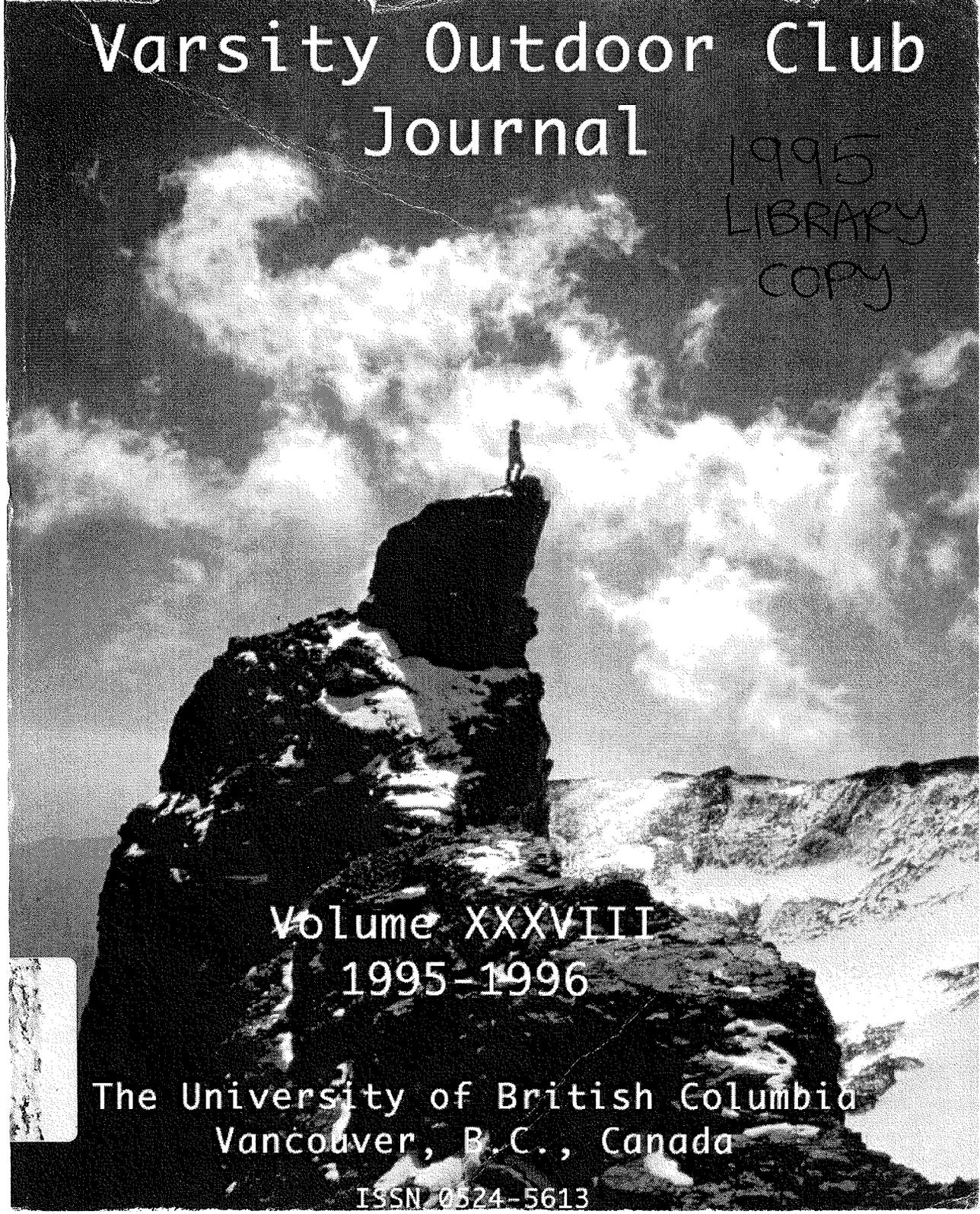


Varsity Outdoor Club Journal

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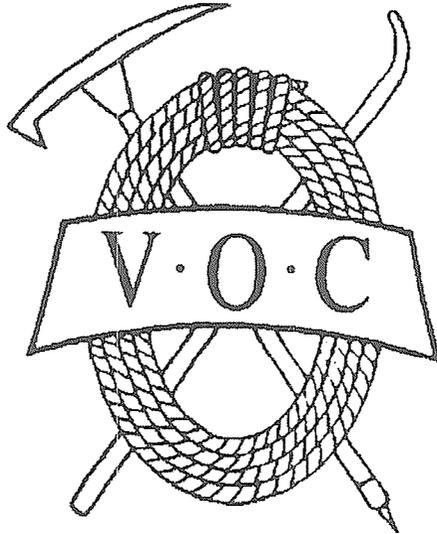
Volume XXXVIII
1995-1996

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, B.C., Canada

ISSN 0524-5613

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The
VARSITY OUTDOOR CLUB
JOURNAL



Volume XXXVIII
1995-1996

ISSN 0524-5613

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, B.C., Canada

“Dedicated to life.”

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President's Message

VOCJ 1996

Well, finally the year is drawing to a close. This is my fifth year at UBC and I'm graduating in May. Time to go out into the real world and join the other pseudo-environmentalist-yuppie-MEC frequenting types (all said in good humour!).

The VOC is definitely changing as time rolls onward. During my stay in the club I have gotten involved more and more in outdoor activities, and have been growing more and more aware of the surroundings, and the consequences of our actions on the surroundings.



The Prez, always ready to lend a hand.

will encourage visits all year, and still make a reasonable weekend trip.

1996 was also the advent of the Reading Week at UBC. This meant more road trips (and

For example, during this year, we finally saw the creation of a provincial park surrounding the Stawamus Chief in Squamish. This will no doubt cause some strife (paying for camping in the future etc.), but it is necessary as the area was showing huge signs of wear. Anyone who has been to the climber's campground recently can tell this.

In addition, we are hoping to see that areas like the Randy Stoltman Wilderness Area (Lillooet Headwaters) will come into being as parks, and be rescued from the clutches of the evil logging empire (funny how I say this, when my job depends on exploitation of natural resources as well).

The club itself is doing great. As the years go by, a constant influx of young faces keeps the focus of the club current. Our membership was down this year ('Heard it was a lean year all around for clubs), but we still ended up with enough money to do everything.

During his president's message in 1995, Blair Hammond mentioned the intention of the club to construct a hostel/cabin in the Duffy Lake Area. Due to luck and hard work, this has become a reality. The WCB is constructing a cabin for the VOC, and we only have to hire a helicopter to transport it to the final destination (which is currently being decided). The cash surplus this year will go towards this end. The final product will be a luxurious cabin in a setting that

doing a thesis for this president). What today's membership lost in terms of skipping school to do local trips they gained in enthusiasm for the long road trips to those climbing meccas. Every trip had a big turnout.

The executive this year did a great job to keep everything rolling along fine. Every time there was something to do, somebody was there to do it. This kept the usual nightmares of organizing all the schools to a dull headache, and the events went just fine to boot (Thanks to all those who instructed at the schools as well).

Many of the executive were back for another round at VOC government. Drew kept things interesting with his usually biased and very funny weekly VOCENEs. Othes kept the money rolling, and lent a real "real executive" flavour to the meetings (no poly-pro there). Joanna kept stellar minutes, and was the most relaxed exec next to Cam. Doug was a good choice for trips, maybe because he always has time to go on his posted long road trips. Tim took over from Markus (who is graduating this year - the thesis is in) as FED rep, and also plans to be here for a while - that's the great thing about grad school. Vicky purchased the necessary new guidebooks (Including Joe Joe's Waterfall Ice - which was a godsend on my Christmas trip), and attempted to streamline a cumbersome library. Cam held court as the most casual vice-pres in recent memory, as well as getting Longhike underway, and having the connections for the Banquet. As mentioned above, Blair was instrumental on his special project - the new hut. Good show Blair!. Jen kept up our Public Relations with the VOC Old-timers - much appreciated, we can use all the help we can get. Judith kept the updates to the Hustler's Handbook constant, as well as getting excited about tele-school, and providing some 'fire' during the meetings. Mark Grist, although he is quite tall, was somewhat invisible this year (sorry about the meeting times Mark). Nonetheless, he managed to get things rolling for another climbing competition in March, including all kinds of sponsors. Dan and Brodie did a good job of keeping gear organized, and signing it out, so good in fact, that the gear room was nearly empty all year!! And last but not least, Vèrèna just finished losing her mind over the 1996 Journal, hereby immortalizing all you and your wild tails of grandeur!

Enjoy!!

Hasta La Vista

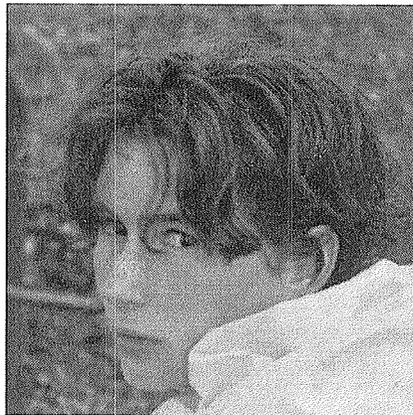
Andrew Gabrys
President, 1995-1996

Editor's Message

I accepted this job a little apprehensively last year at about this time, when I had no real idea about how much work the journal would involve. In fact, I think my exact words were "What's the journal?". Well, now it's done, and I'm definitely feeling overjoyed as well as somewhat accomplished (at both the actual completion of the journal and at my ability to suck a computer science grad student into helping me out!) A zillion thanks to you, Paul, for the many, many hours you put in. The glow in the dark toys are in the mail. Thanks also to everyone else who donated time, pictures and stories, and to the VOC for providing me with great adventures, a place to nap (the blue couch) and so many friends.

Good luck to you all next year (especially Dan, the future editor), I'll send you my article from Africa (on time).

Vérèna Blasy, Journal Editor 1995 - 1996



The editor, Vérèna.

Stunt Director's Message

As the 1996 VOC's official Stunt Director, I was responsible for all stunts, fires, explosions and special effects that went into making up this year's VOC journal. It was a dangerous and unheralded job, but (luckily) I had a team of well-trained professionals helping out. I would like to take a little space to make some special thanks.

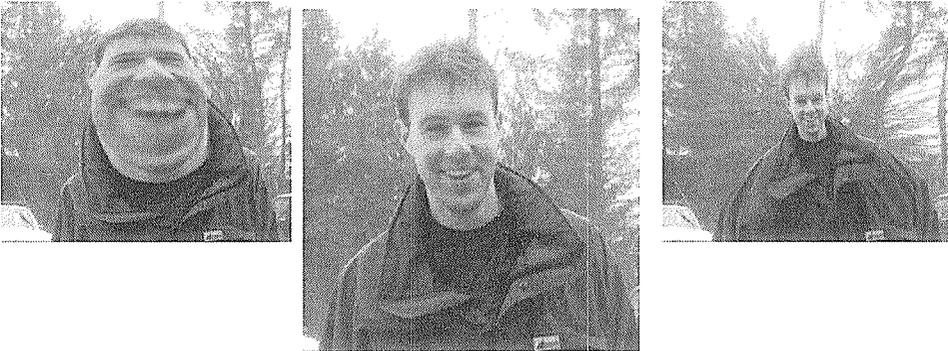
First, I'd like to thank the team of artists that carefully constructed the outdoor backdrops in preparation for our many photo shoots. Some of the sets were so perfectly done, they actually looked like they were outside. Kudos to the library team for doing the research needed to get those little set details just right.

This year, we had an extraordinarily talented group of actors and actresses playing the parts of VOC members. They were extremely motivated, and convincing. I'd like to send out a special thanks to those Los Angeles actors that flew in just to play the parts of the VOC exec.

Of course, every actor and actress was supported by many behind-the-scenes personnel. Our capable costume designers came up with many excellent designs, helped along by makeup artists skilled in magically transforming actors into sweaty, sunburned, smiling outdoors-people.

Finally, an extra-special thanks goes out to the hard-working digital effects team. They used the magic of computers to simulate many of the awe-inspiring pictures you find in this journal. Several techniques were developed especially for this project, including the climbing "whipper-simulation" software, and a package for drawing computer images of people having fun outdoors. We even developed a new method for adding digital sunsets.

- Paul Fearing



Paul Fearing feeling the pressure of endless journal work.

VOC Executives

President



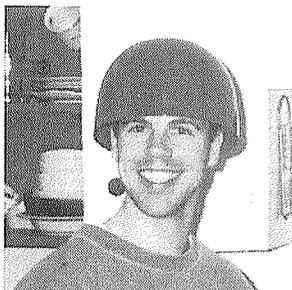
Andy Gabrys

Vice President



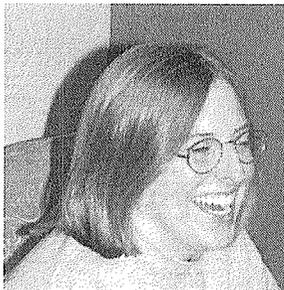
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Treasurer



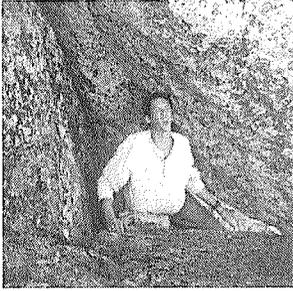
Othes Prosser

Secretary



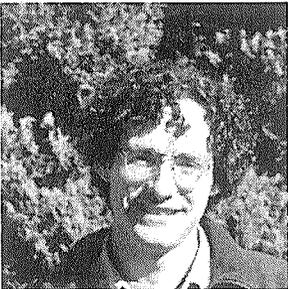
Joanna Wood

Quartermaster



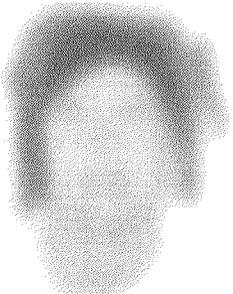
Brodie Haupt

FMCBC Representative



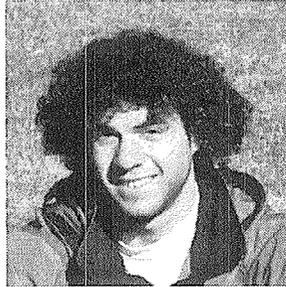
Tim Duty

Archivist



Vicky Chow or it could be a really blurry picture of Andy because we couldn't find one of Vicky

Quartermaster



Dan Perrakis

Trips Coordinator



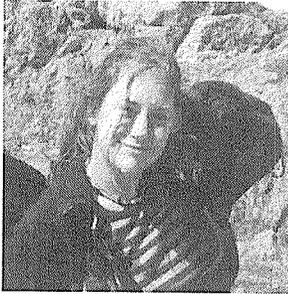
Doug Wilm

Special Projects



Blair Hammond

Public Relations



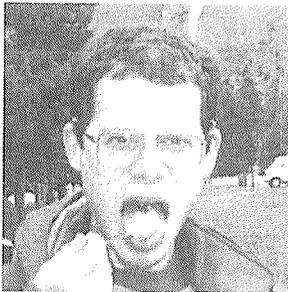
Jen Wild

Animal Kingdom Rep



Tofu & Pig

VOCene Editor



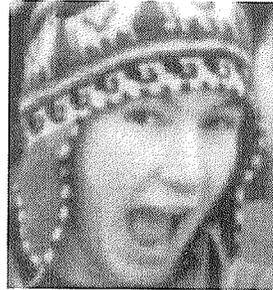
Drew Brayshaw

Membership Chair



Judith Shapiro

Journal Editor



Vèrena Blasy

Climbing Wall Coordinator



Mark Grist

Alumni News

compiled by Markus Kellerhals

Dave Williams is still working in the oceanography department at UBC and getting out on lots of trips.

Mike Sample has a software business in Vancouver. Mike is engaged to Anita, and together they are working on a new hiking guidebook.

Peter Stone is living in Melbourne, Australia and looking for teaching work. Peter is still recovering from a nasty fall he took on a solo hike.

Brian Waddington is working for a geophysics company in Vancouver. Brian is married to another former VOC member, **Betsy Fletcher**, who is working as a geomorphology consultant. Brian and Betsy are active in the BCMC.

Darlene Anderson is living in North Vancouver. She just finished a contract with the Ministry of Lands and is looking for more work.

Marilyn Noort works as a speech pathologist at Children's Hospital. Marilyn is active with the ACC and serves on the board of directors for the FMCBC. She is going to climb Logan with partner **Dave Holloway** who is working on a postdoc in Chemistry here at UBC.

Mike Miles (club president in the 1970's) lives in Victoria, is married with kids and is running his own geomorphology consulting business.

Dick Culbert is doing mining work in South America.

George Fulton is back at school, working on an MSc. in the Geography department at UBC.

John Baldwin works 8 months a year, four days a week (sounds great!!) at UBC. His updated ski guide is selling well. John and spouse **Eda Kadar** are considering retiring to a Caribbean island on the profits.

Graham Underhill is living on Bowen Island and selling real estate. Graham is married to another former VOCer, **Laura Koch**. They recently had a kid.

Julie MacCauley is working for BC Treaty Commission. Spouse **Tony Webb** is doing an MBA at UBC and teaching at BCIT.

Andy and Muriel Pacheco are living in Tuscon, Arizona. Andy is working on a postdoc.

Chris Gill is doing a postdoc in Los Alamos, New Mexico.

Erika Kellerhals is back in BC practicing medicine wherever she finds work.

Paul Kao is living in Vancouver and still climbing.

Noel Buckley is still at UBC finishing his degree. He's still an occasional visitor to the clubroom.

Kobus Barnard finished his Computer Science Degree at SFU. He still holds the world record for most ascents of Mt. Judge Hollaway. Partner **Emily Butler** is studying counseling psychology at SFU.

Pierre Friele is living in Squamish and doing geomorphology work. Pierre has gone soft.

He has bought a snowmobile which he uses to access the alpine.

Rich Lechleitner works in Mt. Rainier National Park.

Ken Legg works as a CA in Vancouver. Ken still gets out climbing and skiing regularly. Spouse **Barb Bell** is working as a nurse doing research.

Anders Ourom works at MEC. He is the current president of the BCMC and active with the Climbers Access Fund.

Bill Sampson was involved with the VOC in the late 60's. He is now homesteading along the banks of the Stikine River.

Denise Hart and **Peter Cellars** have moved to California for Peter's work. They have replaced all their outdoor gear which was destroyed when their home burnt down last year.

Martin Carver has just moved to Nelson for a new job.

Alex Frid is married to Gail and living in the Yukon (I think?).

Michelle Desjardins and spouse **Jim Firstbrook** divide their time between Vancouver and Squamish. Michelle is completing a teaching degree, Jim is working at MDA.

Pat Hajek is "still doing nothing" (quote Drew Brayshaw).

Eric Clemson is substitute teaching around Vancouver and still coming on VOC trips.

Mike Buda is living in T.O. and working for Youth Challenge International.

Mike Surface is still living in Bella Coola. He runs his own desktop publishing firm and is the internet provider for Bella Coola. He also helped with last year's journal.

Jonathan Henkelmann is getting married to **Jill Johnstone**. They are currently living in Whitehorse.

Brad Boyle is still doing rainforest research in South and Central America. He is based somewhere in the American Midwest.

Jane Porter is living in Squamish. She is an interpreter for BC Parks among other things. She lives with partner **Glenn Thompson** who also works for BC Parks.

Gunnar Olovsson and **Lynn Ericson** are both still around UBC and can still be seen on the occasional VOC trip.

Dave Way is teaching in White Rock.

Sophie Royer is still at UBC but is moving to Austria this spring to be with her new spouse.

Steve Grant is active in the BCMC. He lives in Vancouver and is running for the MEC Board of Directors.

Mike Holmes is doing geology work in Ghana. When not doing that he visits partner Isabel in Germany.

Scott Phillips and partner **Fiona Manning** are tying the knot this summer. They live in Calgary where Fiona is interning and Scott is working for an engineering company.

Jeff Greenwood is working in Seattle.

Lisa Moody was playing for the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra which recently folded.

Heather Bury is living in Smithers with partner **John Hagen**.

Peter Jordan is working in Nelson for the Ministry of Forests.

Pat Duffy is a consultant on environmental impact assessment. He lives on the North Shore.

Chris McNeil is working at MEC and is also on the Board of Directors.

Sara Golling is another ex - VOC member on the Board of Directors for MEC.

Drew Brayshaw is..... (oops! He's still here.)

Eric Nodwell and spouse **Carolyn Anglin** are both doing graduate work at Queen's.

Jonathan Wong is working at the Co-op and doing huge amounts of skiing.

Ulli Huetz is back in Germany along with **Dagmar** and **Sabine**.

Rob Driscoll is working as a doctor in the NWT.

Derek Wilmott is working at MEC and doing lots of trips.

Audrey Pearson is still working on a PhD in Seattle.

Bruce Fairley is living with his family in Golden.

Bill Durtler is possibly living in Calgary. Bill and Rob D. did some new routes on Baffin Island last year.

John Boulanger is living in Squamish and doing contract work.

Alan Kriss is working at Coast Mountain Sports.

Tracy Fraser is back at UBC.

Lorne Hoover is a manager at the West Vancouver branch of Coast Mountain Sports.

Caitlin Roberts is kayak guiding in South America.

Karl Ricker is living on the North Shore and working as a geomorphologist. (Seems to be a correlation between VOC membership and geomorphology.)

John Crockewit is working in Vancouver as an environmental engineer.



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Class '45 - Class '55 V.O.C. Reunion

by Karl Ricker

September 15 / 16, 1995

I was the youngest face in the crowd to attend the “old timers” reunion of the V.O.C. gang on a sunny weekend. I joined the club in the autumn of '54; that was about the last year the members of the war vet crowd were left on campus, for which I heard so much of their antics over the years to come. Their enthusiastic presence, en masse, at the reunion was a very vibrant occasion. They had not lost the touch.

Well over one hundred were in attendance at the Friday evening banquet at Cecil Green Park and nearly as many showed up for a day of hikes at Cypress Bowl on the following Saturday. Why Cypress Bowl? Not exactly a traditional stronghold of the club, but the guest speaker for the evening, Dr. Bert Brink of the early 1930s crowd, reminded the audience that Hollyburn was the site of the club's first cabin in the 1920s before they moved onto Grouse. Most of the gang in attendance were of the Grouse vintage, but many had also taken part in the move to Mt. Seymour in 1950, either as a senior student or a recent grad. In fact, the only member to receive the engraved gold pocket watch award*, for his work on the design and construction of the Seymour Cabin, Don Manning, was also present in the audience. Bert wound up his address, reminding the gang that the club has a purpose on campus; too much academia is not healthy for the development of a well-rounded student and the outdoor environment is the perfect relief valve to let off steam! Bert received a standing ovation for his comments.

Attendees were in amazingly good health, with several being recent leaders in the business, academic or regulatory communities. (Politicians were absent.) Many will be listed in the Canadian edition of Who's Who. There were a few notable absentees as well, Alex Burton and Pat Duffy of the early 1950s didn't make it, but are around town in a very conspicuous presence. However, those who attended were not there to tout their decades of accomplishments, but had come simply to have a good time, and it sounded like the days of old! Forty percent of the notorious “Squamish Band”, Dick (Lazenby) and Nick (Bob Nicolson), turned up to lead a boisterous sing song - yep, Bob with this famous wash tub base fiddle was part of it, and he plucked it like an old pro. And a stand-in, Rob Bruce on the clarinet, added another 20% component with excellent ad-libbing. It was a rousing evening, which will be hard to match - and from 60 - 75 year olds! Not to be unexpected however, because this was the war vet grads who were easily the most notorious group in the annals of club history, and they weren't about to forget it.

Next day, the man who designed the aerial tram at Jackson Hole, Bob McLellan, organized the hikes on Cypress. It was a hot day, and the not so agile walked through to Yew Lake and

onward to a view of Howe Sound, while the vast majority plodded up the dusty Baden Powell Trail to Cabin Lake. Many of the ladies peeled for a swim! Regrouping at the parking lot a few hours later, about 50 continued to Susan Roote's home in the British Properties for a late lunch and a chance to mingle for perhaps one last chat. Susan was the oldest daughter of former U BC president, Dr. Norman McKenzie, world renown for his ability to expand the university by 3 fold, overnight, at the close of the war by wheeling in hundreds of army huts from the nearby military training facilities. Some of those huts are still on campus!

You know, 50 years doesn't change the scene too much; but, I won't be around for the next one! The challenge is yours to match this performance. Humbling but very impressive, it was a privilege to be there and witness a bit of club history resurrected with finesse and exuberant enthusiasm.

Karl Ricker
V.O.C. President 1958-59

VOC REUNION (UP TO 1955)
SEPTEMBER 15, 1995
ATTENDEES

JACQUIE AINSCOUGH	JANE BROWN-JOHN	BOB NICHOLSON
GRANT AINSCOUGH	AL JOKISCH	HARVEY PARLIAMENT
ANNE AITKEN	SHIRLEY JOKISCH	KARL RICKER
JOAN ANASTASIOU	ANN-ELLEN JONES	MARY RODE
KIP ANASTASIOU	FRANCIS JONES	TREVOR ROOTE
NANCY ANDERSON	IAN KAY	SUSAN ROOTE
JOHN ANDERSON	JEAN KAY	JOHN SAVAGE
GWYN BARTRAM	MARIE KENDALL	AUDREY SAVAGE
BOB BREADON	GORDON KNIGHT	MAY SCOTT
BERT BRINK	OILA KNIGHT	ROBERT SERAPHIM
RON BRUCE	DICK LAZENBY	ALFREDA SERAPHIM
BOB CHOWN	SHIRLEY LEBRASSEUR	FRANK HARVEY-SMITH
MARY CHOWN	ROBIN LEBRASSEUR	HARRY SMITH
JOYCE CLEARIHUE	JIM LEE	HELEN SMITH
GEORGE COATES	RON LESLIE	GEORGES SOURISSEAU
JOYCE COATES	STACIA LESLIE	MAY SOURISSEAU
ANE CONNOR	TAD LETSON	BETTY SOUTHER
JOAN CROSBY	JOAN MACINTOSH	JACK SOUTHER
ROGER CROSBY	DONALD MANNING	MARY-LOU STATHERS
JACKLIN DICK	BERYL MANNING	BOB THOMAS

ARNOLD EDE	ERNEST MASON	CATHIE THOMAS
MARGARET EDWARDS	JESSIE MASON	JOHN TIEDJE
VICTOR EDWARDS	ELLISON MASSEY	DOROTHY TIEDJE
WALTER EWING	FLEMING McCONNELL	EVA VACEK
IRIS EWING	AILEEN McCONNELL	VALERIE WALKER
DOROTHY GRABER	SOPHIE McDOUGALL	WAVERLIE WARILA
HENRY GRABER	PATRICIA McFEELY	JOHN WARILA
AL HALL	ROBERT MCLELLAN	LYNN WEBSTER
AGNES HAMILTON	JEAN MCLELLAN	NORA WHEELER
JUANITA HARRIS	FRANK MEHLING	JOHN WHEELER
SEV HEIBERG	MARGARET MERLER	SHEILA WHITE
ROY HOOLEY	SCIPIO MERLER	BERT WHITE
LARI HOOLEY	DAVID MOLSON	MILLS WINRAM
MARGARET JAFFARY	JEAN MOLSON	JIM CRAIG
SYDNEY BROWN-JOHN	CHARLES NASH	

* Don admits that he lost the watch in his garden recently.



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The VOC's New Hut



by Blair Hammond

In the fall of 1995 Tim Duty let me know that I could expect a call from "some guy at the Worker's Compensation Board" about a proposal to build a new hut. Intrigued, I didn't have to wait too long before Brian Gawly of the WCB phoned me. Brian heads a department at the WCB that is involved in rehabilitating injured workers by retraining them on building projects. Someone at the Board thought it would be a good idea if they built something a little more interesting than a tool shed or small garage, and thought that a mountain hut would be a worthy project. Brian contacted Linda Coss at the FMCBC and asked her who to talk with about a cooperative hut project; Linda recommended the VOC. We had just finished fixing up Brew Hut and seemed to have some interest in a hut program. Eventually, Brian and I spoke on the phone and I went out to Richmond to meet with him and check out the facilities at his disposal.

Well, turns out that Brian's a heckuva nice guy, and a relation of Sarah Weber's of some sort, and the facilities are A-1. So, the project starts rolling. The WCB injured workers will build the hut from scratch; from rough logs to finished project. Then, it will be taken apart in an organized way (hopefully!) and the VOC will truck it to the road nearest the eventual hut site and fly it in by helicopter, where a joint crew of WCB carpenters and VOC hard core will re-erect it. As part of a rehab program, the WCB will cover most costs. Linda Coss provided the contacts needed to get the raw timber for free.

In order to make sure that this project goes well, we have formed a cabin committee to oversee the planning, site selection and building of this hut. The committee is comprised of Blair Hammond (Special Projects), Tim Duty (Fed Rep), Dan Perrakis (Quartermaster and future president, no doubt) and Markus Kellerhals (old fogie and has been). Denie Robichaud (another old fogie) is our consulting carpenter (contract price so far: 1 beer). This macho group has met to discuss the qualities of the hut, possible locations and to review the preliminary plans sent to us by Brian.

So what will the hut be like? Well, somewhat fancier than our other huts. It'll look more like a little log ski chalet, with a red aluminum roof and a front porch perfect for whiling away those balmy mountain summer afternoons. It'll sleep twelve comfortably, and be heated with a kerosine heater, somewhat superior to the one in Brew Hut. As this hut will be better insulated than our other huts, it'll be nice and toasty on even the snarliest of winter days. Inside, you'll notice fancy post and beam architecture and a fairly high ceiling, with a loft that covers 2/3 of the floor area. At the far end, beside the baby-grand, will be a sauna. At the other end, kitty corner to the slate pool table, will be a hot tub. The design promises a very sturdy hut.

As to where we are going to put this new hut - well, we're not sure exactly. We made a list

of possible locations based on the input of a variety of people who have skied the local mountains. We also made a list of criteria: Must be less than four hours drive from Vancouver; must have good access year round; area can't be overrun with snow-mobiles; can't be so difficult to get to that it precludes use by most members of the club; must have good skiing, mountaineering and summer hiking; can't be too far from a road in order to limit costs of flying it in. Combining these two lists, we came up with several sites, which we are now in the process of checking out. Right now the front-runner is Phelix Creek, near Birkenhead Lake Provincial Park, north of Pemberton. While at the limit in terms of driving time, the area has fantastic potential. It's surrounded by peaks with names like Mts. Gandalf, Shadowfax and Aragorn, prompting the potential hut name of Rivendell.

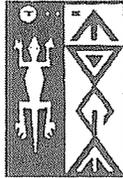
Currently, the committee is in the process of applying for a license to place the hut in one of several areas. We are hoping to be able to place it in September of 1996, but if not, then in the following summer. It all depends on when it is built and how long it takes to get the license. If you have any comments on the hut program, contact any one of the committee members named above. Keep your eyes peeled for notices to help with this great project.



VOC's New Hut. Sketch: Blair Hammond

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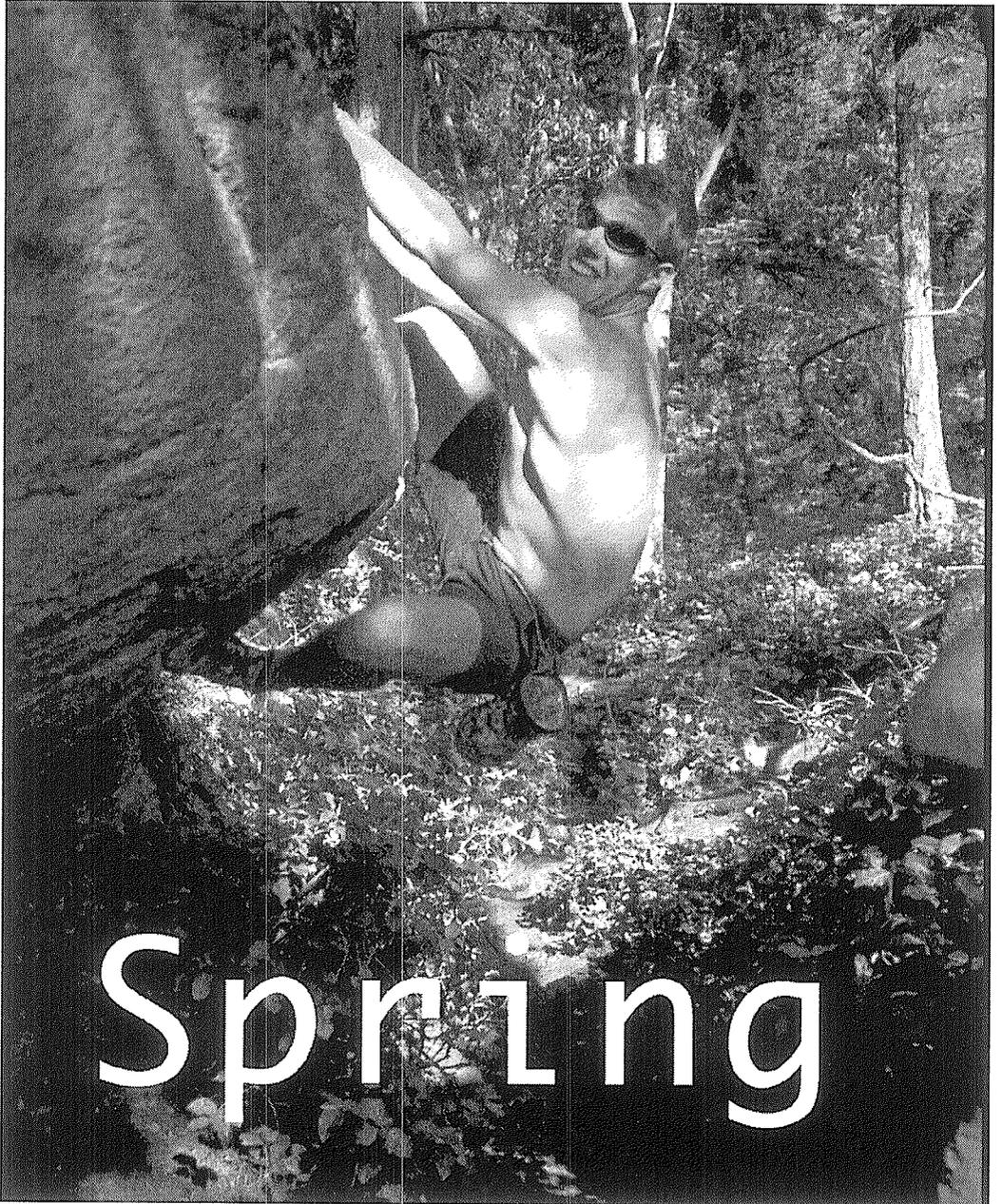
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(Spring) Cam Campbell bouldering. Photo: Drew Brayshaw.

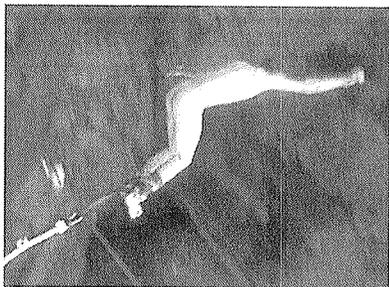
Free Willy II

The story of the 1st annual VOC Naked Bungy Jump

by *Drew Brayshaw*

Somehow I discovered that Bungy Zone, outside Nanaimo, was holding its annual Naked Bungy Jump (wear no clothes, jump for free) on the day immediately after the Arts County Fair. I had always wanted to jump, but never wanted to pay... I decided exhibitionism loves company and put up a trip sheet.

Surly and hung over, on the morning of April 2nd Dan, Carl, Cam and I drove onto the Nanaimo ferry where we were met by Quinton, Vance and Annette. We all jammed into Cam's truck to drive to Bungy Zone. We got there in time to be no.'s 78 through 84 out of the lucky hundred who got to go. It wasn't free either...you had to pay \$5 as an "entrance fee". A lot more than the 100 jumpers were there... there was a whole army of tourists and video-camera toting perverts. The crowd seemed a bit like the Clayoquot protest camp...lots of youths, bongo players, devil-stick twirlers, piercings, hacksack games, etc. About 70% male, 29% female and 1% undecided. We hung around and checked out the proceedings. Ten jumpers went per hour. As the first guy leaped off the bridge, Dan yelled out "Free Willy!" and got a laugh from the crowd. We hacked for a few hours and watched the general proceedings. A few people (notably women) had painted interesting designs on their bodies... flowers, swirls and so on. No one backed out, but some people had to encouraged by the crowd (Jump, jump, jump!)



Drew taking the plunge.

Photo: Cam Campbell.

Seeing naked people flying through the air soon began to pall. After cheering for some people we knew (Saakje and Rupert) and watching a three-hundred pound woman dive off to reassure ourselves that the cord would hold, we headed into scenic downtown Nanaimo for lunch. Carl and Dan ate a whole roasted chicken between them. Then we headed to Petroglyph Park for some bouldering. It may be sandstone, but it definitely isn't the Fontainebleau of the Island!

Our time was approaching, so we headed back to the zone. A woman and a man in the #60's backed out to boos from the crowd (they were the only ones to do so all day). More hacking, then it was the 70's turn to go. In our group this was Quinton, Vance, and Annette. They took their jumps with style and grace. Annette ran into some problems when the raincoat she was given fell into the water and sank...

Now it was the 80's turn. We queued up and climbed up onto the bridge. I wanted slides (for VOC slide contest of course) so I volunteered to go last. Cam went first and leaped out yelling and laughing. Dan jumped next and demonstrated the form of an experienced jumper. Then Carl got the chance to show off his new nipple ring. He chose the dignified face first plummet style of jump.

Finally it was my turn. I pulled off my clothes and got strapped onto the bungy cord. The employees were all guys and, let us say, they were not enjoying the gender imbalance of the day. But this was fine by me!

As I hopped (legs tied together for the jump) to the edge of the platform to dive, I began to have sudden doubts. The butterflies in my stomach discovered chaos theory and tried to get a storm started. As I teetered on the brink I knew I couldn't back out, even though I was setting myself up for the biggest whipper of my career... a hundred and forty feet, several times! (You bounce around a lot on a jump... up and down and up and down).

All of this passed through my mind in a second. Someone in the crowd yelled "C'mon, jump!" I blanked all my thoughts and in a strange convulsion threw myself off the bridge. Cam captured the event on camera. All my muscles are clenched as if I am about to throw myself head-first into a brick wall. I was probably the only person all day to jump off feet first... on the way down I slowly rotated forwards to the head first position. Without glasses I have no depth perception...I thought I was approaching the water when I was fifty feet away, and was equally surprised to feel myself bounce back up. It's very odd to fall AWAY from the ground!

By the time I was lowered into the raft I had learned to enjoy it...the fear only lasted for about the first fifty feet of the total drop, some subconscious corner of my brain going "ohshitohshitoshitohshit" until it was silenced by the rest of me going "wheeeeeeeeeee!". As I was untied, I felt good... I felt like I could have punched my way through a brick wall!

I joined the others in the truck and we headed out. Quinton pulled out a pipe and we all partook of a bowl. I knocked back a leftover cider. We all agreed it was a rad event...but not worth paying for. See you in April!

Participants:

Cam Cambell

Dan Perrakis

Quinton Bennett

Annette??

Drew Brayshaw

Carl Fleet

Vance Culbert

The Adventures of the Monarch Icefield Book Club

by Jan Palaty

Abundant spring rain splattered against the windshield. The vehicle was covered in mud both outside and, increasingly, inside. The party was silent as it eyed the desolate surroundings and the gas needle's march towards "E". "It's a good sign!" said Mike H. "We'll get three weeks of sun, just wait!"

Our party of four (Guy, Mike B., Mike H. and myself) was on its way to Bella Coola, a small coastal town 400 km north of Vancouver and the starting point for a three week ski traverse of the Monarch Icefield, an infrequently visited area of vast glaciers and towering peaks. The weather is notoriously bad here due to the Icefield's exposure to every storm coming off the Pacific Ocean, so we came well-supplied with books and the patience required for sitting storm-bound in a tent for several days; hence our team name of "The Monarch Icefield Book Club". Our plan was to fly in three food caches but to complete the horseshoe traverse without further airborne assistance. This approach is more physically demanding than being flown directly to the alpine but also offers the greatest rewards. Doesn't that glorious mountain view greeting you in the morning taste especially fine knowing you've paid for it with days of sweat, fatigue and mosquito bites?

Skiing in May might sound odd but the vastness of Coast Range icefields makes it much faster (and more fun) than hiking. Telemark boots and bindings mounted on second-hand downhill skis are generally preferred.

We followed the Hotnarko River trail in Tweedsmuir Park to Turner Lake where we admired Hunlen Falls, tumbling 550m from the Chilcotin Plateau before disappearing in a great mist far below. Another day of travel took us to Junker Lake, a lovely body of water bordered by a long sandy beach boasting a phenomenal view of the 3000m bulk of Mt. Talchako, a summit seemingly earmarked for the Himalayas but delivered to the wrong address. Junker Lake also marked the beginning of the bushwhacking and its resultant snail-like progress, prompting us to head straight up to treeline and camp before a stunning panorama of the Turner Lake chain and the peaks of the Monarch Icefield.

Having spent the latter half of the day sinking into bottomless wet snow, we decided to get up at 5 am the next morning in order to travel on the still-frozen crust. This made for rapid progress and allowed us to set up camp by mid-afternoon and lounge in the sun while studying the maps and planning a peak-bagging list that would have intimidated Reinhold Messner. This area also features picturesque glaciers which frequently drop to elevations far below treeline, so it's not uncommon to see a lush green forest perched on cliffs above such a river of ice. One striking example is the Jacobsen Glacier which follows a long winding path from the Icefield before breaking up into a million ice pinnacles and spilling into a large lake.

Next morning, we skied up to Pandemonium Pass, high above the Talchako Glacier and our first food cache, where we were hit with the spectacle of the Monarch group spread out before us. Defended by fierce icefalls and huge cliffs, it looked like something straight out of Patagonia with a

dash of Himalayan flavouring. We descended to the glacier and looted our food cache before strapping the three pails to the light plastic sleds we had carried in and proceeding up to the base of Monarch itself. We decided to rope up here, owing to the large number of open crevasses, but unwisely allowed Guy to take the lead position; this turned out to be like walking a cheetah on a leash.

Following a few days of poor weather, the skies cleared and we skied the 13 km to our next camp in less than 3 hours, giving us lots of time to bag the 2800m summits of Mts. Erewhon and Dagon. Glacier-hung peaks extended in all directions as far as the eye could see, reminiscent of waves on an ocean. The next day was again spent indoors while steady rain and wind poked holes into the massive snow wall we had built around our camp. Guy and I dashed over to the Mikes' tent for lunch and spent a couple of hours making absolutely sure that everyone received equal amounts of such controlled substances as salami and licorice.

I stuck my head out of the tent at 5 am next day and gave a loud whoop upon seeing clear skies. An hour later our skis were chattering on the frozen surface as we swooped down across the glacier to Mt. Cerberus (3140m), an impressive dome of cliffs and ice towering high above the surrounding peaks. We climbed up the steep crevasse-riddled slope to the easy summit before returning to camp and continuing onwards. That afternoon combined all that was best in spring ski touring; we admired the scenery and let gravity do the work as it brought us down the long smooth glacier at perfect cruising speed to our campsite at the base of the mighty towers of Mt. Jacobsen.

The next day saw us climbing over a ridge to the next glacial basin and enjoying a fabulous ski run down the Fyles Glacier, linking eighty consecutive turns on its vast expanse to our next food cache. Our three 20 liter metal pails were located on a rocky knoll above the glacier in order to keep it out of the clutches of the wandering grizzly bears whose tracks we occasionally saw in the snow.

A maddening wind kept the tent flapping all night and prevented us from getting much sleep, although this did allow us to experience the stunning sight of a full moon rising behind the dark walls of Jacobsen and the sounds of Mike B. being amazed and moved by the spectacle.

It hailed, snowed and did everything else imaginable the next day, so the Book Club settled in with its fresh supply of literature. The following day dawned clear and cold, requiring boots to be thawed over the stove before setting off to climb Snowside Mtn. (2960m) by the heavily crevassed glacier on its north face. Plodding through a foot of gorgeous powder, more than one member was heard to sigh loudly at the thought of how lovely the skiing would have been if it wasn't for those wretched crevasses and the fact that we had abandoned our skis at the base of the peak. A pitch of soft ice then led to easier ground and the knife-edge ridge which served as the summit.

On our last day on the Icefield, Guy and Mike B. went off to storm the seemingly invincible towers of Jacobsen while Mike H. and I wandered up to the friendly 2700m summit of Mt. Fyles. There was no wind, not a cloud in the sky and no hurry anywhere; we found some pleasantly flat rocks and meditated on what a wonderful spot this was.

Early next morning we packed up and left the glacier before making the long climb across the ridge of Polar Bear Mtn. It was a tired group that reached the top but we were soon revitalized by the long descent down the smooth glacier to our campsite. The sun smiled at us over the myste-

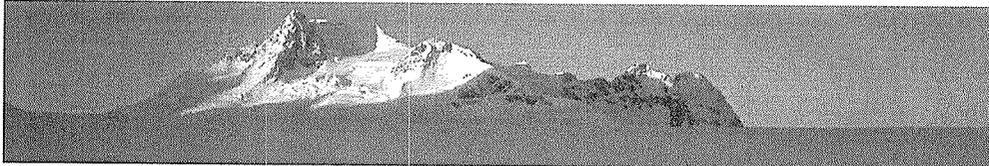
rious spires of the Mt. Arjuna group as we carved innumerable turns in the perfect spring snow. We camped on some big glacier-polished boulders and revelled in the luxury of walking around bare-foot. A steep icefall had to be negotiated next morning, the highlight being an exciting section where we scrambled over blocks of ice jammed between the walls of a deep crevasse. Then it was just a quick hop to reach our last food cache by mid-morning; like starved bears in a supermarket, we attacked the bins and ate ourselves into a happy stupor.

We had a rather exciting descent of the Arjuna Glacier, where the Mikes barely avoided going for a long tumble down the steep frozen slope, before leaving the glaciers for the last time and disappearing into the forest. Progress was initially rapid and free of obnoxious thickets of alder and whatnot (true mountaineers pride themselves on their lack of botanical knowledge), but soon reached an intensity I had never experienced before. First there was the alder. Lots of alder. Then alder on steep slopes also hosting a thriving population of devil's club. Swearing by group members became continuous as they strove to disentangle their skis, towering high above their packs, from the grasping alder branches.

In such situations where it takes minutes to move meters, it's interesting how everyone always wants to see the map every quarter hour. There is never any uncertainty about the route or the approximate position, which are very similar to what they were an hour ago, but people still derive comfort out of studying an increasingly dirty map with feverish intensity.

Fortunately, all bush must eventually come to an end, so by mid-evening we were walking through a beautiful old-growth forest on a mossy carpet which soon took us to the place we had been dreaming about for hours: the clearcut. "Wow, the clearcut! Isn't it gorgeous?" we yelled as we stood at the edge of the forest, knowing that there was a logging road nearby which would quickly take us down the remaining 13 km to the highway. We soon found the road and the bugs found us soon afterwards, so we appointed Guy to make supper and dived into the tents.

Mike B. had threatened a painful death to anyone who dared get up at the customary 5 am, so it wasn't until 7 am on that last beautiful morning that heads started poking out of tents. The birds were singing, the greenery was at a safe distance and a last few peaks were still poking their heads over the hillsides as we put on indescribably filthy clothing, hoisted our packs and hobbled down the road, reaching our truck in a few hours and bringing a marvelous ski trip to an end. All we had needed for our three weeks of unforgettable climbing and skiing was some basic ski touring knowledge (e.g. avalanche safety, backcountry camping, glacier travel), a few days of preparation in the supermarket and Mike B.'s basement and a modest \$460 each to cover food, transportation and helicopter costs. So if you've got the inclination, some of the wildest ski touring to be found anywhere is waiting for you in the B.C. Coast Range!



Princess Mtn - Monarch Icefield Ski Traverse, May '95. Photo: Guy Edwards

Goat Ridge

by *Marek Labecki*

May 13-14, 1995

This trip was essentially meant to be a reconnaissance of snow conditions before the expedition to Mt. Sedgewick. I was long undecided whether to plan it for 3 leisurely or 2 somewhat more strenuous days. Many VOCers appeared to be away at this time of the year so I did not get to recruit anybody except Ai, my frequent fellow-hiker (although two more people expressed some interest in the trip but did not join us in the end). We rented some snowshoes because it seemed likely that we might need them on this trip. Ai also brought an ice-axe. Our assumption that crampons would be useless on the presumably mushy snow later turned out to be true. The approach I chose was the simplest possible and went initially along the Petgill Lake trail, which starts near Murrin Park, and then continued on a rougher but marked route up to Goat Ridge. There exists more challenging approaches involving, for example, bushwacking from Britannia Creek or Marmot Creek but we ignored them for the time being.

It was not very clear how seriously we should treat the potential presence of bears at lower elevation (which might add some trouble to overnight camping) so I finally opted for a 2-day trip with an early start on Saturday and a high camp above the timberline, possibly on the summit. The eight o'clock Maverick coach brought us to the Petgill Lake trailhead and the driver was nice enough to drop us off right by Murrin Park, where there is hardly any room for a vehicle to pull over on the right hand side of the highway. We started the hike at 9:40 a.m. and quickly got wet from sweating. The trail to Petgill lake is civilized and generally very pleasant, so on a warm day like that, one could expect to meet quite a few other hikers. Under my heavy pack and after two not very good nights, I was already fairly exhausted when we arrived at the lake around noon. We stripped to a reasonable degree, let our outer layers dry in the sun and indulged in an hour-long rest on a spacious rock.

A visitor to Petgill Lake is soon welcomed by joyful chipmunks, which then start energetic endeavors aimed at sharing your food. Well, better chipmunks than bears... After a series of photos, when the little bravados kept bugging us, the inevitable thing happened we managed to close one of them in a bag with trail mix, thus demonstrating the old truth that the price of food is often freedom. The chipmunk got the message only for a couple of minutes, after which it came back over and over again. We dared not repeat the demonstration though, realizing that an excessive amount of stress on the animal could result in undesirable physiological processes contaminating the contents of the bag.

Looking at our destination, circa 1000 m above our lazy spot at the lake, I was wondering why the hell I had to climb up there but soon my head was cleansed of stupid thoughts when we hit the trail again. The route was indeed somewhat sketchy here and there but it never headed northwest, contrary to the description in "103 Hikes". We did not encounter snow until the elevation of

about 1100 m, where we put on our gaiters. The markings were getting worse and worse and eventually we lost the trail completely. Fortunately, we were close enough to the ridge and could continue up a fairly obvious route. On a few steep parts I appreciated the assistance of Ai's ice-axe while he found himself a nicely shaped stick that did an excellent job too. We got to the ridge within perhaps 3 hours, which then made us foolishly assume that the summit was just one step away. What followed was a never-ending torment route through a zillion bumps, each one offering a guessing game whether to go straight over it or to bypass it on the left or right and each one giving us new hope that it would be the last. Goat Ridge is pretty long and so, if you are heading east, it takes quite a while before you even get to see Sky Pilot. The snow was packed and walkable, no need for snowshoes, but I was too tired and dehydrated to appreciate that. We were dragging ourselves on almost unconsciously until, at about 7:30 p.m., the impressive massif of Sky Pilot appeared, and shortly thereafter finally there were no more bumps to cross. The full moon and sunset quickly added even more splendour to the fantastic panorama from the summit at 1770 m/5800 ft. The temperature was above zero - how nice to pitch the tent without getting our hands frozen and without the usual trouble with the pole cords which lose their elasticity at sub-zero temperatures! We began the long procedure of melting snow to make up for the lost body fluid.

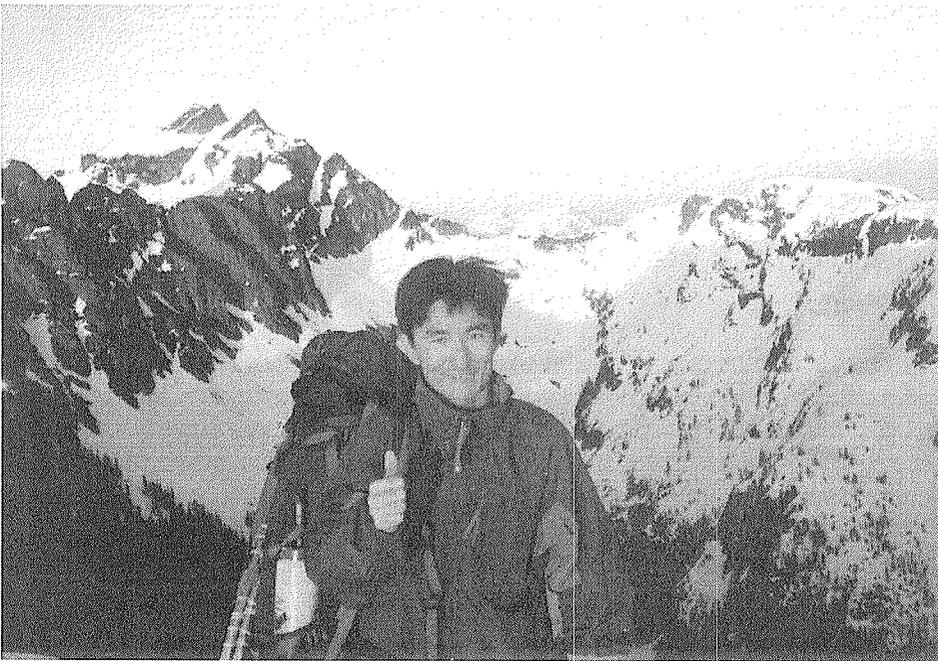
I did not have a particularly good sleep that night. It was windy for a few hours, and then I woke up at about 4 a.m. and did not get back to sleep until sunrise, which I had intended to witness and take pictures of. The moon was still up and truly amazing a huge golden circle sinking down slowly... Well, not slowly enough for me since by the time I set up a tripod for my camera most of the moon had vanished above the waters of Thornbrough channel. Soon, however, the eruption of the sun from behind the Mamquam range compensated for the loss. The spectacle kept both of us up for about one hour until we returned to tent to catch some more sleep.

After some morning tea and rice for breakfast, ready to get more snow melted, we suddenly ran out of fuel! Apparently, a 300 mL bottle of white gas is not quite enough for two hungry and dehydrated bodies even if it's just one night. We started descending at about 10 a.m. and followed our steps of the day before, shortcutting the route whenever possible. To avoid one unpleasant part just above the timberline, we circumvented it to the right and quickly got down and increasingly steep slope to about 1300 m. That was too low an elevation, it was getting very steep and bluffy, we were already below the timberline, and had not yet managed to get back to the trail! I truly abhorred the prospect of climbing back up to find a safer slope to traverse but, following Ai's persuasion, we were forced to do so. Otherwise, if we were to bushwack all the way down, we would probably miss the last Maverick bus back to Vancouver.

Ai's idea of gaining some elevation, followed by my suggestion to move along the creek we had just gotten to, turned out to be a blessing. At the least expected moment, Ai spotted a trail marker on a rock and we soon recognized the route we had done the day before. We took a good rest at Petgill Lake (of course, accompanied by chipmunks) and headed back down at 2 p.m. The trail was pretty crowded and two or three parties, seeing the loads on our backs, curiously asked us about Goat Ridge and our trip. We shared all our humble knowledge with them. Two of those peo-

ple later gave us a ride to Squamish, since we got back to Murrin Park at 4:30 p.m., an hour and a half before the scheduled arrival of the bus. We were indulging in drinking and eating at Seven-Eleven until, at 5:30 p.m., an unexpected thing happened. We could see a Maverick bus, which was supposed to be in Squamish at 6 p.m., passing by, then stopping for a moment at the intersection and then disappearing south. We were too far from the highway to wave at the bus, not to mention the astonishment left us pretty speechless. We spent the next 110 minutes on the side of the highway, hoping that what we saw was some Powder Express or another road ghost, then trying to hitchhike, which made a few drivers laugh when they saw our baggage. Another surprise struck us when a medium-size sedan with two people inside and bicycles attached to the trunk pulled over and offered a ride. The driver, Mark, who recognized us as VOC members, remembered us from the November '94 Glacier School! It really pays off to go on the right trips with the right people.

Trip participants: Aiichiro Sekiyama and Marek Labecki



Ai on the summit of Goat Ridge, with Sky Pilot and full moon in the background. Photo: Marek Labecki

Mt Sedgewick

by Marek Labecki

May 19-22, 1995

Enriched by the experience of the previous weekend's trip to Goat Ridge, we (i.e., Ai and myself, with no other participants) already knew we should leave the snow shoes at home and take our ice-axes with us. I decided to plan the Mt. Sedgewick trip for 4 days so that we would not need to hurry. We brought enough stuff to drink and plenty of fuel (1.3l) to be sure we would not run out of it as happened a week before. For the comfort of this confidence I did not mind carrying one of two extra kilograms on my back.

We took the 11:00 a.m. Maverick bus on Friday and had more than one hour to relax at Shannon Falls before crossing Howe Sound on Garibaldi II, a lovely ferry operating between Darrell Bay and Woodfibre. The ferry is free, runs every 1-2 hours until about midnight and the half-hour-long ride itself can be considered a tourist attraction. If your hobby or profession is pulp and paper engineering, you will also find the ferry's westbound destination exciting. The impressive industrial installations of the Western Pulp mill present an interesting foreground for Mt. Sedgewick, looming in the back, a sight you can only catch for about a minute when the ferry approaches Woodfibre.

Registration at the First Aid post is mandatory for all hikers and, probably to attract the reluctant ones, a humming bird feeder has been installed right outside the window of the building. You can watch the charming creatures from less than one meter, sometimes even six or seven of them at a time, dipping their long beaks in the feeding wells or fighting for access to food. Shortly after 2:00 p.m., we started a walk up a terribly boring logging road until the elevation of 640 m/2100 ft. The smog from the mill could be smelled for most of the time, although I must admit that I had expected something worse. For example, it did not give me a headache, which I can quickly get from car exhaust gases or cigarette fumes. With the end of the logging road, a steeper and more interesting route started that led us to a cabin nicely located on the side of Henriette Lake (870m/2850 ft.). A few patches of snow were covering the trail just below the lake but there was no snow around the cabin. The hike from the mill site had taken us 3 h 40 min., including at least one hour of rest stops.

There is a dam on Henriette Lake, from which we could admire a roaring waterfall dropping a couple of hundred meters below as well as the quiescent surface of the lake on the other side. The lake was mostly frozen but thawing fast in the spring sun. The cabin has a locked private part downstairs and a second floor that is available to the public. The upstairs part consists of a well equipped but shabby kitchen and a cozy room with two beds and blankets, three chairs, a table, something that used to be an armchair, and bookshelves with various paraphernalia (e.g., playing cards), all dating back approximately to the time the dam was built, i.e., 1947. Two topo maps of the area are displayed on the wall in the kitchen and one of them may be taken away for the time of

a hike. There is a wooden helipad just outside the cabin, suitable for pitching a tent or two by those who like this special thrill of taking a chance with a landing helicopter. The only distant views from Henriette Lake are over the dam to the east and include Goat Ridge, Sky Pilot, and Mt. Habrich, the latter looking like a finger pointing toward the sky. Those planning some serious mountaineering in the area should only hope it's not the middle finger.

We slept very well that night, although both of us had some strange dreams...about the cabin. I dreamed that some sort of a tour group just moved in along with a bunch of furniture and tried to kick us out of the place. Meanwhile, Ai had a dream of causing a fire by carelessly handling his Whisperlite. We were happy to see the cabin back in normal condition in the morning.

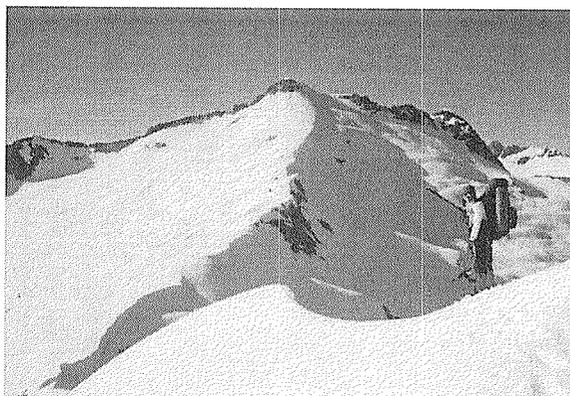
Around 9:30 a.m., we started ascending the ridge between Woodfibre Creek and Henriette Lake. Initially, the trail was on a steep part in the woods and the markers on the trees could be seen every 5 m or so. But no sooner had we reached the snow line, they magically went out of sight. At about 1300m/4300 ft. we caught a short glimpse of Sylvia Lake with its emerald serpentine of water hatching along the shoreline through the cover of ice and snow. Guided by the constant hooting of grouse, we hiked along the ridge past Woodfibre Lake and further toward Mt. Roderick. The route there is quite bumpy, so we tried to traverse slopes to maintain our elevation as much as possible. We ignored the summit of Mt. Roderick (you can call it cheating if you wish) and proceeded directly to the south ridge of Sedgewick, reaching the saddle above Taquat Lakes at 4:30 p.m. From there on, it's a steady ascent to a minor peak at 1740 m/5700 ft., about a mile south of Sedgewick. On a steep slope just below that point, our ice-axes became really useful although the wet afternoon snow still didn't offer a very secure feeling.

We arrived at the above mentioned minor peak at 7:00 p.m. and, as expected, there wasn't really any flat spot for setting up a tent there. The east face was an almost vertical, rocky bluff dropping abruptly off the edge of a cornice on top. The narrow ridge ahead however, did not look very encouraging for camping either, so we decided to spend the night, where we were. Hoping that about 10 m should be far enough from the edge of the precipice, we began to make an energetic use of the snow shovel and created, after digging out about 60 cm/2 ft. of snow on the uphill side, a comfortable terrace for the tent. Soon, the sun came down and the temperature dropped below freezing. The wind was getting stronger and stronger, rocking and shaking the tent, and we were wondering how far away from the original camping spot we were going to be in the morning. At this point, Ai recollected a story of one VOC trip where one of three tents pitched on a certain summit was blown away by the wind and tumbled about 100 m down slope, with somebody inside. This made a truly marvellous bedtime story. Fortunately, as we found out, the snow was frozen hard enough to hold the pegs securely and keep our tent in place.

At 5:00 a.m., and after not too much sleep, we rushed out to watch the sunrise. It was perfectly still and windless, so our tent was safe. The first flash of the sun short out from behind the body of Mt. Garibaldi. Soon, the morning light also awakened Sedgewick and we started getting ready to set off for the summit. Crampons (which we didn't bring on this trip) might have actually been of some use on the crusty snow when we were descending the steep, narrow ridge down to the col. The further part uphill was generally safer, until just below the rocky summit. The most obvi-

ous route led around to Sedgewick's east ridge and required crossing the snowy, well visible from Britannia Beach, south-east face of the mountain. Traversing the exposed slope of up to 50 degrees on hard snow really inspired my imagination when I saw a potential side route with excellent glissading opportunities circa 1 km downhill, all the way to the bush of Mill Creek valley. Once on the east ridge, it was just a few easy steps up to the summit. It took us about 50 min. from the camp.

The highlight of the fantastic panorama from the top is a fascinating view of the Tantalus Range. The area to the north and west looks fairly remote, except for some terrible clearcuts at lower elevations. For signs of civilization, one needs to look down south-east, toward the fumes of the Woodfibre pulp mill and further towards the Mining Museum in Britannia Beach. To the south, way in a distance, the UBC peninsula shows just off the slope of Black Mountain. Indeed, as I checked it later, Mt. Sedgewick can be seen from UBC campus, although not from Blanca St.



Marek on the south ridge of Mt. Sedgewick. Photo: Ai Sekiyama

After a 45-minute siesta on the summit, we started descending and Ai had the idea of doing some self-arrest practice of the east ridge. He tumbled over and then...I almost closed my eyes hearing a noise of something falling down and disappearing in the abyss of bush below the south-east face of Sedgewick. Fortunately, that was only Ai's water bottle. If you ever happen to be bushwacking in the Mill Creek valley and come across a Pepsi bottle containing water, it will be appreciated if you pick it up and return it.

We were back at the tent at 8:00 a.m. to have a well-deserved

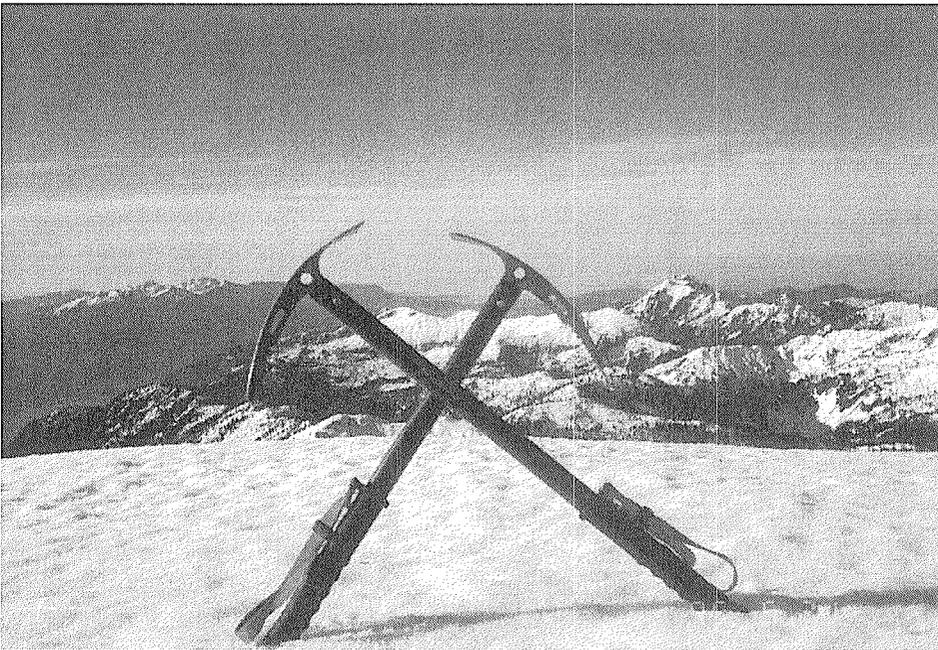
breakfast. According to Ai's calculations, we were just about to run out of fuel (it turned out later that one of us still had a half-full bottle of white gas), so we didn't bother ourselves with too much cooking. We hit the trail back at 10:30 a.m. Before the descent of a very steep part below the minor peak where we camped, I almost began to look for another route because the heavy backpack was seriously limiting my balance control. Eventually though, I followed Ai's steps and slowly made my way down, facing the slope and dipping the full length of my ice-axe in the soft, mushy snow. It was a warm day (the Queen's birthday eve, after all) and our shoes, wading in the wet snow, were soon soaked through. Our goal for the day was to get to the Henriette Lake cabin before it would be occupied by potential crowds. Near Woodfibre Lake, we encountered two hikers heading to Mt. Roderick, both of them in shorts and without gaiters. They told us that there were, indeed, a few tents by the lake but no one dared stay in the cabin for "the smell in there was unbearable". We

were happy to hear that and we rushed down to the lake, thankful to the heavens for bestowing such dull sniffing organs upon us and for making us so insensitive to the filth of mountain cabins. We reached our destination at 3:00 p.m. and quickly claimed the upstairs floor as our territory by laying down our stinky clothes all over the place.

Looking in the mirror in the cabin, I discovered a serious sunburn on my face, contrasting with pale patches of the eyes and forehead. The burnt skin was painful when touched. If you want to take my advice, never use Vaseline as sunblock, especially in the mountains.

After plenty of rest and a good sleep, we started the following day (the Queen's birthday) at 5:30 a.m., and within no more than two hours, descended back to Woodfibre. Waiting for the 9:00 a.m. ferry, we relaxed and admired the hummingbirds at the First Aid post. Once across Howe Sound, we quickly took a strategic position on the highway to intercept the route of the 9:45 a.m. Maverick, hoping that it had not pass that way, say 30 min. before. The bus did arrive around 10:00 a.m., which was a nice gift for us as well as for the Queen.

Trip participants: Aiichiro Sekiyama, Marek Labecki



Crossed ice-axes on the summit of Mt. Sedgewick, UBC peninsula in between. Photo: Marek Labecki

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Where the Icefields Have No Name

A Skip Trip in the Nass River Country

by Markus Kellerhals

The Nass country is eagles, bears, endless rain, dripping rainforests and huge clearcuts, pine mushrooms and devil's club, salmon and eulachon, lava flows, waterfalls, mountain and glaciers and a native people still fighting for their land; in short a microcosm of B.C.

Tucked between the Nass River and Observatory Inlet, on B.C.'s north coast, lies a small icefield with ridges radiating outward toward the coast, and toward the interior. The peaks there are quite subdued, rising to just below 7000'. Despite this, glaciers extend as low as 2000', maintained by the huge winter snowfalls that this area is known for.

We set our sights on visiting this area in the spring of 1995. At the end of April, Brian and Betsy Waddington, Dave Williams, Matthias Jakob and I drove to Greenville, a village located along the Nass River, not far from the coast. Our first view of the area was uninspiring; from the Nass Highway we looked up to a group of rounded snow bumps. Brian expressed our sentiments perfectly, "We drove for two straight days just to ski the Squamish-Cheakamus divide?" However, as we neared the coast, the topography became much more rugged, and the peaks we spotted appeared to be acceptably spiky.

In Greenville we met John Clarke, our sixth team member. John had arranged for two locals to drive us to Kwinamuck Lake, at the northeastern end of the range, where we would start our trip. From there we would ski southwest for 12 days to reach the coast at the mouth of the Nass River, where we had arranged to be picked up by boat.

We spent our first night on a logging spur above Kwinamuck Lake. Dave sorted our boxes of food into six huge piles that were unfortunately destined for our respective packs.

The next morning we plunged right into the lovely, but very steep and slippery, forest of old growth hemlock. Fatiguing quickly, we set up camp as soon as we reached the ridge above treeline. The huge Nass River valley, crisscrossed with logging roads and clearcuts of various ages, was spread out below our camp.

Over the next few days we skied southwest toward the main part of the icefield, climbing several gentle peaks on the way. The logging roads and other signs of civilization were soon left behind and the peaks became more rugged as we moved into the centre of the range.

From a basecamp on the east side of the icefield we climbed a 6600' peak above Shumal Creek and several subsidiary summits to the southwest. From the same camp we traversed a rugged ridge between Shumal and Anudol Creeks to climb a 6200' peak overlooking the Nass. On the return to camp a thick, clammy fog enveloped us quite suddenly. I managed to get totally disoriented before resorting to the compass. A kilometer or so from camp we broke out of the fog and were back under a broiling sun. It was as if we had left the walk-in freezer and entered the sauna. That evening tendrils of fog reached toward camp but never quite surrounded us.

The following morning we packed up and moved camp to the west, stopping to climb the

6800' peak in the centre of the icefield. That evening four of us ascended the icy 6600' peak immediately west of camp. Matthias headed alone up the steep 6700' pyramid at the head of Stagoos Creek. The descent from our peak made heroes of us all. On the perfect, slightly sun-softened surface we could do no wrong. Only at the very bottom did the snow consistency shift toward the gooey-oatmeal end of the spectrum.

Weather was again perfect the next day. We skied to the northeast corner of the icefield and climbed the two peaks east of Kelskiist Creek, both of which gave us superb views down to the inlets below.

It was time to move camp again the following morning, but first we retraced Matthias' steps up the 6700' peak above Stagoos Ck. This is probably the most spectacular peak in the area, rising from low valley footings on two sides. The seemingly inaccessible west peak almost certainly involves some fine rockclimbing (which we, unfortunately, were not equipped for).

When we finally got started with the packs, the sun had been softening the snow for some time. This made for a rather harrowing descent to the next glacier. Several of us were accompanied down by our own private avalanche, fortunately of the slow-moving variety.

After setting up camp we finished off the day with a jaunt up a 5300' bump to the west which gave views of the divide heading toward Pk 6577' - the next section of our route. From a distance the route appeared difficult. Several steep sections on the ridge appeared as if they might be tricky to bypass.

However, when we reached that part of the divide early the next morning, our worries proved to be unfounded. It was one of the most scenic sections of the trip, with stunning views into the deep valleys on either side. Steep slopes dropped off on either side of the narrow ridge but the crest was largely skiable. Later that day, we scrambled up Pk 6577 from the west. From the peak we watched threatening, grey rain clouds move in from the coast.

That evening we camped on the glacier southwest of Pk. 6577'. Brian and Dave skied up the nearby 5600' peak before dinner. Shortly after dinner, it began to rain for the first time on the trip.

Next morning the rain had stopped but the clouds still looked threatening. As we traversed around the east side of Pk 5600' my skiing began to feel strange. I looked down at my feet and noticed that one binding was almost falling off the ski. I hobbled across on one ski, to the col where the others were waiting. When we got to a spot out of the wind, I inspected the damage to my skis. The top plate on one had broken and was separating from the ski along with the attached binding. I remounted the binding, put in extra screws and lots of epoxy and hoped for the best.

On a narrow section of the ridge we were hit with an intense rain squall that soaked us to the skin in a matter of minutes. We quickly set up the tents on two small snow ledges and took shelter within. A break in the weather late that evening allowed us to dry some clothes.

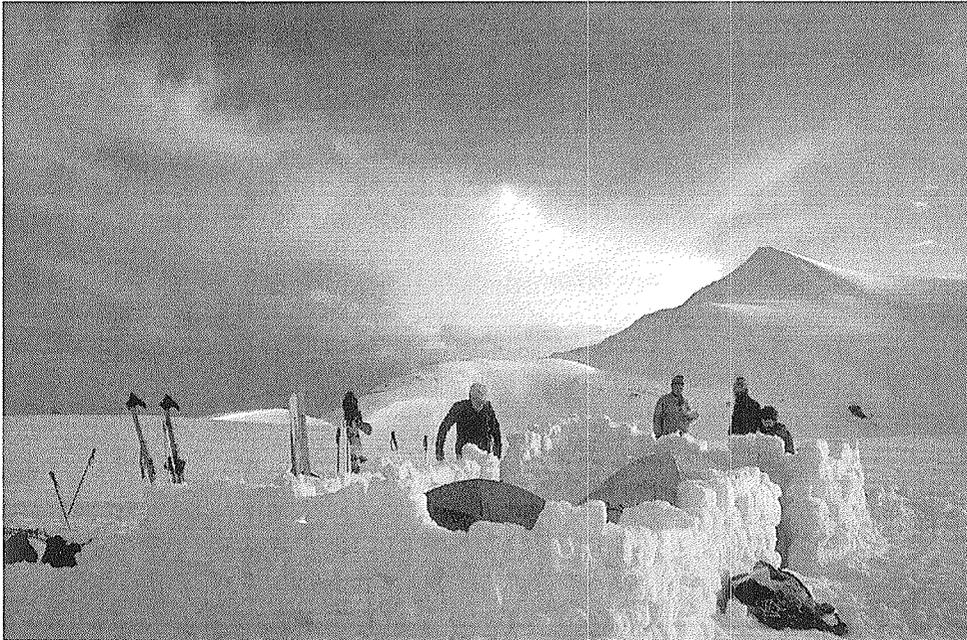
During the times we were stuck in the tent on this trip we were well entertained. John shared stories from his 30 years of Coast Mountain explorations. We even got him to agree to publish the book, "The Remaining Unclimbed Peaks of the Coast Mountains"; the only problem being that he will only publish it in 2010 when he's finished climbing them all! When John was not entertaining us we could usually count on Matthias to keep us amused with his degenerate, Bavarian sense of

humour.

My bad luck with equipment continued the next day. While digging in my pack I dropped my Therma-rest and watched it roll over a cliff band below. About an hour later, I reached the area into which it had fallen. Finally I recovered it from the base of a cliff where it was lying a few feet away from a deep moat.

After travelling a few kilometers, we were pinned down by weather again. It now appeared that we were going to be at least one day late finishing the trip.

When the weather was still marginal the next day, we discussed other options for finishing the trip. It was possible to bypass the remaining ridge by dropping into the Iknouk River and then finishing the trip with a bushwhack out to the coast. We had no illusions about how pleasant the 'green hell' in the valley below us would be. The only question was how long could we afford to wait for the weather. Miraculously, as we sat around discussing, the clouds began to break up. Within a few minutes our decision was made.



Pk 6400 Camp 1. Photo: Markus Kellerhals

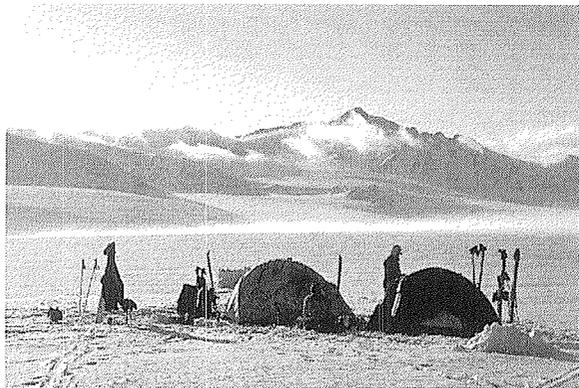
The day that followed was magical. We traversed all day along ridges just above fog level. Our final camp was on a heathery knoll at the end of the ridge. It was just above where we would have to drop down into the bush the next day. From our vantage we watched the evening light play on the fog layer below us. Across the Nass, to the south, were row after row of peaks that even John

couldn't identify.

The next day all we had to do was descend to the Iknouk River and then bushwhack out to Nass Bay. We skied down into the forest to about 2000' before the snow thinned out. From there we reached the shore after a few hours of choice bushwhacking. There we found a note, dated the day before, from Alex, our boatman, which said, "Back to pick you up tomorrow p.m."

Sitting on the beach all afternoon, waiting for the boat, I had lots of time to think about the trip. Though the area may not be as spectacular as some of the more rugged parts of the Coast Mountains to the north and south, it had an appeal of its own. The lush valleys that were usually visible below formed a superb contrast with the snow and ice covered ridges that we travelled along. Certainly, some of the appeal lay in the remoteness of the area. During most of the trip there were few hints that the six of us shared this planet with six billion others. We left nothing behind us but a few ephemeral ski tracks, while the mountains left us with powerful memories of beauty, silence and shared adventures.

By 10 p.m. we had pretty much given up any hope of being picked up that day, and were going to bed. Some of us were already in the tents when we saw the lights of a boat at the edge of the tidal flats. We packed in record time and stumbled across the muddy flats to the boat. The trip back to Greenville in the dark, with a rising southeaster blowing us along, catching snatches of music from the stereo seemed a fitting finale to another excellent Coast Mountain journey.



Pk. 6700, Camps 4 and 5. Photo: Markus Kellerhals

Four Dunderheads Go Skiing in the Waddington Range

by Lenny Thomas, May 1995

dunderhead /'dʌnde'hed/ n. a foolhardy or inexperienced person. [17th c.: perh. rel. to Scot. dialect *dunner* resounding noise] See also NUMPTYHEAD
- (adapted from) The Concise Oxford Dictionary

I've always been fascinated with the idea of getting away from it all. Unfortunately, growing up in Southern England, wilderness was hard to find. So imagine my joy the first time I visited Canada's west coast, taking a flight from Vancouver to Whitehorse, staring out of the window as the huge icefields of the Coast Mountains slipped by underneath. I decided to visit them one day.

It was Joe's fault that we ended up in the Waddington Range. He lent me a copy of Don Munday's book, *The Unknown Mountain* over Christmas last year. In it I read about Don and Phyl's discovery of the "mystery mountain" (Waddington) in the late 1920's and their subsequent repeated attempts to climb it. Over the succeeding years, they mounted many epic expeditions in the surrounding area, climbing many other peaks, making maps, taking photographs and recording the natural history. They were the first to use skis to travel around on the vast glaciers that fill the center of the Coast Mountains and, reading their book, I was inspired to follow them.

So, come spring we were planning our trip. "We" consisted of myself, Katrine (my sweetie, from Scotland), Joe (a Yank) and Dave (an Auzzie). We had less skiing experience than the average 7-year old who you see whizzing down the slopes at Cypress Bowl, but we were keen and that counts for a lot. Joe, being a traditionalist, ruled out any form of air support (i.e., food drops) and, being Dunderheads, we neglected to borrow an emergency radio beacon. We were going in alone.

Day 1

We land by a log boom at the head of Bute Inlet and are greeted by a crowd of smelly tree-planters, who are taking the plane out. We are a little worried, as we were under the impression that our plane was taking us to Scar Creek logging camp, thirty kilometers further up the Homathko River. Joe asks one of the tree-planters where we are. "Dunno," say the guy, shrugging and throwing his guitar into the cabin. Perhaps Joe will get his wish, and we will have to walk the whole way. Perhaps we should have swum from Vancouver.

Luckily for us, one of the grinning bystanders introduces himself as George, manager of the Scar Creek camp, the guy who arranged our piggy-back flight. He gives us a ride to the camp, and then up the Scar Creek logging road as far as his 2WD crummy will safely go (and a little further). We unpack, wave good-bye, and stare mournfully at the huge pile of gear we're proposing to carry. We eat lunch and procrastinate. We realize we have left 7-person breakfasts and some of the dinner ingredients behind somewhere (so we're down to 14 days of food). Eventually, the inevitable

can be postponed no longer: we shoulder our loads and trudge up the road, cutting up through a clearcut once we are opposite the Cascade Glacier.

We camp at the top of the clearcut, looking out over the heavily harvested landscape. Peaks of the Whitemantle range stand out directly to our south in the orange fire of the sunset. We are all pretty quiet, wondering if we're going to be able to haul our 85 pound loads up the hillside tomorrow.



The Dunderheads. Photo: Len Thomas

Day 2

We haul our 85 pound loads up the hillside. The forest is pleasant and open, but we hardly notice. This is the hardest thing I've ever done. By late afternoon we're in the sub-alpine and the gradient has eased enough for us to contemplate donning our skis. The difference in weight on our

backs is immediately noticeable. A little later we get out the crazy carpets and load 20 pounds of food and fuel onto them. We camp at around 1700m below a ridge we will climb onto tomorrow, but which has wet slides coming off it in the warm afternoon sun. Perhaps the worst is over already.

Day 3

Spend about half the day with our skis on our backs again. First getting up onto the ridge. Then negotiating some steep sections. Then, rather than risk traversing across an avalanche chute at the end of the ridge to get around Pk. 2439 (west of Bert Glacier), we descend a little and scramble up a short rock face. I'm beginning to wonder if B.S. Darling's comment in 1910 (quoted by John Baldwin) "Skis were also employed but did not prove useful" may be all too accurate.

At the top of the face, we are greeted by the lovely sight of some relatively flat snow. Throwing our skis on again, we make it to around 2400m on at the edge of the glacier west of Bert

Glacier before it's time to stop. Dave's pack hip-belt has become detached and he has gotten nasty blisters from all the hiking. In order to train for this trip, he spent several months in the lab writing up his Ph.D., and so is in tip-top skiing shape. Our camp is in a beautiful spot: Whitemantle range opposite, glaciers falling off into Scar Creek all around and behind us, a gentle glacier heading upwards, tracing our route for tomorrow. Perhaps the worst is truly over.

Day 4

The map shows large crevasses in the area we're planning on crossing today, so we rope up. (Let's face it if they're big enough to be on the map, they must be BIG.) We fumble around tying unfamiliar Kleimheist prussiks to the cheezy 7mm ropes we've brought along. Truly, we are Dunderheads, learning on the job.

The crazy carpets make our loads seem almost light, and the predicted crevasses do not show their presence as we cruise up the glacier and over the top of the shallow pass between Mount Agar and Martello Mountain. We are greeted by a magnificent scene on the other side: the Waddington Glacier spread out below us, flowing away to the right, with the peaks at its head spread out ahead and to the left. We sit down with the map and pick out Irresistible Mountain, Grenelle, Sierra, Fascination. We see Mounts Agar and Munday and, between them, our goal for the day: Mystery Pass.

In only a couple of hours we have covered about the same distance as in the past 3 days. We arrive in the pass and set about building ourselves the mother of all snow walls around our campsite an unnecessarily huge corral that would quite easily have held the home-made tents of Don and Phyl Munday, all of their friends and the horses they took on their 1933 expedition. The view is mind-blowing: I feel I could sit and stare at it for ever. To the west, seracs pour down both walls of the Ice Valley, which opens out to show us much of our route to come, as well as peaks of the Ha-iltzuk Icefield in the distance. To the east is the Homathko Icefield, dotted by yet more mountains. South and north we are enclosed by the snow and rock walls of Mounts Agar and Munday. And there, beyond the west ridges of Munday is the Mystery Mountain, a giant pinnacle of rock and ice, jutting up way above its compatriots. As the sun disappears the high, wispy clouds catch fire above us and we are spellbound. Now I know why the Mundays kept coming back.

Day 5

We set off to climb Mount Munday, with day-packs, but are turned back as the fog moves in. Instead we decide that a little crevasse rescue practice is probably in order. We head east along the head of the Waddington Glacier, looking for a decent sized slot. Of course, the minute we ski around the east ridge of Mount Munday we are back in the brilliant sunshine. Looking back, we see that the fog is caused by clouds that are being forced up the Ice Valley and are funneling through the pass where our camp is. Only Dunderheads would pick an exposed pass in which to place their camp.

In the Waddington Range, everything is bigger. Mountains are higher (up to 14 000 feet), glaciers are longer (20 kilometers), even our packs are bigger than usual. So, true to form, we

manage to find a really big to crevasse play in. It's probably a kilometer long and about 200 feet deep, so far as we can tell. As an initial practice, we decide to "rescue" my pack, which I duly attach to a rope and throw over the crevasse lip. We set up a Z-pulley and begin to haul and, sure enough, the pack gets stuck. I begin to wonder whether a pack is really such an essential piece of equipment on two week ski trips, but then I remember that my lunch is in the top pocket. We jiggle the rope and manage to dislodge it



Camp at Mystery Pass, Mt. Waddington in the background. Photo: Len Thomas

Munday and Irresistible Mountain and look down onto the Tiedemann Glacier, the peaks opposite (Combatant, Tiedemann, Sierra, Claw...) and off into the distance to the gentler slopes of the interior ranges. The light is beautiful as we head back towards the stream of fog gusting through Mystery Pass and our tent site.

Day 6

The morning dawns fair, so we decide to have another go at Mount Munday. Dave's blisters are turning nasty, so he decides to stay in camp for the day to try and dry them out. It is therefore only three Dunderheads that set out to try and beat the rising cloud layer.

We don't make it. The fog catches up with us just as we are kicking steps up a steep section and stays with us all the way to the summit. Apparently there's a lovely view of Waddington from the top, but we never saw it. Truth be told, we didn't even really get to the true summit, which is one meter higher and separated from our peak by a steep notch and a short, knife-edge ridge. After

Gung-ho from our success, Dave decides to practice a crevasse self-rescue. We lower him over the lip and he tries to prussik back up. This leads to the comic situation of me, belly down at the edge of the crevasse, shouting down encouragement while Dave thrashes around on the end of the rope 40 feet below. Turns out you need four twists on a Kleinheist for 19mm webbing on a 7mm rope if you want to stop the knot from slipping. Oops - my mistake! (I thought it was three.)

The afternoon has nearly gone by the time Dave is extricated. We have time to race north to the col between Mount

some token shaking of ropes and clanking of carabiners, we give in and retreat back to camp through the white-out.

We console ourselves with a dinner of reconstituted mashed potatoes and bacon bits, with lots of pepper, margarine and cheddar. The quality of the food so far has been absolutely superb, thanks to Joe's gourmet menu planning. We have 7 different dinners, including curried quinoa, beans with chili, and pasta with a dehydrated version of Grandma DeGisi's secret marianara sauce. Lunch is a block of cheese and some (rapidly disintegrating) Scot's Oat Cakes, supplemented by dried bananas, Sport Bars and other snack items. Breakfast is Dave's own oat, fruit and nut museli. As I said, the quality has been good. Quantity, however, is somewhat lacking as we're up to the limit of what we could carry (and that was before we left some of it in the hanger at Campbell River). We eat at different speeds: I gulp my food down almost without chewing, so always finish first and stare around hungrily as first Dave and then Joe spoon their way leisurely down their 4-cuppers. Katrine is always last, struggling to force the final few mouthfuls down. Her stomach doesn't seem to have the same capacity for distention as the rest of us. After dinner Dave reads to us from Mallory's original translation of *The Quest of the Holy Grail*. Because this trip has been something of a Holy Grail for me, this seemed to be an appropriate choice of reading material. Right now Sir Perceval and Sir Bors are having a hard time, but good Sir Galahad keeps showing up and helping them along.

Day 7

Up early (before 9), pack and head off down Ice Valley in glorious sunshine. The frame of Katrine's glacier glasses break in a fall. Duct tape and 5-minute epoxy intermission. We ski across the Corridor Glacier and up, over the pass between Jester Mountain and Mount Waddington onto the Dais Glacier. The skiing is pleasant, the snow turnable. Two days without packs (and six days eating food from them) and our loads seem more bearable. Dave's blisters are still pretty bad: he later confessed that if a chopper had landed next to him sometime in that first week he'd have bailed out.

We camp on the lower Dais Glacier and immediately set about creating another snow-fortress. Our different styles of snow-wall construction are beginning to emerge: mine and Katrine's are somewhat slap-dash and don't stand up too well, Joe's are neat and solid, while Dave's are positively artistic. Dave builds a minaret on the end of his wall, complete with a lovely snow-angel holding a trumpet on top. We fashion seats facing the sun and sit, backs to the towering Mount Waddington, reading from *The Quest* while dinner stews.

Day 8

We leave our camp with light day packs and head up the Fury Glacier to have a peek down Fury Gap. On the way, we meet two members of another party, who are apparently camped nearby. I'm a bit disappointed to meet other people, but given the popularity of this area it's not surprising.

We eat lunch at the mouth of Fury Gap, looking down onto the Scimitar Glacier, which

snakes away into the interior. We are now on exactly the opposite side of Mount Waddington from Mystery Pass and can look up at the start of the north-west ridge, which is the route the Mundays used in their 1927 attempt on the peak. They were turned back by a bad storm and had to spend a very uncomfortable night camped out in the Gap. As we sit there, looking at the seracs tottering at unfeasible angles, we speculate as to whether they tend to come loose in huge chunks, or in small pieces. Just then several small pieces drop off and cascade down onto the glacier below, setting off a small avalanche. Question answered.

Day 9

On the move again, across the head of the mighty Franklin Glacier and up the Finality Glacier to camp at the head of the Hoodoo Glacier, looking down into the lush green valley of Hoodoo Creek. Seems a little strange to see all that green after the white-black-blue of the last few days. We dump our loads and ski up Finality Mountain, which gives us an amazing 360° panorama (see picture on the back of Baldwin's book for one view). Good run down too.

That evening I get the clever idea of trying a ride on my crazy carpet. After all, I've been dragging it along for all this time, so why not use it for its designed purpose? Luckily I have the sense to tie the thing on to my foot and take an ice ax, which I'm very grateful for as I rapidly pick up speed and head for the valley bottom. Dunderhead antics.

Day 10

We cross the head of the Hoodoo Glacier and head down the Confederation Glacier, which turns out to be 5km of pure fun - steep enough to crank turns at the top, and then flattening into one long whoosh lower down. In no time at all, we're at the junction of the Confederation and the Jubilee Glaciers. Here we have to make a choice: do we climb up the Jubilee, over a pass and exit to Knight Inlet, or do we head east and come out into Scar Creek, where we started. We choose the latter, and strike off eastwards up the Breccia Glacier to a camp in a lovely flat pass between Whitetip and Breccia Mountains.

This was a long day 17km, 1000 meters of down and 700 back up so our snow-castle walls aren't up to much. Pasta with pesto, pine nuts and parmesan for dinner, followed by chocolate pudding for desert. Joe has discovered that one of the fuel bottles on his sled has leaked into his food bag. Here's some advice: if you ever go on a long trip do not use those red plastic Nalgene fuel bottles sold by the Co-op. They might be 20 grams lighter than the metal ones, but they have a design flaw in the neck that causes some of them to leak vapor, poisoning all of your fatty food items (such as cheese). Joe did not enjoy his lunch for the rest of the trip.

Day 11

An excerpt from my diary: “ “ (I didn't keep one).

We are feeling lazy and get up good and late. The weather is still glorious, so we go exploring. Katrine and I climb Breccia Mountain, which is just a small pile of rocks, and then head off towards Icefall Point to look down on the mighty Franklin Glacier as it winds its way from the base

of Mount Waddington out towards Knight Inlet. Right below us is the lower icefall, surprisingly broken given that it isn't very steep. We will cross Franklin above the icefall and skirt round it on the far side on our way out tomorrow.

Below us, to the south, is Saffron Creek. The Mundays built a small shack there one summer and used this area as a base camp in many of their expeditions. They, and their friends, first climbed and named all of the peaks around us. I feel as though I am following in their footsteps (or ski tracks) with every step.

After lunch, Katrine and I climb Whitetip Mountain while Dave and Joe head off towards Icefall Point. I love the feeling of scrambling fast over easy rock in the remote wilderness it's a feeling of freedom that I crave every minute I'm in the city. The ski down from the base of Whitetip to our camp is the run of the year for both of us: arcing turn after turn on the soft afternoon corn, whooping and yelling like hoodlums.

Day 12

We head out: down the Whitetip Glacier, across the Franklin, past the icefall and up the Repose Glacier on the other side until we cross the pass and can look down into Scar Creek once more. Skiing up the Repose, Mount Waddington appeared briefly to the north through a pass and I silently bid it farewell.

The midday sun is cooking the snow, and we set off a small slide as we descend the glacier towards Scar Creek. It's sensible to camp where we are and wait for things to firm up a bit before going any further. From our camp, we can see along the valley to where we slogged up the hillside on the way in. We dig a solarium and read from *The Quest*, while iceworms emerge from the snow all around us to listen.

Day 13

We actually do manage to get up early for once, and are on our skis by 5.30. The snow is isothermal and hasn't frozen, making the skiing horrific. Luckily it isn't far until we find a nice looking gully to hike down into the hanging valley above Scar Creek. I put my skis on one last time to ski along the valley, but the others prefer to walk. Our next challenge is to get down the lateral moraine at the end of the hanging valley and into Scar Creek proper. We elect to take a bushy route, rather than head down the scree, and an hour of Devil's Club later we're at the valley floor.

We hike along the beautiful gravel beds until we are stopped by a fast-flowing creek, joining the river we are following and barring our progress. Across the creek, we can see the start of the logging road. After some procrastination, we strip down, replace our boots and ford the creek without difficulty. We sit on the start of the road, drying out, cooking our last pasta meal (why carry it?), eating Sport Bars (ditto) and finish off our book. Lancelot finds the Grail but is not allowed to see it because he is impure (he had an affair with Guinevere). Bors and Percival eventually succeed in their quest. Galahad, the monk-knight comes out tops. Everyone dies.

It's 17 kilometers from the start of the road to the logging camp. Less said about that hike

the better. We arrive in camp at dusk and are greeted by a somewhat incredulous logging crew. After a shower and more food we feel almost human again, some less than others. Next day we hitch a ride back to Campbell River on a plane (yes - skis do fit in a 206 if anyone ever asks you), and we have 3 helpings of ice cream and a double latté. Civilization!

Participants:

Joe DeGisi

Lenny Thomas

Dave Westcott

Katrine Vogt



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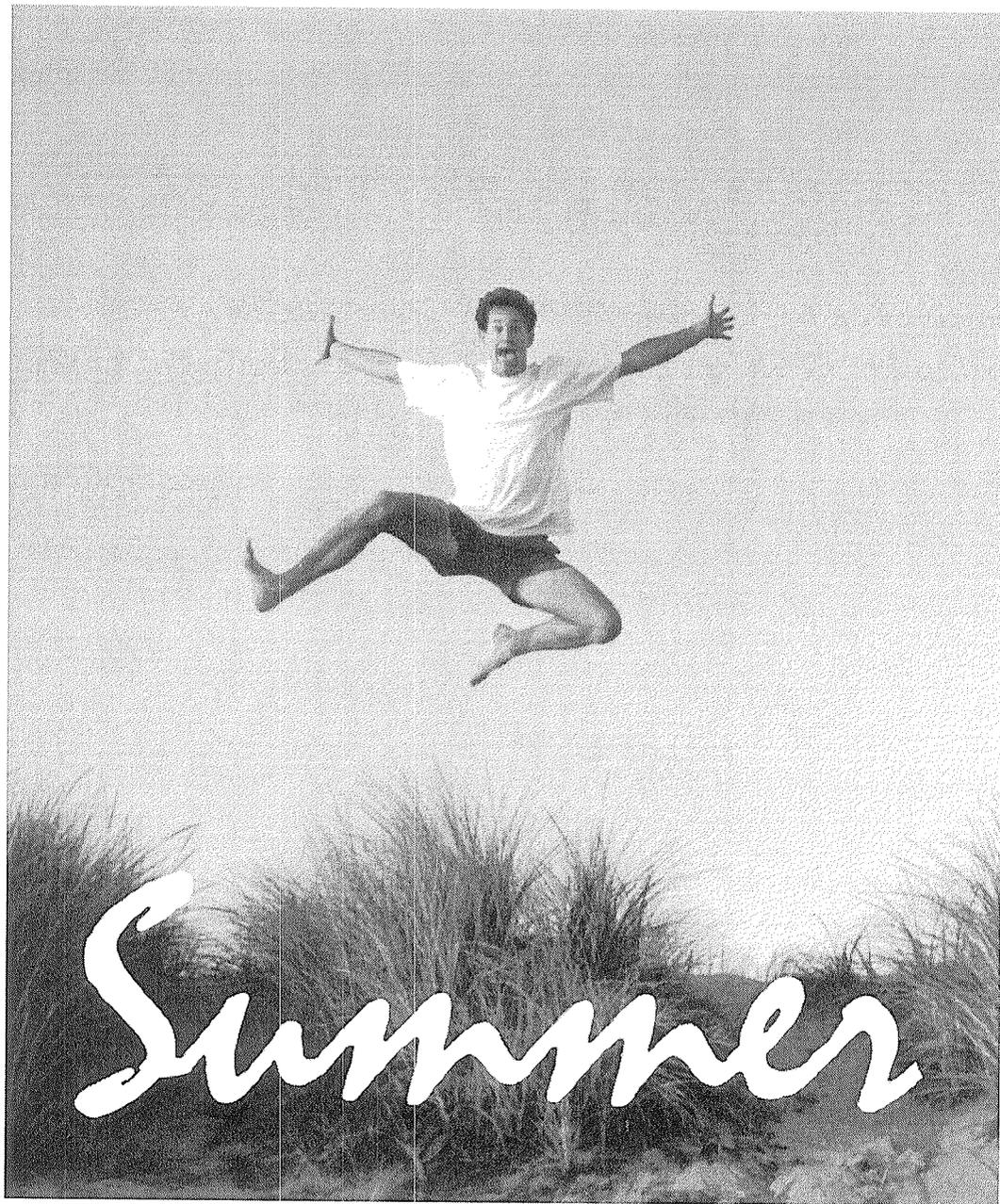
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“We’ve always wanted to leave a page intentionally blank.”



(Summer) Oregon Sand Dunes, J.M Honeymoon State Park, June 1994.

Photo: Mark Grist.

A Trip Up North in the Babemobile

by Joanna Wood

Paul Fearing
Jen Wild
Doug Wilm
Joanna Wood
and several giant rubber insects

Last May four VOC lefties decided to head north to Stuart Lake (better known as Ft. St. James) to visit Robyn, another right brained VOCer. We had planned an early morning start, determined to escape the city before other motorists were even awake. However there were several delays along the way. Doug had spent the night at Judith's (get those dirty thoughts out of your head) and had promised to be ready and waiting at the door. However modern technology had failed to wake Doug so Paul and Joanna resorted to throwing pebbles (and a stuffed penguin) at the bedroom window. Eventually Doug emerged and we set off. When we reached Jen's house we found she hadn't even finished packing. However with a little help, mostly verbal, the task was soon completed and we were on our way.

Paul and Joanna were soon treated to their own personal viewing of a W.W.F. match. The action almost got out of hand (some of the bruises are still healing) but luckily Joanna was able to rescue the coveted chocolate chip cookies. At one point we nearly had the cops after us, but not for the usual reasons. (Doug was a passenger on this trip.) At one of our pit stops a local mistook the action in the back seat, coupled with Jen's screams, for something other than playful abuse.

By the time we finally arrived at Robyn's cabin/motel room mass quantities of food had been consumed. However the eating did not stop there. We discovered a great bakery in town and made several daily trips. As well we experimented with cookie dough - the debate over raw vs. cooked is still raging.

We woke up early on our first full day in Stuart Lake, located our climbing guide book and set off in search of the locals crags. We followed trails, scrambled up pebble slopes and bushwhacked to no avail. The book sucked! However over a gourmet dinner at Robyn's aunt and uncle's home we were told of Dr. Denis Brown, a local man who had attempted Mount Everest without oxygen. Apparently he is always looking for people to climb with. The next morning we hooked up with him and were shown the real routes to the climbing spots. (We have been sworn to secrecy as to their locations.) Unfortunately Robyn had to leave to work in the bush for the rest of the week and couldn't come with us. We spent the morning climbing on a rock face that jutted out over the lake. Everyone climbed well, with only one mishap that made Doug was glad he was anchored in. We were top-roping, belaying from the top of the climbs. Need we say more?

We had lunch at Dr. Brown's waterfront home, enjoying the sunshine. In the afternoon he took us to the Amphitheater, an aptly named rock face. We had to hike quite a ways, bushwhacking,

but at least we knew we were on the right trail this time. We then had to scramble up a slope of pebbles creating an abundance of rock slides. When we finally reached the climbing spot we had to rap down to get to the belay station. The exposure was incredible. Dr. Brown's dog had followed us the whole way up and refused to stay put. We had to stuff him into Dr. Brown's pack.

When we weren't eating or climbing we epitomized laziness, enjoying the sun and the good company. We spent much of our time reading. Jen had come well supplied with trashy romance novels and they were passed around. Paul decided he wanted to become dark and brooding so he too could win the hearts of heroines with heaving bosoms. When the time came for us to return to the city and look for work many tears were shed. However we have many fond memories of our week in Stuart Lake, as well as some souvenirs. (Rumour has it there are photos of Doug with his hair up in pigtails.)



Ed note: This picture is just a rumour.

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Four Wettings and a Funeral

by Drew Brayshaw

This is a tale of chasms in the ground and the asinine pursuit of ascending and descending them. Have you ever seen the film, B.A.S.E.Climb? Do you remember the part where they're trying to get in shape for Great Trango, and they go canyoneering in New Zealand- rapping through waterfalls, swimming through pools, the whole bit? I thought it looked wild when I saw it. Two years later, it was the summer, I was unemployed and bored. Everyone else was working and I felt like killing myself (figuratively). I decided to emulate my wild Antipodean heroes and teach myself canyoneering.

The strange thing about doing any dangerous activity by yourself is how good it makes you feel. I think soloing is the best cure for depression around. Not only does it give you a rush when you get scared and succeed, but you are forced to realize that you like life-that's why you don't let go.

I decided to start off with a simple canyon- Nelson Creek, right near my house. Armed with swim trunks and Tevas I hiked up the Black Mountain trail to where it crosses Nelson Creek. Then I jumped in the creek and started wading downstream. After a hundred meters or so, a trail marker appeared on the side of a tree with a little sign: "You are lost. Turn around and follow the creek uphill and you will find the trail!" I kept going. Soon I ran into the first of several waterfalls. They were slabby and I could downclimb on the mossy rocks on the side. Lower down, the creek wound through a wider canyon with old growth, and big second growth, cedars and hemlocks. Sunlight poured in through gaps in the canopy, birds sang, and I hopped through pools and over deadfalls, yodelling to warn bears of my presence (there are a lot of them in this area in the summer). Eventually I passed under the highway bridge and slid down a culvert into a pool at the start of the Sea-view trail, just a few blocks from my house. The world seemed better.

Next up was the next canyon east - Cypress Creek. For this one, in addition to the swimsuit and Tevas, I took a webbing harness, locking biner, baby angle, and a forty-meter coil of yellow polypro that I wasn't supposed to have. I started from Cypress Falls Park. Putting on my harness, I rapped off McCready Bridge (on the old logging road) with the polypro, using the biner and angle pin to set up an "Australian brake" rappel (thanks, Greg). Dropping into the canyon, I had to rap again down the upper Cypress Falls into a pool and swim across. The canyon was familiar and I made good time to the Lower Falls, where I had to rap for a third time, using the fence from the observation platform as an anchor. At 22m, this one was a rope stretcher! Pulling down the rope was fun as I had to jump up and grab the end while standing under the falls. Eventually, half drowned and cold, I succeeded and splashed away down the lower canyon. There were a few more tricky spots below the swimming hole, but by the time I passed under the highway things were getting casual. I exited the stream at Marine Drive and walked home along the tracks. By the time I was home, I was dry.

Round three took place in Capilano Canyon. This one was pretty simple. I decided to avoid

the deep upper canyon (the kayak slalom), but took a life jacket (for improved flotation) just to be on the safe side. I got into the canyon just above the Capilano Classic wall (check out Squamish guide for details), and walked/ swam downstream to Park Royal. No technical problems, but only try it when the water's low! The best part of this trip was the cries of tourists as I splashed along under the suspension bridge. The worst part was riding home on the bus, soaking wet, with a life jacket. I got some stares but I told people that I'd just swum across below the Lion's Gate Bridge!

For my last canyon descent (I was getting bored of it by now) I headed to Lynn Canyon. After spending a day scoping out the lower canyon, with the 40m waterfalls, I decided it was too technical- besides, I hadn't been cliff jumping for ten years, and I was worried I'd be out of practice! So I hiked up to Norvan Falls and followed the river down to the entrance bridge for Lynn Headwaters. I got to see some deep pools and lots of logjams. If you don't want to swim, this section of Lynn Creek can be done, but it's much more difficult. The greatest challenge is had by staying on the west bank. Another wet bus ride home.

By now I needed a new fix, but I still liked the idea of canyons. After taking a week off due to a sprained ankle (sustained during Shane & myself's escapade at Cathedral) I decided to ease back into climbing with a North Gully ascent. I hitched up to Squamish and hiked up to the gully. It had rained during the week and things were lush. The gully was familiar up to the first chockstone, where I turned back several years ago. This time I cranked up some 3rd class ledges on the left and followed a system of ramps covered with devil's club (on a climb in Squamish- unbelievable!) past the first two chockstones. Dropping back into the Gully, I approached the third chockstone, dripping with slime. I tried to force a way up the left hand side, but gave up- too much fall potential. A nice crack system with big jugs on the face gave me passage on the other side of the gully. A little further and I got up to the fourth chockstone. This one is huge-the size of an aircraft carrier! There's a cave under it. I walked into the cave and saw light streaming down through a hole in the back. A corkscrewing system of ledges took me up through this chimney- easy climbing in Hi-Tecs.

The rock above this last chockstone was pure garbage- the worst I've ever been on, and that includes Frenchman's Coulee! It was shattered into sugar cubes and runoff was streaming down it. Anything you grabbed came off in your hands. I bridged up the gully a ways (hint- climb loose rock with opposition, push in on the rock, don't pull on it) and batmanned my way out on blueberry bushes and a dead tree. Hiking down the Backside trail, I was finally able to find the branch for the Solarium, and checked it out. Later on, I followed a mother grouse and her chicks. This climb was the line of first ascent of the Chief. Even though the rock is choss, its atmosphere and history make it a must do for everyone- but only once!

That's the end of my canyoneering, at least for 1995. Hopefully this story will inspire more brave souls to scare themselves on silly adventures. In the future? Well, the complete Lynn Canyon descent is still there... and there's the summer descent of Shannon Falls... it's there all right!

Phil and Brodie's Mystical Adventure to Yosemite (and Beyond)

a tale of epic proportions

by Phil Stringer and Brodie Haupt

All of the characters in this story are real, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is on purpose.

Day One (May 6th)

We started out bright and early leaving Brodie's house - in the far away land of White Rock. The previous night, we had left a note to ourselves so that we wouldn't forget the hot-dogs. In the morning, the Keebler elves of the house had changed the note to read as follows: "Wieners, keep your speed down - US tickets are expensive \$\$\$" (However, we did not heed this warning). We left Brodie's dwelling at 5:30am sharp and arrived in Portland at a few minutes before the eleventh hour. (Note: watch out for Washington Police hiding under overpasses - or is that over under-passes?). We were mysteriously drawn into R.E.I. - which reminds us of a store that we all know well. Zooming back onto the I 5, we found Snapple TM (for Phil) at less than cost (try 35 cents per bottle). You must realize that Brodie was driver supreme while Phil, with his feet out the window, was pretending to read the map. We decided that the I 5 was too slow, so we headed East to Crater Lake - on Phil's suggestion that it's a "beautiful place to visit". On the back road to Crater Lake, we stopped at one of Oregon's Dollar Stores and bought tons of candy and some A-Plus rootbeer to quench our thirst. The rootbeer tasted like recycled mouthwash and was hurriedly disposed of out the window of said moving vehicle. (Do not worry, we both hit the garbage can). Famous land marks of Oregon, include: towns with three houses, eight churches, and a wide selection of cults to choose from. The approach to Crater Lake was quite treacherous, as it started to snow. I'm not talking a little snow, but enough to shut down the road TO Crater Lake. Phil quickly found the map, and found a road that would bring us back to safety. We ended up staying at the closed Rogue River Natural Bridge campsite. Brodie ended the day by soaking one foot (including his shoe and this becomes important in the near future!) in the glacial "freshness" (imagine Brodie swearing VERY loudly at this second - "What, is it a little cold for you Brod?") of the mighty river of rogues. Brodie threw the shoe in the trunk of his car and resorted to sandals. That night, it rained.

Day Two

We packed up and headed back to the safe speeds of the I 5 with techno bagpipe music emanating from the stereo. As we left Oregon, you could hear us singing the Oregon State song: "Oregon, My Oregon" (pronounced in an American drawl, "Organ, My Organ"). Could you imagine an Oregon organist playing "Oregon, My Oregon" on his organ? Anyway, as we crossed into California, we were confronted by surly border guards looking for fruits and vegetables. Brodie and Phil

both agreed that the strip search and rubber gloves were unnecessary. We were forced to stop in the hick town of Yreka, in Northern California. We decided to be a little heroic at this point, and were brave enough to cook ourselves a little bacon and eggs at the local Denny's. There, we found ourselves surrounded by maidens in distress; their boyfriends had left them for some rodeo and they did not have access to a pick-up to get to the rodeo themselves. We avoided eye contact, and ducked quietly out the door. Then, on our journey south, we passed a curious sign. It read: "Litter Removal Next 10 Miles By the Siskiyou Procrastinator's Club - it was, surprisingly, the cleanest section of Interstate we've ever seen. About here, we found our car struggling up many a hill. We prayed to the God of Ford (Escort) to help us up these hills; He possessed our car and made it "soar" up the hill. We simply rolled down the windows and flapped our arms- hell, it worked. Crazy Canucks. With most of the Gods on our side now, we new we would make it to Yosemite by nightfall. But, we must have done something wrong in our sacrifices, because They dumped a load of snow on the road into Yosemite - thereby, closing it to all mortals. (See Crater Lake Day One). We found a last ditch campsite in the Woodward Reservoir. As our bags of gold were not overflowing, Brodie's Scottish nature took over and he led us to an "Underdeveloped Site" - to save all of \$2! Picture this: An African Savannah, with five foot high grass, one tree and many spiders and there you have the luxurious locale. We were happy, it was finally sunny. A quick dip in the three inch deep "so-called water" that made up the lake, resulted in a swarm of spiders filling Phil's shoes; for future reference, do not enter the lake under ANY circumstances. We set up our tent, or tried to, but the wind was howling and threatened to blow all our possession across the State. So, instead, Phil found the stove and proceeded to break it. Dinner was served. Cold. We ate in the car, and watched buzzards circle in the sky above us. When the wind died down, we set up the tent and made a new destination: Reno. Because, as we both repeated many times, "Everything will be better when we make it to Reno." Then, it rained. A lot.

Day Three

We awoke in shock, as we were under attack. It bellowed outside the tent and beckoned us to confront it. We hesitantly looked out the window of the tent for what sounded like a sixty foot monster cow. Which, had the super-power of becoming invisible at will and was currently using that power to deceive us. Brodie-the-Brave, scouted the area by standing up, which enabled him to see fifty miles in every direction a benefit of being tall and being in the middle of grasslands. We jumped into the car, and left for Reno. We chose a route that was not, as they say, "as the crow flies." We scanned the airwaves for local culture and had a fiesta in the car with Gonzales and the Tijuana Brass. If you've never been across the Nevada State border, you're missing out! The border guards are all dressed up as casino dealers and the drinks are free (and abundant). We waved and proceeded towards Reno. Reno is a large city. We found ourselves in the casino district feeling like we'd traveled through a time-warp. We stayed at Circus Circus and were considered annoying whipper-snappers by the local inhabitants. We spent the first hour of our arrival trying to fix Phil's stove in the bathroom sink of our hotel room. The gas fumes were pleasant to breathe, and we quickly found that the windows on the 13th floor didn't open - so that we couldn't escape the evil

stench and plummet to our deaths. Brodie led the expedition to find the “loosest slots in town” and a decent blackjack dealer. We ended up in Harrah’s where we missed school so much that we felt drawn to take lessons on how to lose our money playing a variety of games. We lost at Roulette, Craps, and Blackjack - Brodie swears that the carpeting and mirrors distracted him into giving the Grand Harrah his money. Broke, we returned to our gas chamber and fell asleep instantly, hoping to wake in the morning. It rained, once again.

Day Four

We awoke and discovered coupons for almost free food and followed the crowds to the buffet line-ups. Brodie set out to eat a little of everything and, for the first time ever, was able to fill his hollow leg. We decided to skip the Casinos of Evil and headed out of town to Virginia City. The bard of our troupe sang to us as we approached the summit into the valley of Virginia. The city appeared out of nowhere among the hoodoos and the scublands. Virginia City was a mess of an old mining town. Shacks and run-down buildings were scattered between the boardwalks, saloons, hitching posts, and classy tourist traps. One of these was the Bucket of Blood Saloon, where Brodie taste tested the beer which was optimistically called, “Bucket of Blood Beer.” In his words, “Blech. This tastes like fizzy piss-water.” (“Like all American beer?” Phil questioned.) Phil was suckered into purchasing a tacky souvenir. Then, the boys proceeded on to investigate the miles and miles of graveyards on the outskirts of town. Brodie took a billion awesome, Nobel-winning photos at this point, but later found out that the entire film was wrecked. We survived the ordeal of the graveyard and returned to the Escort. Back in Reno, we played a few more nickel slots, were assaulted by Dick Clark (trying to entice us into his Lair of 1950’s Swing Hits), and found the local dance club / pool hall / radio station we quickly left, retreated back to the room and fell asleep. It rained.

Day Five

Upon feasting on chicken embryos and slices of sizzled pork butt, in the den of cheapness, we left the “biggest little city on Earth” and headed for a nicer one: the woods. The plan was to zip across the State and end up cruising up the Coast. We left Reno, passed through the town of Susanville (staying only long enough to visit Wal-mart to purchase a new stove - Phil’s was beyond repair and we did need to eat). We next found ourselves in Redding, at the mall. We opened the trunk of the car to get at our wallets and were instantly terrorized by the smells emanating from Brodie’s footwear. The Rogue river shoe had managed to grow some sort of vile creature. We decided this particular creature was the evil cousin of a sea monkey and needed to be destroyed. A full bottle of talcum powder later, the shoe was thrown back in the trunk where it could be used as a trap to kill the mouse that had been nibbling at our oatmeal and making a general nuisance of itself. On the road again, we headed for yet another closed campsite. We avoided paying the \$8 and claimed that, if we were the only ones there, it wasn’t worth the \$8 anyway. The site was located on a spit of land, amid giant pine trees just north of Weeverville and Trinity Dam. We proceeded to hike along the shoreline of the lake and watched the houseboats cruise by. Phil found \$1 and added it to their treasure trove. After dinner, we collected some neatly chopped cords of wood from all the

empty campsites around us, and started to build a fire that would ward off the giant monster cow that had been stalking us ever since leaving Manteca. We had heard the cow earlier in the day and it was still invisible, or at least was slim enough to be hiding behind the evergreens. Pine cone, after pine cone was added to the fire; the raging inferno that followed must have scared the cow back to the Savannah it roamed, because we never heard it again. The fire was just the right temperature to roast marshmallows from halfway across the lake. We were tired from our day's journey and decided to hit the hay as the clouds rolled in and it started to rain.

Day Six

We left in the morning and headed for the coast. The plan was to head north along the California coast and stay in the Redwood Forest for the evening. We made it to Eureka and headed straight for the mall. After a little shopping, we left and went through Klamath looking for a campground that might be open. Stopping at every visitor center along the way, and harassing the volunteers / hosts with endless, annoying, unanswerable inquiries, we found that the only campsite that they could recommend to us was the one that we wanted to go to anyway: Del Norte. The campsite was amazing. A windy little road led into the lush forest of giant trees. We were quietly enjoying the scenery when all of a sudden we were approached by a man standing at a checkpoint. He was an American. He carried a gun. The ranger took some more of our gold and let us pass. We found a not-too-slug-infested campsite and thought about dinner and a warm, but not too warm, fire. Phil searched for firewood, but only found more slugs. We left the campsite, in search of good times, dry wood, and a thing on our expedition map called "The Whaler Island Groin." First, we went to Safeway. We resorted to buying dry wood from a grocery store. Phil hauled the wood into the car while Brodie set his sights on the Whaler's Groin. In the sunshine, we pulled into the Whaler's Groin parking lot. After surveying the Groin we found the path that led to its peak and scrambled up it. Like good little V.O.C.ers, we took some photos and did a little bouldering on this huge choss pile. We avoided bouldering on the seals that were sunning themselves. On our return to Del Norte campsite, we passed by our friendly ranger, who waved his.45, and proceeded to make ourselves dinner and a fire as planned. The fire wasn't much of a success, as rain had started to fall. It wouldn't have mattered anyway, the clerk in Safeway had sold us pre-soaked firewood - it was so wet that even Phil's attempts to drown it in white gas failed, but the sideshow was spectacular. It rained all night.

Day Seven

We packed up our ever-wet tent and headed north, again. We zipped by Whaler Island Groin and headed towards the Oregon border. Brodie had been complaining that Phil had done all the shopping so far and that he hadn't found a hat that would match his rad pants. We drove by the giant, rain-soaked dunes, and decided against trekking across them as Phil said that Florence was "the place to visit." In Florence, we managed to find a store surprisingly called "Hats." Brodie was pretty sure that it was destined to be the place to find a hat. He bought a hat. (The Mario and Luigi Hats - refer to Mark Grist). We met a few of the locals - including a young lady who had just turned

21 and had already finished off more Scotch than you'll ever see - and offered them a symbolic V.O.C. peace symbol: our hack. They proceeded to flail and we got some good air and maybe even a hack or two in before calling it a day. Brodie and Phil were dead beat and decided to climb back into the Escort and head to a campsite. Passing the Seal Caves, we were sucked in and forced to smell something worse than Brodie's shoe (but just marginally). We decided against seeing the creatures that produced this wonderful aroma. Instead, we wandered the aisles of the gift shop. To our amazement we found the worst gift ever: Poo Pets - animals sculpted from manure for your garden's pleasure. Then we cruised on up to Yachats (pronounced: Yah-Hats). The campsite that we ended up taking was located at the edge of the cliff that overlooked the Pacific Ocean. We set up our tent and quickly set about finding our bathing suits and a way down to the beach. A quick decent down the rubble cliffs left us standing on the wide, sandy expanse. We ran into the water and ran away at double-speed. The water was just a tad chilly. After a few more somewhat brave attempts at entering, we resorted to forceful measures that involved barbaric actions; in other words, we pushed each other in. We enjoyed the sun and as the last rays ducked below the horizon, Brodie took a few more photos - the only ones that survived. We retreated to our tent and dinner. However, before we could feast, a neighbour came by and offered us two-thirds of a freshly baked cherry pie. We almost refused, but reclaimed our sanity at the last moment and engulfed the pie in seconds. Then, we cooked our last remaining rations in a big pot: a can of beans, a can of tuna, and a package of Alfredo noodles (avec sauce). This was, surprisingly, the best food that we had on the entire trip. That night it rained, but gently.

Day Eight

In the morning, we escaped the tranquillity and lure of Yachats and headed north for Mount St. Helens. That was not all we were escaping: fueled by last night's dinner we had to drive with the car windows rolled down. We passed through the open-minded township of McMinnville, where we were stuck in a traffic jam. The vehicle that was causing the jam was a topless jeep. Its driver, an old man wearing a fez, was parading along the street. The entire jeep was covered in American flags and a sign read (in 2 foot letters): ARAB PATROL. The passenger was also a fez-head and carried a pair of binoculars around his neck. We passed through Portland (unscathed) and hit the road east to see both Mount St. Helens and the lava tubes. Of course, the tubes were closed. Mount St. Helens offered a spectacular view, but we were greatly disappointed when we encountered a bold sign that informed us that there was to be "no pumice picking." We climbed back into our car with empty pockets and headed for the first cheap Motel 6 we could find. We hadn't had a shower since Reno and our hair was full of grease, smoke, sand, and salt. This enabled Brodie to form all sorts of interesting hair sculptures.



Hair sculptures, or the return of Elvis?

Photo: Phil Stringer

Day Nine (the last leg)

The final morning of our eventful journey was upon us. We headed straight for the border. Claimed our duty free beer and rejoiced. Penniless we returned to Canada hoping for a hero's welcome. We didn't get one. Instead, this is what we ended up with: Brodie drove an unparalleled distance of almost 4000km in 9 days; 9 day climbing trip with no climbing; Brodie's shoe creature was sacrificed to the washing machine; and paranoid delusions of a monster cow roaming the countryside to this very day. We knew we were back in sunny Vancouver because as we headed our own separate ways the heavens opened and, what else, it started to rain.

Thus, providing hours of endless amusement. We came across the first Motel 6 in Centralia and drove into the parking lot; conveniently located behind a chain of outlet stores - more shopping! We were informed by the manager of the Motel 6 that there were no rooms available as they were all being lent out to the participants of a women's softball tournament. We were getting a little disappointed that there was no room in this Inn, when the manager decided to give us a room that opened up as if my magic. We hauled our semi-clean clothes up to the room and planned to change into our bathing suits for a quick dip in the pool before dinner. The pool was closed. The manager kindly told us: 1) where to get good grub, 2) that the motel was completely booked by a girl's under-18 softball tournament, and 3) the location of the best sports bar in town. We ate well, played hacky sack in the town square, avoided the sports bar when they handed out the karaoke request forms, and returned to our motel room. The rest of our evening was spent drinking beer, watching corny movies, and trying to entice the softball princesses into our lair with shiny bottles of Zima. We think it rained.

THE END?

This yarn was concocted by master storytellers
Brodie Haupt + Phil Stringer

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A Climber's Story



by Jason Malloff

It started out in the usual way weekend trips do:

“Hey J.” Friend #1 said to me one day. “What would you think about going to the Bugaboos next weekend?” “I don’t know,” I said, a bit of hesitation present in my voice. “I was sort of hoping to go to Canmore that weekend.”

On July 1 my girlfriend and my old roommate came up from Vancouver and we headed out to some of the awesome sport climbing areas of the Rockies. To make a boring story short, it pissed on us and we ended up only getting three climbs in. I was pretty anxious to get back to Cougar Creek Canyon because I really liked what I saw there: climbing in the ‘Bugs’ stirred something inside me.

“I’ll talk to you tomorrow,” I said to Friend #1. He had caught me on my way into the bike shop and at the time my mind was primarily concerned with my absent and long overdue shipment of parts and the manner of interrogation I was going to employ on the clerk’s lame ass.

The next night a group of us were at my house watching a movie and no sooner had the first lines left Christian Slater’s lips than Friend #1 starts talking Bugaboos.

“Jesus man, can we just watch the show first?!” Not to be slagging the guy, but sometimes Friend #1 doesn’t seem to know what’s going on at this end of the universe. Before the screen could even turn completely black the Bugaboos conversation had resumed.

“You are obsessed!”

“Friend #2 wants to go too,” said Friend #1. I look over at Friend #2 sitting on the couch. “You know, we really should go seeing as it is so close,” adds Friend #2. Friend #2 is from Vancouver so I can see how a mere three hour drive to get there from here would make the Bugaboos even more enticing to him.

“The Bugaboos are kinda serious.” I said looking at the both of them. Part of my indecision stemmed from wanting to go to Canmore that weekend but also it resulted from the fact that what I said was true. Climbing in the Bugaboos is pretty serious and I wasn’t sure these two had a firm grasp of this fact.

“Friend #3 also wants to go,” said Friend #1. Friend #3 wasn’t there at the time so it became obvious to me that the three of them had been talking about this and were pretty anxious to go. Things began to pile up on me: the pressure from my friends, the stigma surrounding the ‘Bugs’

and most of all my own underlying desire to climb the Bugaboos finally caused me to fold.

“Ok, I’ll go,” I said, a little hesitant. I looked at Friend #4 and Friend #5 also sitting on the couch. “You two in?” I asked.

“Man, that’s 3 days.... I can’t take that long off training”, was Friend #4’s response. Same thing from #5. Friend #4 and Friend #5 are both hardcore mountain/road bike racers and for the three of us it’s our first year off racing so we don’t hassle them. Besides, both of them are doing really well so they probably shouldn’t mess around with things.

“How about we meet on Wednesday at the coffee shop and hammer out the details: rides, equipment, climbs and what not,” I said. It was agreed and everybody left for the night. After everyone left I called my girlfriend T. in Vancouver and asked her to come. Not only is T. my girlfriend but also my favourite climbing partner. Even at the time I knew that this was going to be one of the most memorable trips of my life.

I guess now’s the time I should tell you that none of us had ever been to the Bugaboos before. Sure, I had hiked the mountains and glaciers around the Bugaboos, read the guidebook, and heard stories - but I had never actually been there so I had no firsthand knowledge of the place and I had the suspicion that my friends knew even less.

The next day I purchased my own copy of the Bugaboo rock handbook and planned out the trip for myself and T. and decided on which climbs we would do. Our agenda for Friday went something like this:

- get home from work at 5:00 pm
- pick T. up at the airport
- leave for Bugaboos at 6:00 pm
- reach parking lot at 9:00 pm
- hike to Kain Hut (5 km, 2133 ft. elevation gain)
- arrive at Kain Hut at 12:00 midnight
- wake up at 5:00 am Saturday and climb

This was pretty fucking ambitious.

I figured that on Saturday T. and I would climb the west side of Snowpatch Spire via the Krause Macarthy route: 8 pitches rated at 5.8+ topping out at the summit at an elevation of 10,050 ft. I figured on it taking us 2 hours to get to the base of the climb, 6 to 7 hours to complete it and approximately 4 hours to rappel the route and get back to camp: 13 hours total, meaning we would get back at 7:00 pm. On Sunday I figured we would climb the NE ridge of Bugaboo Spire, 11 pitches rated at 5.7 (with a 5.11 holy shit factor due to exposure) topping out at 10,450 ft at the summit. We would descend this via the Kain route. Total time: approximately 16-18 hours.

This plan was really fucking ambitious.

Wednesday night rolled around and I was stoked. I met the guys at the coffee shop, not a hint of my old hesitation remaining. It was now that I found out how much my three friends knew about where we were going. It quickly became evident that to some extent all of them had their heads half way to completely up their asses. All they knew about the Bugaboos was where the park was located on the map and what the cover of the guide book looked like. My first indication of

how little they knew came when Friend #3 tried to tell me that the Bugaboos was mostly a mountaineering area. I humoured him and politely told him to get real.

“It’s a rock climbing area.”

“Well sure, there’s always some climbing on mountaineering routes.”

“Oh man,” was all I could say as I stared blankly at him.

“What?”

Now here is what it states in the intro of the guidebook:

“There is very little alpine-style mixed climbing here. This is rock climbing in an alpine setting with snow and ice merely for ambience.”

I could have shown this to him but instead I showed him the picture of the west side of Snowpatch Spire. I did this for two reasons. One, it showed the route that T. and I were to climb. Two, at the base of the spire on the glacier there was a small circle drawn. Inside this circle there was a speck of what looked to be fly excrement. This was in reality a person. It was this picture that allowed me to drive the key point home to him. In the Bugaboos you are surrounded by glaciers and vertical to near vertical granite. In the Bugaboos you are fly shit.

“Oh,” said Friend #3.

The more we talked the more the wind left their sails. They were the ones who were hesitant now. I sort of expected this. All too often with most people things are all Preparation and no H. In the end they figured they would go up and do some of the easier routes that were mainly class 4 and low 5th class climbing.

“I guess it will be a learning experience,” said Friend #3.

“It’s really not the place to learn,” I said in as upbeat a way as I could.

A little info about my friends now. What Friend #3 meant about learning experience was not “Big route” learning experience but “basic climbing” learning experience such as climbing cracks, placing gear, building belay stations, etc. Friend #3 was at about a 10b climbing level then, this on t.r. He claimed to have lead once on natural gear but had just gotten back from tree planting so wasn’t in the best climbing shape. Friend #1 had never led and had never climbed granite and at best can do a 10a face climb on t.r.

Friend #2 I didn’t know a lot about. He was about a letter grade below me on t.r. but didn’t have too much leading experience and had never built a belay station from natural gear. This may sound like I was slagging them but I’m not - this was just the plain truth.

Friday we ended up getting out of town at 7:00 pm. Oh well, we would make up time on the hike. We got to the parking lot at about 10:00 pm, wrapped our vehicles in chicken wire¹ and

1. In many areas around the Kootenays, porcupines are a problem. Because of their salt-deficient diet, they need to supplement it from other sources. It is for this reason that they chew (eat) car tires, electrical wires, heater hoses, boots, ginch or anything else that may have come in contact with road salt, sweat, or urine. Wrapping your vehicle in chicken wire is the best way to deter porcupines from leaving you stranded on some logging road with possibly a thousand dollars of damage to your vehicle.

started off at about 10:45 pm. I had to borrow a friend's pack and as soon as I lifted it onto my back I realized that not only had I overpacked as usual, but also that it didn't fit me worth a damn. It was dark, the hike was tough and the way my friend's pack was cutting off the blood to my head and abrading the skin off my hips was getting to be like a grain of sand under my foreskin.

We arrived at Kain Hut at 1:00 am. So much for the plan. Oh well, we'll just sleep less. Four hours later T. and I woke up, and at 5:00 am Saturday headed out across Crescent Glacier and up the col onto Vowell Glacier on the west side of Snowpatch Spire. Before leaving, T. asked a dude if we would need crampons. The reply was "No, but you'll want gaiters."

The west side of Snowpatch doesn't get sun until about 2:00 pm. We didn't need gaiters, we needed, you guessed it, crampons. A word from the wise and intensely bitter: if you want info, ask somebody you know or know of through good reputation. If one of these people is not around and you still feel the pressing need to ask advice from a complete stranger, do this, then base your actions on the exact opposite of what said stranger tells you. You do this because said stranger is a yin-yang - the one person in an area filled with knowledgeable hardcores who still cannot distinguish shit from shinola.

We got the base of the climb at 8:00 am. To describe to you what the spire looked like is impossible. To describe the Bugaboos at all is impossible. You must go there to get anything but the faintest conception of what it is like. The granite here is not like the black and white highly eroded granite of Squamish. It is black and white, cream and even orange in colour and as featured as an old derelict bum's face after 80 years of hard living. Our route followed what is best described as a gully formation or a huge dyke. After about 100m of scrambling, the real climb started. It was pretty cold (about 4 degrees C) but the rock still retained some of the heat from the previous day. The first three pitches were easy. The 4th was hard, very hard. The guidebook said:

"Climb - easy flake/ramp that slants right"

There were four ramps. I followed a layback furthest to the right, all the while thinking "Man, if this is 5.8 they sure rate climbs hard here!" "I think that's the wrong way," T. said when I first started the pitch. "Looks right to me - the pro looks about the best on this line," I shouted down to her.

Well, T. kept to her story and I kept to mine till the crack started to get thinner and thinner. A little piece of info about myself: I'm stubborn. This is good in that I'm also very determined and just never give up. This is bad in that if I think you're wrong, I will continue to think you are wrong until I am presented with some convincing evidence otherwise. Struggling up a crack that felt like 10d when it was supposed to be 5.8 and then seeing it start to end after about 30m was pretty convincing evidence. I rappelled down off of two nuts that I had to leave. Oh well, could have been worse, but still this little setback not only cost us 2 nuts, but by the time we were on route and ready to start pitch 5 it had cost us 2.5 hours. Before I continue, I have to say that the 3rd pitch was super cool. It was only about 5.7 but it followed the left side of the gully. This left side most closely resembles about 8 granite worms 1-2 ft. in diameter and 24m long crawling up the rock. Pitch 5 went well. But on the 6th I went off route again and had to do a scary traverse to get back on route. Again time was lost. It was now about 8:30 pm and we still had 3 pitches to go. By

this time, people were starting to rap down our route as it is the main path of descent for most of the routes on Snowpatch Spire. On pitch 6, after placing a piece, I clipped my 'biner of wires onto it thinking it was a quickdraw. When I took it off 2 large nuts dropped off. I shouted down to T: "Did you see 2 nuts fall?" "Yep," she shouted back. "Did they stop?" "Nope." Two more pieces gone. Ah, gravity is a harsh mistress.

Pitch 7 was the best. A huge humajumma with a scary section of unpredictable slab and a series of vertical 5.7 moves with minimal pro. When I got to the top I turned around and looked at what was at my back while I was climbing. The vast white of Vowel and Bugaboo Glacier, the impressive pointed peak of Pigeon Spire, and the 3 giant peaks of Howser Massif, still over 100m above my current position of about 9,900 ft. To top it all off the sun was casting a warm orangeish glow over everything, as it always does at 45 minutes prior to sunset. It was then that it struck me. "Hey, the sun is casting that warm orangeish glow that it usually does right before sunset." My stomach felt like it was sliding down my leg. "This is not good."

Some info now about the gear we brought along with us in a daypack that I modified into a haul sack with the aid of some duct tape. Like I said it was pretty cold so we brought along our Goretex shells and polypro. We left the fleece behind because it was a clear morning and it was bound to warm up. We wore shorts but brought our rad pants along 'cause they're pretty light and hey, you gotta have some cold weather gear. T. brought her mitts as well. I left mine behind - 90 grams of wool is just too much to pack. As for food and H2O, we had a litre of water to share and two PowerBars each. After all, it was only a 6-7 hour climb to the top and even an extremely trim athlete has enough calories stored on him to run a marathon and a half. We brought along a headlamp as well but left this at the bottom along with our ice axe and hiking boots. Like I said, it's only a 7 hour climb. Yeah, right.

Okay, so now the sun was setting and I was starting to get gripped. I started building the belay station. Even though there were a couple of fixed pins there (necessary for the rap down), I always back them up with a few pieces. As I clipped a 'biner onto the second pin I noticed it was kinda loose - actually, very loose. I began to do some math. Would we be able to bypass this manky rap station or not? Oh well, guess we'll find out.

"On belay", I shouted down to T.

"Ok", she shouted back.

"T."

"Yeah?"

"Bring up a rock with you!"

When T. got to the top she tied in and handed me the rock which I smashed into pea gravel trying to bang the piton in. No matter, 'cause she'd been thinking and was sure that we could bypass this station with two ropes.

The next and final pitch was described in the guidebook as a "chirney" which lead into and offwidth or an optional traverse and "hand crack". I looked up at the "chimney". One could consider it a chimney if one were able to use a condom as a bivi sack. No time to ponder. The earth was rotating, the sun was setting, the light was dwindling and I was off on the grunt of my life. I

reached the “chimney” and started up it, wedging myself in tighter than a nun’s fart. To move upward, I fully exhaled and squirmed my way up inch by inch. To rest or place a piece, I inhaled expanding my chest against the walls and allowing my arms to freely flail around in a vain attempt to first find, then place a piece which I grabbed off my harness. All the while, the only sound I could hear was the crunch-scrunch of my helmet scraping against the rock. Eight metres and 15 minutes later I exited the chimney, took a look at the offwidth which looked to be exactly the same size as the chimney, then made my traverse over to the “hand crack”. I’ve seen wider hand cracks in a plumber’s butt. This was a finger crack. Maybe it was elevation, or maybe I was off route again, but it sure didn’t feel like a 5.8+. After flailing up the last 4m I reached the top of the 8th and final pitch. It was only about 8 ft. below the top, so after building the belay station I heaved myself onto the top and did a quick 360 and hopped back down. In that short 360 I saw a lot - too much to describe, but what I remember most was my gaze fixing on the west. The sun was fully down, twilight was coming, we were in for 6 double rope rappels in the dark, and I was totally gripped. I belayed T. as she climbed the last pitch. It was taking too long.

“T., you gotta hurry.”

“I know! But these pieces are hard to get out!” I had hung all over them and even stood on one.

“Just leave the fuck’n’ pieces!” I could hear the fear in my own voice. “We’re in big trouble.”

She reached the top. Only a thin strip of orange remained in the west and the sky had turned a deeper hue of blue. Surprisingly she was super cool and this helped me mellow out a bit. She explained later that she had done all her wiggling out while she was belaying me and was fine now. We were both still scared, though. It was probably about 10:30 and we still had 6 rappels (40-50 m) to do, a glacier traverse and a descent down the col before we would be back at the hut. But still, even though I had dreaded watching it, seeing the sun sink down into the Purcell Mountains from my vantage point on the top of Snowpatch Spire was one of the most breathtaking scenes I have ever seen.

Now it was time to go, and still I had some naive delusion that if we could just hurry we would be at the glacier before it was totally dark and at least we could then use the headlamp we left at the bottom. The mind tries its best to give you some courage when you need it.

The first rappel went super smooth. The second went well also. I began pulling the rope so we could do the next. It came about 5 ft. then stopped. No problem, I’ll just pull harder. Still no go. No problem, I’ll just hang all my weight from it, bounce and heave until I die from an aneurysm. That rope was going nowhere.

It was about midnight now and a strange calm had come over me. Something inside me just said “Hey, it’s dark and it’s gonna be dark for another 5 hours so quit being such a friggin’ wimp!”

“Well, I guess I better jug up the rope and fix it”, I said.

“No, please don’t! Wait ‘till tomorrow. We can sleep on this ledge. It’s too dangerous. Don’t go!”, T. said.

She sounded kinda worried and maybe it wasn’t the best idea to go up at night. A night on

that “ledge” didn’t look like it was going to be too much fun either. It was more of a ramp and was only 1-1.5 m across. I looked up at the sky: a clear starry night with no hint of a storm moving in. This was good. It was about 0 - 1 degrees and if we were to get soaked by a cloudburst we might die of exposure before getting to the hut on time. Fear of dying of hypothermia in the middle of July may seem unreasonable but let me remind you we were at 9,000 ft. and surrounded by snow and ice. Even in the initial stages of hypothermia there is marked mental and motor impairment and this would become a factor while crossing the glacier where at one point a single slip could mean a 300m slide into the crevasses and seracs at the base of Pigeon Spire.

After trying various things to stay warm, T. and I decided to zip our coats together and hold each other to share body heat. This was better, but still damn cold. For a while, I lay there on my back with T. on top of me admiring the stars and the white granite around us. Everything was so clear, colour was absent but edges and contours were honed to a razor’s edge by the adrenaline coursing through me. Of all the nights of my life, I can remember none so vividly. After about 7 minutes, I began to relax and my eyelids grew heavy and even closed for about 30 seconds. Then I heard T.’s panic stricken voice.

“I’m...gonna be sick!”

“What?”

“I gotta get out! I think I’m going to throw up!”

As I frantically tried to unzip the coats, T. started to retch and dry heave. A stupid, petty voice inside me said “Man, this is going to get disgusting!” Then another more compassionate voice drowned this out and said “Hey! This is your girlfriend you jerk! And besides, a little warm puke might feel good right now.” Well, nothing came out. I guess the power bar she ate 15 hours ago had burned up on the climb and that half litre of H₂O probably poured out as fear sweat on the way down. After a couple more minutes of dry heaving she started to feel better.

“You gotta get that checked out!” I said.

“I already have,” she replied, her voice hoarse and raspy.

“You’ve probably got an ulcer. Did they check for that?”

She said no and that she didn’t really want to have the test done ‘cause it wasn’t exactly a ride at the carnival. Something about shooting blue dye up her butt or some crazy ass stuff like that. I decided to drop it.

Our coats no longer zipped together, we started to get cold.

“Fuck this!” I said. “This sucks! I’m going up the rope.” I got no argument from T. this time. Probably because her throat hurt too much to say anything. I made a prussik around the two ropes with one of my cordelettes. I then put the rope through my ATC. This probably wasn’t the most efficient method but it was the best and safest I could think of at the time. I was off. I juggled up the rope, pulled the grapevine knot from the crack it had wedged in and rapped back down. It was a pump but now at least I was warm and we could rappel the next pitch - or maybe not. To make a long story short, let’s just say I got pretty efficient at this technique of ascending ropes. I did it two more times on this pitch and then again on the 5th rappel. It was getting pretty light now and we had only two more raps to go. The second to last ended on a large ledge where I could relax

without clipping into the rap station there. While I was waiting for T. to finish the rappel a packrat scurried up on a rock and sat there watching me with its big, nocturnal eyes. It couldn't have been more than 5 ft. away. As it sat there, flicking its furry grey tail, I thought to myself "I like this packrat."

When T. was down we threaded the rope through the rappel station one last time. I made the rap down to where our boots, ice axe and headlamp were neatly wrapped on the rope bag. I painfully unpacked my feet from the climbing shoes in which they had spent the last 20 hours and slid them into luxuriant damp socks and cold hiking boots. As T. made her rap I noticed that the strap of my rope bag had been gnawed almost clean through. T's boots also showed signs of teeth marks and her sock looked like Swiss cheese.

"I hate that packrat."

It was a beautiful sunny morning by now, and safe at last, the majesty of the place started to overwhelm me once again. Our traverse across the glacier and down the col was slow but uneventful. At the bottom of the col we met Friend #1 and Friend #3 who gave us some food and water. It may as well have been ambrosia and the nectar of the Gods.

"You guys check'n' things out?" asked Friend #3.

"Nope, coming down. Spent the night on this rock. Made it to the top though!" This is all I could choke out. My throat felt like it was packed with sand.

"Whoah! We're just going up to do the Kain route on Bugaboo spire." he said.

"Time?" I asked, gesturing to my wrist.

"8:30."

We left our friends and headed to the hut. When we got there we sat around in a stupor for a bit. Fatigue had set in and my body felt dead. I wouldn't have known a woman's caress from a police issue stun gun at that point. After a bit more of this, I hauled my ass up, made some pasta then shot the shit with some of the other climbers in the hut.

At about 11:00 a.m. we headed upstairs for a nap. I crashed as soon as my body was in the bag.

Once I woke up. I looked over at T. sleeping beside me and for a moment I didn't recognize her. I wondered what I had done to have such a beautiful creature sleeping here next to me. That was some crazy ass shit and it still left me feeling weird even when I realized who she was.

At 2:00 we woke up and headed down to the parking lot. This time we got to see what we missed on the way up and I was even starting to get used to the pack of hell on my back.

We got to the lot, unwrapped the car and were out of there. In the rearview mirror I could see Snowpatch Spire and still the night before didn't seem real, like one of those spirit dreams that natives talk about, the ones that are more real than what we call life. We stopped at Radium and picked up a couple of subs. They would have been good too if the bread wasn't as dry, tasteless and absorbent as an Always Maxi with dry weave.

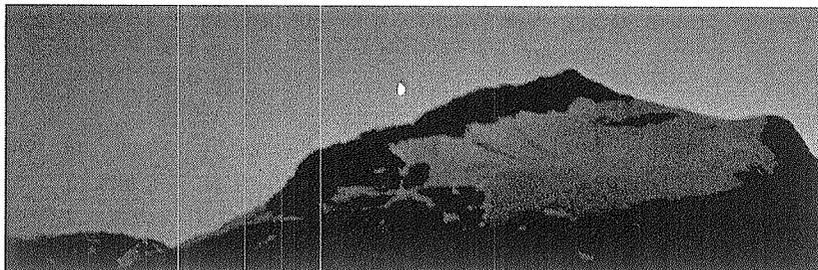
We got home at 9:30 p.m. I ate some real food. Put on my work clothes, grabbed my hard hat and headed off to my graveyard shift at the mill with lead for legs, scraped up hands and a head full of memories. I'm there as I speak.

Top 12 Ways for a VOC Member to be Really Obnoxious

12. Demonstrate your big-wall paper bag technique to your parents.
11. Teach rock school in the nude - "Whassamatter - never seen a big jug hold before?"
10. Dry your underwear on the campstove during dinner.
9. Giggle and point at any time on a nude bungee jumping trip.
8. Piss in your kayak to keep warm ("it works for wetsuits!")
7. During Halloween, use VOC ropes as "really big colorful fuses".
6. Refuse to call the Journal Editors "you godlike beings, you".
5. Refer to yourself as "Hardman" on your term paper.
4. Avoid paying gas money - "I thought it was solar powered!"
3. Wear your rack to class.
2. Brag about your Goretex underwear.
1. Hit on cute new VOC members before the exec gets a chance.

- Paul Fearing

Stein Valley Journal



by Brett Allen & Nic Thorne

July 21, 1995

5:00 am - got up

6:16 am - took bus to Granville Station

6:46 am - took Skytrain to Bus Depot

7:40 am - boarded Greyhound bus to Lytton

We noticed a sign at the Greyhound station saying that Greyhound pays you \$100 for lost luggage "unless higher value declared." I started speculating that you could scam them pretty easily ("Oh yes, I paid a pretty penny for this block of dry ice..."), but Nic pointed out that they may have already thought of this and installed refrigerated compartments. But oh, imagine the tragedy if a puppy were inadvertently thrown into the wrong compartment! "Here's your dry ice sir, and oh! Your dog ma'am..." With this thought of poodle-pops we boarded the bus.

- BA

7:45 am - bus finally leaves

10:00 am - coffee stop in Hope, BC

~11:30 am - arrived in Lytton, got lunch, got a ride to ferry

12:00 pm - got to west side of Fraser river

12:34 pm - got a ride to trail head road

12:45 pm - at trail head

3:05 pm - set up camp (1st marked site after Devil's Staircase)

Well, at some point today during our arduous hike, my body rebelled against the punishment it was being given. "Forget environmentalist ideals," it said, "let's start a 'Pave the Stein' movement. Let's change the 'Devil's Staircase' switchbacks into the 'Devil's Escalator'." But then we came to a breathtaking view and I thought, "NO, we must consider the future." After all, someday they may invent floating packs that you can just buckle onto your belt and they bob along behind you. That would make hiking worthwhile again.

- BA

July 22

7:15 am - got up, breakfast of fried potatoes

9:41 am - once more into the breach!

10:55 am - stopped for a PowerBar at Earl's cabin

I woke up with a bit of a start-- there was a beast in the tent! [ed. note: the author is making an inaccurate reference to Brett] We were both exhausted at the end of the day yesterday - went to bed at 6 pm and woke up just after seven this morning. Brett was whining as we walked: "We could be lying under that pear tree with our mouths open, waiting for the fruit to drop!" I have the heavier pack by far today, which has kept him quiet.

- NT

Oh, the torture! Nic has turned out to be a brutal taskmaster, flogging me at every turn. "Faster! Up the hill! We'll be at the lake by sundown!" Today I have been trudging dutifully behind him, like any good peon should, so that's kept him quiet for the most part.

- BA

12:20 pm - stopped for lunch

We're starting to think that we've brought too much food. Nic blames it on his "other trips," which I have heard all too much about. Apparently "they" always take big blocks of cheese, two feet long, huge boxes of bread, apples a foot in diameter, six or seven head of cattle-- per camper, and enough eggs to make omelets the size of helipads. Oh, and you should hear about his plan for when we meet a bear...

- BA

I believe I am justified in accusing Sir Allen of Fairview of exaggerating -- I never said anything about cattle or eggs. We are indeed loaded down with food, however. The suggestion has been made that we make a cache which we'll pick up on the way back, but we're low on plastic bags. I suggested that we could pour in half the honey, half the peanut butter, half the cheese, etc., but this idea was, for some reason, rejected.

We have yet to meet a bear, which is disappointing. When we meet one I plan to run ahead, wrestle it to the ground, steal its pelt, and take off before it gets angry.

- NT

Sure Nic, we'll just stick the honey jar over its nose, first..."Mmmmmmm... honey. Hey! How'd it get so cold all of a sudden?! Hey you! Come back here!"...

- BA

~4:00 pm - arrive at Ponderosa Shelter after an exhausting day. Thank god!

~4:30 pm - Nic decides that this is not, in fact, Ponderosa Shelter, therefore we must con-

tinue. He is mistaken. KILL THE FREAK!! We stop two campsites later.

July 23

7:30 am - get up

Unfortunately I seem to have developed a horrible blister on my heel. So I went back 30 minutes to Ponderosa Shelter with all of the food, while Nic set off to hike onwards to see what lay ahead. After 10 minutes, he got lonely and decided to come back (claiming a “near-fatal accident”). He didn’t even have a bear pelt to show for his effort. Anyway, it looks like today will be our lay-day.

July 24

8:31 am - wake up

After a truly exhausting day yesterday of lounging around Ponderosa Shelter, Nic and I have decided that there is to be breakfast in bed. On this matter we are agreed. The controversy arises with regard to who should be the one to make the breakfast (this would require getting out of bed). I believe quite firmly that it should be Nic who gets up. Nic, for some disillusioned reason, believes that it should be me. Perhaps we will just wait for the next set of campers to pass by the campsite. “Hey you! Get to it; we’ve been waiting!” The other matter is how we are to flip the pancakes, sans spatula. I vote that Nic flips them by throwing them up in the air and catching them in the pan. Of course, there’s the danger that the pancake will fly over his shoulder, hitting a passing bear in the face. “Mmmmmmm... pancakes. Hey, why is it so cold all of a sudden?! Hey!...” It’s a rough life, being such hardy campers such as ourselves.

- BA

12:09 pm

An exciting day so far. After lounging around the campsite for most of the morning, making a hearty breakfast of pancakes, we set out at 11:20 on a day hike for Cottonwood Creek. After walking for about five minutes, on getting about 20 feet before a stream we had to cross, we noticed that it was occupied by a Grizzly Bear. I froze, Brett started to run, but we calmed down and walked away, back to the campsite.

- NT

[ed. note: Steven Herrero’s book *Bear Attacks: Their Causes and Avoidance* states: “Keep in mind that most sudden encounters leading to injury have occurred when the person was not aware of the grizzly until it was less than fifty-five yards away. Supposedly the bear was not aware of the person any sooner, and when it became aware, the person was already too close.” (p. 126)]

~12:30 pm

While considering what to do back at Ponderosa Shelter, we thought it might be appropriate to consider our campsite evasion tactics. Unfortunately, woefully little was offered in the way of

trees to climb, and even our attempts to get on top of Ponderosa shelter were fruitless (unless, of course, the bear would be so good as to give us a boost.) We had just decided that are best option would be to stay put for a little while, when who should appear but our old friend, the Great Grizzly Bear! Oh boy! I guess it forgot to introduce itself the first time. While it stood in the corner of our campsite (almost directly under the food bag) and peered at us, we decided, once again, to exit stage left. We are now sitting a goodly distance along the trail, with only a small amount of equipment (including our peanut butter and honey sandwiches).

- BA

12:56 pm

In four minutes we will head back to the campsite to pack up. We will have a rousing chorus of "100 Bottles of Beer on the Wall," to advise the bear of our presence. Nic is already warming up his "fine baritone voice." What a day.

- BA

4:18 pm

Made it across the cable crossing. More later...

- BA

8:35 pm

What a day. After getting down to negative sixteen bottles of beer (I made up a new verse: "If an anti-beer should happen to appear..."), we hightailed it out of Ponderosa with all our stuff at 1:25. Fortunately everything appeared to be untouched by the bear. Due to my blistered heel, I was wearing one flip-flop sandal and one hiking boot. This worked well, except for those unfortunate times when it slipped off my foot. Anyway, extreme paranoia set in as we noticed the recently dug up stumps and roots, large impressions in the dirt, and big, fresh scats with the flies still buzzing. It seemed that we were either following, or being followed by, a bear. After about two hours of this excruciating tension, my sandal had just slipped off again. As I bent over, I heard a short, harsh roar, sounding almost like it came from above. Neither Nic nor I immediately realized that this was unmistakably the woof of a grizzly, very close. Without even turning around we doubled our pace-- that was too close for comfort. Fortunately a woof is usually used for intimidation or warning-- a low growl is more likely to indicate attack. We didn't rest until we made the cable crossing, and then continued all the way to our first campsite-- roughly five hours of solid, tense, speedy hiking. After this third encounter we are thinking that we may cut this trip short and pack out tomorrow. We probably won't be sleeping too well in the valley.

- BA

Yes, it seems that we were following a bear. We'd been making lots of noise after our encounter at Ponderosa, singing songs, going over Frantics skits and occasionally yelling out "Olé!" but the markings on the trail clearly indicated, as Mr. Allen mentioned, the very recent pass-

ing of a bear. Though I thought the woof came from behind us, Brett though it came from above, which would be an interesting scenario: the bear, moving down the trail to get away from our noise, eventually decided to climb a tree. We treed a bear! “Bear! Quick! Climb a tree! (Stephen Herrero, in his book *Bear Attacks: Their Causes and Avoidance*, notes that a bear has never dragged a person down from a tree at more than 30 feet high) No! Wait! It’s IN the tree! DIG!” (It seems unlikely that a bear would attack a person in a hole more than 30 feet deep.)

In hindsight, I think we were right to leave Ponderosa shelter. Stephen Herrero notes that if there’s evidence that a black bear has been at a campsite, you should exercise extreme caution, but if it was a grizzly, “you should just pack up and leave, no matter how tired everybody is.”

- NT

July 25

1:02 pm

Well, Nic and I have been in civilization (or at least, the “Canyon Oasis Bakery and Cafe”) long enough to have two games of chess. The bus doesn’t come for another three hours, so we have some time to kill. The weather has been overcast, and Nic has exclaimed “Oh, the first few drops of rain!” about a dozen times since 6 am this morning. I guess with all the sunny weather we’ve had so far, he never got the rain he’d hoped so much for.

- BA

7:18 pm

During the bus ride we’ve decided that we need to be a little better prepared against bears next time. Perhaps a twelve-foot electrified chain-link fence around the campsite, anti-bear ditches, all of the trees cut down in a 50 meter radius so that the search light can sweep the area, land mines around the perimeter, tripwires attached to suspended anvils, spiked pits covered with leaves, and snipers armed with AK-47 assault rifles. The food itself will be locked in a steel safe in an area suitable for nuclear waste disposal - an 11 foot tube drilled into the bedrock. Then perhaps we will be able to get a good night’s sleep, except for the air raid sirens going off each time a rabbit hits the electric fence. But at least those pesky bears wouldn’t bother us again.

- BA & NT

The Pup's Butt

by Drew Brayshaw

The North Buttress of "Harvey's Pup" was first climbed by a group of VOC members (including Dick Culbert) in the late 60's. The climb was supposedly good, recommended in both the Culbert and Fairley guides, but it languished in obscurity for years until an old West Van climber by the name of Don McPherson rescued it from obscurity by freeing the three or four aid moves and printing a topo in the MEC route book. Don loves projects like this- he's the guy who built the Grouse Grind trail. Anyways Don knows Andy Cairns, and while they were climbing at the Edge Don told Andy all about this route. Andy got psyched and mentioned it to me while we were engaged in a bushwhack on the far bank of the Squamish River. A few weeks later, with Andy getting ready to move to Africa for a year, we decided that the Pup's Butt would be a good farewell climb.

Andy's wife dropped us off in Lions Bay at quarter past seven. We wandered up the Lions Trail for about an hour and took the overgrown spur marked "Harvey-North Face". Soon we had reached a big clearcut/talus slope below the face. We scrambled up and over boulders and into the gully which drops down from the Pup. We climbed up the 3rd class ramp on the north face until we reached the "gut" which separates Harvey and the Pup.

Here we ran into difficulty. All we knew was that the route began from near the gut and traversed right. The gut itself looked horrendous: like an overhanging version of South Gully on the Chief, but with horribly rotten rock held together with a "magic carpet" of moss. We began to despair. There was no sign of a route, and the promised "clean and solid" rock looked like choss! Sandbagged again! But wait- there's an old, rusty piton....and there's a back-off sling hanging from that shrub! This must be the route.

Andy led off: up loose, overhanging rock to the pin, which he clipped off with a Screamer, then a long hand traverse rightwards along a ledge below a roof. The pitch ended at a tree belay from which Don had considerably pruned some branches, providing a nice niche in which to sit. Following the pitch, I cleaned the backoff sling as booty. You never know when you'll need one of those yourself, eh?

The next two pitches led up a squeeze chimney in a corner. The rock looked dirty from below, but the top of each hold was clean. Inconspicuous fixed pins, many of them relics of the first ascent, supplemented cracks in the sidewall for protection. The second belay was a chockstone boulder, the third a heather bay at the top of the chimney. I found the chimney easier to climb by stemming the outside, while Andy just stuck his body in and wriggled his way up in good trad style. The fourth pitch began with some steep moves up a short wall, then easy slabs to a belay below an ominous black, overhanging wall split with a weeping gash. This, we knew, was the crux. Another backoff sling hanging from a fixed pin showed us that we were still on route.

Andy led off up the black wall, following an arching, left leaning layback/undercling in a corner-it looked a bit like Crimson Cringe in Yosemite, but instead of being 5.12a, it was only 5.9.

The pitch ended with a few very steep moves and a mantel onto a tiny ledge similar to the fourth belay on Rock On. There was a fixed pin, and a #3 Camalot placement backed it up.

The crux of the next pitch was right off the belay. A few 5.10a moves up an offwidth meant we got to discover the friction coefficient of moss and Goretex. Enough tiny edges and incuts existed to make real offwidth techniques like kneebars and elbow jams unimportant. Above this section the rest of the pitch was straightforward 5.6 fist crack climbing. The belay was a nice cave formed under a huge square chockstone. We exited the cave on the right (west) side, up a crackline with a few more old pins-good hand jamming. The next four pitches ascended a so-called "blunt nose" over a series of slabs and small walls. After climbing in the shade all day, we finally caught some sun on these pitches. We summited about 5 P.M., and were immediately struck with the problem of descent. According to Don, neither of the two options he had tried were very good.

Two rappels took us to the Harvey-Pup notch, the top of the Great Gut. From here we could make a 5.9+ bushwhack to the top of Harvey, or 8 raps off devil's club down the south gully of the Pup and back to somewhere near the trail. We decided to go up.

The technical dirt out of the notch was some of the worst climbing I have ever encountered! A pitch of 4th class pulls up tree trunks led to a dirty collection of loose flakes and evil steps held together by lichen. Hi-Tecs were more effective than Aces in scrabbling up this munge. At the crux, just as I was about to peel off and fall to my death, Andy took up slack and I was able to Friar Tuck up the rope to his belay. Thank God for topropes from rope guns!

Some bushwhack traverses took us to below the summit of Harvey. Even though the sun was setting, we made the fifteen minute detour to the peak, then raced down the trail. Andy twisted his ankle and I ended up carrying the rope as well as the rack. We didn't have to dig out the headlamps until we hit the logging road, and we were back to the gate at the Lions parking lot by nine. By the time we reached the store, and called my dad for a ride, it was ten p.m.-a fifteen hour day, and effectively fourteen hours "car to car".

The Beta: approach takes about 1.5 hours. To start the route, begin about 25 m. right of the gut, and climb straight up to a fixed pin, then go right beneath a roof. Take a rack of nuts, long slings, and a full set of Friends (one of each, plus double #3 size) or equivalents. A few small Tri-cams come in handy, but there's no place where they are absolutely necessary. The climb looks dirty from the ground, but is surprisingly clean when you're on it. It is steep and offers good positions and exposure. Best done on a long, hot day in summer (faces north-shade all day). Apparently the rappel descent is a bit better than the climb out of the notch. Despite the descent, I'd still recommend the route-varied climbing, good views, and you can have the whole line to yourself, any day of the week. The cruxes are short and the whole thing was originally rated 5.7 with four aid moves; now grade III, 5.10a.

SUMMER LOVE

We met at the beach
And we played in the sand.
I loved your long hair
and the way you were tanned.

Our love was so strong
I didn't really care
That all I knew of you
Was your long golden hair.

Along came the Autumn
And we much too soon found
The surf got too cold
To be our playground.

I still haven't called you,
But I don't really care
'Cause all I remember
Is your long golden hair.

J.W.

Road Trippy

by Cam *"Not only am I a member, I'm the vice-president!!"* Campbell

Shortly after the untimely demise of rock & roll legend Jerry Garcia, Clemson and I were bouncing down the Interstate with the sounds of the Dead filling our ears. We had our sights set on a great city, not an ordinary city; this city had no permanent residents. This city had no buildings taller than the outhouse. This city was a kingdom with no royal personage, a magical place aptly dubbed the City of Rocks. Our journey was long, we traveled day and night leaving a trail of motor oil, like bread crumbs, as we pushed on.

Well into the night, after hours of bunny dodging, we reached our destination. Exhausted, we pitched the tent, I was pondering the lyric "If I get home before daylight, I just might get some sleep tonight," Grateful Dead. We awoke to the howls of a lunatic dog, replaced the flat tire, topped up the oil, and set out with the unsettling feeling of stale cinnamon buns in our stomachs, ready to face whatever challenges we might meet that day.

City of Rocks, Idaho is an amazing place with gargantuan masses of rock perched atop the rolling hills of an otherwise barren landscape. "The sun was beating down on my baseball hat, the air was getting warm, the beer was getting flat," Beastie Boys. As we pulled up to the water pump, to get our daily ration of eight liters, we knew it was going to be an all-star day. Indeed it was, crushing off numerous classic trad routes, we accumulated over fifteen stars. A dinner of perogies and bacon proved to be a fitting end to a virtually perfect day.

The next morning I awoke distressed at the thought of having to drive forty miles into town for a new tire. Clemson and I ate our breakfast and sipped our cappuccino in silence, for we both knew that today was the day to compete with yesterday. We drove to meet Tami, Douglas, and Eric at the only store in a hamlet so unique that its name is Almo. After handing Clemson off, I, alone, headed to town for provisions, beer included, and a new tire. To everyone's surprise, as well as my own, I returned to the crags with ample time for another stellar day. Barbecue steaks, corn, roasted marshmallows, and beer capped off the day for us, the road trippies (now five).

The two chariots went separate ways at the fork well after sunrise. One, carrying Tami, Douglas, and Eric, headed for the crags, while the other, carrying Clemson and I, headed for the Twin Sisters. The Lowe route on the South Sister was our decided assault path, though only on the way down did we notice the closure advisory. Excited about going to the Tetons, Clemson and I raced up the route with very little style or grace, then set out to meet with the other three trippies. We met up with them to see Eric and Tami jamming and camming and Douglas sunning himself on a rock. Eager to hit the road, Clemson and I bellowed witty comments at the climbing duo until they topped out and rapped off. With the setting sun at our backs we followed the Snake River east into Wyoming and the Grand Tetons National Park.

The highway wound through the starlit mountains like an eel navigating the murky caverns of an underwater labyrinth. With the temperature gauge well into the red our long ascent finally ended and the highway started its decent on Jackson, Wyoming. We found a campsite on the edge

of Gros Ventre lake, it was expensive but luxurious and one of the only available campsites because this was an important week for Jackson; Billy Clinton was there taking in the beautiful scenery with family and friends. The sleepless night was cold, thereupon morning came as a blessing.

The next day we shopped. When we awoke to the frigid sunlight we donned toques, gloves, and jackets, before long we were barefoot, shirtless and sweating. We bathed, badly needed, at the local hot pools; Douglas, doing his best Jesus impression, stripped naked and carefully walked into the pool. "Boiling hot in euphemism, slowly becoming part of the water, like a frog who never knows, the Jacuzzi's getting hotter," Mr. Bungle. The view of the Tetons from anywhere in the plains west was exhilarating; they pierced the prairies like broken glass through skin. The Grand Tetons host such ski resorts as Jackson Hole, boasting some of the steepest ski terrain in the world, after seeing them for the second time this became obvious.

We spent the day in Jackson buying provisions, beer included, heckling tourists, and trying to spot Billy. Then to Moose to acquire route info, buy matching pants, and hang out in front of the liquor store. Dinner and sleep came early that night for the next day, as planned, started premature.

After hiking for nearly an hour along the edge of Teton lake we stopped to enjoy the sunrise. Meandering trails branched off our path like arteries toward extremities, after careful consideration we selected one which would lead us to the gully below Symmetry Spire. The approach was mildly strenuous, though a loaf pinching break halfway up was well accepted. At the base of Symmetry Spire we stopped to enjoy the view for an elapsed two minutes then raced up our chosen routes; Eric, Tami, and Douglas tackled Durance Ridge, while Clemson and I mocked them on the adjacent Direct Jensen ridge, no more than fifty meters away.

Route finding proved to be the crux of the climb; after five pitches, four hours, and three liters of water, it seemed we were still on the ground. At the start of the sixth pitch, or so, the fart that was heard around the world, or at least across the gully, emerged from my rectum and landed on Clemson's face. Soon enough we were out of water and had what seemed to be the majority of the route ahead of us, consequently, the day contained more than its share of cursing. "BABY DICK FUCK, BABY DICK FUCK, BABY DICK FUCK BABY DICK FUCK, BABY DICK SUCK, BABY DICK FUCK BABY DICK FUCK, BABY DICK SUCK, FUCK FUCK FUCK," Gwar. Finally we topped out.

We enjoyed a grapefruit at the top, then set out to rap off the back deciding that waiting for our comrades would only result in a headlamp descent. While running and tumbling down the scree slope the only thought in our dehydrated and delirious minds was Pete and his Wicked Ale, we settled for worm-infested runoff from the nearest snow field. It was almost dark when we stumbled upon three lost hikers at the ferry dock on the lake; which was the planned meeting spot for our fellow trippies. These lost hikers asked us when the next ferry was, we informed them that the last ferry was an hour ago. They then asked us how long it would take to hike around the lake, we again dampened their spirits and told them two hours. They inquired about the closest parking lot, we answered "half an hour, that-a-way," they left. "And I got no compass, and I got no map, and I got no reasons, no reasons to get back," U2.

We enjoyed the sunset, while sitting on the dock with our aching feet soaking in the cold

water. Realizing our comrades were not going to be down soon, Clemson and I headlamped our way to the parking lot; fortunately we were smart enough to park at the closer lot. Thirsty, we decided to head, sans autres trippies, to the lodge for water and other sanitary procedures. However, on our way we were unsuspectingly waved down by the three previously mentioned lost hikers. They gave us apples, they gave us water, they gave us money, they gave us free invitations to attend their concert (symphony), we gave them a ride to their car.

At around eleven thirty, at the parking lot, Clemson and I were rudely awoken by Douglas, Eric, and Tami banging on the car window. I was happy to see them, they were happy to be down from their climb, we headed to Moose to make long-distance calls. "What a day, what a day if you can look it in the face and hold your vomit," Faith No More.

Clemson and I drove to Moose for provisions the next morning, though our objectives were immediately forgotten once our eyes happened upon the lustrous aura of the Chuckwagon. We were drawn in by the images of all-you-eat pancakes and bacon for only three bucks!! After a monstrous feast we met les autres Trippies trois at the campsite and headed back to Moose to plan our anticipated assault of the Grand Teton. Then we hung in front of the liquor store, drunk stout, and watched the rain fall.

We packed light in the warmth of the rising sun, excited about our agenda for the next two days, our agenda which had the Grand Teton written all over it. All we had left to do was stop at the park headquarters to acquire the required permits and we would be on our way. To our dismay, this final preliminary procedure proved to be a bigger problem than originally anticipated; they were all out of permits, the mountain was full!! After a communal Trippie discussion, with considerations being made with regards to the approaching bad weather, and the abundance of climbers, a decision was made to head to Lander and the "legendary" sport climbing Mecca of Wild Iris.

Many climbing legends such as Todd Skinner, and Paul Piana call Lander their home, and after a personal taste of Wild Iris limestone, reasons were obvious. We reached town, visited the local coffee shop, and poached the local swimming pool for well needed showers. The night was spent in the town park along with dozens of other climbers most of whom were from NOLS, for which Lander is homebase. The following morning, after a short Frisbee session, we headed for the crags.

The weather at "The Legendary" Wild Iris is far from normal: "Warped," Red Hot Chili Peppers. Every afternoon, like clockwork, the clear blue sky would turn a disturbing shade of gray, followed by a torrential downpour. The first time this happened, we ignorantly decided to call it a day and visit the nearby hamlet of Alantic City for lunch. To our bewilderment, twenty minutes later the rain had hindered and the sky was again clear and blue. Well, for the second occurrence we were a little bit smarter: we jumped upon the opportunity to take shelter beneath one of the numerous caves/rain-shelters to eat our lunch, and climbing resumed shortly thereafter.

The routes at "The Legendary" Wild Iris seemed uncommonly difficult, partly because we were a little burned out, but mostly because us coastal boys (and girl) aren't used to sport climbing at 8500 feet. We still found quality routes in areas such as the O.K. Corral, the Shooing Gallery, and Cowboy Poetry. Our day was capped off with some creative firewood cutting techniques, which

involved the truck, and an unforgettable final communal trippie night was spent at “one of America’s top ten campsites,” Backpacker Magazine. “I want to rock and roll all night, and party every day,” KISS.

Our final day at “the Legendary” Wild Iris was the last real example of true Trippie togetherness. Eric and I started our day at the Five Ten Wall with Clemson, Tami and Douglas, then our search for bigger and harder routes began. Our journey was momentarily stalled when we happened upon two hard-core, burned-out, dope-smoking climbers from Salt Lake City, though soon enough our search resumed. Our quest ended at Cowboy Poetry where Eric and I miraculously redpointed an 11a. At the height of our celebrations, a local climber overheard our boasting and informed us that the route has since been downgraded to 10b. We pretended not to hear him.

Today the formation of the all too familiar storm clouds signaled the end of our road trippy; by the time the rain hit we were on the highway heading north, home. “And every night I shut my eyes, so I don’t have to see the light, shinning so bright, I’ll dream about a cloudy sky, about a cloudy sky...” Faith No More. Clemson, Eric, and I parted from our other two fellow Trippies at the hot springs in Thermopolis, after a wonderful dinner at Pumpernick’s. They again had their sights on City of Rocks, we followed the guiding light of the North Star, bringing home the lyric: “What a long, strange trip it’s been,” Grateful Dead.

Participants:

Doug “Douglas” Wilm

Tami Rummel

Eric “Clemson” Clemson

Eric Hutton

The Author

WARNING: In no way was this article intended to portray real events or real people. The characters and events discussed in this article are purely fictional, and any resemblance to real events or people is coincidental.

On the Road to the City of Rocks

With apologies to Jack Kerouac

by Carl Fleet

Trip Participants (during my portion of the trip)

Carl "Car-Man" Fleet
Doug "Mono" Wilm
Tami "Bugaboo Epic" Rummel
Jason "I Hate Working at the Mill" Maloff
Keri "Nepal Stories" Merig
Ryan "Skull Jam" Hamilton

It all began one sunny day in August. I had just completed my four year prison term at UBC and I was paroled to the world of minimum wage. As I remember it, I was in the middle of doing some yard work at home when the phone rang....

Tami.

Tami Rummel. Calling from the faraway state of mind known to us all as "The City" in Southern Idaho, she gave me the good news. Good news because I thought that I would be spending my week off work, during the Labor Day Week, bitterly in Vancouver. I couldn't stay. I had to go. I had to be... on the road.

The good news went like this: Tami's boyfriend (my old roommate) in Cranbrook, Jason, was meeting up with her and Doug in the City of Rocks, Idaho. Together with two other local friends, Keri and Ryan, Jason was driving out to The City in a few days and had room for one more person. My time was limited. My only chance to make it to a state of rock climbing bliss was to find a way to hook up with Jason in Cranbrook.

I had to. I had to.

Beg.

Borrow.

Steal.

I managed to get a hundred bucks together and I did the unthinkable for a road trip. I bought a plane ticket to Cranbrook.

Two days later, I was on a propeller driven (not a jet!) plane to the Rockies. From there, Ryan picked me up at the local airport. We met up in Cranbrook with Jason and Keri and we soon parted the fair town to begin our drive to The City through Montana and Idaho. (Surprisingly, the car was not searched at the US border by the National Guard as on my previous crossing into Montana.)

From there, the miles drifted past and the towns rolled by: Eureka, Olney, Whitefig, Rollins and Elmo. Onward to Ronin, Missoula, Drummond and Deer Lodge. Butte was next, then Melrose and Dell. Then we crossed over.

Day 1

Idaho.

It was four o'clock in the morning. We blew past Dubois; the road getting faster and faster. Idaho Falls, Blackford and American Falls rolled off Interstate-84 like curses out of Doug's mouth. By dawn, we zipped through Burly and finally to Almo. This town comprised a general store, a gas pump and surrounding ranches under the great American sky. Very quaint.

A little later, we found Doug and Tami's campsite on City grounds.

We drove all night. Except for a couple of hours sleep in the car, I had been up since 7 AM the previous morning and it was now 6 AM. The prudent thing to do was get some rest. Well, screw prudence. The beautiful granite spires beckoned me to climb. So, all of us -- except for the newly re-united couple of Jason and Tami (who retired to her tent for 'couple things') -- went to do some cranking on minimal sleep and rest.



[Ed note: Questionable Outhouse Humour Alert!!]

By five in the afternoon, my body clock caught up with me. But, before going to eat and sleep, I had to gronk... bad. I was then initiated to the fine collection of outhouses in the City of Rocks. (Read: flies. Lots of 'em.) Due to my current physiological state though, I had no time to track down an outhouse without flies. Man, there were so many flies. In the dump-hole, they would not wait for my gift and tried to invade my Expando-Sphincter. I killed them by squeezing my butt cheeks. I got three. During the rest of the trip, finding a fly-less outhouse was a black art. But I digress.

Day 2

I slept soooo well. Birds chirped. The sun dawned. I woke to see Doug sleeping beside me. Well, life can't be totally perfect. Hah!

That day, Jason, Keri, Ryan and I went climbing while Doug and Tami went off to do some classic route. I had a bit of a hard time finding good climbs in my range. It was my fault because I let the other three encourage my doubt about the size of my climbing rack and its supposed insufficiency. So, we stuck to sport climbing, sadly. The three of us tried to get Ryan to perform his patented, no-hands skull jam, but he said it gave him headaches.

Day 3

Today, Doug and I went climbing. We cranked quality trad routes. My doubts of my rack almost vanished. You see, I had plenty of gear for your typical Squamish-length pitch (20 to 30 meters); but in The City, a typical pitch is 40 to 50 meters. So boldness was the order of the day. When we returned to camp, Doug and I heard talk from the other four about going to American Forks in Utah because they were not having the greatest time in The City.

Yeah. I guess all of that surrounding beauty, hot weather, high quality granite and lack of crowds can be a f*##\$ing owner. Needless to say, Doug and I saw the fallacy in the others' logic and

decided to stay behind.

Day 4

Jason, Tami, Keri and Ryan split for the Mormon State. Doug and I cranked routes. I discovered the beauty of the runout climb....

“Hmmm. I could place another piece here at 20 meters, but I have another 25 to go. No bolt anchors. Gonna need some gear for the anchors. Shit! Oh well, when in doubt, run it out!”

This was also the day when Doug became intimate with the other black art of The City: route finding.

“Carl. This is not a 5.9!”

“Yeah? Well just down climb it then.”

“Easier said than done, dude.”

Day 5 and on

Doug and I climbed in isolation and fantastic weather over the next three days or so.

The days blurred together. We learned many things. I became intimate with down climbing diabolical chimneys. I learned how to creatively recover gear from a sand-bagged 5.9 (actually 5.11b). Doug learned to descend a buttress via squeeze chimneys.

Overall, excellent climbing was balanced with the worst guidebook I have ever laid eyes upon. Typo-ridden; no descriptions; poor topos; star ratings for choss climbs; even censorship of “rude and offensive names.” Damn religious fanatics.

We also frequented the local general store for post - climbing rewards. Namely ice cream on a hot day (mmmm, mmmm). They were closed on Sunday though. Damn religious fanatics.

This world.

I tell you.

Day 8

Early afternoon. We went to the general store for (my) first shower in a week. I think ‘ripe’ was a good adjective. Doug and I later drove into the town of Burly (45 minutes) to eat out. When we returned to the campsite, the other four had not yet returned as planned. They were probably in a Utah prison for possession of coffee or forced into a baptism.

Day 9

Tami, Jason, Keri and Ryan returned from American Forks late last night. They claimed they had a good time, but Doug and I knew better.

This was our last day. Jason, Keri and Ryan were returning to Cranbrook. Doug, Tami and I were to head back to Vancouver. Work for me, school for them. While packing the car, we discovered a local rodent found its way into the car and ate the Fritos. (To this day it has evaded capture. We think it is at large somewhere in Kitsilano). We split that morning after packing Doug’s car.

Vroom. Vroom. The Trip Back Home

The road back home was entertaining. First, we had breakfast in Burly and it sucked. Through all of Interstate 84 to Boise, hot wind blew in our faces. It was so hot. At least 666C. We desperately searched the BCAA map for areas of blue to swim at. Ahah! Deer Flat Reservoir west of Boise.

One hour later, we found it. We changed clothes. We ran up to the water to jump in. We stopped short of the edge. While Doug and myself suspiciously eyed children playing in the water, Tami asked the official-type looking dude in uniform, “Ummm, can you swim in that?”

Official Dude replied, “Well, only if I had to. Say if someone was actually drowning. Even then I’d like to find another way.”

A local woman overheard us and offered to lead the way to a swimmable part of Snake river. So, we left the primordial ooze behind and went in search of its source.

Needless to say, the river wasn’t much better, but at least there was a flow. We swam and tried not to swallow the pesticides, or expose our eyes. I am still stunned that I didn’t get a rash.

Later, while I was changing outside the car, I unknowingly surprised passing motorists with my full-on, see-my-hairy-butt moon. Doug witnessed their faces and conveyed the humor.

We drove on west to Oregon, then north to Washington and never found any decent swimming. (Actually, Doug heroically drove the entire 18 hour journey.) The remainder of our escape from the USA was uneventful except for the beautiful sunset over eastern Oregon.

It was 4 a.m. the next day when we pulled up to a gas station in Blaine, Washington. It was so friggin’ cold. I mean really cold! Brrrr! At least minus 82 degreesC. We drove up to the lonely Canadian border guard, pseudo-relieved to be home again. Half an hour later, I was home sleeping on my bed. I dreamt of the City of Rocks.

I dreamt of the City of Rocks.

Author’s follow-up

I happily quit my job one month later due to post vacation smugness. And oh yeah; “A good time was had by all!”

A Day at the Beach

by Drew Brayshaw

Around the end of June I quit my job and decided to spend the rest of the summer climbing. Sounds good, doesn't it? Actually, it was more like I was told "Here's your cheque, don't come back", but the net effect was the same. Anyways, Cam had been tormenting me with his stories of all the routes he was putting up at our "secret area" in Cheakamus Canyon while I was working, so I called him up and said that we had to go climbing. A long weekend...good weather...why crag when there are unclimbed routes in the mountains begging to be done? We thought about destinations for all of two seconds and decided to go to the Coquihalla.

Actually, we ended up going before the weekend had started. Wednesday morning I threw a few things into my pack: wirebrush with half the bristles missing, four pins, shitty VOC alpine hammer, third tool with a hammer head, water bottle, Gatorade bottle wrapped in duct tape, bug hat, lime green bush pants, 10.5mm rope, helmet, rack, map, etc.: the usual stuff. About the only thing I left at home was the kitchen sink.

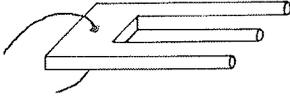
Cam drove over and picked me up in the afternoon. We filled up his truck with my junk collection, plus another fifteen or so of the Ten Essentials, and headed off on Highway One through rush hour traffic. It was good to pass through the hordes of scurrying drones, rushing home from their 9-to-5 grind, and to know that we were doing something different. As we drove east, the cars thinned out and the air began to smell like the back end of a cow. This made us hungry, so we stopped in Chilliwack and gorged ourselves on a famous chain restaurant's unhealthy grease food before continuing in our travels.

We passed through Hope quickly, like a bad meal through a diseased infant, and found ourselves squirted out of the greasy sphincter of the Lower Mainland and into the beautiful Coquihalla country, where granite domes bulge upwards in Freudian fashion to disturb climbers' bivouac dreams. Some bastard had locked the gate on the pipeline road which cuts around the back of Needle Peak so we had to pay the highway toll like law abiding citizens.

Turning off onto the upper Coldwater road, the mountains were just black silhouettes on a starry sky. We were a bit surprised to find road work ongoing on the logging road. A bunch of waterbars were in the process of being cut or filled in (who could tell which?), and there were huge mounds of dirt piled across the road like the leavings of an incontinent giant. Cam had to switch into 4x4 to get over the last one and I was glad his truck had rollbars as we roared up and over at a dangerously tilted angle. Last year, even a Camaro could have made it up this road! Finally we got to the end of the road and set up camp. A beautiful night: warm, quiet, and scented with the smells of fireweed. A few meteors blazed their lonely trails across the sky as we inflated Therm-a-Rests and pitched Cam's tent.

In the morning, of course, the real situation made itself clear. It took us a while to work out that it was daylight because the tent was completely covered by a horde of mosquitoes and black-flies. I had heard about the summer bugs in the Coquihalla, but now I was getting some first hand

experience. These were the type of mosquitoes that in places “away up north” land on a runway and get filled with fifty gallons of aviation fuel before the mechanic realizes he isn’t dealing with a Bell 206! We choked down breakfast (oatmeal for me, ichiban for Cam) while psyching up for the day. End of June and still a big dump of snow everywhere: so much for the north side of anything at all. We drove up a spur and headed for the south face of Vicuna.



Imaginary pro for those imaginary cracks.

The approaches in Coquihalla country are sweet, especially for out of shape rockaineers who haven’t been in the mountains for a month or so. Barely an hour after leaving the truck we were out of the trees and into the heather and block zone. We wormed our way through house sized, moss covered boulders, over stunted trees, through blueberries (yum) and onto a great smooth slab below the south face, with rivulets of running snowmelt to drink from. This gave us a nice “class 1” approach to the

base of the face, although I nearly stopped to put on my rock shoes at one point since my blown out Hi-Tecs had less grip than a thalidomide tot. Cam told me I was being weak and pitiful so I left the “hiking slippers” on. When we got to the base of the face, we began scoping.

The dominant feature of the south face is a huge zawn. On the right, we could see some nice looking lines, but closer scrutiny showed that they might be (gasp) THIRD CLASS for the first pitch or so, so we vetoed them (the fact that they looked way blank higher up had nothing to do with this decision, of course). We hiked “around the corner” to see what was on the south-west face and our eyes were drawn to an obvious corner and crack system which shot up just left of the big zawn, and right of a grim gully.

Soloing up to a heather ledge, Cam set up a belay off some pencil-thin tree while I changed into my rock shoes and hung various useful items off loops and webbing. I had this feeling that somewhere up there I was going to need the kitchen sink I had left at home. I began by pulling up on some crumbly left facing lieback/smear bulge type thing, jamming in the usual cams in case some hold decided to jam out on me. Above, the corner turned into a perfect face crack on excellent stone. A few moves, a nut, a sling, a few more moves...sunshine, snow and sky, “This is the crack I dream about!!!” I yelled to Cam. Then I looked at my hands. The perfect quartz crystals inside the crack were giving me the Jaws treatment: blood everywhere! Actually, it wasn’t as bad as it seemed: just some scratches. I continued up the crack until it died out, and set up a belay off big cams jammed in a wide crack behind a bulging roof.

Cam rushed up towards me. By the time he was close he had about eight or nine pieces on his rack. I didn’t like the roof above me so I told him to head left. He pulled over the edge of a right facing corner into a face crack, starting off a small ledge down and left of my belay. I offered him the rack but he declined it; he figured he had enough gear for the lead already. “OK, man, you’re on.” He took off out of view. Underneath the roof I couldn’t really see what was happening, so I just fed out rope when told to. Suddenly a big chunk of dead wood came flying through the air past the belay. I heard cursing and bitching, but the rope stayed loose. Eventually the “Off belay!” came

floating down to me.

On top rope now, I cleaned the anchor and pulled left around the roof. Fuck, I wouldn't have wanted to lead this, I thought to myself, butt hanging in space, feet scraping in the lichen, hand stuffed deep into a wide crack filled with seaweed like growths...eventually my groping hand closed on a big, wobbly jug and I hauled over the lip... It was only 5.8, man! Above, a big crack led up to Cam: 2"-2.5", about the same depth, and flared as hell. Most of the gear Cam had was nuts and tiny cams: he only managed to get in a few pieces in the full length pitch. The crack succumbed to gastons the whole way up: half way, a big clump of heather stuck out and presented a barricade that had to be stretched around. A stump showed where the falling wood had come from: the last gear had been about thirty feet below: "Good lead, man!" I arrived at the belay: a tiny one-cheek ledge Cam had enlarged with his pack. Once at this rest, he had been able to get at the "spare gear" he was carrying, and get enough to craft an anchor.

Above the belay, the crack pinched into nothingness within a meter or so. Lichen frosted knobs and crystals led upwards over a bulge. A tiny finger traverse seam led off rightwards. Cam tried to persuade me to head right but I didn't think it looked good. I stuck a cam in at Cam's head level and started climbing straight up. Forty feet later I was at the bulge. The rope hung down from my waist to the belay in a single smooth arc like some period photo from the 1930's. I shifted weight back and forth between my feet and pawed at some crumbly, suspect knobs sticking out of the lichen...they wobbled. I looked left into a sand filled gully about twenty feet away, left and down, and considered jumping. My knees were knocking in time with the nervous clenching of my sphincter. Yeah, I was gripped. My fall line passed directly through Cam's helmet-not good. In front of me was a wobbly flake crater where something had fallen out not long ago. At its right edge was a thin expando crack. I tried to place an RP: it fell out when I yarded on it. Same result with a #0 TCU. In desperation I forced my fingers behind the flake, pulled out, and jammed a pink Tri-Cam in. It worked...sort of. The crack still expanded but the Tri-Cam just flexed with it. Still, better than what I had before. Envisaging a long "cheese grater" of a fall I pulled up on some suspect nubbins and began the lichen dance again, like a kid running along the edge of the beach and jumping back when the surf comes crashing in...for sure I knew that I didn't want to get my feet wet! Another forty feet and I tucked in my other pink Tri-cam... this one was bomber. It was easier from there to the belay and I didn't need to place anything more, just as well because I couldn't have even if I wanted to. I sank more gear into the anchors than I had used on the pitch and screamed down an "Off belay" to Cam out of sight below.

The next pitch looked grim and black, choked with lichen, so when Cam arrived at the belay, after assuring me that the pitch I had just led was only 5.7, he headed up and right along a ledge system. Just above the belay he asked me how good my anchors were.

"Good...why?"

"Because there's a big block here... get ready."

"What?!"

"I'm going to trundle it...look out."

"OK, 1, 2, 3, **ROCK!!!**"

The rock came flying down, tumbling and dancing as it broke apart into a cloud of chunks. A previously unnoticed groove in the slab channeled most of it right by me. I did a sort of "Russian cossack with his pants around his ankles" dance to avoid collisions: most of it missed me but I got smoked in the hip by a head sized piece. Looking down I noticed that one of the three cams in the belay had pulled out during my exertions: "Fuck!...can I take you off belay for a second?" Eventually Cam finished his lead. As I was getting ready to second, a huge chunk of cornice went crashing down the north face of Alpaca, just across the way.

We were near the top of the face now. One more pitch of traversing and stemming took me onto the summit ridge. I belayed Cam up and we scrambled to the summit. Down in the Anderson River drainage some members of the resource extraction sector of our thriving economy were doing something with heavy machinery and a helicopter, making lots of noise and smoke. Cam checked out the clearcuts appreciatively... he's in Forestry, after all.

We scrambled down the south-west ridge and eventually began rappelling. Two ropes were mandatory, the longest rap being 45 m. A few old slings marked the most reliable anchors. The Kubik/Zenger route was heavily furred with grey lichen...it made our route look clean by comparison! From the base, a long schuss through snow covered meadows, followed by an hour of traversing, brought us back to the car. Dinner time!

The bugs were horrendous by the creek. Although we had planned to stay for several days, we ended up leaving the next morning, driving back to Vancouver (with a quick detour up the Skagit Valley to look for a field that wasn't there) as most of the Lower Mainland headed out to enjoy Canada Day by sitting by a lake and drinking beer. We ended up deciding to call our route "Vicuna Beach": partly because of the sand and sun, the driftwood, the crashing "surf" from Alpaca, the seaweed; and partly because it sounded like Laguna Beach in California. "Life's a beach, DUUUUDE!"

Vicuna Beach (II, 5.7), a new route on the southwest face of Vicuna Peak, in the Coquihalla Pass area. Climb straight up cracks and slabs for three pitches, starting immediately left of the obvious big zawn and right of a loose gully. Traverse right for two pitches below summit ridge until lichen relents and permits access to summit. Climbing is mainly clean (lichen is tolerable), rock is good, some long runouts. A wide range of cams and nuts are useful (RP's to a #3 Camalot), especially TriCams. Pins were taken but not used. Bring extra slings for the rap descent. First ascent by Drew Brayshaw and Cam Campbell, June 29, 1995.

WHIPPER

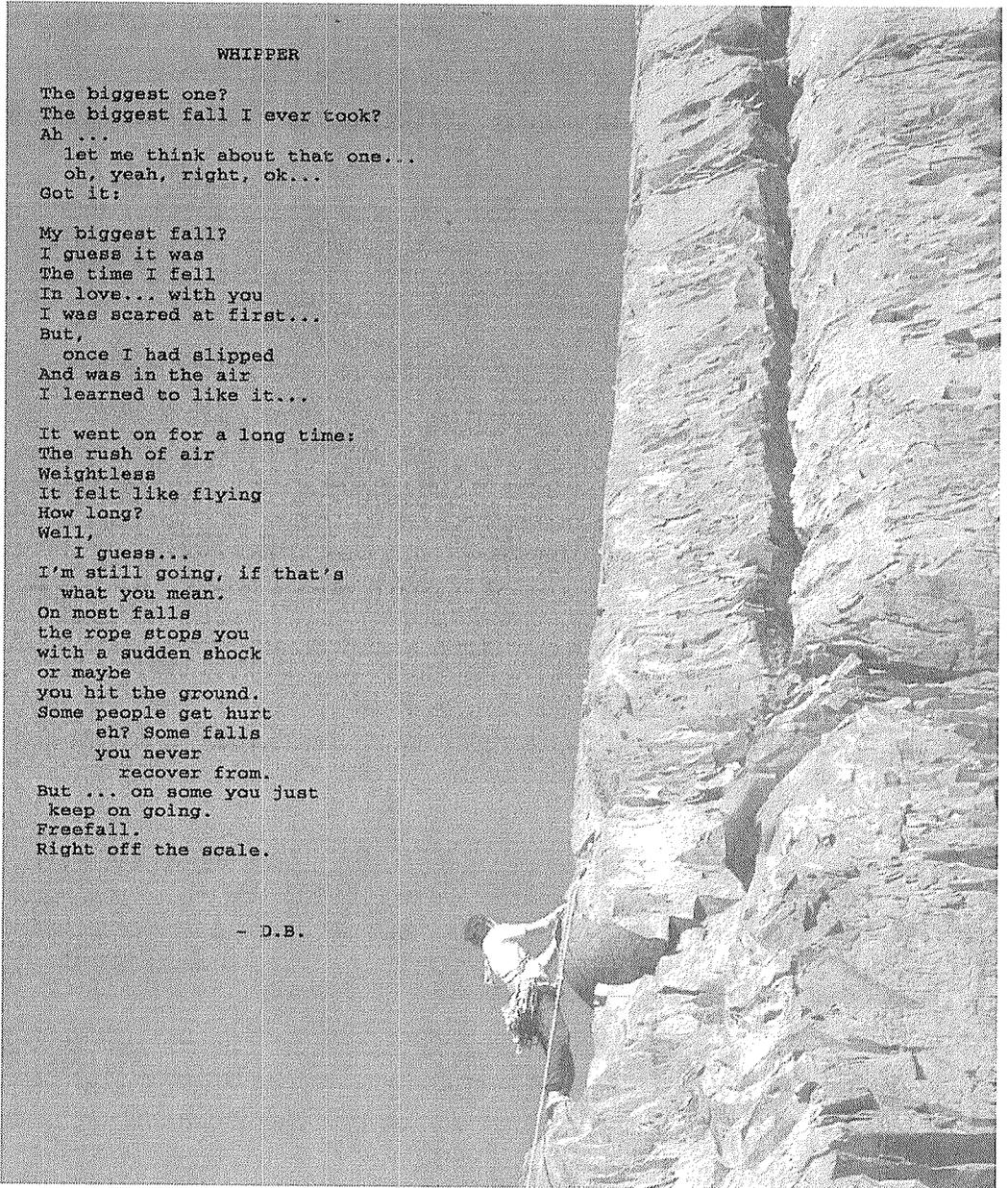
The biggest one?
The biggest fall I ever took?
Ah ...
let me think about that one...
oh, yeah, right, ok...
Got it:

My biggest fall?
I guess it was
The time I fell
In love... with you
I was scared at first...
But,
once I had slipped
And was in the air
I learned to like it...

It went on for a long time:
The rush of air
Weightless
It felt like flying
How long?
Well,

I guess...
I'm still going, if that's
what you mean.
On most falls
the rope stops you
with a sudden shock
or maybe
you hit the ground.
Some people get hurt
eh? Some falls
you never
recover from.
But ... on some you just
keep on going.
Freefall.
Right off the scale.

- D.B.



August in the Bugaboos

by Ian Fisher

In mid-August of 1995 my climbing partner, Mike Zaklan, and I took a two-week trip to the Bugaboos and the Rockies. We were apprehensive about the weather since the first part of August had been pretty cool and wet across the southern part of the province. We ended up having exceptional timing, arriving in the Bugaboos at the beginning of a week of decent weather. The preceding poor weather turned out to be a blessing in disguise, leaving the area remarkably uncrowded.

We arrived in the Bugaboo area in the evening of August 19th, a Saturday, after a full day of driving from Hope. With dusk approaching we decided it would be best to camp in what we thought was a Forest Service campsite in the bottom of the Bugaboo Creek valley before heading up the trail the next morning. Our campsite wasn't quite what it seemed as there were no facilities and it turned out to be the domain of a large, noisy group from Calgary. After some hours of involuntarily listening to loud blues music we finally got to sleep!

One novel aspect of the Bugaboo parking lot is the need to fence the lower part of your vehicle with chicken wire provided by BC Parks. Porcupines are a problem in the area and will happily devour such vital vehicle organs as fuel lines, brake hoses and electrical cables from the underbelly of your car. Spending a few minutes after arrival setting up a chicken wire, log and stone barricade can save tremendous frustration. Those who do not take this step risk having to walk down the road another few kilometers to the CMH lodge to call for help and an expensive tow of over 50 km to the nearest highway and town. A gift shop owner in Radium Hot Springs told me she had a couple of customers from the mid-west United States who thought the chicken wire was some kind of joke only to return to their car a few days later and find it immobile!

Early Sunday morning we were shouldering our heavy packs up the trail into Bugaboo Glacier Provincial Park. The trail gains 700 m in 5 km but most of the elevation is picked up in the last two-thirds of the distance, in some cases on steps and ladders bolted to the rock. Including a few rest stops, we were at Kain Hut in 2+ hours. Getting from the hut to Boulder Camp, located at tree-line (2100m), requires a loss of about 100 m of hard-won altitude. Tenting is more economical than the hut and offers more privacy, especially since we had neighbours for only two nights of our five-night stay. Camping is also available above Kain Hut on the rock slabs of Applebee Dome (c. 2400 m) but some sites are subject to flooding and all are very exposed to the elements. Charming, solid-looking granite outhouses are a common feature of all accommodations.

After briskly setting up camp, we headed out to get a perspective of the area. A large snowfall before our arrival limited the options so we decided to head north towards Brenta Spire for a look around. This offered views of most of the major spires along the way. We ended up scrambling the east spur of the ridge connecting Crescent and Brenta Spires until a narrow section of disgustingly soft and broken rock halted our progress. From here we had a good view of a few small figures trudging through snow on very exposed ledges near the summit of Brenta. The ascent did not look advisable until after the bulk of the snow had melted. We returned to camp satisfied that we

had familiarized ourselves with some of the area. The weather the next morning looked a little uncertain so we once again decided to be conservative in our activities. A 5.6 route called Lion's Way on the relatively low (2737 m) Crescent Towers appeared to offer a good choice being only about 8 pitches long. The Bugaboo Rock guidebook description and photo of the route start isn't particularly clear and we were fortunate enough to meet the exceptionally helpful and friendly park ranger who pointed out the rather vague start of the route.



Snowpatch (L) & Pigeon (R) Spires from the S. Ridge of Bugaboo Spire. Photo: Ian Fisher

Initial progress was slow, I guess we just weren't yet acclimatized to the high altitude and rock quality. While the later climbing was not particularly difficult, moss, lichen and loose rock added some challenge. We had done five or six pitches and arrived at a pleasant rest stop just as the feeling in the air started to change. Our view to the west was obscured by the mass of Bugaboo Spire a short distance away so the sudden arrival of an active weather system from that direction came as quite a surprise. At first it appeared to be relatively minor and Mike started up an easy-looking crack on a large slab. Within a couple of minutes though we were being bombarded with hail and Mike could barely hold on to the rock as static electricity coursed through the crack he was climbing. Not able to continue, he retreated to our belay station where we took cramped shelter behind a small horn while strong winds and wet hail made conditions miserable.

With the lichen covered rock now wet and slippery, we decided to rap off the route and into the south-west gully of Crescent Towers. Two 25 m rappels got us to non-technical terrain just as the sun started to return. As it would take some time for the now slick lichen to dry, we decided to call an end to the day's climbing. We took the opportunity to stroll around the lower edge of the Crescent Glacier and viewed the storm which had halted our climb heading off to the north-east in an otherwise cloudless sky. While we had been in the area for two days and still not made a peak, we had received a good taste of the rough Bugaboo granite and alpine weather.

The next day, with the ranger not recommending visits to Bugaboo and Snowpatch Spires because of avalanche danger below the Bugaboo-Snowpatch col, we decided to visit Brenta Spire, described by the guidebook as a good starting point for climbers new to the area. We retraced much of the route we had followed to the broken ridge spur two days before and were then faced with the task of reaching the Crescent-Brenta col. The guidebook made this sound a simple step but route-finding up the col was rather slow. Getting to the base of the col across a steep and mobile slope of snow, ice, rock and mud added to the interest.

The start of the ascent of the col was quite straight-forward as we ascended a series of ramps, ledges and easy cracks. However, this system ended near the top of the col and we were faced with continuing straight up on technical terrain without technical gear, or making an exposed traverse to the right. Mike decided to try the direct route first but, after reaching the top, decided that the traverse was the better way. I got myself well psyched for travel unroped across about 10 meters of exposed rock. A good, flat ledge with a few handholds led below a cliff and above a convex slope which culminated in a substantial vertical drop to the talus slopes far below. We were able to use our hands on the ledge while finding small footholds on the rock below. This turned out to be easier, but equally unnerving, than it looked. From the end of the traverse it was a brief and easy ascent to the col and a panoramic view of the lower Vowell Glacier and the peaks beyond.

After a pause at the col we began the scramble up Brenta's south ridge. The views, especially to the south and the rest of the Bugaboo group, improved with each step. A large level portion of the ridge near the summit proved to be the end of my climb while Mike made a substantial mantle beneath an over-hanging rock before reaching the summit a few minutes later. We had a grandstand view of the area and the target of our next day's adventure: Bugaboo Spire. With no clouds in sight, we enjoyed a leisurely break in the sunshine and absorbed the alpine ambience.

We carefully retraced our route down the col, having noted the top of our ascent route on the way up. The traverse proved to be much less of a challenge on the second crossing. We had to deviate from our original route at the bottom of the col as the slope which had been somewhat mobile with rockfall in the morning was now quite active as a result of the action of the sun. Once we had gained the saddle with the spur we had scrambled on our first day we were on very familiar ground and made good time to a large tarn just below the Crescent Glacier. A large slab extending into the tarn made an excellent substitute for a beach. Here, at about 2500 m elevation, we caught some of the sun's last rays before it set behind Bugaboo Spire. We resolved that if the weather looked promising in the morning, Bugaboo Spire would be the next day's objective.

We rose just as it was starting to get light the next morning and, sure enough, it looked like

another splendid day. We quickly got all of our climbing gear organized for mixed conditions, grabbed a bit to eat and headed up the trail. We had talked with the ranger the previous evening and in his judgement the Kain Route up Bugaboo's south ridge was in condition while the more challenging Northeast Ridge would not yet be climbable because of lingering snow.

Ascending the trail up the moraine to the Crescent Glacier was now very familiar and we promptly reached the edge of the snow. We donned our crampons, got out our ice axes and roped up in preparation for the brief glacier ascent to the Bugaboo-Snowpatch col. Our progress was quick as the Crescent Glacier is relatively uncrevassed and a somewhat packed layer of snow gave an even walking surface. The grade increased substantially near the col but caused little difficulty. Upon reaching the col we were treated to a spectacular view of Pigeon and Howser Spires lit by clear and sharp morning light. We took what turned out to be the last major rest stop of the day, cached our crampons and gaiters in the rocks, and started up the south ridge of Bugaboo Spire.

The ridge was strongly reminiscent of our ascent of Brenta Spire the day before. Route-finding was initially quite easy as we scrambled our way up. Just where the snow began to get fairly deep we caught up to the only other party to climb Bugaboo that day. They were ascending a head-wall on the ridge which we found could be bypassed by traversing slightly to right and climbing two pitches up easy chimneys. While travel was not especially quick given the slippery character of snow on rock, we almost caught up to the other party when we reached the south end of a slightly sloping arête which forms part of the south ridge. We belayed the arête on account of incredible exposure and ferocious wind gusts. Near the end of the arête I punched a hole in the snow in the narrow gully I was traversing only to discover that the crack was bottomless and opened onto the sheer East Face far below. The arête ends at the infamous gendarme pitch and we were forced to wait for the other party to move on before we could continue our ascent.

The weather was taking a turn for the worse and the sky became overcast. Mike's altimeter watch, which had been correct at the start of the day, had us about 150 m above the summit, indicating a serious drop in pressure. Combining the threatening weather with the fact that it was now mid-afternoon we pressed on to the short technical part of the route. Even though we were near the summit, my spirits were getting down and I later found out that Mike was feeling quite anxious. Nevertheless, he kept moving and was soon climbing the steep gendarme pitch which had stumped Conrad Kain for an hour and a half during his first ascent in 1916. I couldn't see what was up while I belayed but it seemed that the rope stayed still for a long time as Mike, still wearing heavy leather boots, worked out a way to cross a difficult slab just out of view above me. This pause in the action got me quite demoralized and I was almost sure that we weren't going to make it, especially as the first flakes of snow came down. Just as I was losing hope the rope moved briskly and Mike made it across the gendarme to the next belay station.

At the urging of Mike and the other party, I dug out my rock shoes and put them on for the 5.6 gendarme pitch. Domestic bliss was not a phrase that came to mind as the couple ahead of us rappelled down past me! The sticky soles of my Boreals made all the difference in the world and, after a bit of trouble with the face climb above the belay station, I was soon up to the crux - a brief traverse across a relatively featureless slab inset into the gendarme. With almost nothing to grab

onto, I made a “confidence move” of major proportions, expecting to end up “falling” on the rope. However, my best efforts paid off and I made the other side without this deception. This seemed a pretty stiff move for 5.6! With the gendarme behind us, we scurried up the final pitch to the 3176 m south summit.



East Face of the Bugaboo Spire. Photo: Ian Fisher

Putting on the rock shoes had changed my mindset considerably and I must have been far more relaxed than Mike when we made the top. The snowfall was at its peak now but we could see that the view to the west was much clearer than that to the east and so could confidently say that we would soon be in the clear, at least for a few minutes. With time short we grabbed a much deserved drink, took a few photos and prepared to rappel off this exposed eyrie. Making the traverse to the north summit and its different set of vistas was not even worth consideration.

The first rappel, to the top of the gendarme pitch, was easy. The gendarme rappel proved more of a challenge as we had forgotten the guidebook’s advice to rappel down the backside. As a result we had to add a substantial horizontal component to the rappel. The wind blew the rope over the ridge behind us on the first toss but later provided some assistance in blowing our bodies

towards the arête as we rappelled! Looking down was exciting given the near vertical drop to the Vowell Glacier about 500 m below. Retrieving the rope gave cause for anxiety since reclimbing the pitch to free it if it became stuck would be out of the question. With much relief on our part, it came loose easily.

We started the traverse of the arête using the rope and protection but, after I spent a frustrating number of minutes unsuccessfully trying to clean a stubborn chock, we decided to do the rest of the arête without the use of a rope. The high degree of exposure had become somewhat routine while the weather was, at least temporarily, calming down. Before long we had reached the end of the arête and the first of two rappels leading to the snowy scrambling of the lower slopes. While Mike headed down from the arête, I sat down on a decent sized slab to replace my rock shoes with heavy boots more suited to the snow and rough terrain below. The now clearing sky afforded a spectacular vista while the late-afternoon light made neighbouring Snowpatch Spire appear especially dark and foreboding. There was little time to savour the moment and I was soon threading the rope through my figure-eight for the rappels.

Having completed the final rappel, we were left with the tedious scramble down snow and loose rock to the col. Arriving back at the col we were pleased to find our cached crampons and gaiters unaffected by the gusty winds. We grabbed a quick bite, put on our snow and ice gear and began the descent of the Crescent Glacier.

The sky by now had become ominously dark as heavy clouds blown from the icefields to the west loomed above. Before long we were being pelted by sleet and rain and the sound of thunder rang out. Just as we neared the spot where the glacier levels I looked up to see Eastpost Spire, about a kilometer away, suffer a direct lightning hit. I stopped in my tracks in amazement. Fortunately we were too close to the towering mass of Snowpatch Spire to be in much danger but we redoubled our pace nevertheless as the rain grew heavier.

Luckily, the rain let up and then stopped as we reached the edge of the glacier and packed our technical gear away. Our familiarity with the terrain assisted our speedy descent as the light began to fail. We arrived back at the hut just as dusk fell, the ranger noting our return from his window. It had been 14 almost non-stop hours since we left camp in the morning a far cry from the 7-8 hour return trip vaguely suggested in Bugaboo Rock. We rested for half-an-hour at the hut, sipping hot chocolate provided by some fellow visitors sympathetic with our efforts. It was with a certain smugness that we considered that we must have been one of the few parties to make the summit that month as another period of inclement weather seemed to be setting in.

Hungry from a long day, we carefully made our way down the dark trail to our campsite in the hope of preparing something to eat. However, the weather did not co-operate and the rain resumed with full force, cheating us out of a hot dinner. We managed with a little trail mix and got some well-deserved sleep.

The next day was spent recuperating and we limited ourselves to a stroll over to the edge of the Bugaboo Glacier. Variable skies helped contain our aspirations while we were limited from crag climbing by the dry and cracked condition of Mike's hands a result of the rough Bugaboo granite. To make up for the previous day's lack of nourishment, we ate three hot meals at lunch and another

later in the day. Much of the day was spent in camp, drying equipment soaked the previous evening and fending off the pesky but cute Columbian ground squirrels who did their best to track down every piece of dropped food. A furtive short-tailed weasel provided added entertainment that evening as he darted among the rocks, examining us from every angle.

The next day turned out to be fine and sunny, a pleasant send-off for our departure. A few cumulus clouds suggested some instability in the weather with the ranger telling us that he wasn't aware of anyone heading out to climb the major spires that day. Shouldering our gear-laden packs we ascended from camp back to the hut and then began the descent back to the parking lot. We knocked an hour off our 2 hr ascent time on the way down.

The parking lot was considerably busier than it had been when we had arrived six days earlier. We dissuaded a family out for an easy hike from tackling the trail to Kain Hut and spoke to a bemused older couple about where we had been. Our effort in fencing the car with chicken wire paid off and Mike's Toyota ran perfectly. After a brief visit to Bugaboo Falls we were off to Radium Hot Springs for a real meal, shower and soak in the hot pool. Spending the night at Parks Canada's shower-equipped Redstreak campground seemed a real luxury compared to Boulder Camp.

Over the next week we explored a small part of the Rockies, although the sore heels I incurred as a result of wearing the wrong combination of socks on the descent from the Bugaboos limited our scope to day-trips and sport climbs not requiring heavy boots.

Visiting the Bugs was a memorable experience and one I'd be happy to repeat. The compact nature of the main group of spires gives plenty of options, weather-permitting. While recent snow limited our adventures, anyone with good endurance and tolerance of exposure would find a visit as enjoyable as we did.

Baker

by Drew Brayshaw

The weekend after Canada Day, it was time to do something BIG - over 10,000 feet. Eric came up with the plan of the North Ridge on Baker, a classic snow and ice route with sections up to 550. We ended up with a party of four: Cam, Ian, Eric and myself.

The trip began with me schlepping all my gear over from West Van to Cam's house on the bus. Cam, Ian and I drove down to White Rock in Cam's truck, and after some work found Eric's house. We hung out with Eric's mum and dad while Eric sorted through his golf clubs and baseball bats in search of some mountaineering equipment. Eventually we headed south with Eric giving directions. We crossed at the truck crossing and toured around through the back lanes of Blaine and Bellingham, picking up necessary equipment like beer and chocolate for our ascent. Eventually we drove out to Glacier and found the trailhead. It had been showery, but the weather appeared to be clearing up.

After Eric meticulously arranged our bags so that he wasn't carrying a gram more than anyone else, we set off up the Heliotrope Ridge trail. About the site of the old Kulshan Cabin, we stopped to wait for Eric. Half an hour later, as we were getting ready to go back and look for him, he appeared. It seems that he had been "bonking" and had to stop and eat a few PowerBars and strip down to his shorts to recover. There were no more episodes like this and we continued on to our campsite at the Hogsback, fording a few big streams on the way. I, of course, managed to pick up a bootful of water at the biggest one. Step, squelch, step, squelch, etc.

At Hogsback we set up our tents, made dinner, drank our beers and hung out for a while, checking out the sunset and shooting the shit about everything and anything. It was decided that we would get a real early start - wake-up call was set for 4 A.M. Sure enough at 5 A.M. the first light of dawn caught us scrambling up the ridge with stomachs full of oatmeal or ichiban. At the base of the glacier we roped up and began slogging. Crampons were unnecessary. I was roped to Eric and was all for calling the rope unnecessary too-we could see the slots, and self-arresting was easy. But we stayed roped up, and passed by many groups of bumbles: Mazamas, Mountaineers, and other big club groups, all shortroped in groups of four or six, with crampons on, busily shredding their own ropes. We could see the weather crapping out and decided to abandon our North Ridge attempt and just go for the Reg. Route (Coleman-Deming).

The regular route is just a slog. In worsening weather we plodded under the Black Buttes, up to the Coleman-Deming ridge, around some crevasses and onto the famous Roman Wall, at 300 the steepest part of the route. So many people had been along this same path that there was a beaten trough a foot deep in the snow. By this point there was limited visibility, rain and snow, and cold gusts of wind. We pulled over the Roman Wall onto the summit plateau into a 60mph headwind with horizontal hail. Wandering around aimlessly, following footprints in a whiteout, Cam and Ian found the summit register while Eric and I, five meters away, couldn't see a thing and had no idea what was going on. About this time I realized why we were roped up when one of my footprints

revealed a hidden black void below.

Having summited, we turned around. Going back down the Roman Wall, Eric boot skied while I butt glissaded, sending little slush avalanches down onto him much to his displeasure. As we dropped down below the cloud level, the snow and hail turned into pounding rain. Luckily, we were all already soaked, so it was no big deal. We got back to the Hogsback about 2 P.M. to find Eric's tent (duct tape with poles, basically) had become a single puddle. After rescuing our wet gear we ran down the trail, surfing over the flooded creek crossings, and arriving back at the truck variously between three and three-thirty. With no dry clothes to change into, we just got into the car and turned the heater up full blast.

Driving back, we saw a number of places offering "joes" or "jo-jo's". We decided to stop and find out what these were. Pulling off the road, we slouched into the classic "Holy Smoke, a Tavern!" and chatted up the waitress. Just as we discovered that "joes" were thick fries (like pub fries up here), the waitress had to go and ID Cam. We got the boot! Finally we hit the overpriced "Bob's Burgers and Brew" in Sumas, and as it turned out, no one could even afford a beer! So much for Baker.

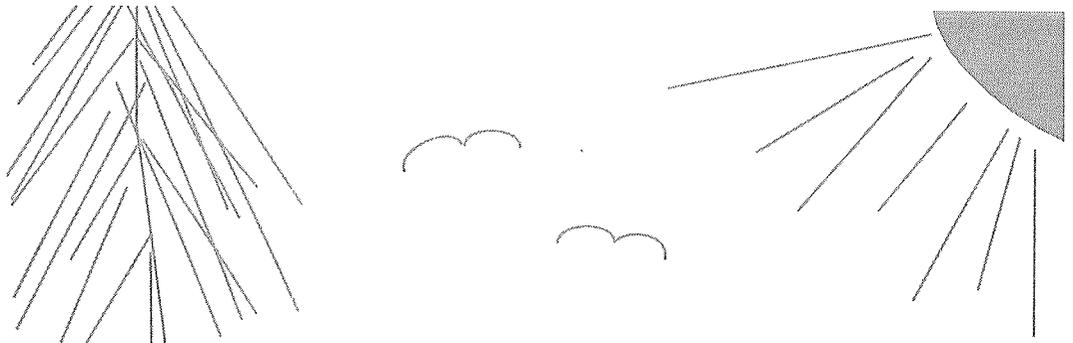
Participants:

Cam Campbell

Ian Campbell

Drew Brayshaw

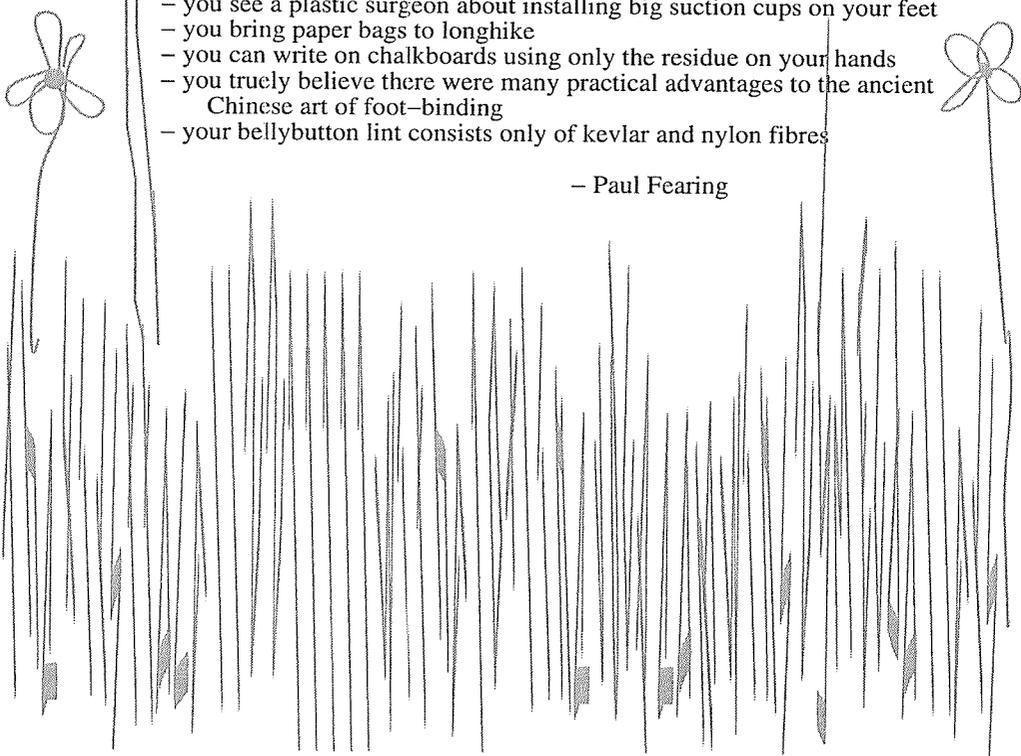
Eric Clemson



You know you're a HARDCORE rock climber when.....

- you practice big-wall by sleeping on your shelf instead of your bed
- you've actually done a headjam
- during your audience with the Pope, you ask if he's ever taken a whipper
- you see a plastic surgeon about installing big suction cups on your feet
- you bring paper bags to longhike
- you can write on chalkboards using only the residue on your hands
- you truly believe there were many practical advantages to the ancient Chinese art of foot-binding
- your bellybutton lint consists only of kevlar and nylon fibres

- Paul Fearing



Upper Stein



by Judith Shapiro

It was the last week in August before school, the last week before I started second year. We expected rain the whole time, but Alex Mossman, Ully Huetz, Blair Hammond, and I were going to have a great time hiking in the Upper Stein anyways!

Day 1: Drove to Lizzie Lake, slept in the van.

Day 2: Hiked through the woods to the Lizzie Lake cabin. Stopped to admire its setup (running water!) and fantasize about being independent hard-people living in solitude in the mountains. Hiked up into more open terrain, following a marked route, until we saw a little lake just before Tundra Lake. Dipped down to this small, protected lake. Unfortunately had to share it with a couple of other campers, but we were on our own for the rest of the trip.

Day 3: After sleeping in and lounging around for breakfast, we hiked up to the ridge overlooking Tundra Lake, seeing it in all its magnificence for the first time. Hard to describe the effect this beautiful blue lake had on me without resorting to clichés, so you'll have to go see it for yourself. No clear route to follow around the lake, so had to decide "right or left?". Went right. This was interesting for someone who'd pretty much stuck to trail hiking up till now. Steep snow fields to cross, some as steep as 60 degrees, without crampons or ropes (I didn't know what crampons were, so it didn't occur to me that my hi-tecs were less than appropriate). Everyone took turns cutting steps but me, which was just fine with me. We carried ice axes but, luckily, only used them for balance; no one needed to self-arrest. Once around the steep part, Alex and Ully dropped their packs and went up towards a nearby peak while Blair and I lounged like lizards on the warm rock. Then, down to a lower ridge where we camped, overlooking Tundra Lake: gorgeous spot, but lots o' bugs!

Day 4: Across a boulder field to the ridge we would follow to our next destination. Up onto the ridge at a point we then determined to be impassable (at least, by us), back down, along the scree and back up onto the ridge where we found...a trail!!! Absolutely amazing: walking along an easy trail, able to look around and see snow-capped mountains for miles around. Got really hot and ready for a dip, but by the time we got down to the little lake we were to camp at that night, Ully was the only one who still felt the need to run into the shallow icy cold water. Pikas galore at that spot.

Day 5: Down along a creek bed to the valley bottom, then back up again to the very same spot and camped up on the ridge. Enough said. OK fine, I'll tell you. We were going to go see Stein Lake, but when we finally got down to the valley bottom, it was all marsh and highly difficult to travel through (in my opinion, anyways). So we thought we'd head back towards Tundra Lake, but

the going was rough and we kept finding ourselves angling more and more uphill. After a long day, we found ourselves up on the ridge, looking down on the lake we'd left that morning! We walked along the ridge a bit, towards Tundra, and set up camp in a sort of dip in the ridge-line, so it was somewhat protected.

Day 6: Back along the ridge to Tundra Lake. This time we went around it the other way, which involved spacing out in a big way as we picked our ways down a boulder field, then along the same sort of terrain to the end of the lake, then up to the ridge and back down to the lake we'd stayed at the first night. Went wading/swimming in the shallow warm water. Nice sandy bottom.

Day 7: First day of not beautiful clear blue skies. Woke up to ominous thunder approaching and had our quickest, earliest start of the trip. Kind of exciting, actually! (Gosh, as I write this, I wish I were there now!) So, back down, accompanied by claps of thunder, to Lizzie Lake cabin, and down to the van. The van's battery was dead, but we got a jump start and were on our way to get ice cream in Whistler. Funny; I was sort of ready to be back where I could get ice cream and have a shower and not have to deal with bugs by the time we got back to the van, but once I'd had my ice cream I was already ready to head back into the backcountry.

Climbing in New Areas - Summer 1995

by Andy Gabrys

Well I've been climbing for some time now, and I really enjoy checking out new climbing areas. For some people, this means going out of province and seeing the great areas like Yosemite, or Smith Rock or other places like this. I enjoy this side of climbing a great deal.

I also have a little different take on this whole scene, because I work in the summers as a mining engineer. This forces me to be out in the Styx, and consequently I am exposed to climbing areas that not many people go to, or that are just new and being developed.

In the summer of 1993, I was employed in Chilliwack, BC. Besides being my home town, there was work for me as a surveyor and draftsman. The outdoors around Chilliwack really have something for everyone. The whitewater kayaking on the Chilliwack is intense, the hiking is grand, and there is alpine climbing of all descriptions, including Mt. Slesse and others.

For me though, my summer included both frequent trips to Squamish, and trips to the developing crags at Harrison Hot Springs. To get to this area, you drive from Bridal Falls to Agassiz, then over to the junction of the Lougheed Highway (gas station) and turn right towards Harrison Hot Springs. Continue until you see a golf course on the left. Immediately after the end of the golf course, a dirt road leads through weeds and brush to the left. A parking area will appear under power towers. It is always so nice that BC Hydro always has a right-of-way through climbing areas!

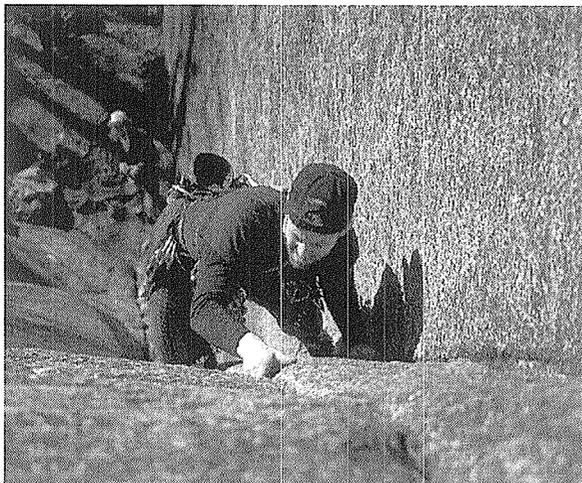
After parking a short trail leads to the left over a small creek and into the woods and the crags. The rock itself is granite, and contains many inclusions (brecciated pieces of country rock contained in the formation intrusive) famous in Squamish as chickenheads. It is very fine grained, almost approximating sandstone at times.

There are quite a number of routes now, including some that climb the main wall visible from the road. These are apparently 4-5 pitches long, and some are bolt-protected. In the forest, there a number of shorter routes, somewhat like Smoke Bluff cragging. Although I was involved in cleaning the very first route climbed in the latest surge, we found an old rappel ring from previous times. Most of the latest route development has been done by Rene Crawshaw, Darren Jensen, Alex Howden and other friends of mine from Chilliwack. The grades seem to fall about 5.11 and easier, with the longer routes about 5.10 to 5.11.

After that summer, which was my first year of climbing, I happened to end up in Tumbler Ridge, BC for summer 1994. Where is Tumbler Ridge you ask? Well it is north east of Prince George, and it is the location of the north-east coal fields, commissioned at a time when coal was worth much more than it is now. In a few years, the place will probably be a ghost town after the Japanese decide that they don't want to pay so much for coal.

Anyway, the mountains are the northern end of the Rockies. The rock is sedimentary, but unlike the lower ranges, it is mostly sandstone/gritstone and siltstones instead of limestone. Any mountain around the Bullmoose mine is good for hundreds of routes on gritstone about 30-35m

high. The gritstone bands are typically at the end of the unbelievable logging and exploration road system that crosscuts the area. This is good because the elevation is about 6500 feet. The rock is reasonably solid, and first ascents could be had every day until you die. In fact, I did not climb any route twice over the whole summer. The climbing kind of took on an alpine feeling, being that high, even though it was just cragging.



Andy. Photo: Dan Perrakis

In the summer of 1995, I ended up in the relatively cool town of Campbell River, BC. Now this place has a lot going for it. Good lakes, the ocean, fishing, hiking, glaciers, kayaking, alpine climbing, and cragging. The town is big enough that you can actually go out at night and see other people your own age, and it's not like you just stepped into the Beverly Hillbillies (it could be different if you grew up there, but being there as a foreigner wasn't so bad).

Usually I seem to hook up with somebody from work who is into climbing, and this summer was no exception. My friend Albert Chong was a mine geologist, and liked climbing rock and ice, and also hiking.

We had three real adventures over the summer. We went cragging at the Crest Creek Craggs a number of weekends, we attempted the south ridge of Mt. Myra, and we attempted the north spur of Kings Peak.

The Crest Creek Craggs are a unique area. About 70 kms from Campbell River along highway 28 to Gold River, the craggs rise on both sides of the road in a provincial park. A spirit of adventure is needed to climb here, as the routes are still emerging from the island moss. The rock is basalt, and is relatively solid. It reminded me of Skaha, in that the cracks were funky, and the face climbs had lots of the Dave Vocadlo death moves (crank and highstep on crimps - private joke I guess).

In a recent (Oct 25) issue of the FMCBC Cloudburst, the craggs were touted as the first area to have multiple land use or something like that. It's true, there is a real juxtaposition of logging, hydro dam type stuff etc. and somewhere they managed to squeeze in the climbing. Not bad though. Routes up to 5.12, with a mix of natural and bolted climbs.

The south ridge of Mt. Myra was interesting, in that like the north spur of Kings Peak, we did not get to the top. It was early season, with lots of snow in the area. Albert and I put on the plas-

tics and hiked away from the car at Westmin (there is a designated parking area for the park users, do not park at the mine). It also happened to be the shittiest day of the summer, with a light rain that just did not let up at all. After hiking for 2.5 hours, and doing a couple of stream crossings on wet water pipes, we reached Tennent Lake. After continuing for another hour (slow going in the wet sloppy snow), we reached the open ridges about 600m shy of the summit. Naturally the weather completely socked in at this point. With only open ridges ahead, and long walk if we got off route, we turned around somewhat disheartened.

After our defeat on Mt. Myra, we were looking for another objective. We were looking at Kings Peak. We could have had an easy time if we had gone up three weeks before, when a snow gully afforded fast access to the summit ridge. Of course when we got there, the gully had a wicked huge 'schrund' halfway up. So that option was definitely out. Instead we chose to do the north spur, which looked to be a pleasant 400m or so of 5.6 on the usual sketchy Vancouver Island natural gear. On we went,

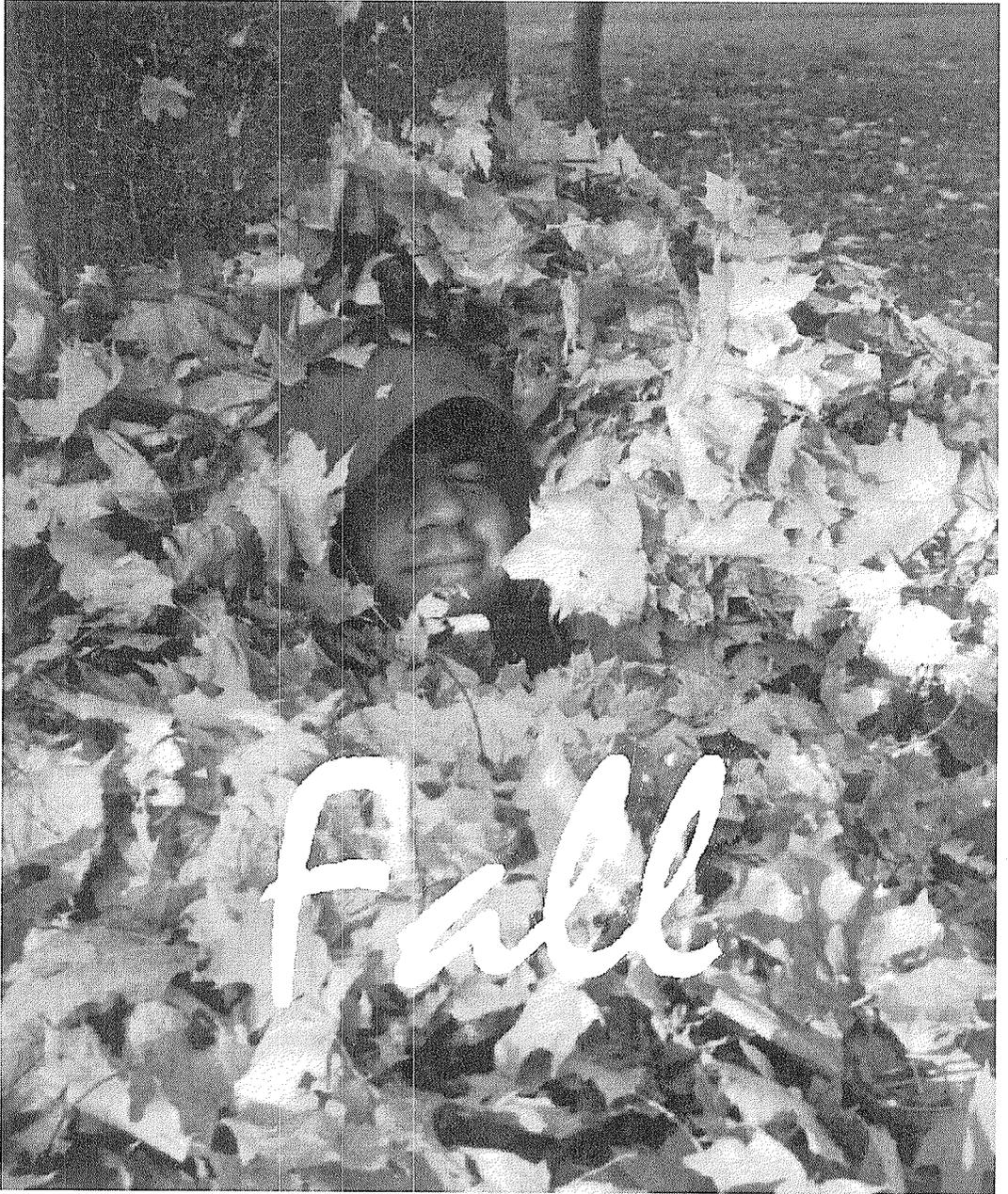
And then RAIN RAIN RAIN.

Program intermission. Enough of this crap, so we just took the tourist route, but weather sucked, and after pissing around on this other stuff, time was running short. So again we headed down after the most of the strenuous climbing was already done.

Needless to say, Albert and I were wondering if this weather was the bane of the climbing existence.

I fully recommend everyone who is in the areas I talked about should go and check out the climbing opportunities. It is not Squamish, but it is passably good enough to keep you occupied. The stuff on Vancouver Island provides great alpine challenges as well, and I think I will be back to do some of that.

Cheers!



(Fall) Dan Perrakis preparing to hibernate. Photo: Paul Fearing.

Welcome to the Big Stones...

by Drew Brayshaw

Labour Day weekend was approaching and the weather had been good for a week. I was cragging every day and mad to get out and do some big mountain routes. I went up to Squamish with Eric and we hatched a plan to hit one of the big routes. I was keen for Hozameen but EC had his heart set on the big walls and fine stone of the Chehalis. So it was agreed that we would set off and slay that fearsome beast, the North Ridge of Mount Clarke: Grade IV, twenty-five pitches of climbing up to 5.10-. I got so psyched for this because I had only done grade III routes before; my longest alpine climb before this was only 10 pitches.

Eric being who he is, and living where he does, I ended up taking the bus from West Van out to Surrey to meet him. Saturday morning on a long weekend is never a good time to travel on the bus, especially with a huge pack full of gear. Some insane psycho creep sat down next to me and took off his walkman, but neglected to turn it off. Tinny Christian Metal (bad, bad sign) blared from the earphones.

“Say, mister, that’s a pretty hat y’ all got there,” he slobbered, pointing at my visibility yellow Edelrid Ultralight, plastered with stickers and cartoon skulls. I groaned mentally.

“Are yew goin’ mountain climbing? Son, ah hope yew got a lot of them pee-ton things ‘cause the Lord’s gonna need a lot of helpin’ to keep yew safe up thar.”

I turned to him and stared fixedly at his left eyebrow. “You know, there’s a word for someone who sits down on a bus and talks to complete strangers. That word is ‘Asshole’. You, my friend, are an asshole. Pure and simple. Why don’t you take that spiel and go somewhere else with it?”

This is my patented Anti-Psycho Speech. Once again, it worked. Double-chins sucked in his phlegm, jammed his walkman back on his greasy head, and staggered back down the aisle to find some other sap to rant to. I settled back and closed my eyes. Ahh, bus rides. The rest of the trip was uneventful.

At Surrey Central Station Eric, of course, was not present. I sat around waiting in the parking lot. Some skaters skated by. “Yo mo’fuh, fly lid!” jeered one.

“Aha, ha, ha! Aha, ha ha! Mo’fuh!” laughed the rest. Yes, I was in Surrey, all right. Eventually Eric showed up, and we left, passing famous Surrey landmarks like the big flag and the “Loose Moose” sports bar. Eric talked about baseball and I looked out the window. Eventually we got on the highway and drove out towards Mission. We passed another retro Farm Vehicle truck and Eric and the other driver did a big slow down, wave, smile, point routine. They were both wearing ball caps too. I almost expected them to get out and hug each other!

After a last stop at the Sasquatch Inn to pee and get gas, we drove up the Chehalis mainline. The usual weekend crowd of off-roaders and beer swilling gun club nature boys was out in force so we took things slow. Eventually we pulled in at the end of the line, roadhead at Eagle Creek.

Now Eric began to display his meticulous concern for tiny details. Our packs were

unpacked and repacked to ensure we were both carrying exactly the same weight of gear. The two racks of gear were picked through and only the lightest biners taken. Everything was checked and double checked. Finally, after setting "The Club" on the steering wheel, so none of those alpine youth gangs could steal the truck I guess, Eric declared we were ready to proceed.

After a quick slog up the Nursery Creek spur road, we bashed through the last clearcut and into a nice avalanche track full of slide alder and bugs. We dropped to the creek and picked up a faint and sketchy flagged route which led us along Nursery Creek into the big basin below the ridge east of Viennese, and south of Nursery Peak. Eric reminisced about his last trip here, in '88 with Jeff Greenwood ("and then we climbed that bump...or wait, maybe it was that one...no, I could be wrong..."). Eventually we thrashed through some trees and into the big talus at the bottom of Nursery Pass. An hour and a half of scree-bashing later we stood in the Pass itself, gazing at the awe inspiring north wall of the Clarke group, and the fearsome vertical jungles of the south side of Nursery Peak, real Fred Beckey territory, like the Northwest Passage on the Chief. I was all for bivying at the pass, but at Eric's insistence we pressed on (good move, it turned out) and arrived at a beautiful site with running water and good views directly beneath the start of the north face of Viennese. Some bivi gear lying around told us we would have company later on that night.

I volunteered to make dinner, figuring that way I could lie around the next evening after the climb and relax while Eric cooked (also, at that point I'd be so tired that anything would taste good). While things were boiling we got some good sunset shots, especially of Viennese. Eric was using some film he had won in a photo contest; unfortunately it was ISO 400, so he had a very, very high shutter speed set. We ate, drank tea, and went to bed. We only had bivis and it was great to watch the sun set from inside a warm cocoon. What perfect weather! (note foreshadowing). Our neighbours, some Americans, arrived back in camp at about 11pm, after having completed Cre-scendo.

At 5am, we were woken by our watch alarms. Quickly brewing up, we sorted gear into day-packs and took off by 6:30. The snow patches below the north faces were icy hard; Eric had a single ice axe and I just had my boots, so we slipslided our way around, staying on the rocks as much as possible. The final approach to the toe of the North Ridge presented some problems, as it was guarded by a glacier that was nothing but a stacked pile of overhanging seracs. Eric tried to force a way through, but had to give up. He ended up caching his ice axe on a rock island to pick up later, and we decided to climb two traversing pitches leftwards to get onto the crest of the ridge.

I led off on the first pitch, which was easy and well protected. After running out about 40m of rope I set a belay. Eric took the next pitch, which involved some tricky downclimb traversing (5.9 or so) and ended at an old rappel and belay station on the ridge crest. Now it was my turn to lead, but I knew that this was the crux, so Eric took it. He began jamming and bridging up some clean right facing corners. Halfway up the pitch, he decided that his large, heavy pack full of rain and bivy gear (have I mentioned the perfect weather?) was cramping his style, and he left it hanging on a piece of pro. When it came my turn to second the pitch, I had to climb up, untie from one of the two ropes, let Eric pull it up, drop it down to me, tie the pack into it, and then second behind it as Eric hauled it up, untangling it when it got wedged in or caught on horns. This pitch was defi-

nitely very cruxy, though: quite sustained, with thin cracks widening to perfect fingers, off balance reaches to different crack systems, and a blank corner involving layback/pinch arete moves.

The next pitch was also a crux, but less sustained, just a single blank section with some 10a/b face moves until one could gain a seam with an old pin. It felt strange to be chalking up at 7000 feet! Above this the climbing eased back and we were able to simulclimb several hundred feet to a large ledge, the "Lizard Ledges", mainly by following the slabby left side of the ridge. We stopped on Lizard Ledges to have some energy bar and water. It was about 11:30. For the last two hours, providing some excitement through the cruxes, we had been treated to a terrifying spectacle as the ugly, broken pocket glaciers and seracs through which we had traversed in the morning rained a constant barrage of house sized ice chunks onto the rocks below. The rumble from this sounded exactly like the noise which rockfall above our heads would make-it was quite unnerving!

Eric led the first pitch off Lizard Ledges, a beautiful fingers to fist crack which swooped up under a big roof block. A 5.8/9 move pulled over or around the roof into a crack in the block itself, and a great #3 Camalot placement. I took the next pitch, 5.8 moves linking together a series of ledge and wobbling flake traverses, which put us back on the left side of the ridge. Again we simulclimbed several hundred feet to a narrow knife edge ridge, where we had great views and got our first sunshine of the day. We were dressed for the cold shadows, though, so we scurried along the ridge and back into the shade. The friction drag on the rope was annoying me immensely, so I was able to persuade Eric to unrope ("fuck the rope, man, we should just go for the top!") and we 3rd classed the last three or four pitches to the summit.

What an awesome climb! The summit gave great views in all directions, especially of the big north walls of Bardean etc., and the mighty towers of Judge Howay. One could also see down into the very wild unlogged valley of upper Winslow Creek. To the north, I could see the south ridge of Grainger, my first ever alpine climb. I shot most of my remaining film, and we began to traverse the very long northwest ridge of Clarke. Yes, our descent was taking us further and further away from our bivouac site!

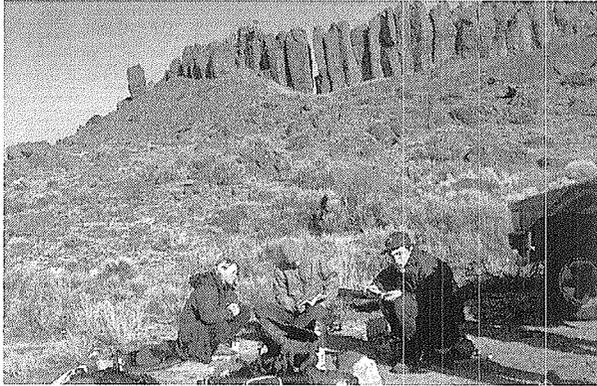
The NW ridge provided beautiful ridge walking with some 2nd-3rd class moves, and two rappels, one down the chimney which in Serl's words contains rock "of loose persuasion" (check out the Fairley guide). We also saw "some 4th class, described by one commentator as "beautiful granite." However, I was finding parts of this hard to enjoy, because the sun was shining directly in my eyes, I was very dehydrated and possibly beginning to feel heatstroke to boot! I wobbled along far behind Clemson until we found a snowpatch. I lay exhausted while Eric found a rivulet and filled our water bottles. After drinking a liter and a half of fresh snowmelt I felt quite revived! The rest of the ridge was a breeze, except for our second rappel, near the end. We descended a horribly loose gully, just like on the Copilot, back into the Nursery Pass cirque, and began the long trudge back to camp. I took my last picture of a beautiful sunset with many puffy clouds (hint, hint). Now I had my second wind and was able to pull far into the lead of Eric, a situation he was not too happy with at first ("Hey, wait up! C'mon, wait up! HEY! Wait the fuck up!..."). Eventually he became reconciled to it, especially when we stopped to don headlamps and I pointed out that he still had to go and retrieve his ice axe. As things turned out, I was back in camp by 10:30, and Eric arrived at

11:00. A late dinner was followed by bed. As I crawled into my bivi sack, I noticed some fog filling the valley-that's a sign of good weather, right? (WRONG!!!)

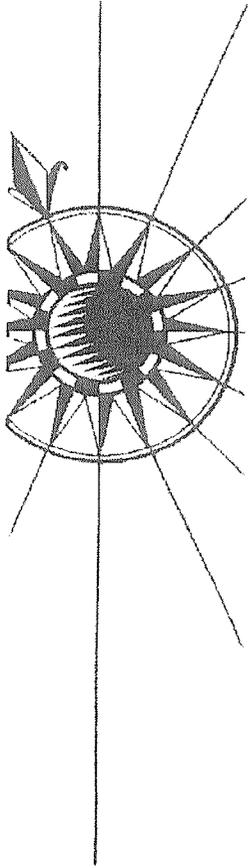
Well, at about 1:30, all four of us happy campers were awakened by hideous thunder and rain. A huge storm had snuck out of nowhere and was pounding the peaks. The thunder sounded like World War 3, and the lightning was a better show than "Symphony of Fire". Of course, we couldn't appreciate it because we were too busy pulling our gear inside our bivi sacks before it became soaked. Our American friends just put up a tent.

In the grey dawn we packed and squelched back down Nursery Pass. Bursts of sunshine were interspersed with standard coastal torrential downpours. Arriving at the creek on the way down, I gave up and just waded down it, while Eric boulder hopped along the bank. By the time we were back at the truck it was mainly sunny. We drove home looking for a place for a beer and burger, but it was Labour Day, so we ended up settling for the Bakerview Dairy Queen.

That's it-the trip was over, right? Wrong-the crux was still to come: taking the bus back home from Surrey to West Vancouver with a backpack full of soaked gear and stinking clothes, on Labour Day. I squeezed into a seat between some guys brownbagging Pilsner in the can and tried to fall asleep... (read paragraphs two through six backwards).



Guy, Anne-Marie and Eric at Frenchman's Coulee. Photo: Dan Perrakis



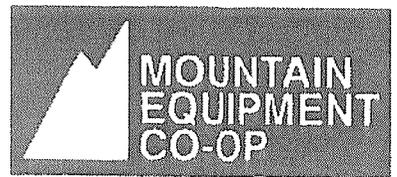
LET THE MOUNTAIN MOVE YOU

WHEREVER ON EARTH YOU STRIVE TO GO,
MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT CO-OP CAN SUPPLY
YOU WITH THE GEAR.

WHETHER IT'S CLIMBING, SKIING, CAMPING,
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Rumblings on Mount Sedgewick

by Katrine Vogt, September '95

It's Friday night the music is blaring, the beers are cold and I'm bopping around the kitchen preparing the food for a weekend trip to Mount Sedgewick. Weight is not really a factor since its only a two day trip so I am going wild with real vegetables and even a dessert. Forecast is for sunshine on Saturday, clouding over later on Sunday. Perfect, lets go.....

Sitting on the ferry over to Woodfibre munching on doughnuts from the 7-11 in Squamish, life seems rosy. The sun is indeed baking down on us and we got the ferry with 5 mins to spare, a rarity for us because we are normally charging for the gangway just as its being raised and the ferry is moving off. Hey - things are looking up, whoever said trips with Lenny and Katrine are always epical?

Rummaging through my backpack for the lunch so I can keep it near the top of my pack, nice and handy, I start to get that sinking feeling. Where is the green stuff sack with all the food? Oh F***! I ask Lenny casually if he picked it up off the kitchen table before we left. No, he knows nothing about it, after all I was to be in charge of food. Shit..... Lenny takes it quite well really considering I have just ruined the whole trip! So what are the options, have a screaming fit, demand the ferry turn around and wait 2 hours for us to get back to Vancouver and pick up the food? Unlikely. We decide maybe we will just do a day trip instead.

We sign in at the First Aid post and set off up the trail. We stash the stove and pots in some bushes, not much point in dragging them along, but we keep the tent, maybe we can survive off of berries, after all we do have two Sports bars each. As we round the corner a couple of kids and their dads, off on a fishing trip, are munching down on their Twix. I close my mouth firmly to stop from drooling and muster up a smile. The berry picking is good, lots of nice juicy blackberries and as we climb higher leaving the road for a wooded trail we chow down on blueberries and decide if bears can survive on this, so can we.

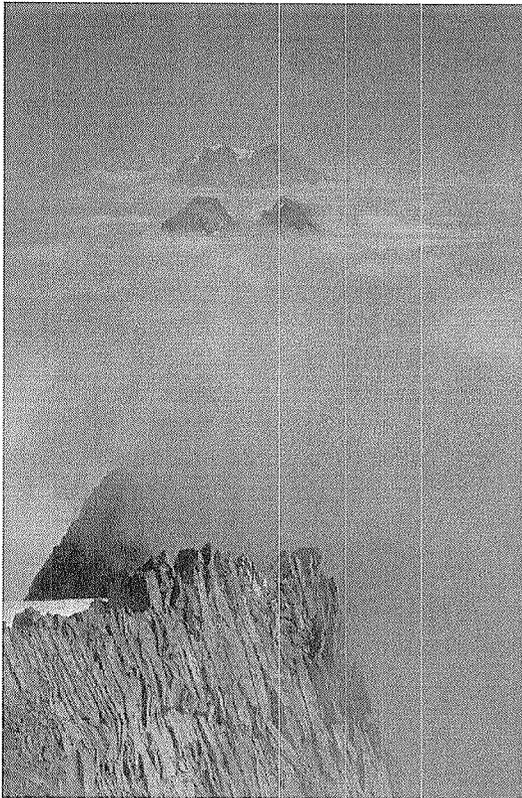
Before too long we are at Henriette lake, not too aesthetically pleasing as it is dammed but we start to get a view up the valley and some of the surrounding peaks. We decide we have plenty of time and set about exploring the cabin at the edge of the lake. Two rooms, a kitchen and a room with two bunk-beds, not bad. Suddenly I am seized by the idea that there may be food in the kitchen. Several rummagings later I have discovered a packet of Rice-o-roney. Never before has such jubilation been heard over such a measly offering. There is also some porridge oats, hey dinner and breakfast. Things are looking up. We grab a huge pot, a wooden spoon, some newspaper to get a camp fire going and the grub. We set off up the steep slopes towards Silvia Lake with renewed vigor.

Silvia Lake was not going to be our camp site destination, we had thought to stop further on at Woodfibre lake, but the glistening waters and sandy shores lured us down. A quick dip in the lake before getting a camp fire going and we cooked up our feast. One small packet of Rice-o-roney doesn't go far on an empty stomach so we fired up some oatmeal too. Topped with blackberries we

had saved it was, well palatable anyway.

If you wanted to make this a three day trip and spend more time in the area, a nice day hike from Silvia Lake would be to walk the Sechelt Ridges running south and west from the lake.

Next morning we forced down more oatmeal and set off to conquer Mount Sedgewick. The forecast of clouding over later in the day was a little optimistic since it was only 6 am and we could hardly see the path in front of us. We followed the ridge past Woodfibre Lake, probably not a good camp site since you would have to bushwhack down several hundred feet to get to it. On past the Taquat Lakes to the top of Mount Roderick. Here we met some fellow hikers tucking into chocolate bars. We hurried on - it was going to be a long day with only a bowl of oatmeal to go on.



View from the top of Mt. Sedgewick.

Photo: Len Thomas.

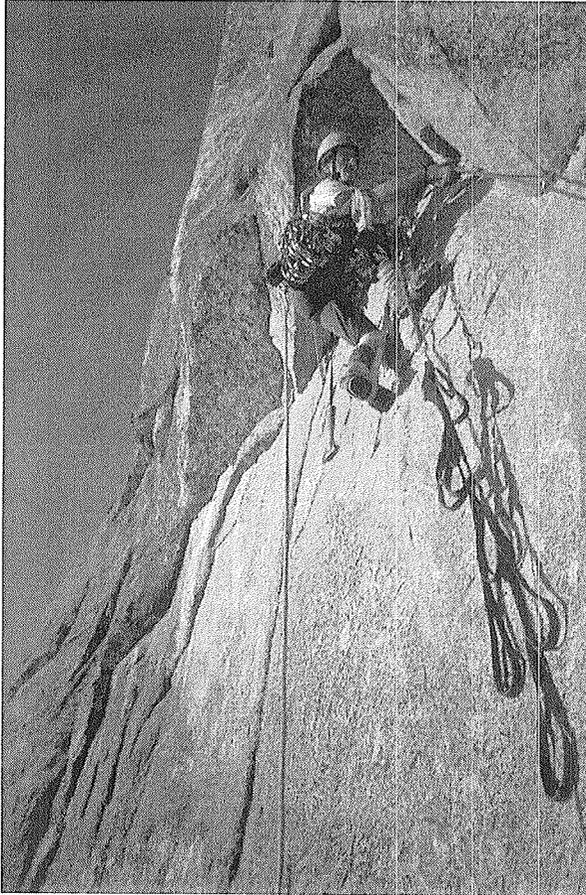
we could find on returning to Squamish and sure enough when we got home, there on the kitchen

The ridge from Roderick to Sedgewick is probably spectacular on a clear day, but even in thick fog it provides some fun scrambling over rocky bumps. Finally we were in sight of the peak, well we would have been if we could have seen it. We set off for the final scramble to the top. One thing about thick fog is its great for vertigo freaks like me, since you can't see more than a few feet down. As we scrambled up the last 200 feet we found ourselves emerging out of the mist to a glorious view. All the peaks around were poking up out of the mist; it was a surreal sight. Far off to the east we could see Skypilot, over to the northeast Garibaldi and Atwell and to the north the mighty Tantalus range. We sat smugly gazing out over the scene and naming peaks as they appeared to float up out of the rolling mist clouds. We had almost decided not to bother going up to the summit, what with the lack of provisions and the fact that there was zero visibility, but boy were we glad we had.

The trip back was uneventful but long and tiring. We devoured everything

table, welcoming our return, was the green stuff sack of food.

Participants: Lenny Thomas, Katrine Vogt



**Aid climbing on “Lurking Fear”, West Face of El Capitan.
Photo: Guy Edwards**

Mt. Rainier

by Igor Burstyn

Labour Day Weekend 1995

It was a bright and sunny day. After squishing 4 people and gear into a rental 2 door Ford we embarked on a long drive down into Yankee-land. It was interrupted by screams of pain by those residing in the back seat (me and Moose) and a short lunch break in the depths of typical North American suburbia.

As it was a sunny day, we got a glorious view of the mountain and camp Muir. Some of us wanted to hike to the snow line that same day (it was 6 pm on Friday) but cool head winds prevailed and Cougar Campground was home for the first night. Moose announced that he would not be able to sleep. I was also riding the edge of my nerved endings. However, we would have been able to sleep quite peacefully under a beautiful starry sky (screw the tent) if it was not for the red-necks who enjoy driving around the camp-site at 4:00 am. Ai gave us a last crash course on rescue techniques, the order we would move in, and checked all the gear.

Saturday, about 7:00 am. We leave from Paradise to heaven (Camp Muir - 3100 m). It is still bright and sunny. We are bathing in sunshine, a clear view of Rainier, and our own adrenaline. En route we make a discovery that Igor cannot tell a dead marmot from a live one, and that those beasts can run! We begin to feel the effects of altitude; the gentle colour of sunset.

Sunday, 12:30 am. Stars watch us boil water for hot chocolate and rope up. There is already a caterpillar of roped teams climbing toward the Cadaver Gap. One can only see their headlamps. We step onto snow hoping that our headlamps will warn us of any obstacles. Fortunately the trail is as broad as a highway. Sunrise is glorious - one of the most memorable spectacles of the climb. As the sun shows itself, icefalls of Nisqually Glacier come into view. As we gain altitude, we lose tempo. The trail zigzags, avoiding crevasses, and becomes monotonous. At this time we are moving painfully slow. We have to redistribute the load in our packs to even out the pace. Sixty mph winds grate us near the summit. The summit itself is disappointing and I am more concerned about getting back. I am not the only one. Fog and snow are replaced by the sun, but only for an instant. We are now crawling and extra sweaters and underwear are put on. No sense in waiting for the second coming of the Messiah around the summit. We head back, exhausted and somewhat worried. "One foot after the other and we will get there," I keep comforting myself. It is nice that the group is in the fighting spirit. 15 hours after departure we complete the circle at camp Muir. Legs do not want to move, but dinner is cooked, since we are without fuel it is much harder to stay warm and well. Faces are grim, burned by relentless (and by now no longer appreciated) sun, and tired. I play Moose a game of Crazy 8s and keep forgetting the rules. Surprisingly enough I win. We play another game (a Russian one called 'Durak' = fool). It seems to be my lucky night in cards. Why am I not in Vegas? Night. Headache. Ferocious thunderstorm and wind that turns over our tent. I try to put all the metal gear as far away from our bodies as possible: no sense getting fried twice - sun

and lightning (the second bearing more serious repercussions).

Monday. Ai and Marek make breakfast. It is very nice of them, but I have no appetite. All I want to do is to get my darn pack on and run down the mountain. My wish comes true at about noon. We descend into a sea of puffy clouds that look like an extension of the glacier. It is sunny again and I welcome (all of us do) the moist freshness of the mist at about 8000ft. Some idiot is getting yelled at by me for throwing rocks at the cliff (there is always at least one!). Moose is pissed off at a guy feeding junk food to a marmot. Car. The mist is completely gone. Rainier is again staring at us in all of its majesty. Congrats and inquisitive looks from strangers. Civilization feels like a ski boot in October: only vaguely familiar. Moose mentions coming back in winter and/or doing a more interesting route on Rainier. I think that he has finally lost his noodles.

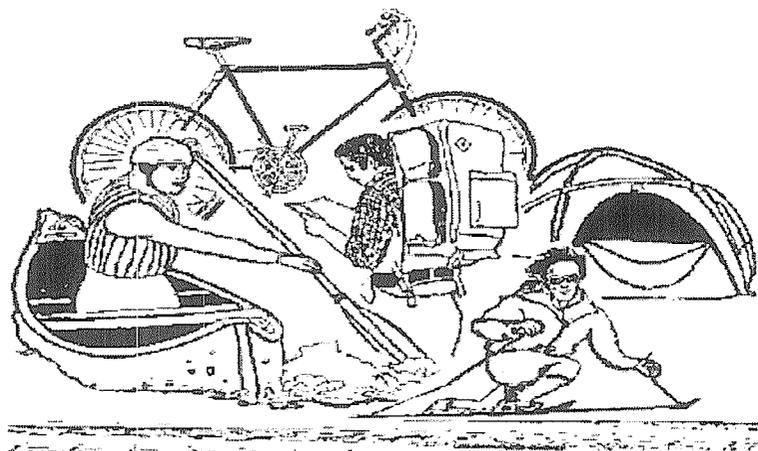
Lessons of Rainier:

- Take your time to acclimatize (two days at least).
- No matter how bad things are, stopping will make them worse: when in trouble move your ass!! Even if you are not in trouble, move your ass!! to stay that way.
- Marmots can run.

Participants: Ai “Indy” Sekiyama, Mark “Moose” Grist, Marek “Rambo” Labecki, Igor “?” Burstyn

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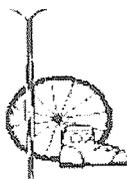


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A Rainier Ramble

by Mark Grist

Labour Day Weekend, 1995

On the Labour Day long weekend, an international climbing expedition consisting of members from Canada, Poland, Russia and Japan took part in the first annual "VOC International Climb of Goodwill". Funding for such a massive expedition was indeed scarce and the four team members were seen scrounging their packs searching for pennies in order to afford the compact rental from Budget. Luckily, an old popcan was found and sufficient money was obtained in order to meet the rental fee. Jamming, stomping and squeezing 4 mighty packs + equipment into the Ford Escort was an amazing feat in itself, and in doing so received international attention: "Hey buddy, the doors are bulging!" - U.S. Customs Officer.

Upon arriving at Mt. Rainier National Park in the late afternoon, it was quickly decided to wait until the next morning for the climb to Camp Muir. Any signs of early morning lethargy the next day soon vanished when clear skies and a beautiful sunrise greeted the climbers. After registering with the ranger (who had an amazing ability to make wallets US\$15 lighter), the fearless foursome embarked on their climb.

After witnessing countless hikers, skiers, snowboarders, and four teenagers "bobsledding" down the glacier wrapped up in their tent fly (nice try, but it really doesn't work!), the observation was made that impeccable weather in this *partikular* area seems not only to have an anti-prokras-tinitis effect, but also seems to increase energy levels significantly in the species *Homo sapiens*. Research since performed by PowerBar *et al.* (1995) has served to establish the mechanisms underlying this effect. Further studies by Yuppie (1995) show very high correlations between ability to pay US\$400 for the guiding service and the ability to piss others off by talking loudly to dorky friends on a cellular phone at base camp. Upon hearing that the preposterous sum of 400 dollars was charged to be shepherded up the mountain, the four expedition team members considered starting the chant: "V-O-C...cost is free!", but chose to resort to more subtle statements, such as the occasional "Mooooooo" or "Baaaaaaa".

The next morning came brutally early for the hardy VOC'ers (12:30am), and saw them dismantling their tents and piling rocks on top. Some people would think this strange behaviour; however, in light of evidence by Holy Shit! *et al.* (1993), strong, unexpected gusts of wind can blow your tent down the mountain and into a crevasse. After eight hours of trudging on the "highway" to the summit crater, the foursome had finally reached their goal. One individual, who shall remain unidentified, fumbled desperately with his harness in a miraculous attempt to bare his bottom before all hell broke loose in his bowels. A marginal degree of success was attained, after which the blue bag pooper-scoop was employed to "get the main stuff" as the rangers so delicately ask.

After a long weary descent to basecamp, a valiant attempt was made by still unnamed person to raise some funds for the journey home by selling his now-filled blue bag as an authentic souvenir to a wide-eyed tourist-hiker.

“Gosh, really? That’s volcanic plasma from the summit crater of Mt. Rainier?”

“Why yes sir, Rainier is an active volcano and what you see in that there double-bagged super thermonuclear plastic bag did in fact come from an eruption up there.”

“No shit, eh”

“Well....not exactly, sir.”

After this fatal slip the blue bag and its contents were deposited in barrel #12 (the other 11 were already full - a small indication of the impact 11,000 people a year have on the mountain).

That night saw an amazing electrical storm which prompted rapid exotentosis of all metallic objects. It could not be determined whether hair was standing on end due to fright or due the effects of static electricity. Nevertheless, the ensuing hailstorm, when heard from inside the tent, prompted the simile “It was like sitting in an aluminium garbage can positioned under a waterfall cascade of marbles”. Incredibly, the next morning arose bright and sunny, with a blanket of cloud obscuring all but the peaks of Mt. Adams and Mt. St. Helens. The following leisurely yet weary descent was enjoyed by all and seemed analogous to our sentiments towards the upcoming school year.

Participants:

Mark Grist

Igor Burstyn

Marek Lubecki

Aiichiro Sekiyama

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Mt. Slesse

by Neil Kearns

Motivated by a semi-successful climb of Yak peak with Andy Gabrys, and by the warm Indian summer, Eric Hutton and I set out to climb another Chilliwack climb, Mt. Slesse.

The plan was set. We'd leave UBC at 5:30, bivy half-way up the climb, and be back in Vancouver by Sunday - *no problem!* We left the car at about 8:30 and made short work of the hike along the logging spur. Thanks to our incredible route finding abilities, it only took us three hours to discover we were on the wrong one. Covered in sweat, nowhere near Slesse, we could only laugh at our incompetence. Undaunted, we ran down the Spur and started bushwhacking up Nesakwatch Creek (no trails for us thank you). After another couple of hours of aimless bushwhacking, we decided that Fairley's guide was not going to be enough to see us through. We retreated and arrived back at the car at 9:00 pm (disappointed and slightly embarrassed).

After this intense training/recon session, we knew we were set for the following weekend. With our approach memorized and packs lightened, we left Friday night and camped at the trail head. We woke up early and ditched our bikes to make the hike out an "easy" one. Our ascent was started by 9:00 am. Beautiful weather, pocket glaciers and football fields of glacier worn slabs made the approach a real treat. After a quick lunch at the base we began our climb. We climbed until around 5:30, doing the first 10 to 15 pitches in our runners. We were brimming with confidence. "We'll be back to the car by 4:00 tomorrow" announced Eric. "At the LATEST!" I confirmed.

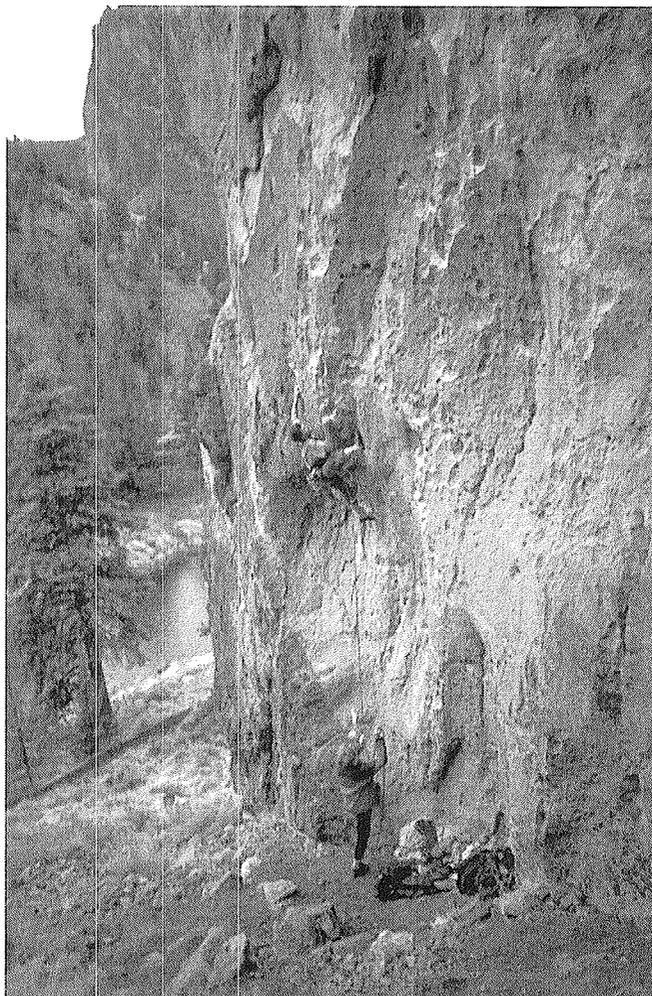
The next morning was great and we were treated with some really nice climbing. Around noon, we came to the "gigantic bivy ledge" indicated in our route description (the one that we had thought we had slept on the night before). Apparently we weren't moving quite as fast as we had assumed.

The final pitches of Slesse are the reason this climb is considered a "classic". We reached the top at around 5:30, just in time to watch a beautiful Cascade sunset. The only problem at that point was that we were stuck up there in the dark. I found a bivy spot that I felt would be "good enough". Eric said "no way" so we started down.

The first few rappels were obvious and when we reached the south gully I was happy that I had listened to Eric. After taking a moment to re-read the descent description, we started making our way down the gully. Surprisingly, our route finding skills let us down again, and we ended up missing the key part of the descent in which we were supposed to traverse west toward Slesse Creek Trail. Instead, we bumbled our way down this garbage chute gulley, ending it all with a dramatic rappel through a waterfall. That was enough for me and I insisted that we bivy and wait for day light. This time Eric agreed. Never before had my bivy sac provided such refuge.

The next day saw us spending hours bushwhacking, cursing, and dreaming of water. At one point we were so confused that we actually thought we might end up in the States. It turned out that we were not that far off course and we made it to our bikes by around 5:00 pm. It was only fitting that we had locked the bikes and had left the keys safely in my car (30 km away!). We hiked 15 km

to a main road where we were able to catch a ride with a guard from the correction facility nearby. We reached the car by 9:00pm and without hesitation, headed straight for Taco Hell.



Guy at Smith Rocks, Nov' 95. Photo: Guy Edwards

Yak Attack

by Andy Gabrys, September, 1995

There are some things that loom in your thoughts as objectives, as some sort or primal test against which you can wage your skills. When you hear about other people's attempts it can either fuel your desire or repel you. So it starts the tale of how I got involved with the reigning bivouac kings of the VOC in a two day onslaught of Yak Crack(5.8, 14 pitches) on 6700 foot Yak Peak in the Anderson River Range of the Coquihalla.

My first experience with the peak came when I was much younger, and the Chilliwack Yellow Pages had Yak prominently featured on the cover. What a wild looking peak, much more spectacular than the peaks around Chilliwack (which I later learned to appreciate as well). As I grew older, I got the chance to view it from the bus coming back from Kelowna during Peach Fest weekend in 1991.

So how did we actually get onto the idea of Yak? Who knows, it was probably just the usual tall-talking that everyone seems to do in the clubroom. So one Sunday morning in September, Eric Hutton, Neil Kearns, and myself found ourselves bound for the Coquihalla in Neil's trusty Pontiac. The weather was proving to be beautiful. We were on the road shortly after 6:00 A.M.

When we got to Hope, we were looking for some place to buy food, since we did not have the sense to buy it in Vancouver the night before. Of course, we had cruised through Chilliwack a half-hour too early for the Safeway. So we went to the Chevron Town Pantry. The lady there assured us that the Power Bars that they had on hand were very popular with the dirt-bikers (I guess we looked like rednecks). So on again.

We arrived at the Zopkios area about 9:30 A.M. No problem, we will be climbing by 10:00 A.M. or so. Looking over towards the peak, it looked so close. But we had a problem. It seems that during the previous evening at Cam's keg party, the approach trail location was not divulged. This was amazing, as a very drunk Drew Brayshaw was seen giving intricate route beta to Neil and Eric on everything including which hand to use for which hold etc.

So like good second guessers, we drove up the road hoping to find a closer rest area, and one that would have a trail. We decided to stay there, and started hiking up a faint trail into the bush. Within two minutes, the trail disappeared, and we were into a furious bushwack. This was to prove the preferred mode of travel for the next TWO HOURS. Here is a sample of the route.

"Where the hell is the trail"

"I don't know, but I know if we go up and to the left we have got to hit it"

"Man, this sucks. Hey, I think the brush is disappearing over there"

And of course it was. We hit a gully full of slide alder that was impossible to walk through. But we went up regardless.

After much cursing, we finally broke out into fairly open bush, that was covering some class 4 slabs. We could at least see the peak. Damn, it was still a long ways away. But we knew which way to go.

When we finally reached the bottom of the actual slabs of the climbing route, we could see another two parties climbing the route. One was in the chimney, and was whining about some 90 foot runout. Then as the other party climbed out onto the face and into the 5.6 handcrack, a BIG-BRO came down from the heavens into our arms. It seems that the smart second on the chimney team had dropped it while cleaning the station. Too bad it was so damn bent.

So we waited while these wizards got their shit together and finished their pitches. This was also to be the main activity during the day. Since the route was unknown to us, and the pro proved sketchy in some areas, we did not try to pass them. This was also a dumb idea (refer to the opening paragraph about the 'two day onslaught' and 'bivouac kings').

Now how about the route itself. The rock ranges from good to poor, and the protection is good to poor. The climbing situation is grand, but you could get all that from reading Fairley's guide. What was very cool was the ever better views of the surroundings as we got higher. The climbing is generally easy-ish, and you just get a kind of mind-fuck from the lousy pro.

So on we went, generally getting stuck behind the speedsters ahead of us.

Now flash to 6:00 P.M. that evening.

"Wow, it sure it taking a long time."

No shit! It started getting colder, and we put on all the clothes we had in our packs. We were all wearing helmets, which had proved useful when the parties above us decided to trundle some rocks on our heads. With the addition of the toques, we looked fully like aliens.

When we finally reached the bottom of the two pitch summit dihedral, we ground to a halt. It seems that one of the two intrepid leaders had led the first pitch and then was top-roping everyone else up. So Eric went up after this circus, and had to stand at the belay for about 15 minutes until those wizards cleared out so he could set up the belay.

By now, it was fully dark, the headlamps were out, and we were freezing our asses off. Eric did a fantastic lead of the final pitch in the total dark, and finally reached the end of the climbing route. When we reached his stance, we realized that the details we had regarding the descent were sketchy at best.

So with a fire in my boiler, I climbed up and around to the north to try to find the so called trail. And I found:

CHOSS and lots of it.

It is amazing how a strong rock like granite can weather to clay and turn into absolute shit. So with a fantastic belay set on a decomposing horn, everyone came up to me and we had a pow-wow.

"Looks like we might have to bivy on this choss-pile"

"Fuck that, I'm going to die if I stay here"

But we did stay, at least until about 1:30 A.M. We were tied in, sitting on this sloping ledge covered in shit rock (Here is some trivia - Skarn means shit rock in Norwegian I believe). We had our legs in our packs and everything. I guess we aren't homophobes, because we were huddled together to try to stay warm. Finally I lost it.

So I jumped up and got the shit together and led off upwards. What would have been casual

in the light was gripping, not knowing if I was standing on something that wasn't really connected to anything.

I reached a small grove of trees, and we almost decided to bivvy there, because it would have been warmer. But I was still on fire, so I went up again, until I reached another grove of tree/bushes just before the true summit. It seemed that others had stayed there also. I found out later that it had been other VOCer's. Now we were actually only minutes away from the actual descent trail. But in the darkness, the last little traverse was scarier than Medusa's face in the morning. So we bivvied, and stayed there for the night.

Over the 5 hours that we spent there, you could have counted the amount of sleep that we caught collectively on two fingers. I had to jump up every half-hour or so to try to get warm. The wind whistled through our clothes. When morning broke, I found I was never before so happy to be up at 5:45 A.M.

After the usual summit photos, we started down. The trail was fairly good, and avoided all the bushwack that we had done the day before. In fact, the trail came very close to where we had first parked to do the climb.

So what was learned from this?

If you go climbing a long route with Eric and Neil, take a bivvy sack.

If there are slow people in front of you dropping stuff on you, use your gun and get rid of them, you won't be disappointed.

Routes that other people say have great pro on them are not necessarily like that in real life.

If you are bushwhacking for 2 hours, you are probably off route.

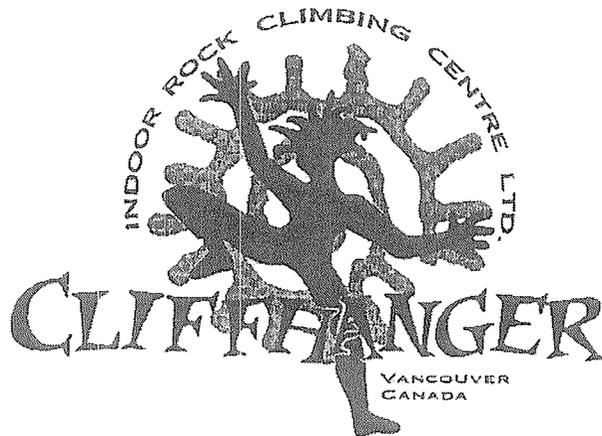
Last but not least, keep going to find the descent trail, this way you avoid becoming intimate with the small trees that you will no doubt be lying under to stay warm.

Cheers!

Participants:

Andy Gabrys, Neil Kearns, Eric Hutton

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A Tale of Two Tents



by Ron Horwood & Alanna Brady

“They were the best of tents, they were the worst of tents.” (Yes, we know we are ripping off a great literary line but how many of you can finish the paragraph?) Anyway, back to our story. This is a story of gear freaks and their senseless persecution of poor, retro, non-materialistic freaks (who would really love to give up their non-materialism and buy all the gear necessary to become a gear freak, but alas cannot).

We arrived in Skaha and proceeded to the free-because-it’s-closed-campground and began to set up our tents. Now these weren’t those namsy-pamsy-set-themselves-up kind of tents. These were hard men tents. Real effort was required for their assemblage. The first step, in setting up the tents, was picking a spot--which, as it turned out, ended up being too close to Drew. The next step was to find a rock. The optimum method for doing this was to stumble around in the dark until you tripped over one that was large enough to be used. Then came the hard part; because pounding in spikes with a large rock made a rather large noise that attracted Drew. Drew then proceeded to make fun of Ron’s tent pegs, stating that they’d be put to better use holding down railway ties or as “pitons”. Meanwhile, Ayasha and Alanna arrived before Drew so were luckily spared his witty remarks concerning tent pegs. Unfortunately, Joanna, Dan, Doug, and Ron were present to comment on the wimpiness of the pegs and the “fact” that we stole Ron’s rock; and so (quote from Ron) “didn’t have to stumble around in the dark to find their own. Growl!”

After being attracted to the general area by Ron pounding in his pegs after “reclaiming” his rock, Drew made fun of Ayasha and Alanna’s tent: “This must have been set up by Keebler Elves; a good breeze would knock this down.” He then entangled himself in the guy-lines of Ron’s tent, swore and proclaimed that any VOC member who dared to own such an ancient and useless piece of gear should be shot and thrown in the river. Indignantly, Ron defended his tent but to no avail, for it was already trashed, and so he went to find another rock.

Drew’s work being done for the evening, he retired to his technological marvel of a tent. When morning arrived, Drew passed judgement on Alanna and Ayasha’s tent finding it not worthy of standing. In a rage, Drew collapsed the hapless tent on the helpless people inside. Hearing a commotion Dan dashed from his tent too late to stop the carnage but just in time to receive the blame. And so if you are a “poor, retro, non-materialistic freak” be wary of people who set up new routes and don’t clean them thus resulting in a black mark by their name. (That would be Drew in case you hadn’t figured that out.)

Leavenworth, Thanksgiving 1995

by Andy Gabrys

“Ya Fritz, ve are going to drink some beers”

This was the cry that rallied some of the participants that weekend. What else was there to do on a weekend in Leavenworth, the cutest little faux Bavarian town in the north-west?

Drew, Anne-Marie, Dan and I drove down in the WHITE WARRIOR for the festivities. The border crossing guard was ready to give us the strip search, because he didn't believe that anyone could go rockclimbing on such a shitty weekend. I guess he figures that when it is raining in Blaine, everyone is having a shitty time as well.

The drive was fairly uneventful as we drove directly to TACO HELL. This was my first experience with this, and believe me, I was reluctant. But you just can't complain when you are too stuffed to walk and it only cost you five bucks.

Arriving in Leavenworth that evening, we met Jen (my girlfriend) who had driven down from the Okanagan that day. Just minutes behind us was the whole VOC brigade, so we went into Eight-Mile campground and took over several sites.

The weather was great, and we did some classic routes. For that matter, we also did some real choss-piles. Both seemed to be represented in fair numbers in Leavenworth. We also were able to take in a little beer gardening in the town, where we met two Americans who had never been to Canada in their lives, despite living three hours away, and were amazed that we were down there. They were entertaining anyways.

One episode that sticks in my mind happened one evening in the camp. Certain fellows who own a van were partaking in some natural enlightenment, when V1-Earl (the pseudo-ranger type) shows up and sticks his head in the van just as someone was trying to light a bowl. Perhaps not noticing, the fellow continued to puff, and V1-Earl must have been stoned as well, because nothing was said.

Anyway, this was another trip where someone's car broke down. As Neil was wailing over the campsite speed bump at about 1 MPH, a tie rod broke on the right tire. This led to a fantastic repair job by the local mechanic hero-types, and only ended up costing \$290 U.S. after ordering in the wrong part etc. After this was over, Neil was so depressed that he went to spend an equally large amount at the Co-op back in Vancouver. I am glad to announce that he is doing much better now, and wants to sell his car.

I came away with the impression that Leavenworth is something like Whistler. It is fine to visit, but it sure would be depressing to live in a town that is all restaurants and gift shops. At least both Whistler and Leavenworth both have their own breweries. And the winter activities are not bad. Good skiing in Stevens Pass. The ice climbing is apparently like the lower mainland here. Ice only forms in freezers and during the 100 year storm.

Nonetheless, Leavenworth was good enough that I will keep coming back, and hope that everyone who has not been there goes to check it out as well. Cheers!

A Visit to a Remote Alpine Cathedral

by Mark Grist

September, 1995

“ ‘Tis distance lends enchantment to the view
and robes the mountain in its azure hue.”

- Thomas Campbell

The problem with peak bagging is that just when you think you've reached the top and are about to enjoy the view, a little voice in the back of your head never fails to point out which of the peaks off in the distance it hasn't seen the view from. The worst part is that we often listen to this little guy: "Yeah, the view from here is pretty good, but man, if we were standing on that peak over there, then we'd be taking in a real view." Thus, having grown up in North Vancouver, my little voice has done a lot of talking during local scrambles, and he never seems to shut up. In particular, there is one peak I am continually reminded of: "Dude, this is a pretty impressive peak, even Fairley calls it 'The most interesting mountaineering objective in this [North Shore] group.' , long approach, illegal access, ..." And so he babbles on and on, and I nod solemnly in agreement.

So after many years of weathering a storm of insults from this little shit disturber, it was time to put an end to the torment. Bye the way, I think it would be appropriate to give this little fella a nickname, you know, a cute name which we can use to refer to this "little voice". So I was searching for a good name when it suddenly popped into my head ... Drew. (There are always ways to get even!)

Anyways, word had it that it would take about 14 hours return and looking at the map it was probably going to be 35km return. "Yeah, that's a pretty good day's hike," Drew said as my saner consciousness wondered what I was getting into here. At any rate, the challenge was there and I had long since been "convinced" on meeting it.

Depending on the snowpack, the best time to go for Cathedral mountain is August to early September. Doing this trip as an overnight excursion (camping is technically illegal) is recommended, and a good spot to camp would be the rather idyllic lake on the ridge ~5 min North of the peak of Coliseum mountain. (Bring a bathing suit, too.) In planning for this trip, I figured on biking as much of the first 7km to Norvan creek as possible - the first 4km of which (to the debris chute) is feasible on a mountain bike, and actually a pretty good ride. Biking in is a good idea for two reasons: you can chop about two hours off your total return time, especially the flat part you can't drive because the gate is locked before 8:00am; and secondly, riding out at the end of the day saves having to trudge the last boring 4km to the trailhead.

So there I was, out of bed at 5:30 and hoping to be hiking at 6:00 (yeah right), but only half an hour behind schedule. Soon enough, however, Norvan ridge was attained and great views were

seen along the beautiful alpine ridges which are so characteristic of the local mountains. On this attempt of Cathedral in a day, I was to make two key mistakes: first, I only took 3L of water on a sunny warm fall day, and second, I tried to skirt the large rock face facing east on the ridge between Burwell and Coliseum. From the summit of Coliseum mountain, it looks like the ridge will end in a peninsula, with sheer rock faces on three sides - forcing a retreat. This is not the case, however, and following the ridge is the easiest and fastest route to Burwell (don't miss the one cairn - consisting of two rocks - along the way!). Negotiating the boulderfield by dropping off the ridge and skirting this rock face is not recommended, unless one is going for extra hardman points.

Reaching Burwell, it was obvious that I was short not only on water, but also on time. Drew was hopping up and down: "Man, we're so close - look at it! It's right there! Who needs water? Lots of time. Come on. Imagine the view! Dude..." But as rational people will agree, nobody listens to Drew when he's in this state, if ever at all. My only consolation was to spend some time bouldering on the amazing sunbleached rocks NE of Burwell mountain - including some 20 foot long 5.8 problems. If Burwell is your destination, rock shoes and a chalkbag are a must, with some good looking slabs due east about half a kilometer away. On the hike out, Drew was getting in his cheap shots, as usual: "I knew it, you just weren't good enough, eh? Man, I bet the view from on top of Cathedral would have been real good today. In fact, I bet you could have seen Mount Robson from up there..." Needless to say it was a long walk out, but hey, there's always next year, right?

Wrong. The Indian summer held and the next Saturday was to be as cloudless as the previous. This time I was really psyched - up at 5:00, hiking by 5:30, at Norvan by 7:00, Burwell by 10:30 and with 5 liters of water this time. From Burwell the plan was to follow the ridge due north until it intersects the west ridge of Coliseum (the most obvious line from Burwell). As a detailed route description is not given in Fairley's guide book, allow me to describe the important points.

Allow ~6 hrs return from Burwell, descending from its peak via the north ridge (keeping more to the east side, especially to avoid a 40' face, which sports some good looking routes). Ascending from the Burwell-Cathedral col is a Burly Blueberry Bushwhack (translation: don't wear yer best shorts!) and a faint trail is visible (evidence of other Drew-induced activities). Keeping to the west side of the ridge, a little further up, a 15' wall is reached which is climbable really only in one spot, with some enviroholds for assistance. After crossing a large open "plateau" keep to the right and drop down to avoid a "ridge-peninsula". Eventually swing around to the west of rock faces as the upper slopes of the ridge are attained, and then head east on the ridge to Cathedral itself. The route to the summit is "Fairley" obvious and some bleached flagging and cairns are found. It takes ~45min along the west ridge to the top, following the obvious system of ledges and gullies. The way down, however, is not nearly so obvious as the steepness of terrain and stunted, shrubby cedars make routefinding difficult. The importance of keeping in mind what exactly the return route will look like cannot be overemphasized; unless, of course, you enjoy traverses through thick brittle cedar shrubs on 500 slopes because of following the wrong gully and ledge system (as I did). If in doubt, keep more to the north than to the south on the way down. As the return route swings south towards Burwell, the general rule here is to stay higher rather than lower. Going too far west (by descending too much) will put you nicely on route for the Eastcap drainage

with a nasty gully between you and the ridge you really want to be on (as I also managed to do). The rest is straightforward from here.

As you may have figured out by now, this was a solo trip (except for the nagging presence of Drew, but he doesn't count). Before you cluck your disapproval, ham radio contact with home base was maintained throughout - the repeaters on Seymour, Burnaby, and UBC are all well within range from Norvan ridge through to Cathedral, with one dead spot at the Burwell-Cathedral col. With a message of Chinese take-out arriving at home, the hike from Burwell turned into a quick trot, and three hours later saw me at the parking lot. This experience was interesting in that even though fully knackered, picking up the pace a little (to a jog) ups the concentration and avoids the "weary trudge out" syndrome.

The blueberries (*Vaccinium alaskensae*) are very plump and juicy in September; however, I did have one scare. While stuffing my face, a large party consisting of ACC'ers passed by, with the leader cautioning "I wouldn't eat those..." I immediately thought that these were poisonous berries I was consuming but was put to relief when this joker said "... because you'll be crapping blue thunder tomorrow!" Drew was laughing his head off after this one, but he had been silenced after finally reaching the summit of Cathedral. "How about that view there, Drew?" I smugly said, thinking I had finally shut him up for good. His reply was calm and casual, "You know, the Judge was looking pretty good today..."

With good routefinding, allow 15-16 hours from the outer gates (locked at the ungodly hours necessary to do Cathedral in a day), taking off ~2 hours if you're a decent mountain biker. This endeavor is to be done only once in a lifetime, with subsequent one day ascents of Cathedral constituting mental insanity, physical torture and a shitload of hardman points.

My First Multipitch (a very brief debriefing)

by Brodie Haupt

- Fall 1995: Dan Perrakis and Brodie Haupt meet on a sunny U.B.C. campus and decide to go climbing
- It is Dan's first multipitch lead and Brodie's first multipitch climb
- We reach Squamish by mid-afternoon and, with guidebook in hand, set our sights on the apron
- Try to find the proper trail to the base of the apron
- End up taking shortcuts that were not very short and retrace our steps
- We try to find the first pitch of Deidre
- Argue about the first pitch and the description in the guidebook.
- It IS a birch tree at the top of the very short first pitch
- We mistakenly had brought our packs along
- Brodie hides his pack in the bushes and warily straps on Dan's 30lb pack
- We rope up for the easy first pitch because we are determined to do everything by the book
- Climbing begins
- Dan leads and, as one would suspect, Brodie seconds
- The traverse that follows is "fun"
- The two pitches of hand over hand layback crack are amazing and take nuts like a squirrel
- Brodie has problems laybacking as the heavy pack keeps shifting on his back
- Brodie bounces his shoulder off the apron a few times, flails, but does not fall
- Brodie can't retrieve a nut
- Dan goes down to get it while Brodie watches the traffic far, far below
- Dan drops his nut
- Dan shouts
- A climber on the pitch below catches the nut and returns it to us (how considerate of him)
- We are passed by a few people soloing
- We reach the top a few hours and 7 pitches later without falling once
- Everyone smiles and rests
- We try to find an easy way down
- Brodie forgot his shoes in the other pack and Dan only has his pair of Birkenstocks
- We clamber down the mountainside and end up back in the parking lot
- We realize Brodie still has no pack
- We run back up the trail to find Brodie's pack
- It starts to get dark
- But we know where the trail is now (off by heart)
- We get into the car and head for home feeling tired, but proud of our accomplishments
- It was a superb afternoon on Squamish granite and a "good day was had by all"

Needle Peak 1995

by Drew Brayshaw

The Vth Annual Needle Peak trip was the largest ever, with some 30 participants. This meant an extra large headache for the trip organizer (me). I ended up just telling everyone to meet at the UBC Bus Loop very early in the morning, figuring that things would sort themselves out. In order to avoid last minute phone calls from those strange people who wait till midnight on the night before a trip and then call you up and ask “Will I need to wear hiking boots for this trip?”, I went over to my brother’s place in Kits to spend the night. This also enabled me to deal with the problem of trying to get from West Van to UBC at 4:00 AM (impossible w/o car).

At about 5:45 I staggered out onto the street and was soon picked up by Cam. Andrew gave me a breakfast beer to get the day going as I squirmed into the back of Cam’s crowded truck to ride out to UBC. At the bus loop I jumped into Brodie’s car along with some people I had never met before. We drove out to Hope introducing ourselves and listening to Material’s Hallucination Engine.

At Hope, it was time for another tradition: breakfast at Rolly’s Restaurant. Here we met three more members of our group. As we were leaving, another four showed up. Big trips are always chaos; I had given up all hope of organizing something this big. I was just along for the ride. Back in the car, more ambient music and blah, blah, blah, half an hour later we were packing up in the parking lot. Cam, remembering the snow last year, put on gaiters and plastic boots, although we ended up not seeing any of the white stuff this time around.

Everyone headed out on the trail at their own speed. Cam, Ashley and Andrew brought up the rear of the party, giving me freedom to float about somewhere in the middle of the group and engage in more blah, blah, blah with my new acquaintance Karin. It was probably the finest day of the year. An eagle flying overhead would have seen a long line of hikers strung out along the trail, with Cam’s group at the rear and Vance way, way out in front.

After much sauntering through alpine meadows we reached the base of the south-west ridge proper. Here is where the going gets difficult and for a while I turned into a counterfeit mountain guide. I always write “easy hike” on the trip sheet for this trip, but some people have a different definition of easy than others. Yet in five years of leading this trip I have only had one person turn back before making the summit for psychological reasons. Here a few people needed intensive coaching on the two rock steps, yet everyone summited.

After a few minutes on the peak Vance and I decided to challenge ourselves a bit. We dropped down the North Ridge and traversed along it almost to the Thimble (Markhor Pk.) Fairley’s guide calls this class 3-4, so we didn’t expect any problems—there wasn’t anything I would have wanted rockshoes for, anyway, although some bits were a bit technical and exposed (the latest Beckey guide says this ridge has a few 5th class moves, but there’s no place to put pro in, so you’ll be 4th classing it anyways....). After traversing the ridge and checking out the view of the unrepeated? East Buttress of Needle, we cruised back up the ridge to find that most of our party had left

to check out the alien artifact on top of “the Flatiron” and to swim in the lake. We zipped back down to the meadow and bouldered on the classic boulder until everyone had returned and had their head counted. After a final few moves on the boulder, we headed back to the cars.

Back at the cars our carload hung around till the end, as I made sure that everyone was back down the trail. Then, when it was our turn to go, Brodie’s car wouldn’t start! Almost all the other cars had left- only Lee’s van was still there. Lee and his engineering buddies came over and checked out the car - they diagnosed it as needing \$300 in repairs before it would ever move again! Joanne, Brodie, Karin and I were resigning ourselves to a long, cold night out and a big hole in the wallet for repairs when Brodie tried to start the car again- and succeeded! Just a flooded engine. That’s the last time I believe an engineer’s diagnosis of a mechanical problem.

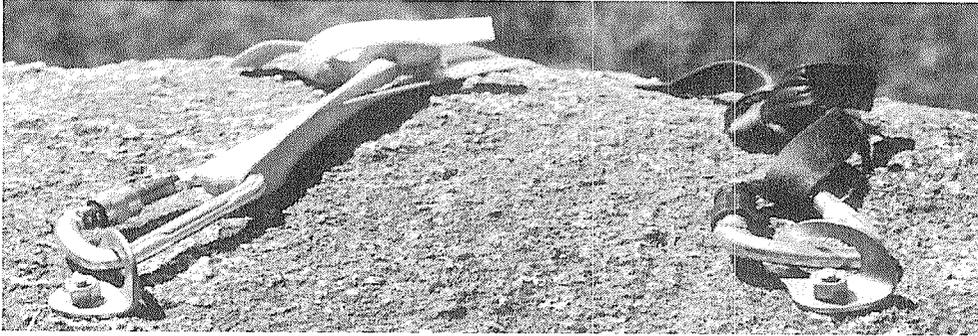
The rest of the trip followed the usual pattern: Othello Tunnels, ice cream in Hope, drive back to the city with a beautiful sunset to end things off. Joanne and I had a spirited disagreement over what an “easy hike” is; she had expected something more like one of the English hill walks she was used to, whereas I figured anything with less than 6 hours hiking and 3000 ft. elevation gain to be “easy”. But even this pseudo-argument could not ruin the perfection of what was probably the best of the annual series so far. See you at Needle Peak VI!

Participants:

In the blue car: Brodie Haupt, Karin Fleming, Joanne Green and Drew Brayshaw. In the other cars: 26 other people!

Night Climbing with the Picnic Commandos

by Paul Fearing



Hey. We're young. We're restless. We're bad at opening sentences. So instead of some catchy little hook to start this story, we'll just plunge right into our little tale of **COMMANDO NIGHT CLIMBING**.

It all started on a fine September evening. For some (now obscure) reason, Judith was mopy and depressed. Joanna and I tried to console her, proposing a little adventure. We decided that we'd have a happy little picnic in the park - sort of a feel-better-Alan-Alda-bonding-little deal. We'd have a cute little wicker basket, with a red table cloth. Perhaps rabbits would frolic at our feet. Or at least, that was what we told Judith. The **REAL** plan was much more devious and dastardly. Joanna and I had decided that the only way to combat the mopy blues was with a shot of adrenaline - the basic idea being that ya can't be depressed when you're busy wetting your pants with fear. We decided that we'd ditch the picnic and take Judith for a secret stint of night climbing.

We grabbed Judith and stuck her in the car.

"Hey, I'm feeling great!" said Judith. Joanna and I gave each other a look.

"Don't you feel even the slightest bit sad?", we said. "Sad enough so that a quick shot of adrenaline will make you feel so much better that you'll call us true friends forever?"

"Nope."

"You're just in denial. I bet a little clim..er, picnic will make you feel better."

We blasted off, shamelessly lying to Judith.

"Ooops. Missed the turnoff to Stanley Park. Hey, I hear there's great picnicking at Ambleside.

"Shoot! There went the Ambleside turnoff. I know - let's go to Whytecliff Park at Horseshoe Bay."

"Was that Horseshoe Bay? Damn - that turn-off is so confusing. No matter. We can stop at Porteau Cove."

"They really should mark that Porteau Cove turnoff a little better."

We arrive at Murrin, near dusk, and start setting up. By this time, we're forced to fess up to Judith, who has long since figured out that we're Minions of Satan bent on her destruction. We trudge up to Sugarloaf. Other climbers (happily breaking down their gear) look at us strangely as we discuss how many ropes we want to put up. We squirm and make up lame excuses. "Our eyes - sensitive to the light. Ate too many carrots as a child." It grows darker, and our excuses become lamer.

"Damn - never could understand that daylight savings time thing."

"We're night commandos of death. So what if we use a toprope."

Finally, it was dark and we were ready. We took a few posed pictures in order to enhance our reputations as "Hardcore" (okay, okay, we're more like..."Slightly Firm Core"), strapped on our headlights, and got to it.

Climbing at night was wonderful, peaceful, and self-centering. The night blotted out the ground, the top of the cliff, the surrounding trees, concentrating all attention onto a tiny circle of dimly lit rock. It was like we were holding onto a tiny circle of rock, floating in a big sea of darkness. The belayer stood quietly in the darkness below, watching a small pool of light creep up the rock. But enough flowery descriptions.

The blackness made some climbing routines a little more complex. "Hey - watch your hand - that's NOT my chalk bag." All in all it was a wonderful way to eke out a few more hours of climbing, without having to have a life threatening epic at the same time.

After a couple of climbs, we packed up and set out for home and long-neglected homework. Too bad we're also just as bad at finishing stories as starting them.

Rock-Fall



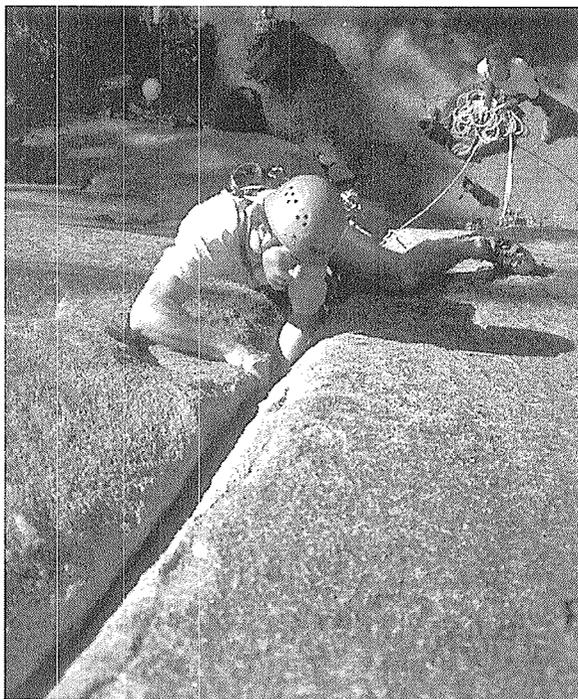
by Dan Perrakis

(Thankfully, these trips actually involved little or no actual falling rock, as we managed to avoid Frenchman's Coulée as a destination)

This year I was fortunate enough to go on all of the major rock climbing trips of the fall. As someone else has no doubt already written about it, I will merely describe Longhike as wet. If you were there you know what I mean (although the afternoon sun made it worthwhile nonetheless). Still, weather notwithstanding, many new rock neophytes were born that weekend, a bunch of which came the following weekend to....

Leavenworth:

As the first trip that I ever organized, this one proved to be quite a handful. The night before leaving, I decided to call everyone on the trip list and make sure they had a ride. This was largely for the sake of the newer members of the club, instead of the customary procedure of secretly grabbing rides from one's friends and then leaving the unfortunate ill-informed flailing in the dust when they learned of the lack of car space (the day of the trip meeting, of course - meaning the Friday everyone was leaving on). Anyway, everyone who wanted to go got there eventually (I think?), there were no epics on the car ride down (after driving for 4 hours through solid downpour, it was nice to turn into the town and find clear skies...) other than the usual - Neil and Eric got a citation from a ranger for attempting a roadside bivi to avoid the \$8 per car fee. Good club spirit, guys! Hmm, it all seems so far away now, I can't remember the particulars.... For me, the trip was a little hectic, as I had just had to fork out \$1000 to UBC that I hadn't expected (it's a long story involving a couple of car chases, some shady gambling deals and a butler who just wouldn't die, but that's another story), I thought I lost my wallet on the first day, and I forgot to pack my food for the trip. So for much of the camp time I found myself begging and borrowing money and food (which was actually my theme during all of first term, but that's a different story as well!) until I struck a deal with Cam and Andrew to cook for them in exchange for a portion of the meal. This deal proved lucrative to both parties, and was continued for all of the fall climbing trips. And yes, climbs were climbed!



Dan cruising up Classic Crack at Leavenworth. Photo: Dave Dexter

On Saturday, many of us went to the large and impressive Castle Rock, and I led my troupe of Rock I graduates up Saber (5.4, four stars!). It was a long pitch, so I ended up having to sit on a roomy but exposed ledge for just under 3 hours as all seven of my students (I feel that I should remember their names - Jacky, Fuzz, oops, sorry guys!) came up the pleasant and varied pitch. Carl ended up on the same ledge after the climb he and Andy were doing, and we sat and chatted about epics and death and admired the great view until we could use both of our ropes to get back down. All in all it was a pretty tiring day for just one climb, but I guess that's the way things work with a party of 8 with only one leader.

That evening, the herd of VOCers (about 30 or 40 of them!) gathered around the fire and told lies and gossip. Various substances were ingested, and worse lies and more vicious gossip followed. Some attempts at guitar playing and singing were made, but the mood and crowd didn't allow for it.

On Sunday, Vèrèna (Vern), Jen & Dave (Dexter), Kyle and I hiked up to Givler's Dome. When we finally found it, it provided good climbs: 3 nice 5.10a slabs, one that gave Kyle a 20 ft. cheese-grater fall (ow), and Givler's Crack, a delicious 2 pitch 5.7 hand crack. We did our climbs accompanied by the sounds of Dave shouting with glee as he found and placed bomber pro place-

ments. On our way down, we met Andy and a couple of others top roping Z-Crack, a burly 5.10d with a cruxy start that a couple of us had a go at. We hit the town that night, in various groups. About 20 of us ended up at a Mexican restaurant where more lies and gossip were told, but over tasty food (paid for with someone else's money, heh, heh, heh...), while another bunch went to the Biergarten and waited around for midnight and Alfred's 21st birthday so he could buy everyone a round. A, those VOC mooches - always taking cheapness to new depths.... (says the hypocrite...)

On the final day, I stayed around the 8-Mile Campground area with a bunch of others, and people took turns leading and top roping Classic Crack (5.8+) a grunt of a hand and fist crack, as well as the other good climbs on that rock. Drew was seen soloing the 5.7 buttress (which had minimal pro potential anyway), and I was seen taking whippers and ripping out TCUs on Deception Crack, a flaring 5.9 finger crack. Did I mention that last term was a bad one for pro placements for me? On the way home, Andy, Drew and I stopped at the Swiftwater picnic area to scrape around on the boulder problems there. I was more successful at the role of photographer than climber, and got some good shots of the other two. Drew got some shots of me praying to the rock for vertical aid, and trying to heel hook in hiking boots.

All in all, it was pretty funky trip. I've forgotten the little details of everyone else's individual adventures, unfortunately, which is my excuse for the dry nature of this section. After consultation of that week's VOCene, I can add that the token epic occurred when Ray Venebles, Dave Way, Olivier and Tanya got to practice their night rappelling technique after traditional routefinding failed on Outer Space (5.9). I think this trip caused many people to add 'headlamp' to their list of "must bring" climbing gear. Hardcore Award for this weekend went to Dave Voadlo, who was witnessed cranking 5.12....< sigh>... Someday.... Anyway, 3 weeks later we were eager for the next rock crusade, this time to...

Skaha:

As has become the tradition (or so I'm told), the Halloween weekend was held at this sunny Okanagan Valley area. This is arranged so that Drew can put up the trip sheet with the title "Ska-ha-ha-ha-ha!" and feel very spooky. Anyway, as usual camping was at the Okanagan Falls site, with half a dozen cars parked end to end in front of the locked barrier. The ranger kindly turned a blind eye to the 20 or-so odd tents that popped up overnight. I say "odd" tents because tent aesthetics were a big issue on this trip, as can testify a certain tent-sharing couple of friends (hint: names begin and end in 'a'). It seems their one-pole design proved somewhat unstable in the "wind"? Ron had the right idea, pegging his tent down with pegs fashioned from I-beams, at 2 kg per peg. And yes, once again, we did get around to climbing.

Blessed with fabulous weather on both days, many cranks were done. Without meaning to delve into the political realm of grade comparisons, I will merely note how I managed to lead Stairway to Heaven (5.11a) (albeit with one hang, on the easy part - shit!), whereas I had never even done Squamish 5.11a on t.r. without totally dogging it. So, you get the picture. Skaha is a nice place for the safety conscious - short distances between bolts and few nasty surprises make it a good

place to learn. In fact, this trip provided first leads to Ron, Vern, Jen, and Ashley (the latter 3 on Lichen In My Panties, 5.8). Paul took his first groundfall somewhere on Another Buttress Wall when he slipped before clipping his first piece and spent the next day showing off his limp. I guess pro does have its uses....

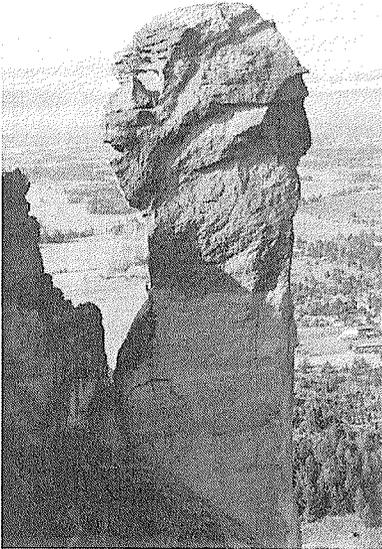
On Saturday, I climbed mostly with Doug “Grumpy” Film, who had a good time on the trip despite his best efforts. The best climb I did that day, and probably the best of the weekend, was The Dream (5.9). Past VOCJ articles have described this climb, so I won’t go on about it, but it’s a crack climb across a roof, and is very sweet indeed. Other memorable leads for me included Minor Skirmish (5.10c), the aforementioned Stairway to Heaven, and Plum Line (5.10a) - the classics, pretty much. Doug had some fine leads too, the most enjoyable being a good 5.8 hand crack on Go Anywhere Wall whose name evades me. At night the VOC horde crowded around the campfire to share warmth and listen to Drew’s classic ghost story, which I missed somehow while fiddling with my guitar. In terms of climbs done per unit time, the Skaha trip was the best of any Autumn climbing trip - a combination of great weather and the high density of moderate grade climbs of decent quality that Skaha offers. (Oh, come to think of it, I hope the place doesn’t get closed down, but I guess by the time this is printed, we’ll know...). Anyway, a rad time was had by all, and we sadly departed Sunday night to return to this artifice we call real life.

Less than 3 weeks later, we headed down to the Oregon desert to crank the sport routes at...

Smith Rock:

After the 8-12 hr drive (depending on driving style and epic quotient), Smith Rock rises magically out of the desert. This year I managed to take a couple days off classes and thereby get a solid 5 day vacation at Smith. Weather this year could be described as “not too cold in the sun”, and this definitely was an issue. Doug “Pilot” Wilm got us there in great time, as is pretty much guaranteed rides in the “Red Rocket”. Sadly though, Doug’s health was low on the trip (he is pretty old, after all...) and he spent the first couple of days exploring the Café Paradiso in Bend. Meanwhile, Sarah, Ron and I tromped about the Crooked Canyon looking for sunny climbs. I don’t remember the details of the first couple of days, but we did Lion’s Jaw (5.8), Gumby Direct (5.10c), Captain Xenolith (I think), (5.10a), Float Like a Butterfly (5.10b?), and a couple others on Rope De Dope block, as well as an interesting looking bolted line that wasn’t in the book that Sarah wanted to try. (An hour and a half later, freezing in the shade and wind, we finally managed to finish it and retrieve our gear - so much for initiative...). When the weekend actually arrived, a horde of other VOCers descended on the place, strewn about at various camping locations. It promptly began to rain that morning (while I was on Revelations, 5.9, causing me to take a 15 ft. whipper - damn weather!) Luckily the porous Smith Rock rock dries quickly, so we could still do some climbing that day, but conditions were far from ideal. Brodie, Doug, and Dave Dexter set up some t.r.s for the non-leaders (Brodie got his first lead in, on Bunny Face, 5.7), and everyone tried to stay dry. Later on a bunch of us scrambled across Asterix Pass and checked out some of the crags on the other

side. Dave and Doug did Spiderman (2 pitches, 5.7) and had to leave their ropes up overnight, while I did some scrappy thing called In Harm's Way (5.7) with Vern and Ashley, I think (or was it Sarah?). In the evening, a bunch of us went to the brewery in Bend (thankfully avoiding being ID'd) where we ate and drank some quality local fare, while others did various similar things, in addition to exploring the lava tunnels nearby.



Monkeyface. Photo: Verena Blasy

Sunday offered considerably better weather, and I set off with Vern, Eric Clemson and Sarah to do a long-awaited project: the Pioneer Route up The Monkey Face (four pitches, 5.7 A1). We were kinda bumbly, considering out of the four of us, only Eric had ever done any aid climbing, or even used Jumars before. So all in all, to get the four of us up the one pitch of simple aid took about 2 hours, and considerable blood, sweat and tears. Vern developed a sudden case of Turet's Syndrome (to the great amusement of the two guys from Seattle who were on the ledge at the same time, laughing at our bumbly efforts) and began cursing me up and down when she had to strap herself into my shaky setup of the VOC ascenders, and climb the vertically-dangling rope that Eric had fixed. I didn't blame her when my time came to jug up the rope - the sudden step off the ledge and into the free-hanging aiders gave me a massive and sudden jolt of adrenaline (and threatened to loosen my rather full bladder) as I swung out into the open air. (In fact, all day I needed to "leak the lizard", so to speak - sometimes painfully so - and would have if it

wasn't for the group of kids that were watching us intently from the ground...) The next pitch was one of the scariest bit of climbing I've ever done. Aptly named "Panic Point", it was a 5.7 jug haul out of an overhanging cave, with about 150 ft. of air under your feet - technically easy climbing, but a real rush to lead. Anyway, we all got to the summit eventually, but sadly it was raining at this point, and attempts at a summit photo proved fruitless. Like the real mountaineers that we are, we did the lengthy free-hanging double rope rappel in the dark with no problems, and hiked the long way back to the campsite. Other people reported having a fairly good day until the weather crapped out sometime in the late afternoon.

That evening, some people went out to dinner, and a bunch of others, myself included, visited the lava tunnels. The tunnels are these really creepy cave-like formations that extend for sev-

eral hundred metres underground. When you get to the end, you can sit and have everyone turn off their headlamps and flashlights and sit in absolute and total darkness. Once everybody actually stops yapping and burping and farting, the silence and darkness combine to give quite an effect. During the day there is good bouldering on the cave walls near their entrance.

On Monday, those who chose to stay and climb were rewarded with the best day of the trip. The weather we all hoped for - hot sun all day - allowed for some really pleasant climbing. My best climb that day, and one of my all time favourite climbs, was Moonshine Dihedral (5.9), a steep dihedral with a jagged crack and an abundance of good pro and holds. A definite must-do. After finally getting good weather and some good climbing in, it was with great pain that the long drive back home began.

So, that's my account of climbing trips this fall, as my foggy mind recollects. These were all big trips, so no doubt I've left somebody's version out. I apologize in advance for this, but others could write their own versions if they really cared. Anyway, every trip was worthwhile, all these trips involved some serious bitching', crankin', finger-tweakin', toe-screamin', terrifyin' and blissful climbing (in addition to more mellow social activity climbing). So if you weren't there, your loss, and you'll want to be there next year. Until then, don't get weak!

Participants: Probably near 100 people in total, so I sure ain't listing 'em all here.

How to Fuck with The Minds of Park Rangers

or, the VOC Ascent of Blanshard's Needle

by Cam and Dru

Blanshard's Needle is the obvious steep peak to the south of Golden Ears. It's a classic 4th class climb, just a bit harder than the tourist route up the West Lion. WHAT A CHALLENGE!

Drew had been psyched for this peak for years. He persuaded Cam that he wanted to climb it too. Drew's brother Chris came along for one of his rare trips into the mountains (got to keep up that mountaineer self image) and brought along his buddy Dave Way, aka Lentil, the guy who converted Chris to vegetarianism.

We met one cloudy Sunday in October. Chris, Drew and Cam drove out to the Wendy's on Boundary, where they met Dave and got in his car. Dave drove out to Maple Ridge. Chris and Dave ate some yummy grains and goo while Cam and Drew had Raunchy Ron's.

We parked in the Golden Ears parking lot and hiked up the trail to the second creek, then up a flagged route up the creek past some waterfalls into the basin below Blanshard and Edge. After about an hour we saw the gully we were supposed to climb up. It went up a long ways... into the clouds and out of sight. The top (that we could see) was covered in snow. It looked like another choss ridden smegma fest.

Not to waste too much time on it, the gully was rude and loose. Lots of blocks got trundled. Eventually (2000 ft later) we came out in the notch between the Needle and Alouette Pk., and hiked along the ridge to the Needle itself.

A lot of the mystique of Blanshard's Needle comes from the picture in 103 Hikes which shows a big phallic tower wrapped in swirling mists. Yeah, the mist was there... the tower was a piece of crap! It was rotten and covered in melting ice and snow. The crux was right off the ground... a ten meter 4th class pitch. At Squamish it would be the descent route for a climb. Cam started to lead up it. For some reason (wet, covered in ice, wearing steel toe work boots instead of hiking boots) he didn't think it would work, so he wrapped the rope around a tree and lowered off like a sport climber. Now Chris thought the pitch was too dangerous and tried to stop Drew from climbing it. But Drew never does anything his brother says, and so he led it, actually placing a piece (sling on a loose horn) which probably means it's technically 5.0...

The rest of the climb was like the approach to Crown Mountain but steeper. Lots of tree holds and wet slime. We ate lunch amid clouds on the rotting summit and then descended. Everybody but Cam rapped... Cam downclimbed to build his ego back up. From there we climbed up onto Alouette and followed the trail down to the parking lot. An easy three hours... but the story doesn't end there.

By the time we got down it was dark. Drew ran ahead to stop the ranger from closing the gate and locking us in the park overnight. He arrived at the road and flagged down a ranger. Then his companions didn't show up! Ranger went into panic mode: "How many lost hikers?" It was his last day on the job before vacation started and you could see he thought he was going to have to

stay up all night.

“Maybe they just came down a different way, sir?”

Sure enough, driving back to Mike Lake we picked up Chris and Dave. But wait, no Cam! “I thought he was with you!” “Oh yeah? WE thought he was with you!” This type of thing got the ranger all upset. He was sure he had an epic on his hands. Just as he started to break down completely Cam walked out of the woods “I thought I was on the wrong trail so I went back for a ways... how’d you guys get down here ahead of me?”

The rest of the trip was uneventful. We drove back to Vancouver. Drew put on some shitty music that everyone else hated, after promising Cam that “these guys sound just like the Beasties!!”. Just your standard mountaineering trip.

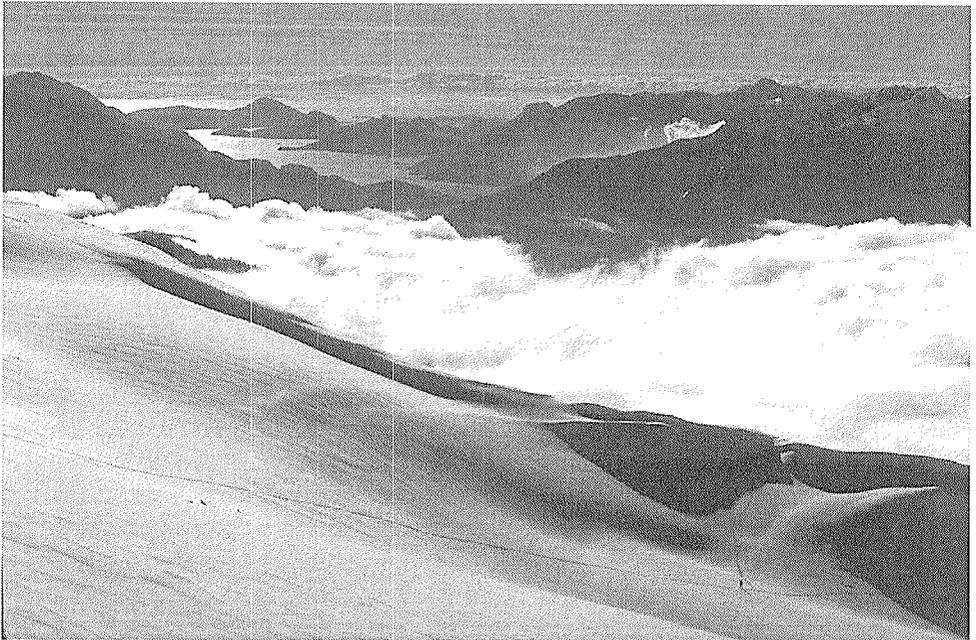
Participants:

Drew Brayshaw

David Way

Cam Campbell

Chris Brayshaw



Some pretty snow (cd ..(darn these unlabelled pictures!) **Photo: Markus Kellerhals**

VOC Glacier School - October 21-22, 1995

By Andy Gabrys

Well, another glacier school has come and gone. Like every year, it was more popular than we could handle, and the sign-up list filled up in a hurry. No problem, especially if we actually have instructors. This proved to be no problem in the end.

The instructors included:

Jeff Kavanaugh

Fern Webb

Dave Campbell

Ai Sekiyama

Francis Leprozo

John Paul Sweeny

Andrew Port

Lorne Hoover

Eric Clemson

Many thanks to these people for their time and energy on the weekend.

The school went remarkably well this year. Dryschool started out a little late, but Eric Clemson entertained students with his casual banter, as I pulled out one piece of gear after another from my tickle trunk. Eric gave me a real hard time about having all this stuff. Needless to say once we got to the glacier on the weekend, I was vindicated. Lorne and Eric had brought enough gear from Coast Mountain to sink a small battleship. Team MARMOT was definitely out in full force.

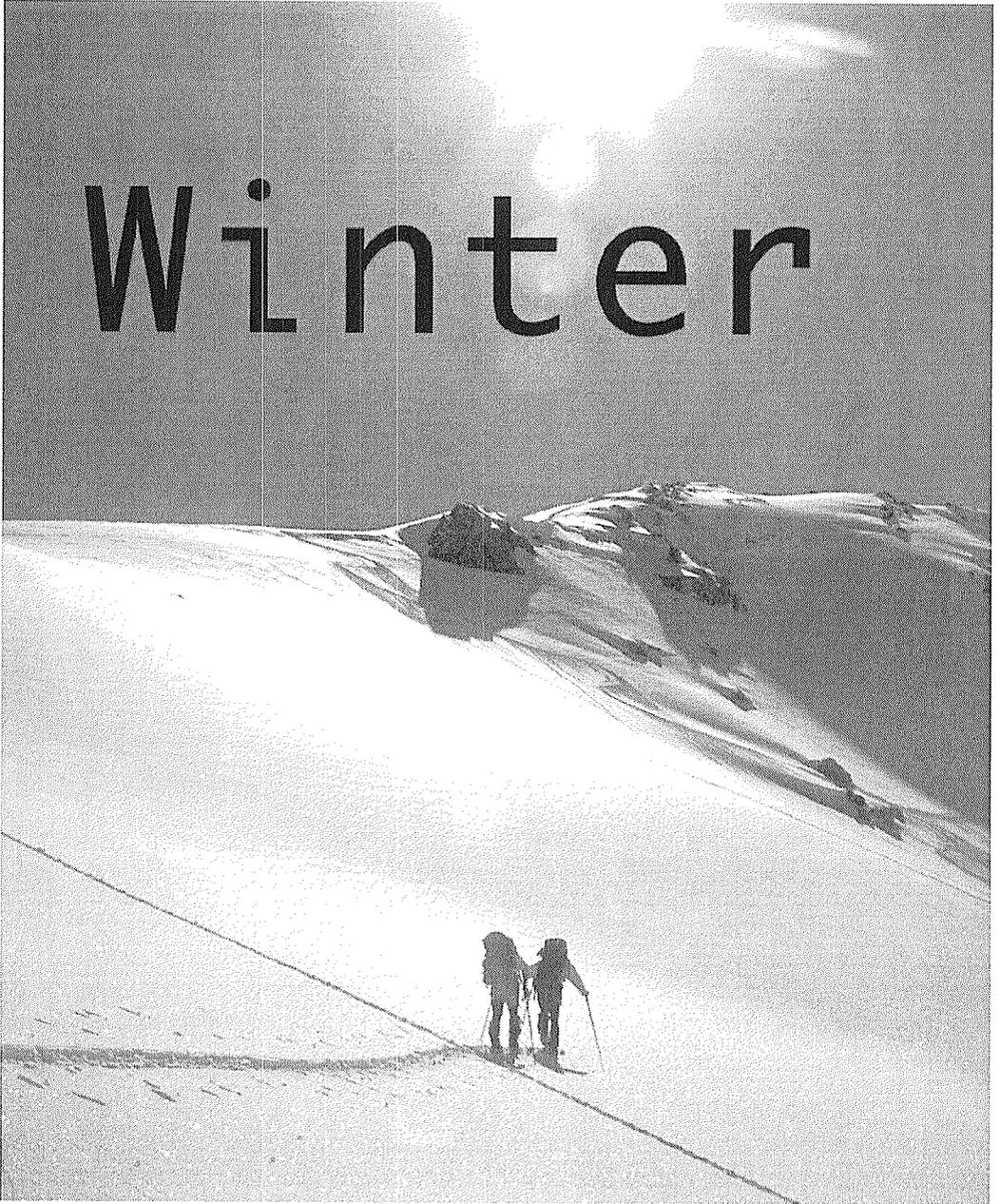
After we had bivied in the parking lot at Joffre Lakes Rec area, we were joined by all the rest of the people and continued up to the Cerise Creek trailhead. Only one car was wrecked on the way, and that was Paul Fearing's. Good Samaritan Lorne gave Good Samaritan Dave his truck so that he could take Paul into Mount Currie to get the car repaired. It turned out to be only \$20. What a deal!

The conditions were just on the wintery side of bare on the glacier, with many crevasses covered, and about knee deep powder on top. And unlike last year, there was still exposed ice on the glacier, where we were able to practice the Z-pulley crevasse rescue and other good stuff. The camp was fine, and more than one person was seen with single-malt scotch in their hot chocolate.

Probably the only low point of the weekend was seeing four skiers pass us on our way to the Matier-Joffre col, and then after we had come down, they caught freshies all the way down the south side of Joffre. Man, was I jealous.

The school in all was very good, and should be just as good in the future with one exception. The trail was not in good shape on the way up or down. The in-between season is not good for the swampy areas that the trail passes through. This should be a thought that everyone should consider.

Finally, a thanks to all who participated, and good luck to all those who have new found glacier skills.



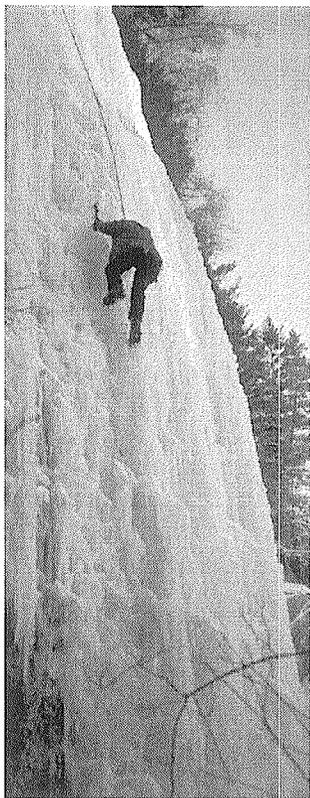
**(Winter) A mysterious mountain with some snow and rocks.
Photo: Markus Kellerhals**

“Ice is for climbing, laddy - not for the single malt” - Anonymous Scot

By Andy Gabrys

YEEEEEEEEAAAAAH!!!

1995-96 turned out to be one of the finest ice climbing seasons in recent times. Things that were not frozen at all in the past few winters turned up fat and ready to go. What a year to get into it



Julie-Ann, Grade V ice.

Photo: Drew Brayshaw

too. This gave us lots of confidence for the return to the wet west coast ice.

Things started off when we went to Anniversary Glacier in October 1995, and Neil Kearns and Andrew Port became the lucky souls to top rope in a crevasse. Soon afterward (November), Eric Hutton and Jason Winters and I traveled to Mount Baker to try to go serac climbing - but #39 had a big washout on it. So it was onto the ski area to try Pandome falls, which was unfrozen hanging death curtains. I managed to get a top rope on some rock that had a few blobs of ice and frozen moss on it. Great for those tools!!

Finally, the weather dawned colder, and Andrew, Eric Neil and I got to do a ‘real’ waterfall - Entropy at Soo Bluffs (Grade III). This was quite funny. We had been bouldering at the bottom, practicing placing gear etc. and then Eric and Andrew lead upwards. But, Eric’s screws were full of ice, and he couldn’t set up a belay, so he had to wait for Andrew. Other people watching thought we were crazy for our antics. I just wanted to take a piss, but I couldn’t because I was belaying!

By the time we were all at the top of the first pitch, it was time to either climb like hell, or retreat. Both options were equally scary. We eventually made an Abalakov thread, and all rapped to the ground, with no one getting hurt. What doesn’t kill you only makes you stronger!

Next stop was Waterton Park in the southern Rockies in December with Cam Campbell. This was paradise. Hardly any snow, lots of plastic ice, a lot warmer than the Banff area, and few people. We stayed at a friend’s father’s ranch, in a rustic 1920’s farm cabin. Every day we got up and did new ice. Both of us lead some routes, and we top-roped lots

Soo Bluffs was a return destination when Andrew, Eric, Neil, Cam and I went back to do Entropy - Complete. Cam forgot his harness, and had to make do with a piece of webbing from the Escape Route (remember your rock I harness just for these special occasions). The day was great, with all five of us going in one long caterpillar up the falls. The best views of the surrounding mountains were had in the fading light of the day, just as we were finding our short rappel for the descent. This ensured a mini-epic returning to the car, when Neil struck off on a path of his own, and we wandered semi-lost through the forest.

During the cold spells that we had in January and February, Guy Edwards and I went into North Vancouver at night to find ice in the Lynn and Capilano Canyons. We found it in both, but only the Cap was frozen enough to climb without a wetsuit. It turned out to be a half rope length of plastic ice, about grade III that we were able to top rope off a convenient fence at the top of the cliff by a foot bridge. It was a real neat atmosphere with the full moon shining brightly, and headlamps lighting the way up the luminescent ice. At our feet, the Capilano River flowed around its bend in the country rocks.

After this last cold clear spell, things got decidedly warm. Dave Voadlo, John Sims and Shane Cook went to Squamish for the first time in the new year. During that same weekend, Cam and I went to Pan-Dome falls at Mount Baker once again.

We were both thinking that we were on crack when the day turned out so warm. When we got to the ski area, there were people skiing without shirts, including one fine specimen with a 60" beer belly - a sure candidate for the skin cancer of the year award.

Much to our delight, the falls actually never really catches the light of the day. This meant 50 meters of plastic ice for our consumption. Cam proved his skill by leading the whole thing, and I had a bloody desperate time seconding it (no falls for either of us - Cam says the leading was kind of scary). After this we beat a quick retreat back to Vancouver, satisfied.

I found out later that the great season was indeed had by all. Sea of Vapours (previously WI 7+ R) saw five ascents over spring break including Alex Lowe and Karen the Ice Goddess from Canmore. It was so fat it was graded WI 5+ in this year's excellent conditions.

Many new routes went up around the lower mainland as well.

I can hardly wait for the summer to go serac climbing and get ready for next year!!!!

“Fuckin’-A Bubba!!!”

(Team Snowbird Goes to J-tree and Red Rocks)

by *Drew Brayshaw*

Christmas. Time for skiing, carolling, and family reunions. A time of cold weather, peace and relaxation as you curl up by the fire, sip your hot toddy, and contemplate the wondrous things you have done over the past year. Right?

WRONG!!!!

At 7 P.M. we screeched out of the Gage parking lot, overstuffed with gear and bound for Josh. Doug (longhair), the mad road pilot; Eric (nohair), Maritimer with transgenic spider implants; and myself (shorthair), frustrated punk/mutant Greg Child wannabe. Upcoming: three weeks of Taco Hell and hard cranks. At least, that was the plan. It was pouring rain but the weather in Josh was supposedly sunny with highs to 75F. Right on!

The first sign that all was not well occurred at the border. As we sat in line (very slow moving, hint hint) we checked out these devices that looked like parabolic mikes pointed at the car.

“I bet they can hear everything we say.”

“Don’t tell them about our big STASH OF DOPE, then, haha, haha.”

“No seriously, have you got anything illegal?”

“Just some oranges....”

“Those probably aren’t even microphones.”

“Well, if they are, I guess they know by now that we are communist terrorists coming to overthrow their fucking country and their whole goddamned way of life!!!”

“Ok, green light... look respectable.”

We pulled up to the booth. The border guard examined us carefully. He didn’t like what he saw. We didn’t either. As Squamish hardman Gordie Smaill once wrote, to make a border guard they must take a failed cop, drill out their skull, suck the brains out and pack the cavity with horseshit. The guard leaned forwards “What’s your citizenship?”

“We’re all Canadians.”

“Where are the two of you going?”

“No, there’s three of us”, piped Eric, popping forwards from behind a mound of sleeping bags. “We’re going rock climbing to Joshua Tree!!!”

“What are you taking with you?”

“Well, we’ve got camping gear...rock climbing gear...clothes, that sort of thing.”

The guard leaned forwards. His voice took on a good-cop, conspiratorial air: “Have any of you smoked marijuana?”

We were all surprised. What the hell does he think we’re going to say? “No!”

“Nope!”

Doug hadn’t said anything yet. The border guard was looking right at him. Doug kept quiet but his grin got bigger and bigger. Finally he said “No,” smiling at the guard as he did so. It was a

big smile. I figured we were fucked for sure right then. I began the mental preparations to spend fourteen hours standing naked in the border lockup, undergoing tag-team cavity searches from a team of psychopathic ex-Vietnam vets.

The guard doesn’t change his tone at all. “Any of you ever been in trouble?”

Now what does he mean by that? “You mean with the law? No!”

“No, sir!”

“Uh-uh!”

“Where are you going?”

Oh Christ, he’s going to go over this all over again. “Joshua Tree...in Southern California.”

“How long are you going for?”

“Till New Years’.”

“What are you taking with you?”

“Climbing gear...tents...ropes...that type of thing.”

“You’ve never been fingerprinted?”

(!!!!) “No...”

“No!”

“Nope!”

“And none of you have ever tried smoking dope...even once?”

“No.”

“No.”

“No.” I was thinking of adding “...but in junior high, I knew some people who sniffed glue-they wanted me to, but I ran away,” but I figured that, that would be laying it on a bit too thick.

“Are you carrying any fruits or vegetables?” Damn-there it was... the microphone testing question. Doug had to tell the truth on this one or we’d be royally fucked for sure.

“Just...a few oranges.”

“And you’ve never been in trouble?”

“No! No! No!” we chorused, AND HE WAVED US ON!!!!!!!!!! We drove away from the border laughing like idiots. Bits of dialogue from this conversation got repeated for the rest of this trip.

The speedometer didn’t drop below 100mph again until we hit the Siskiyous, at 4 am. By this time Eric and I were comatose and Doug was halfway through an 8 hour Neil Young retrospective on the CD player. We only stopped because of the weather...we ended up having to buy chains to get past the highway patrol roadblock. The cost of the chains was about half the total gas cost to get down to JTree....In the pass, a foot of frozen slush, chewed up by the passage of hundreds of eighteen wheelers, kept us grinding along slowly at the speed of 35 mph...Doug wasn’t even in 4th gear! As we crossed the pass into California the snow vanished. We stopped to dechain and I jumped out to take a pee. I had the classic male response to an overfull bladder but every time I whipped it out a slowly moving semi would come around the bend, high-beaming me...finally I found a break in traffic and spouted a geyser into the snow at the side of the road...it went on for long enough to not only write my name, but to underline it-twice.

There were no more unwanted interruptions. We hit a Lenny’s (formerly called Jerry’s, of course (right, Tami?)) for breakfast and then Formula 500 driver Eric Hutton took the wheel while Doug collapsed in the back. A few hours later (OK, more like 12) we pulled into the town of Joshua Tree and hit our home away from home, Jeremy’s. After a few beers and scrabble games we drove out to the Monument and managed to acquire exactly the same campsite as the previous year. Only after staying in this site for a few days did we remember how last year we had decided we would never stay in this site again...

During the night, the coyotes howled and a gale began to blow. Doug had to anchor his low-tech tent to the Stem Gem boulder to keep from turning into a paraglider. Our neighbours woke up early in the morning...their moronic banter made us consider embarking on a campaign of genocide directed against the entire American race.

The morning was nothing to feel wonderful about. It was sunny but the bone chilling winds made us feel like we were ice climbing rather than rock climbing! I woke up early (9am) and climbed “Beginner’s Two” (5.3) to a sunny ledge where I waited for Doug and Eric to wake up. Doug set a bad precedent by not getting up until noon... this was allowed in this case because he had driven for probably seventeen or eighteen of the preceding twenty-four hours.

Well, once longhair woke up we set out to find some nice climbs that were a) sunny, b) not too hard (first climbs in a month) and c) out of the howling gale. We climbed Double Cross (5.7+, I backed off and Eric cranked it...watch out for those plusses!), Hands Off (5.8...I put in 8 pieces of pro on a 10m climb...) and The Bong (Eric soloed it, Doug led it and I seconded in hiking boots-it was 5.4, but on the T-shirt tick list.) Eric was choked at not finding a loaded bong on top after his solo so he downclimbed Beginners’ One (5.2) around the corner to make up for it. While we were climbing Double Cross, Doug got into a conversation with some Americans. He was talking about what a great route it was...they were confused:

“Root? What root? There ain’t no trees up there!”

“No... the route that you climb up!”

“Oh, you mean the ROUTE (pronounced ‘rowt’, rhymes with out). Y’all must be from Canada...they talk funny up there, huh?”

This conversation provoked much amusement when Doug repeated it to us later on.

Well, after three climbs it was sunset already... things go slowly with parties of three. We went back in to town (Jeremy’s) and drank beer and coffee, played scrabble and ate. Jeremy seemed only too happy to have scum like us sit at a table and play scrabble for six or seven hours with only one coffee purchase. There was even live music, some old hippie with a guitar who seemed surprisingly popular with the Marines from “29 Bombs” who had come off the base just for his show. Doug told us that he had heard rumors that the Park was going to be shut down because of the budget fuck-up in Washington. We jokingly decided to hide out in the desert with a big cache of food and water for the few days it would take to get things sorted out.

The same pattern repeated itself the next day. I woke up early and bouldered; Doug and Eric woke up late. After oatmeal, somebody (OK, it was me) was heard to say “Fuck these cracks...I

want to climb runout slabs!” So off we went to Echo Rock where we climbed Stick To What, Stichter Quits and Pope’s Crack...the last one was pretty brutal, not to mention long.

Amusement for the day was provided by an article in the latest Climbing mag. which we had all just bought, written by Jeff Jackson. This article describes his trip with Kurt Smith and Scott Cosgrove to the Cirque of The Unclimbables, and is replete with great dialogue and lines like “This place is gonna be like Toulumne in Bumfuck”, and “Kurt showed us his feet. A blue hole was growing between his fourth and fifth toes. When he squeezed it, puss spurted forth like lava. ‘Please,’ I gagged, ‘save some for our oatmeal.’” One of the best bits of dialogue comes while Jackson is climbing an 11b fingercrack (he’s a sportclimber). Cosgrove is at the next belay taking pictures. As Jackson gets gripped at the crux, Cosgrove suddenly asks him “Did you marry your wife because she’s young, or because you loved her?” We had a lot of fun with this technique. Because Doug was in a longstanding relationship at this time, he got most of the variants of this question directed at him...but he came right back with his own slander, or at least attempted to.

As we were walking back to the cars (nearly sunset again) we met a ranger. He confirmed that the park would close at noon the next day. One look at his big shotgun and our plans for illegal climbing disappeared! We drove into Jeremy’s again. As we played scrabble we discussed plans for what to do. Some woman had tried to pick Doug up while Eric and I were involved with Stick To What; she had suggested that we go to Mexico and climb big wall granite in Canyon Tahoe. Doug was enthusiastic about this plan (he had her number and address in San Diego...pretty fast work for a one-climb conversation!) but Eric and I were sceptical; neither of us had heard of, or had any beta for, Canyon Tahoe...We wanted to go to Hueco Tanks, but Doug pointed out that it was pouring rain there. The problem remained unresolved.

The next morning Eric and I woke up early and got in a few last climbs: Grand Theft Avocado and Hobbit Roof. We came back to camp just before noon...Doug was STILL in bed! As we slowly packed up the car, a crew from the local Palm Springs TV station drove through Hidden Valley and asked if they could film us packing up. Under the eye of the TV camera we did possibly our best pack up ever...when we finished, we noticed most of Doug’s stuff was still sitting out on a picnic table, and there was no space in the car. The camera crew were so impressed by this that they asked if they could interview Doug about his opinions of the government shutdown. Doug was very restrained; he didn’t say “They should kill all those fucking bastards!” even once. Trying to be upbeat, the cameraman told us that “This whole thing will probably be settled by tomorrow.” (WRONG!!!)

We decided to drive into town and decide what to do. After spending several hours sitting in Nomad Ventures reading guidebooks, we still couldn’t make up our minds, so we drove into Desert Hot Springs for a soak and dinner at “South of The Border”. With stomachs full of Mexican food we decide we didn’t want to drive to Baja. We figured the best plan was to go to Red Rocks, which we had heard was still semi-open. This was close enough that “when they settle the budget thing, we can drive back here and still get half a day of climbing in!”

“Yeah...They have to get it going by Christmas, otherwise all those government employees won’t be able to buy their kids presents... the whole fucking U.S. economy would collapse!”

“We shouldn’t even leave, they’ll reopen tomorrow morning!” (that was Eric...he said that every day for the rest of the trip, in defiance of logic and common sense.)

It took us about 2 1/2 hours to drive to Vegas following the secret shortcut route given in both of the guidebooks. We followed directions to the “free” campground and crashed.

The next morning we woke up to cold grey skies. We discovered that we should have paid for a campsite. However, since there was no enforcement of this, we paid one fee for two nights. Of almost two weeks we spent here, we paid about three times in total. The campground host was a very entertaining old chap. He was an old (70’s?) fat guy, the type who always wears a ball cap with the logo of a construction company on it. His voice was pitched high, like Howdy Doody, and when he talked, spittle spayed everywhere. He had one of those TV preacher accents. I told him about our predicament; he replied, “And do yew know, those Congressmen are still bein’ paid? Ah think we oughtta shoot the whole Gawd-damned bunch of them bastards!”

Seeing how lame the weather was, we decided to hit the local bouldering spot. After a few hours at Kraft Rocks, Eric and I were on the verge of self-destructing while Doug had become bored and gone for a big hike around the area. We ended up going into Vegas and strolling the strip for a few hours. We played the slots and visited the casinos that we hadn’t been into last year. Eric and I amused ourselves when we were walking around on the strip by muttering “Sid? Sid?” at passers-by. No-one took us up on our offer, which was just as well- being arrested by an undercover narc wouldn’t have improved our trip at all.

One amusing incident occurred: we had been to the Luxor and were walking back towards Caesar’s Palace. As we passed by a construction site, one of the ubiquitous street types tried to hand us a sheaf of flyers and ads for strip clubs, brothels, etc: the usual Vegas trash. Eric (who was closest to the guy) stepped out and around him and his handful of TITS! TITS! TITS! and similar lurid flyers. Seeing this, a couple walking towards us had their interest piqued. The woman asked Eric, “What, you don’t want that smut?”

“SMUT? Was that what it was? I thought he was trying to give me Bible stories!” said Eric. He turned around, ran back to the guy, and grabbed a big handful of flyers. These provoked much amusement later on, especially the “discount coupons”. We had an image of some Midwestern businessman coming to Vegas to sin and pulling out a handful of these while he was bargaining with some streetwalker. While we’re on the subject, several days later we heard on the radio that several Vegas bellboys had been arrested for pandering (i.e. fixing up johns and prostitutes for a fee, for those of you who got high scores on the Purity Test). We never quite figured this out... Vegas has legalized prostitution!

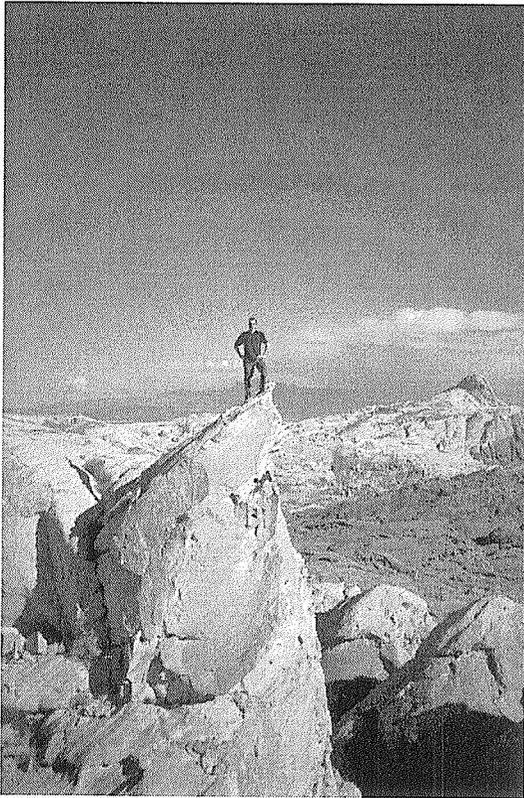
The next day, Doug didn’t want to do any of the “fucking sport climbs” that he was convinced made up 99.9% of all Red Rocks climbs, so we decided to head out and do some exploring. Following a tip from the campground host, we drove northeast of Vegas to Valley of Fire State Park. Here we avoided paying the entrance fee by the simple process of driving straight by the toll booth and spent a few hours hiking around in the maze of redrock canyons. I shot a lot of pictures here...it was very cool, but the rock was too soft to climb, so we headed out. Next stop, Boulder Dam. After walking across into Arizona and back, we got bored and left. The security here isn’t

very good...a terrorist with a bomb could do a LOT of damage!

Checking out the guidebook, we saw that nearby was a place, Keyhole Canyon, with a few climbs on the same rock as JTree. It sounded obscure enough to provide several days of fun, so we decided to go there. On the way we stopped in Boulder City for food. Despite the name, there were no boulders around. I acquired some free firewood (we extended our sponsorship deal from K-Mart to Albertson’s ...I’m sure they would have agreed if they’d known about it!) and Eric the gourmet bought some “Smoked Pork Hocks” for dinner. Eric was so anxious to try these that he gnawed on one right there in the car! We found the canyon with a bit of work (including Doug driving OFF an ON-ramp with a semi approaching us...) and there was a huge supply of firewood already there, complete with a firepit big enough for a team of sacrificial virgins.

!

The only sacrifice that was made was the other pork hock, in hopes of JTree reopening soon (it didn’t work). This night was also notable in that it was the only time that Doug and Eric ate anything other than pasta with cold, straight from the jar pasta sauce for dinner on this trip...they actually cooked some hamburger and warmed up the sauce. The next morning I woke up early and went exploring. A hike/scramble showed me that the canyon extended far beyond the first waterfall (where we had walked to the previous evening). We decided to see how far we could go up the canyon. This ended up being a really rad day with about six pitches of climbing up water-smoothed rocks on the waterfalls, getting further and further up the mysterious canyon that we knew nothing about, until we came out at the top of a series of box canyons on a sunny ridge! The climbing was up to 10a, with a very different character due to the polished slickness of the waterworn rock...some of the pitches were also pretty runout, while others were short and more like boulder problems. If you’re ever down there, go do it! Doug found a mummified



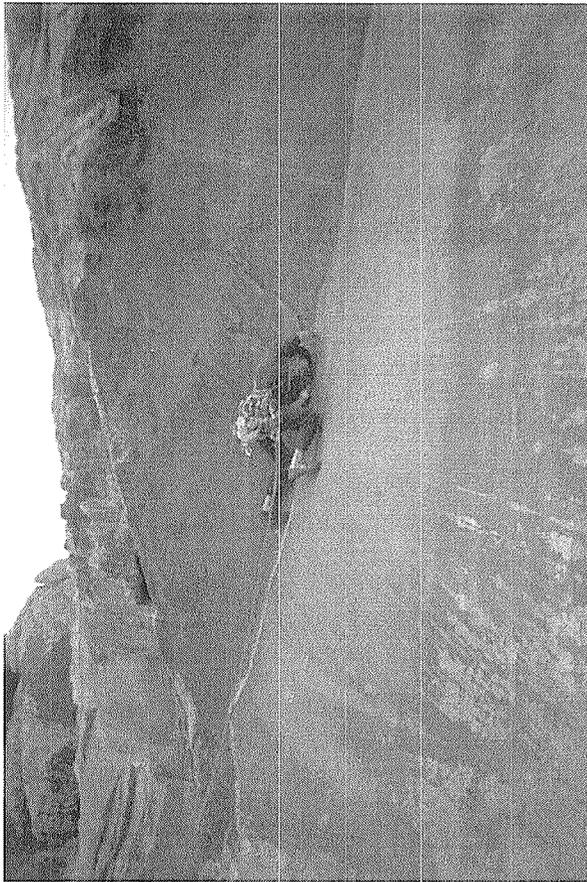
Eric Hutton in Red Rocks (Valley of Fire).

Photo: Drew Brayshaw

tarantula down here which he planned to save to surprise Tami with...but it got squashed during

some intensive chimneying maneuvers. (Our plan was to slip it on top of her sleeping bag while she was asleep and then to say “Psst! Hey Tami! Wake up slowly...and don’t move!) At the end of the day, after some bouldering, it sounded like the government wasn’t going to reopen so we resigned ourselves to returning to Red Rocks. We figured that we could climb there for the rest of the trip.

Back at RR, we found that some other members of our team were Jam Tarts. Out of a carload of 5 (Tami, Neil, Carl, Josie, and Tami’s friend with the van), only Carl and Josie were coming down. We told them where to find us.



Luc on The Fox, Red Rocks.

Photo: Drew Brayshaw.

out he was going climbing in Mexico with Fred Beckey(!) and had a week to kill...he came to Red Rocks looking for people to climb with and just managed to meet us by accident. Well, with Luc in

The next few days were spent cragging on the loop road areas (first and second pullouts). We generally found most of these cliffs to be lame and/or sportified...there were a few good routes, but it wasn’t what we wanted. So, there being 5 of us now (C&J having arrived) we headed to Winter Heat wall at the back of Calico Basin to do some cracks. The name is misleading...it’s very cold, being in the shade during the winter. But all of a sudden we heard a voice calling out. It said “HEY DREW!!”. I stared...who was this person? Then I saw that it was Luc!

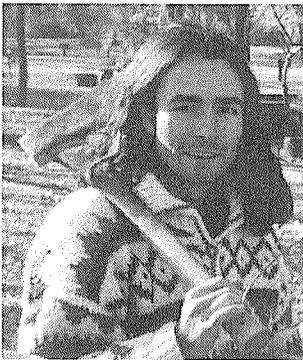
An introduction might be in order. Luc Mailloux is a big wall climber. Originally from Quebec, he now lives in Squamish (when he’s not in Yosemite), where he is one of the last defenders of the trad ethic. He recently made the third ascent of “Breakfast Run” (A5)...he knows how to nail, alright! I met Luc several years ago when he showed up at the VOC clubroom to voluntarily teach Rock School (and meet members of the opposite sex...) and we’ve been on several trips since then, but I didn’t expect to see him down here. It turned

our party we now had a rope gun. We headed off and climbed some rad handcracks that weren’t in the guidebook, but were in the sun. Things were looking up!

The next day we decided to do a long route, Solar Slab. (14 pitches, 5.6). Eric and I woke up early and took off. Doug and Luc and Carl and Josie, who were more cocky, figured they could get away with a later start, and left several hours behind us.

Eric and I soloed the first 5 pitches (gully approach up to 5.3.easy) and passed another party and some fixed ropes (stuck on rappel). We roped up and 4th classed 2 pitches of 5.5, then belayed the two crux pitches, then simuled more easy stuff to the top of a pillar, then unroped and zipped up the last 3-4 pitches and a lot of 3rd class to the top of the route. Elapsed time: 2 hours. We began the gully descent (supposedly easy enough to downclimb at the 5.6 level)... it took us three hours! At one point we rapped off some equalized chickenheads; at another Eric had to swing on the end of the rope to a ledge and jam a loose stone into a crack to create a belay/rappel anchor.

When we got back to the base, we looked...no sign of anyone and the ropes were still there. Eric and I thus each acquired a brand new rope! We headed back to camp as darkness fell. After a few hours I began to worry...where were the others? Doug and Luc had never really met, let alone climbed together, before...what if they hated each other and Luc killed Doug? Carl was climbing with Josie, who had never done a multipitch before... what if they had an epic? However, they all showed up a few hours later. C&J had just done the 5-pitch approach route and waited for Luc and Doug. D&L had descended in the dark with one minimag between them, which had died on the last rappel. They had had some route finding problems, but got along “real good.” Luc has a mantra... when things are tough he remembers a guy from the South he once knew. This chap’s favorite expression was “Fuckin’-A Bubba!”. Luc repeats this when necessary...for example when runout 60’ on hooks and heads, and he finds a bomber placement: “Fuckin’-A Bubba!”. A solid handjam: “Fuckin’-A Bubba!” A manky quarter inch hangerless bolt: “Fuckin’-A Bubba!” Doug found this slogan intensely appealing and the two of them were as thick as thieves by the time they were down.



Bubba?

Circus bills itself as “the Family Casino”. The lunch and dinner buffets were among the cheapest of

Having done a big route it was party time. Luc seemed to know everyone in the camp. We met notables like “Big Wall Brad”, Brad Jarrett, who had put up new A5 routes on Baffin Island and in Patagonia; his buddy, “Blue-Blocker”, who climbed 5.11+ offwidth and liked it, and similar notables. With Yosemite and JTree closed everyone was at Red Rocks! The party continued into the small hours...the next day was voted as a rest day, at least by us. Luc, Brad and Blue-Blocker went off to climb Ixtlan (11c face climbing and 11a offwidths) in the next canyon south.

This was also around the time that Carl, Josie, Doug, Eric and I headed into Vegas for dinner. We decided to go to Circus Circus, home of “The World’s Largest Buffet!”. This is true-imagine The Golden Trough in Bend times ten. Circus

the big hotels. This meant (and we should have realized) that it was crammed full, mainly with Asian tourists who all seemed to come there on some sort of package deals. Whole extended families shuffled through the lineups, piling their trays with total crap. One person in each group served as translators. They would point at a food item and translate: “Ah. Ma-ka-ro-ni! Yes so! Very good!” Then all eight or twenty of them would put some macaroni on their plate and go on to the next station in line. I was trapped between two halves of one such group. I became so pissed off by this, and the constant photo taking (Venerable Grandmother, in line...Number One Son, with bun...Father, with Mother, smiling, pointing at waitress, etc.), that I “accidentally” poured a plateful of gravy down the back of the neck of the family member immediately in front of me. I skipped forwards ten places in line during the riot that followed! The food here was trash. The good stuff was, of course, at the end of the line, so that people would fill up their plates with things like salad first. The desserts were especially bad: the cheesecake was nothing more than squares of pure cream cheese with raspberry-flavored syrup spread thinly on top!

For the next few days we climbed cracks and hung out with the wall masters. Brad told us stories of Yosemite (“Tenaya Canyon has bad juju...Chief Tenaya and his men got slaughtered there, man...it’s a bad scene...”) and his battles with the rangers (“Yes, that’s my car, officer...but that pipe is for tobacco...”) (jumps forward and thrusts imaginary bong under nose) “OH YEAH? DOES THAT SMELL LIKE TOBACCO TO YOU, YOU LITTLE PUNK??”); Luc showed us the photos of his partner’s 25-foot fall and 100-foot blood streak on El Cap, and spent long evenings slandering the new breed of Squamish climbers (“Will Dorling? He makes me puke! He’s always going “Hey, dude” this, “Hey, dude” that... finally I told him “Don’t fucking call me dude!” Yeah, I chopped his route...it was all chipped. And Perry Beckham! Ooooh...”) etc. Doug (last of the trad wanna-bes) lapped this talk up like it was cream and he was a pussycat! Every now and then he would contribute his own line (“Sport climbers? They should be shot!”). Eric and I just hung around getting beta and shooting the shit. The only bad part of this whole period was the arrival of Clemson, Dave Way, Cathy and Karen. They joined into our party. One night, Eric C. began talking about golf...Brad and Blue-Blocker were the first to leave the campfire, followed by Luc, then me and Eric H., then Doug...Clemson was left astounding his audience of Karen and Cathy (who had heard it all before, but didn’t want to leave because they were climbing with Eric) and Dave Way (who was trying to put the moves on either Karen or Cathy and wouldn’t leave if they were staying...). Meanwhile around another fire the party resumed.

Every night before or after partying we would drive around suburban Vegas. There were a few stops we had to make: Lucky for groceries (especially the “Mother’s Iced Oatmeal Cookies”); Starbuck’s for coffee and reading, etc. The McDonald’s of coffee has only recently expanded into the Vegas area and people still haven’t got the idea down just right. Some people seemed to think that they had to dress up as beatniks to come into the store, e.g. this one yuppie type with a white shirt, string tie, sunglasses (at night), quarter inch long ponytail, and goatee apparently drawn on his double chins with a woman’s eyelash pencil! I’m not making this shit up, either! We became favourites of the staff- they knew Eric and I as “the Hat Guys” and would ask us how the climbing was going and how we liked camping in the freezing nights. Many people in Vegas actually seemed

to pick up immediately that we were climbers because no one else down there wears fleece clothing! Another favourite stop was “Bookstar”, a huge warehouse sized version of Vancouver’s Book Warehouse. This place had couches to sit and read in and a wide selection of periodicals and books. Some of these were extremely interesting, like “The Man’s Guide To Giving Women Perfect Orgasms” which we all read to see if we had our technique down or not. Eric said he had seen testimonials to this book on “Donahue” so we figured at least some of it must be true, despite the oddness of some of the instructions. In the same minimal with Starbuck’s and Bookstar was an extremely good Taco Bell... probably the best one in the states. The food actually tasted good!

Of the routes we climbed in this period, the best was probably “The Fox”. This 5.10d corner starts as face climbing to a thin finger crack, which gradually widens to an 8” offwidth! This is the “product of geological erosion and weathering” we were all so struck by last year. Luc led it with his big rack (it took #5, 6 and 7 Big Dudes at the top) and Eric, Doug and I all hurled ourselves at it with varying degrees of success. There was some debate over whether it was ethical to lieback (the “technique of no technique”-L.M.) or whether jamming the whole thing was mandatory. I liebacked the whole thing...thank god for top-ropes! We did some other nice cracks in the Calico Basin as well. I got a new Alien (booty) and we scored two more new ropes (Doug got one and I won the rock, scissors, paper for the other), also stuck on rappel and abandoned. We gave Luc a Fish “Wall Psyche” T-shirt as a gift for rope-gunning, and bought some of his gear so he could finance his climbs with Fred.

All too soon it was time to leave. With seven ropes, Eric’s new haulbag, and our racks in the car, we figured we had enough gear that we could AID the whole way back to Canada! We took off from Vegas and pulled into my driveway 26 hours later (including 2 hrs. sleep in Fucking Middle Of Nowhere, Oregon.)...the rain began at the border!

An Exercise in Stubbornness

by Ron Horwood

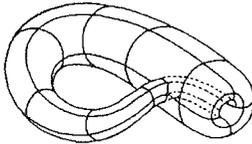
I'm not sure why I did this. After all it would have been fairly simple and not that expensive to take the bus. However, I do have a stubborn streak, and the idea had appealed to the same character flaw that makes me think that physics is fun. The idea of riding my bike to Cypress Bowl with my snowboard on my back had started out as a joke, but the more I considered it, the less funny it became. After all, the season had started late, I was having trouble finding rides to the mountain, and the ride wasn't that bad in the summer.

If I had gotten more than four hours sleep that night I might have changed my mind but it's funny how fatigue will alter your perceptions. Besides that, when I looked out my window in the morning there was fresh snow everywhere. How could any self-respecting snowboard stay at home?

So after a hearty meal I set about attaching my board to my body. A variety of ideas involving the ultimate tool - duct tape - came to mind, but eventually it became obvious that using my boardbag as the backpack it was designed to be would be best.

After telling my roommate about my plan (he needed a good laugh) it was time to go. At first I thought that I had overdressed, but after five minutes of riding through slush and several close encounters with cars, I had a full body soaker and was considering turning back. I really should have, but I had already told people what I was doing, and to turn back would have been bad form. Also, I was already downtown by this time and receiving looks of approval from bike couriers.

Soon all that was left behind as I battled traffic through Stanley Park and over the Lion's Gate Bridge. It's strange how cranky drivers get if you get in their way as they try to merge into one lane, especially since they aren't the ones who'll become frozen road pizza. But I really didn't get much of a chance to consider my near fatal encounter with a Beemer because it was at this time that God decided to punish me for my stupidity.



The TRUE hardcore pee bottle

Have you ever fixed a flat tire on a narrow sidewalk? On a bridge? In the snow? While you keep dropping tools onto the busy street? If you haven't, I don't recommend it. It took me twenty minutes to fix my tire, and when it was done my hands were bleeding. But still God mustn't have been completely displeased because despite my origins in the scouting movement I would normally not be prepared for such an incident. Normally the weight of a spare tube and pump are just too much to bother with, but on that day, with the crushing weight of a snowboard, boots, extra clothes and a Kryptonite lock on my back, it had occurred to me that a few extra grams of preparedness wouldn't be a bad thing.

Well, it was all easy from there, right? After all, now it was all uphill to Cypress and I was

on the highway where cars are so considerate, right? If you agreed with either statement please go to the back of the class. After all, I was being punished for stupidity. My sunglasses began to fog up, sweat was stinging my eyes and my legs were getting sore. And worst of all I had one line of a song that I didn't like running through my head.

Taking off the sunglasses, it was time to take a deep breath of not quite fresh air and consider, not for the first or last time, turning back and finding a hot tub. After a short break and a mouthful of water it was time to return to the endless uphill grind.

When the turnoff to Cypress eventually appeared like a mirage before my unbelieving eyes it seemed like a good time for another water break. Unfortunately it was at this time that the well ran dry. I consoled myself with the thought that the water had tasted salty from the road spray anyway.

By this point you'd think that my body would be numb, but in reality a jagged piece of plastic was sticking into my foot where a crack was developing in my shoe and my legs were only warm because they felt as if they were on fire.

Cypress Bowl road is long, twisting, and uphill but there are several nice viewpoints that double well as rest stops, and by this point I was stopping at every "viewpoint" that I could find. I was physically exhausted and would have been tempted to eat the snow had I not known better.

Finally I reached the lodge. I assume that there were some funny looks aimed towards me when I locked my trusty steed to a ski rack, but at that point all I wanted to do was change from tired wet mountainbiker to a tired dry snowboarder. I entered the lodge, found a table, and began to get changed. It was then that I heard a voice speak my name. The voice didn't seem to have a source at first, but it wasn't some deity getting set to punish me further and it wasn't Cypress management throwing me out for bringing my snowboard into the building (that happened the next weekend). It came from the seat next to me; it was Paul, my friend Paul, who owns a car and had driven up the mountain to go snowboarding with Fiona. Was I surprised to have run into him? Of course not - VOC members just naturally run into each other all the time.

Smiling, I asked them to join me for a few runs. Actually what we did was stand in line for half an hour and then do a run followed by another lineup. After some incredible jumps and some great turns, as well as a couple of lessons for my riding partners, it was time to call it a day.

This is the part where Paul saved me from almost certain doom. He did it so casually that he probably doesn't even realize how important his act of kindness was. This is where Paul took my snowboard home for me. It may not seem like much to you but without all that extra, non-aerodynamic weight it was possible for me to even consider the ride home.

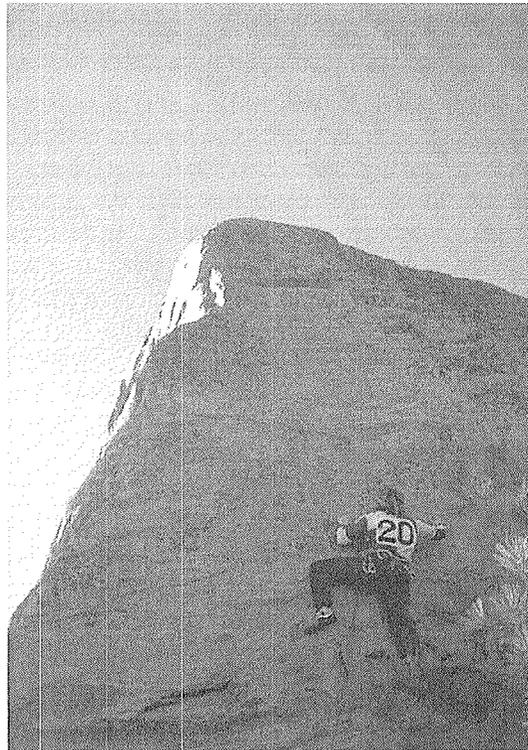
Unfortunately, along with my board, Paul also took my warm jacket. During my long descent of Cypress I learned about the wind chill factor. When I reached the highway, I could barely hold on to my handlebars, and I'm sure my face was as blue as my hands were.

After an hour of riding, the Molson clock was in sight. It read 4:05 and -2 degrees C, but by this time, the water in my clothes had frozen enough to keep the wind out.

A short while later I was chipping the ice off of my Stumpjumper and waiting for Paul to call so that we could go climbing at the Edge. When we arrived at the Edge, I was the recipient of

more strange looks as I told my story, but by then I didn't really care - I just wanted to find a hot tub.

Well, that's my story. I wasn't going to submit it but Paul and Verena threatened me with unspeakable things if I didn't. So I'd like to end with a bit of advice: if you're thinking of doing this or something similar, don't. Count to ten, and then go find yourself a good psychiatrist.



Kyle on "Stairway to Heaven", Skaha, October '95. Photo: Dave Dexter

The Christening of Biff, the Stove

by Lenny Thomas, February 1996

Chapter 1.

It all started back in October of last year, when Katrine and I were looking for a nice romantic way to spend our first wedding anniversary. We thought that perhaps we could spend the weekend at the Burton Hut, in Sphinx Bay, on the far side of Garibaldi Lake. The hut is rarely visited when the lake is not frozen as it takes a long time to get there (3 days - we tried it a few years ago). However, we figured that by carrying up a load of kerosene for the stove and doing a few fix-ups at the hut, our proposed romantic weekend could be considered a work-hike and B.C. Parks would lend us their boat to cross the lake. Blair (this year's Hutmeister) seemed amenable, so we called the Parks office. Bad news: (1) The boat was in storage for the winter, and worse (2) the old stove had rusted out and the park wardens had removed it. We went to Galiano island instead.

Chapter 2.

A high pressure ridge settled over the lower mainland at the end of February, bringing clear, cold skies. We finally managed to get our extremely cheesy car, a Volkswagen rabbit, into semi-roadworthy condition. A ski trip was in order. We decided on the Burton hut, knowing that Blair and a crew of keen VOCers had hauled a new stove up there the previous weekend. Talked to Blair. The party of keen VOCers were turned back by rain. The thought of -20 temperatures and no source of heat encouraged us to volunteer to take the stove up ourselves. Our friend John agreed to participate ("Sure Lenny, I'll come, but knowing you it's going to be an epic, so I'm bringing my bivi sac.")

The trail was pretty marginal at first, especially the stairs, but after that the going was pretty easy. We had the stove (still in its box) tied to the official VOC blue plastic kiddie sled, with one person hauling and another holding a rope behind to steer the thing round corners and stop it from falling off the trail. Katrine was carrying the glass mantle and every time we stopped for a break we'd shout in unison "Don't sit on your pack!"

Thanks to our extreme alpine start (midday) we made it up to the lake in time to enjoy the beautiful sunset. Once at the cabin we quickly unpacked our precious load and fired it up. After 3 hours it had successfully taken the chill of the air and we were toasty (or perhaps that was due to the whisky). After its bumpy ride up, we christened the stove "Biff".

The next day we skied up to the small bump between Mount Carr and the Bookworms (since it isn't named on the map John named it "Small Bump"), and enjoyed wonderful clear views of the remote eastern part of Garibaldi park. On the way down we had a marvelous time cranking turn after turn in the breakable wind-crust (NOT!).

Our third day, we packed and headed out. It had warmed up, making the trail good and slushy and easy to ski. We were well on our way to finishing the trip completely epic-free. However it was not to be: driving back to Vancouver a radiator hose split causing us to lose most of the coolant and badly overheat the engine. Only John's Swiss army knife, duct tape and capacious

bladder saved the day.

Notes on stove usage:

The stove appears to consume 1-1.5 liters of kerosene per day, if run for 3 hours in the evening and 2 in the morning. It does not make the hut “hot”, merely “less freezing”. The last stove rusted out because it was left on the ground floor and got very wet. To avoid this happening again, please make sure that you put the stove in the loft when you leave.

Participants: John Pritchard, Lenny Thomas, Katrine Vogt



Skiing on Waner Glacier, Mt. Garibaldi. Photo: J. Wong

Brew Cabin - Until the Owl Comes Home

by Reto Reisen, February 3/4 96

Menu:

- hot tea (very special mix)
- 2 soups of the day
- Spaghetti aux trois sauces (veggie, bolognese, salmon)
- Tarte aux yaourt, Gateau au chocolat, lemon poppyseed cake

A just reward for a trip which started very leisurely, turning in the late afternoon suddenly into a serious challenge.

Our access route was by way of the Brandywine Creek logging roads. Beyond that, our group split into an advanced ski team (Andre, Alex, Rich), and the rest of us, who slogged up through the switchbacks after them. We kept on the ridge north of the steep gully, gained altitude, more altitude, and the sun began to set. At the latest when a Pygmy Owl came out and looked for the weakest in the pack, we knew we were in troubles, with one question unanswered: whose tracks was our avant-garde following? But you don't really want to leave any tracks at that time of day...

So we arrived in the dark on top of the ridge, with a view of both the lights of Whistler and Squamish, though one small light from a cabin close by would have been more relief. Oh, I forgot to mention - we HAD three headlamps with us (of which one was working), so we went on searching for our way around the hill - abandoning the tracks as they went up into avalanche debris, and instead sliding down frozen slopes in the dark. No cliffs, as we are here to tell the story.

Finally we found ourselves at the valley bottom NE of the hut although we weren't sure at that time. We were seriously considering setting up camp for the night (without tents), as everybody was tired to the point of fainting.

In came the cavalry: Andre and Alex had arrived at the cabin (by way of iceclimbing...good thing we did not follow their tracks through), then turned around to guide us. So, after another 3/4 of an hour we finally arrived at the cabin, 8.30pm. Dinner ensued, and nobody felt like getting up early in the morning.

Morning came, everybody had survived (either a wet doggy wake-up kiss or a Kerosene fume attack), and shortly before noon we were on track again. Light snowfall, we had to cross a slope in a spread out avalanche manner, we got up on our last ridge, and then: skiing. tumbling down on snowshoes, whatever, FUN.

A lesson in how little it takes to get you setting up bivouac. Better have a headlamp (tested) with you.

On this trip: Geoff, Krystyna, Andre, Alex, Rich, Karine, Anne, Roger, Sonja, Reto.



**Brew Cabin, buried in snow. The entrance is through the window on the second floor. Photo:
Reto Reisen**

Joshua Tree Log

by *Verena Blasy and Jen Wild* with a tiny bit of inspiration from Paul Fearing

Sunday, February 18th,

11:59pm

- leaving Jen's, rain slowing down. Contents of car: Jen, Vern, Paul, lots of pillows and snacks and one blue fuzzy blanket. Note: Happy Puff (Jen's climbin dragon) and Beanie (Vern's hardcore worm) will SHRED Killer the wussy "street bunny".

Monday, February 19th,

12:38am

- "I am losing my mind, must kill window!" (*Vern is driven completely mad by the neon's leaky window*)

1:46am

- According to officer we were going 73 in a 55 zone. Doh! But... we got his pencil!! *This definitely calls for COOKIES!*

5:15am

- Paul has a BEAST in his mouth (4 pieces of sherbert gum - the big kind). Big Hunk (*no, we are not referring to Paul but to the chocolate bar*) has been shoved into the glove box.

7:09am

- Jen comes through with a breakthrough: "It doesn't rain much in the desert does it?"

The sun is up and so are Jen and Vern. Paul is Zombie boy, babbling about \$1.99 Denny's breakfasts. *I guess 9 straight hours of driving can do that to you.*

7:17am

- The slug resides in his moistened cave. He's been swimming in the coffee all night! (*i.e.. Paul's "beast" is in the cup.*)

9:16am

- Vern deteriorates into garbled mutatedness after having survived the window of death all night. Denny's it is! Vern and Jen discover "Sound only travels in ONE direction in Oregon." *After whistling at Paul's calisthenics for five minutes with no response.* Most obnoxious sleep deprived people in Denny's. No! That couldn't be us!

10:16am

- Denny's journey completed. I (Vern) have been sentenced to the back seat with NO BLANKET. Will I survive.....

10:30am

- Jen fails miserably at starting Paul's car. Doh! *I think Paul will drive for a little while longer.*

11:30am

- Vern is woken and queried about her ownership of fruits and plants. Huh? (*We have just entered California!*)

11:58 am

- Jen is now driving, Paul is experiencing the Neon's back seat.

4:28pm

- The monsoon begins. Jen, Paul and Vern survive the torrential downpour set on their total annihilation.

7:20pm

- "Glad clingwrap.....Glad clingwrap.....clingwrap, clingwrap, clingwrap, clingwrap, clingwrap!" (*We definitely need more sleep.*) Dinner: McDonald's - ugh! In a quest for a DQ sundae, Vern attempts to get the "Be a Dangler" sign (*what does that mean?*), unfortunately the manager felt they couldn't do without. And I still get a treat for the attempt. - It is dark and I can't see what I'm writing.

Tuesday, February 20th,

9:40am

- Got here at 4 am. *Quick recap:* wind, exploding pretzels, road to forever, torrential downpour part 2, gossip update, cranky Paul. Must climb now!

FUNKY TREES

This place looks like a Salvador Dali painting minus clocks.

10:20am

- Jen drowns toothbrush in waterbottle.

Wednesday, February 21st,

12:30pm

- Climbed at Trashcan Rock yesterday - mellow day. Vern lead her first trad climb (5.1) Yay! *Paul and Dora lead it as well. Jen finds nice rock nest to nap in. Then...Hotsprings.* Jen gets lost going to the urination station. "*All of these piles of rock look the same in the dark!*" I (Vern) got yelled at by Doug and had to cut the tent conversation about Flopsy and Mopsy short.

- Today - Wakeup late. Mellow "bouldering". Jen and Vern have a complaining session of which Dan does not approve of. Paul psyches up for a big snit (*he has had one everyday since leaving, so we are assuming this pattern will continue*). Off to Sport Challenge Rock. Shoosh and Dan sing and play to us. *How CUTE!* Sports challenge - WIND, RAIN, COLD *I (Jen) guess it does rain in the desert after all.* Vern and Jen each do one climb + *some bouldering.* Paul is still boulder King.

Night: Trivial pursuit at Jeremy's. Yummy espresso shakes make Vern pee 2x at night. *Jen and Dan have a bit of a tiff over trivial pursuit rules. Vern makes Lent resolution to stop swearing. She has to pay 10 cents to a charity for every time she breaks it.*

Thursday, February 22nd,

- Adidasi questioning session with shoes ready for take off to the moon wins us free t-shirts, footfaces and shoelaces (for Dan). Paul is labelled tall, skinny, smelly guy with big feet.

- Off to Echo Rock for bouldering and many, many scratches. *Jen, Vern and Ron scramble to explore to hole in the rock and discover that the challenging part is actually getting there. Ron is spider boy.* Vern leads 5.6 - Double Dip (and places one hex) with Ron, to scary walk off. Jen and

Vern cruise up a 10d slab on TR. Jen, Vern and Dan rescue Ron from the evil “walk off” (off of Sticher Quits)- WINDY and COLD. Dancing, frolicking and much huddling is done to keep warm.

- Pizza for dinner, Jeremy’s for dessert and more trivial pursuit. Jen and Dan put away their board game differences to kick trivial butt. The COLD campsite costs me (Vern) 90 cents all in one go.

Friday, February 23rd,

- Slow morning (is anything new?) Basking like lizards in the sunshine. Dan has just sewn up Hands Off (5.8). Shoshanna is now seconding. BEAUTIFUL DAY. Getting a tan (aka burn) Ready for hot springs tonight.



Footface!

- Jen, Vern, Paul climbed Hands Off in beautiful, sunny weather. Then head over to Intersection Rock for some bouldering and lizard watching. Jen climbs sandbagged crappy 5.3 with Dan. More suntanning, *bouldering*, and bread & creamcheese eating.

- Back across the road to “Toe Jam” (5.6) Vern flails on a 10c overhanging crack (Bearded Cabbage). Jen and Vern climb Toe Jam, take down anchors and repel down 10c in the dark - what independent women! A lack of water forces us to go into town for dinner, darn! Note: Vern doesn’t have to pay 10 cents for this word!

- *Ten minutes of Dora, Steve, Fiona and Erin’s campfire (our first of this trip...what softies!) then...Mexican food for dinner, and back to Jeremy’s for more Trivial Pursuit in which Paul amazes all. Teams are: Jen, Fiona, Dora, Steve vs. Erin, Vern, Paul, Jason. (The hotsprings idea was ditched due to pure laziness and, hey, we kind of like our dirt!)*

Saturday, February 24th,

- Vern wakes up at 6:30am with the need to pee and can’t get back to sleep. We wake up, pack, laugh at Paul’s hair and we’re off... to the climbing store and to pee. It is now 10:29am and we’re off like a “pack of horny turtles.” (*direct quote from Paul!*) Vern is now up to \$3.80. Doh! We don’t want to LEAVE!

2:37pm

- We’re in Wasco! From a billboard: “Buckle you Seatbelts, we can wait.” - Add for a funeral home.

- Paul would like his Nectar guide joke mentioned: “I think Ron’s a nectar guy, he saw Alanna, and then he necked her!”

Sunday, February 25th,

3:37am

- We’ve decided to drive through the night. (*Too bad. Now we can’t register at a motel as Mr. Smith, Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Smith*)

- After a “brief detour” for frozen yogurt in Oakland, (Where’s the I-5?) we have arrived in Canyonville. YAY. We are waiting for Paul’s eyes to stop stinging, from laughing so hard, and are avoiding any mention of fruit for fear that they will start up again. I (Vern) want a hotdog NOW.

Vern and Paul play the random game. Rules: whatever you say next must be completely unrelated to what has just been said. "Power tools for midgets... Ants carrying cows..."

7:31am

- We're now in Washington. Paul has morphed into a fuzzy, blue blanket, and Jen and I are now quite awake.

8:20am

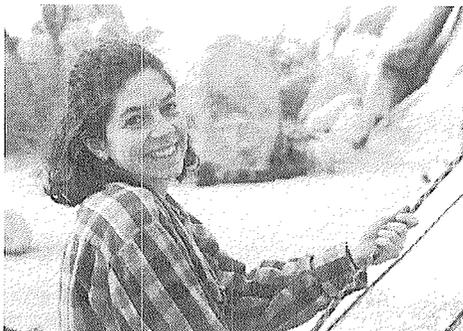
- Spiffy's for breakfast/dinner. Paul is with us in body but not in mind. Vern eats chicken fried steak. What the hell? Jen and Paul both conk their heads while pseudodriving. Paul was crashing into a pillow factory, Jen was just crashing. Vern still wants a hot dog. Paul tap dances with his strudel. What! No, they're not. Now they are bike helmets that are covered in strawberry blood. Paul, the cannibal, is gobbling them up with relish, that is if he can get them to his mouth. Jen and Vern laugh at Paul (as usual) and are generally obnoxious. What's new? Paul picks up two unknown women. What are their names again? No, it COULDN'T be Jen or Vern. These two nice unknown women are going to drive Paul all the way home. I wonder what he's going to do for them? (Take them down to J tree!)

12:09pm

- REST STOP for us. Freak stop for everyone else. (*that would be referring to us*) Jen and Vern are bursting with unaccountable energy. Paul has been conquered and now is Chicken Man! Jen and Vern run it out on one dark green #10 smilie, all the way to Vancouver. What animals! Vern decides that due to the entering of Canada, it is time to put her bra back on. Jen has rebelliously been wearing hers the ENTIRE trip. Wow!

1:19pm

- We have just entered Beautiful BC, we are almost home. BLAHHH! Jen realizes that her climb to Pringles ratio this week has been 8 to 6. How many calories do you burn doing a climb vs. eating a can of Pringles? Wow! Vern worries about stalling the car going through customs and then does it. Brilliant!



Dora at J-Tree, Feb. '96. Photo: Verena Blasy

Winter Longhike

by Paul Fearing and Crystal Huscroft

[Ed. Note: This story is actually about last year's Longhike, but it was submitted too late (tsk, tsk). Pretend it is about this year's non-existent hike.]

It was a dark and stormy night. It was a cheesy and overused first sentence. Yes, it was the epic tale of the Winter Long Hike.

It all started on a Wednesday deep within Buchanan. The chosen winter wanderlusts filed into the auditorium. Mike B. gave a quick overview of what we were supposed to bring. Frankly, we think it was just a cheap excuse to show us his underwear. The leaders helped us organize ourselves into car groups, food groups, and tent groups. This was a "good thing", because all of our leaders would then promptly jam on the weekend. The sad feelings about their absence were more than made up by the happy knowledge that at least one other VOC member could forge their signatures.

Saturday rolled around, and a number of ski-laden cars hit the road for Manning Park. The drive was eased by a healthy dose of cookies and stories (what - you mean no cookies in YOUR car?) On the way, our car stopped at Manning Lodge so the passengers could do mysterious bathroom-like things. Paul (so what if I talk about myself in third-person?) was forced to laze by the Lodge's roaring fireplace. A fine start to hardcore winter camping.

We finally pulled up at the Official Winter Camping Site Of The VOC - the "Lost Duck Campsite". Or maybe it was called the "Loose Duck Campsite". Frankly, my memory's a little dim on this point. Our campsite was already swarming with busy VOC types, carrying shovels. We weren't the only people at the site. There were a few other winter campers, and a large detachment of the Canadian Special Forces (RV Division). But no matter! There were tents to be put up; adventures to go on. We started digging protective holes in the snow for our tents. A few fun-loving souls decided to toss aside the shovels and dig holes using the "butt-flop" method. An even fewer fun-loving souls had to be sternly told that the butt-flopping could stop after the tents were set up. Otherwise, they'd still be at it.



Duuuuuude!

So there we were - 50 or so (I'm making a wild guess) VOC types, all cozily settled into our own little tent village. Some of the tents were even color coordinated to match their occupant's clothing. Every so often someone would pop out of the tent to pose, like some kind of MEC poster child. Somebody even decided to sleep out in the open. We're not sure who it was - in the morning most of his face was iced beyond recognition.

After setting up the tents, we decided to start an adventure.

Actually, several adventures were started, but we kind of lost track of all of where they went and what they did. So, we're only going to describe our own little personal adventure. Sorry.

Our fearless pseudo-leaders decided that the avalanche dangers were too high to take the

previously planned trails. So, we agreed to ski around the Manning Park ski resort. Everyone suited up into “Condition Heavy Wipeout” ski gear, and we drove up the road. We finally piled out of the cars, and stood gasping up at our awesome destination. There it stood: the Manning Park downhill run, in all its snowy glory. Many observations were made. “Do we have to climb up that?” “Where’s the snack bar?” “Will there be pain?”

We strapped on the skins and started the long slog up the hill. The going was hard, but our party was energetic and enthusiastic. At a narrow point in the trail, our group stopped to rest and save the life of a young girl on downhill skis. Lassie would have been proud.

We continued upward, shedding Goretex and gallons of sweat. Those of us not particularly in shape (who, me?) were breathing like a deflated balloon. Finally, we reached the GLORIOUS GLORIOUS summit. We stopped to take in the beautiful mountain views and watch the chairlift unload. Certain members of our ski party immediately met men. We then headed out along the ridges, away from the ski resort. Our merry band trekked under the “ski area boundary” sign, and we all felt a little thrill.

After traversing the ridge for a while, we agreed upon a stopping spot. It was sun-swept little clearing, with a fine view of the mountains, the valleys, and the fresh sparkling snow. We all kicked off our skis, and settled down to watch the glorious landscape; content to listen in silence to the whispering of the wind, the gentle rustle of the leaves, and the fabric-ripping superfart of Eric “big boomer” C. We braced ourselves, waiting for the avalanche, but all we got was a contented smile. “Thank God for Goretex”, he said. “It’s breathable”.

The sun slowly sank, and we realized that we had to eventually descend from this place of beauty. We took stock of the general level of telemark experience, and we realized that a few lessons might be in order. We got varied advice from the more advanced telemarkers: “Downhill knee bent!” “Weight transfer!” “Breathe out while crashing to avoid getting snow stuck up your nose!”

We decided that the slopes looked a little avalanche prone for our tastes, so we traversed back along under the crest of the ridge, stopping occasionally to fall. Back on the downhill runs, we got ready to descend. “Wow! Look at all those black diamonds! This run must be named after some kind of poker hand.”

Suddenly, we leapt into action! Snow flashed everywhere! Many vertical feet were descended. Somewhere, Warren Miller cursed at missing the opportunity to take pictures of our new winter sport: extreme snowplowing. We were naturals. All it took was a carefully timed weight transfer from the left foot onto the left butt cheek, and then another careful transfer onto the face. This was repeated until the sliding stopped. Our skiing was severely hampered by the stunning sunset. Yeah, that was it, sunset, yeah.

Back at the cars, a crazy group of cross-country types disappeared off into the forest for a little night skiing. The rest of us scuttled back to base camp to make supper. By this time, it was dark and getting cold. Luckily, there was a shelter on the site. It was occupied by a few other winter campers, and a number of Canadian military cadets (highly trained in attack and defence). We quickly forced them out of the shelter. Could have been the smelly polypro. There was a good deal of concern for Donald, who had not yet returned from a solo trip. He finally arrived, just as we had

come to the consensus to try and sell his stuff.

As soon as our stomachs were full with noodles, we started the drinking games. The rules: "No zooming a zoomer." "No zooming a schwartzed zoomer". "Crystal makes the rules up as she goes along". Every so often, a non-zoomer would walk by and ask "what's a zoomer?" and "why do you have your fingers in your mouth?"

The rest of the non-zoomers huddled by the fire, exchanging great gossip. See me later for details. An even more dedicated group sat in the main campfire clearing, discussing tomorrow's adventures. As the sound of happy zooming echoed through the still mountain air, the group slowly started to turn in. Eventually even the zoomers stumbled off to bed, and the night was peaceful and quiet (except for the occasional bit of juicy gossip about kayakers).

During the night, several drinkers became aware of their sins and were forced to pee. Not an easy task to leave the cuddly warmth of the sleeping bag to head out into the snow. The moral of the story: "Thank god for waterproof boots! - Hope those weren't mine."

In the morning, we awoke to a hearty breakfast. While we were cooking, we were visited by an official looking Forest Service type. He reminded us gently to respect the other campers around us. He was especially concerned about the soldiers, who were delicate sleepers. Seeing the error of our ways, we apologized profusely on behalf of the Simon Fraser Outdoor Club. Then we got ready to go on more trips.

We quickly readied ourselves, and headed to the cars. Unfortunately, Blair was in his usual state of undress and had to put his boots on. Several less-patient souls went back for naps. Others tried to hack in tele-boots. There was rebellious talk about hacking in tele-skis. Blair got his left boot on.

Finally, a group of us chose to go Back to the Mountain. Eight day glacial traverses were to easy for us - we wanted to match our skills against The Big One. Infamous and life-threatening, it was known by many names: "Widowmaker", "Hell's Highway", or "the Manning Park Rope Tow". With yesterday's experience under our belts (although, it could have just been snow), we felt prepared for the challenge that dawned below. Blair finally got his right boot on. We set off for the bottom.

Of course at the bottom, we realized that we had to either pay for a ticket, or use our easy charm and fast wit to smooth-talk a ride up. So we had to pay for a ticket.

We skied for a while longer, improving our telemarking skills dramatically. There were also many more adventures involving falling. However, we'll skip those because the authors are getting tired of writing. Plus, we frankly feel that most of you are having trouble swallowing the previous couple pages of complete embellishment, poetic license, and downright lies. Although the bit about the fart was true.

ANYWAY - we finally made it back to the car and headed home. The return journey was fast and friendly. All and all, it was a wonderful experience filled with fun and damp clothing. Both of us made a lot of friends, and used a lot of cliches. See you at the next Winter Longhike!

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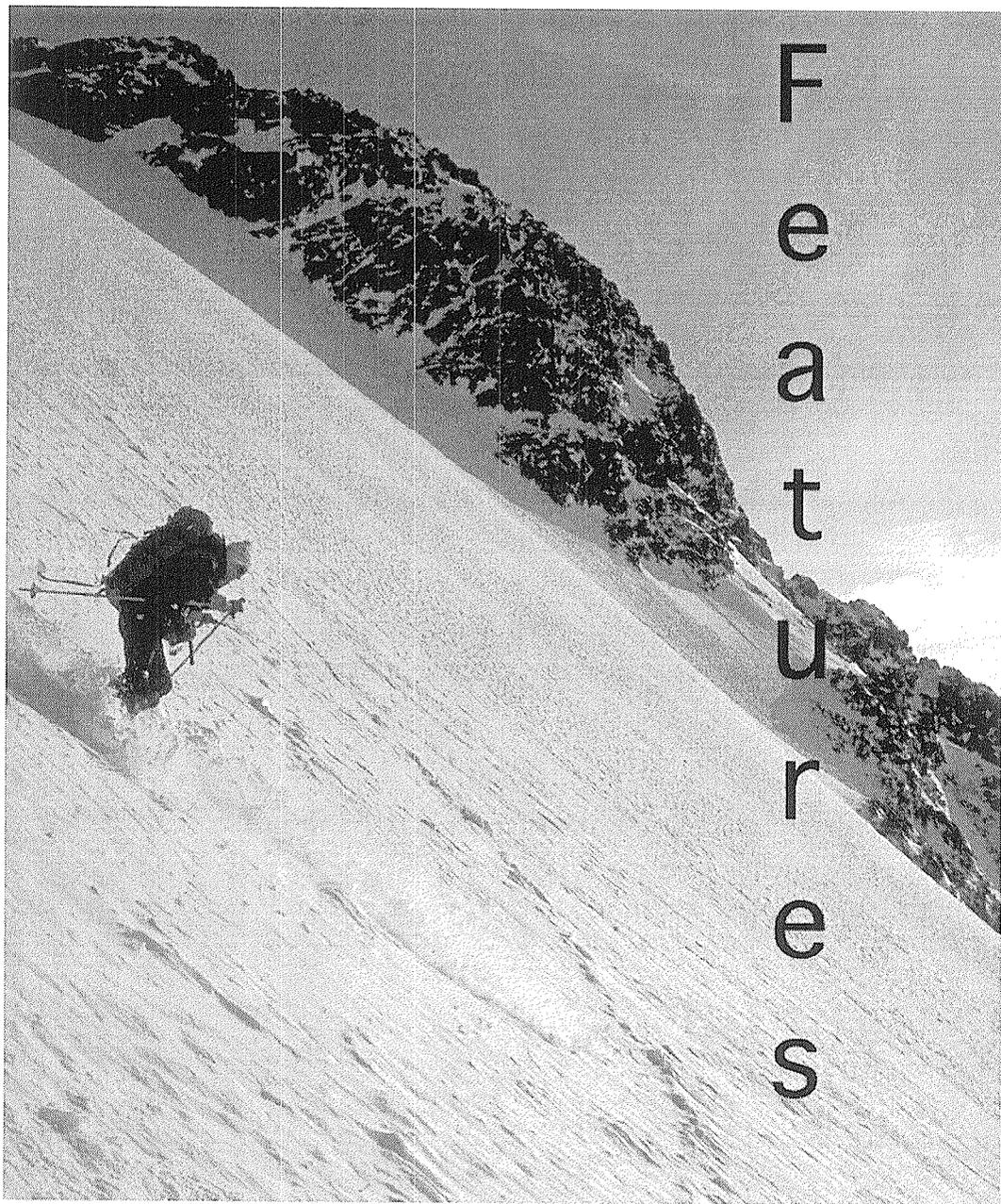
HEY KIDS!

Try to find this year's

HIDDEN CONTEST!

- somewhere in this journal are details of a hidden contest with a *prize*.
- sorry, anyone on this year's exec is not eligible.
- hints will be put in the VOCene if nobody finds it

(as IF!)



(Features) A steep slope

(and a depressing feeling that we really should have tried to start tracking down missing photo credits a lot earlier).

Photo: Markus Kellerhals

The Nostalgia Page

a poem first printed in the 1962 VOC Journal

TO THE GIRLS OF THE VOC

Now I say, it seems to me,
That the girls of the VOC
Are a pretty and study skookum lot.
I've even heard in words,
They play tackle for the 'birds,
But cook they can and dinner's always hot.

"Climbing now!" you say,
And she's ready on belay,
And should you fall the rope is always tight,
Though it's not because she likes you --
For in fact she'd rather spike you --
But she wants to do the Salty Dog tonight.

Well, they make no grumble sounds
With a pack of ninety pounds,
But wait, my lad, for early light of morning:
They'll dump you in the snow,
Screaming, "Where'd my knickers go?!"
You can never say you didn't have a warning.

They're like statues on the fountains,
Are these maidens of the mountains,
So a toast would seem in order now to me;
We would give without compunction,
But this is a 'ficial function,
So -- cheers you hardy girls of VOC!

Anon.

Elizabeth's Travels - Part II

by Elizabeth Cheu

Lynn Headwaters Regional Park

This was the destination on one rainy Sunday morning. Our trip leader, Blair fearless of rain, was up and about picking up non-rainphobics in the trusty blue-VOC-group-outing-van. The five of us were quite prepared for the rain, snow, sleet, hail and possible sunny periods. At the trail head it was still raining and about 1km up the trail the trail had metamorphosed into a raging river. Since we were prepared for everything else possible other than river traverses we turned back and did the touristy Lynn Canyon suspension bridge. We decided to look for Twin Falls and after about quite a longish hike we found ourselves on a gravel road but did not find the falls.

Upper Lillooet Valley/Stoltmann Wilderness

Oct. 28-29/95

Markus and John Clarke led a group of 21 VOCers up to this pristine watershed. Saturday the group hiked in and setup camp on a sandbar and were treated to wonderful scenery. Time was spent scrambling up rocks and enjoyed the sun under the watchful eye of a soaring hawk. Evening came and so did the COLD. Many brought summer bags and found out that these bags were only good in that one HOT week that occasionally occurs in August. Sunday morning we woke up to the J.C. alarm clock, "Darn, I peed on myself again, I hate it when I do that!" Afternoon was spent gingerly picking through old growth Devil's club and we lunched under a spectacular granite column waterfall. Sunshine was enjoyed by all as well as the plethora of knowledge shared by John Clarke.

Birdwatching at Reifel

Start with 5h sleep. Add chocolate. Mix with 53 (okay, 52) bird species in the cold, and top it off with all-you-can-eat Chinese food for \$6.55 - the recipe for the unbearable lightness of being silly. This past brisk Saturday morning (i.e. before the sun came up) 4 VOC-oids ventured to the Reifel Bird Sanctuary, north of the Tsawassen Terry Fermal, to seek out animals of the feathery type. Spotted by these experts in the field were 53 species, but for legal reasons, only 52 were countable.

It was a gruelling ascent though; avoiding the traps of plastic geese decoys, dive-bombing Golden-crowned Kinglets, enduring sleep and food deprivation, attention grabbing fixed-wing birds like Dash-8 and B-747, and hallucinations of Snowy Owls and Western Grebes (they were NOT there, whatever you might hear otherwise). What was really seen: Thousands of Snow Geese, 2 Saw-whet Owls, 1 Night-Heron, 13 duck species, 1 Downy Woodpecker, a Bewick's Wren, and other highly elusive birds like the Chickadee. Still, enthusiasm ran amok and led us after the sanctuary even further away from the lure of food and warmth, to the wastelands of the coal heaps of Robert's Bank (zillions of Pintails and a Common Loon), with adrenaline surges every 200 metres (Raptor!!! - brakes - back up - tumbling out - cold finger - wrong bird - Food!!! - repeat). Only

shortly before starvation we reached the last outpost of civilization, Richmond. Yes, fun was had by all.

Enough sweat and work to justify a longer report!

Mayne Island

Feb. 10/96

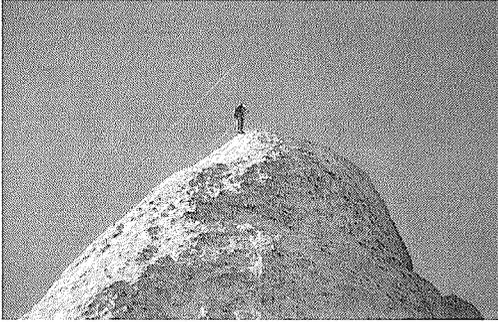
An early season hiking trip was led by Reto to Mayne Island. During the 1 1/2h ferry ride, we spotted eagles, gulls, ducks and seas. Arriving at Mayne Island we hiked up to Mount Parke, which provided spectacular views of Vancouver Island and the San Juans. Helen Point was the next destination and we introduced a common west coast feature to our hiking companions, MUD. Finally, fun was had by all.



Jonathan Wong on the steep, deep and short Elfin Lake Hut run. Photo: Len Thomas

Doug's Distant Destinations

by Doug Wilm



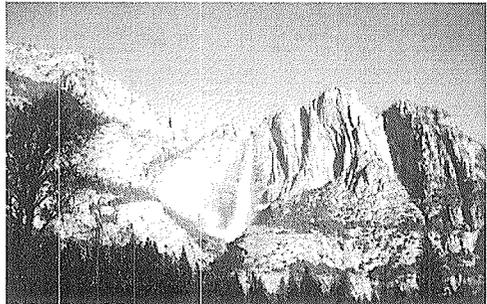
Joshua Tree, Dec. 1994



Red Rocks, Nevada. Dec. 1994.



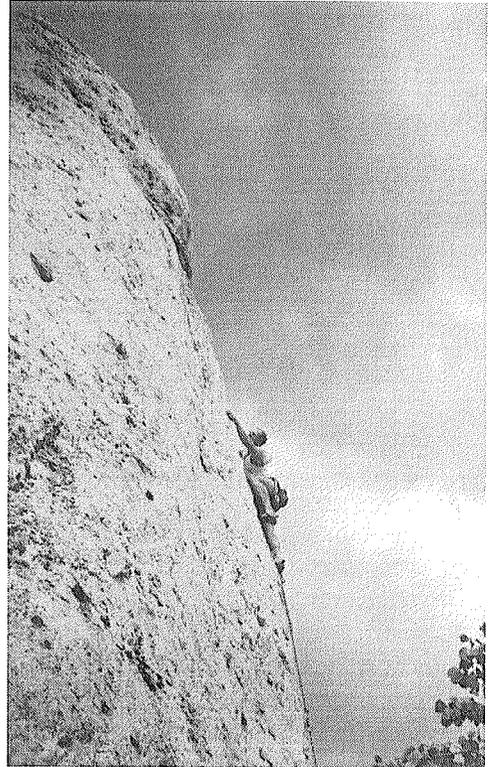
Dave Vocadlo at Yosemite, Feb. 1995



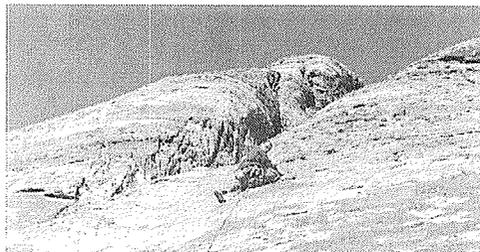
Yosemite



City of Rocks, Idaho. Sum. 1995



Eric Clemson at Wild Iris, Wyoming.



Eric Hutton at Joshua Tree, Dec. 1994

VOC Road Trip Restaurant and Food Guide

by Carl Fleet

When I find myself on a road trip, I almost always sample the local restaurant cuisine along the way. So, I give you the first known,

Varsity Outdoors Club Road Trip Restaurant and Food Guide

These recommendations were collected from VOC members together with their comments. They are shown below by actual area destination, name of the joint (if available), collected comments, and directions. Please note, the directions are drawn from mine and others' brains, so good luck.

Local Grub (as in Canada)

Squamish

A couple of obvious hot spots here, besides the infamous Taco Hell on Highway 99 ('nuff said).

Chief Pizza

Located across from the Dairy Queen in Squamish area.

The Cliffside

Easy to find.

The Sea to Sky

Ditto.

Pemberton

The Pony Espresso

A coffee shop I guess. It's "100% PURE FUNK!"

West Van

The Square Rigger

"The best pub." Hard to find.

Mt. Currie

The Roadside Café

Located on Highway 99 across from the Mohawk Gas.

Hope

More Than Donuts

"100% PURE FUNK! Good ice cream too!"

West Coast Vancouver Island

The Pie Shop

Find it on the way to the West Coast Trail... it's obvious. I've heard this place recommended to me before, so get to it.



Skaha/ Penticton

Author's note: I have never had a memorable meal in Penticton from any restaurant, but I have not been to the two places mentioned below. So....

The Hog's Breath

Follow your nose.

The Pizza Store

Find it ACROSS from Pizza Hut. "Good bouldering."

Not So Local Grub (as in USA)

Mt. Vernon, WA.

Mexico Café

It's kind of hard to find. Cross bridge, go North.... Best of luck.

Leavenworth, WA.

"The Mexican place that isn't the obvious one"

Find it on the second floor of a building 1 block south (?) of the "main" tourist trap street in Leavenworth. A guide is recommended. For extra fun, bring a group of twenty to eat 30 minutes before closing.

Smith Rock/ Terrebonne/ Bend, OR.

Las Siestas

Just behind Red Point Climbers Supply at the turnoff to Smith Rock. 'Hole in the wall' - looking.

Stuff'd Pizza

Check the Smith Rock Guide Book. Stuff'd is almost out of business and is now take out only. Get it while you can.

Deschutes Brewery

Good local beers. Cool environment.

Golden Corral

All you can eat. Friendly service

Portland, OR.

The Original House of Pancakes

Exit 285 (?) off I-5. Ask for the featured Apple Stuffed Pancake. Tell the waitress you are a hungry climber. You will not be disappointed (sick maybe). N.B. DO NOT do any strenuous activity afterwards. You

will DIE! I'm talking HUGE pancake, ok.

Yosemite Valley, CA.

Glaurants in the Valley?

Joshua Tree/ Desert Hot Springs, CA.

Jeremy's Café

Cool hangout. Eclectic beer selection. Find it near the entrance to J. Tree National Monument. Very obvious.

South of the Border

Excellent, fresh Mexican food. Moderately priced and large-ish servings. Did I say it was excellent? Find it in the town of Desert Hot Springs. It is down the street from the Desert Hot Springs Resort Inn. Best of luck.

Red Rocks/ Las Vegas, NV.

The Original House of Pancakes #2

Find it on Charleston Blvd. near Rainbow Ave. See description above under Portland.

Wild Oats

Tired of cooking pasta (again) at the campsite? Sick of all that greasy cardiac-blocking buffet junk? Healthy food can be had in Vegas, served up in a very granola/ Capers-on-4th-ish environment. (If you like that sort of thing.) Find it on Sunset Drive near Rainbow.

Starbucks (on Charleston)

I've tried to leave the chain operations out of this compilation because of their lack of uniqueness. However, this location warrants special mention because of their preferred treatment towards our heroic VOC climbers.

"The Casino Buffets"

Only if you feel like it. Most in Vegas aren't that great quality wise, though they are mondo cheapo. e.g.: US\$1.99 breakfast, US\$2.99 lunch and US\$4.99 dinner were among the cheapest advertised. Where? Let's just say there are more buffets in Vegas than coffee shops in Vancouver.

Exclusive 'Food' to Buy While in the USA

Besides the obvious snacks for your road trip like chips, chocolate, pop, etc, there is one gem to be had when touring the USA. I very highly recommend Arizona Ice Tea With Ginseng Extract (accept no other flavor). This stuff is next to impossible to get in Canada, so stock up before heading back home.

As for beer, well one could write an entire article on the subject, but here's a small selection. In Washington state, I like Spanish Peak Honey Raspberry Ale. Oregon has Deschutes Brewery in Bend (see above). As mentioned earlier, Jeremy's in J. Tree has an eclectic selection of beer: Pumpkin Ale, Grass Lager and some very-obscure-nation brews to name a few. Las Vegas has a local brewery that I have yet to try. It's recommended on good authority, though. Find it on The Strip.

Well, that's the first annual Varsity Outdoors Club Road Trip Restaurant and Food Guide. If I left out your favorite whatever, too bad. Wait for next year's edition. And remember, always leave a tip (you're on vay-kay!).

The Newest Outdoor Phenomenon

by Brodie Haupt

(this article is to be taken with a grain of salt)

Recently there has been a huge interest by the general public in climbing, hiking, and telemark skiing. Climbing gyms are popping up everywhere and you actually have to make reservations in order to hike on classic trails. There is, however, an alternative. I was hooked on this new sport about 6 years ago while attending U.B.C. This sport is compatible with almost every outdoor activity and is relatively inexpensive to start and easy to learn; if you have the spare time to practice. This sport is referred to as HACKY SACK.

A small sack full of beads is all you need to start. The only rules are: you are not allowed to use your hands and you have to keep the footbag off the ground using the rest of your body. A hacky sack is perfect for everything. It is small, light, and portable. You can whip one out and play at your campsite, on the trail, or at the base of the Chief while waiting to climb. I have found that the hacky sack is much more than a game, it's a life-style. You begin by learning to juggle the hack with your knees and feet. Actually, one foot usually stays anchored to the ground and is not used at all until you become more proficient. Finally, you progress to the level of "stalls" which may include maneuvers as follows: catching the hacky sack behind your neck, in your lap, on your foot, or behind your knee. You can become a supreme stunt wanker. Hacky sack offers an excellent aerobic workout and it serves to stretch out muscles you didn't think you had. Especially if you are like me and insist on diving and lunging all over the place. There is not much risk in this sport. Unless you are very clumsy or are an unaware bystander who doesn't mind being kicked (by accident, of course).

When we start hacking on the concourse at U.B.C. between classes (or during classes, for that matter) we always seem to attract quite a crowd. Anyone is welcome to join in no matter what skill or ability they have. This is a very social sport. Our circle of hackers slowly expands until a second hack is produced and another circle gradually develops. I have personally wasted countless hours playing hacky sack. You don't need special equipment (although, you tend to favor a special pair of shoes) or specific terrain. A warning is needed, however, because hacky sack is highly addictive. It has been observed that people will shirk their responsibilities and play for upwards of 7 hours a day. I think hacky sack is a sport of the future and should be established as an activity that is endorsed by the V.O.C. The only problem with this is; how do you post a trip sheet?

P.S. If you decide to drink and hack, please be careful. In other words, make sure you have a lid on your cup. The hack tends to gravitate towards, and into, vessels containing alcoholic beverages.

Sincerely Yours,
The Grand Exalted Stunt Wanker
[and resident flexible fellow]
Brodie Haupt

Rant

by Drew Brayshaw

This isn't an article about any sort of trip. This is a pure rant. What I'm going to talk about is training. How to go from a quivering neophyte into a true mountain hardman/ woman. This training program actually works. If you ever find yourself pissed off at your lack of progress- try this! It works!

Diet. Forget diets. Fuck that! REAL hardmen eat whatever they want. The aim here is that you'll burn so many calories that you have to eat five or six big meals a day in order to stay even. Food is a necessity, not a weakness or a luxury. If you can scam food- that's money you have to spend on something else!

Sport. Don't limit yourself with a hard focus. Do everything at your limit. Climb on all types of rock. Granite, quartzite, gneiss, sandstone, limestone, trees, dirt, etc. Forget quality-quantity teaches you more. If a climb's too easy-solo it. If it's an easy solo: do it drunk. Do it stoned. Do it with a 75 lb. pack on. Do it barefoot and pregnant. Do it at night. Etc. Climb ice. Climb mountains. Climb plastic-it's a good workout. Climb sport route and gear routes... if you don't put anything in, it doesn't matter what the pro is like!

Don't just climb. Go orienteering. Break into private estates in the British Properties so you can run from the guard dogs. Do laps on the Grouse Grind with the gear you would need for the Cassin Ridge. Hike while it's raining, snowing, etc. Save most of the sunny days for climbing.

Gear: if you buy it, use it. Buy it all, but don't get those padding items that sit on the rack but don't get used. What I'm trying to say is that once you buy a Big Dude you can never not climb an offwidth if it and you are in the same place.

Sell your car. Hardmen hitch, ride or walk everywhere. Better yet, sublet your room and live in your car, or under a rock at the Psyche Ledge.

Never back off. If you can't free it, dig out the gear and aid. If you can't free or aid...why did you get on it originally?

If you get a job, get one that requires brutal, outdoor labour. Desk jobs are for sissies. You want something that can be bent to serve as training.

Climbing partners. If you can't climb with other hardmen, find competent belay slaves, who can follow everything you can lead. When going into the mountains, get a sherpa to come along with the beer, tent, etc. so you have more pack space for gear, or so you can carry a smaller pack on the route. While you're climbing, the sherpa can move the car to the base of the descent trail.

While on the subject of partners: avoid relationships with non hardmen. These will divert valuable time from climbing. If necessary, you can pretend to enter into one of these type of things so that you can acquire climbing slaves.

Learn to curse in many languages. Make sure the natives are scared of you whether you're in Namche Bazaar, Banff, Boulder or even South Central Watts.

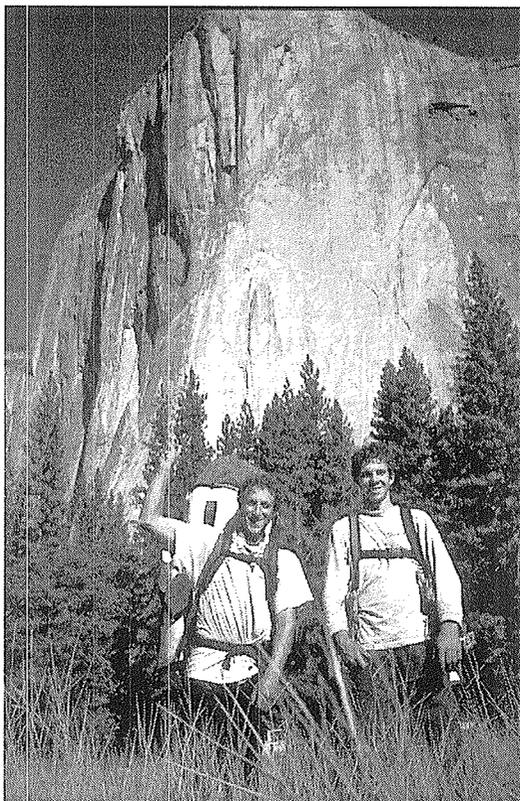
Attitude is everything. Hypnotize yourself into believing that you are the best that ever was.

If it's true-you will be. If not you'll probably perish and cleanse the world of your presence.

Ethics are a luxury. What you should do is whatever's cheapest. Why place bolts next to a crack when you can place gear in the crack? The more you run it out, the lighter your rack will be.

If you aren't prepared to push each and every time you go out-give up. Give a hardman your gear and retire. Anyone who says "But I just wanted an easy day!" should be shot. Excuses don't matter to the mountains.

Aaaaahhhhhh.... what a true load of garbage! Bullshit! Drivel! The main point of this article was to ridicule some Vocadlo/Buda ethics articles of not so long ago. The other point was to display the true hardman attitude. There are too many people in the club who are too soft on themselves because they secretly believe that they're not good enough. Defeatist thinking like that belongs in the Ski Club or the Chess Club! Once you have a good epic you'll never go back to bunny trips...and don't be scared of dying...make Death scared of you!!



Guy and Kenny below "The Nose", El Capitain. Photo: Guy Edwards.

Rehabilitation

by Drew Brayshaw

This is a story about motivation. I'm going to take you back- way back, back to the ancient days of 1990 when I learned to climb. After taking Rock I at Longhike I got in a car and drove up to Whistler for the party. As my brother drove through Cheakamus Canyon I hung my head out the window and stared at the acres of steep rock which lined the sides of the road... all unclimbed. The thought of one day climbing some of that rock seemed like a bizarre dream - it was so steep, and there were no cracks!

Several years later I felt like I knew what I was doing. I was mad to make a first ascent. The idea of climbing something first seemed to me to offer the potential for creation that is normally associated with the arts: the chance to craft a masterpiece, or churn out a piece of schlock, both were there. Some routes you get on have had only a cursory scrub, bolts are poorly placed or placed next to natural gear, etc; or perhaps the line seems contrived or forced in, avoiding a natural line in search of artificial difficulty, or the moves are awkward and the climbing unaesthetic. This is the type of thing you want to avoid on a first ascent. You want to create a potential classic-if the line is good. If you see an untouched line, and it turns out to be a choss fest when you get on it, there's no point in putting a lot of effort into it. These are the climbs that you make FA's of for adventure-scrubbing on lead, trundling blocks off, scaring yourself: having the alpine experience on a crag.

But enough of pseudo-ethics and babble. If you want more go read a Dave Vocadlo article. To get back to my story, after a pointless trip in Garibaldi with Lorne Hoover and his buddy Dave the kayaker, we were heading back down the canyon to Vancouver. This was summer of 1993. I checked out some crags just off the road as we drove by..."Wow! Look at that! It's so steep....and good access!" I said.

"Who would ever climb way out here? It's in the middle of nowhere!" Lorne told me, adding that "the best place for new routes is at Squamish-in the Bluffs".

Well, a few months later, those very cliffs were part of the new sport climbing mecca of BC: the Rogues Gallery, to be precise.

Now it's the summer of 1995. Time to put up some routes in the canyon. On early season trips I forced my companions to stop at different areas so that we could take a look at various hunks of unclimbed rock. Andy Cairns and I scrambled down to the Cheakamus River to examine one high quality potential area, only to find lines of bolts- it's now called Gotham City.

At the start of June Cam and I made a special trip to check things out. We had a list of potential crags. We ended up settling on some steep walls right off the highway. The parking was next to one of those highway improvement signs-we had a name, the Rehabilitation Projects. Indeed, the scrubbing of moss, cleaning of loose rock, and addition of bolts is a very specific type of rehabilitation, although not the kind the highways department was thinking about, I'm sure.

While I worked for the next three weeks, Cam and his buddy Kevin Irish went to work on "The Rehabs". They built a trail to the base, put in stairs, set some stations, and began scrubbing

lines on an overhanging wall hidden in the trees. By the time I was finished work they had one line complete: "Peeler", 5.10+, F.A. by Cam in an inspired effort (it's very hard to redpoint...).

I picked my own line: a series of edges and steps up a steep slab on the wall above the other lines. This had longer access: it took me half an hour to hike up, slam in the pins for an anchor, and get the big snarl of ropes and webbing set up. My route was a very obvious line (from the highway) and a lot of yahoos would yell and honk as they drove by. Meanwhile I discovered how fun extensive scrubbing is. After two hours a new wirebrush would be destroyed, and I would rap to the base covered in dirt, with bleeding scabs on my knuckles and bruises on my knees from the dangling junk on my harness. I melted through a prussik climbing up and down, and my old rope got harshed in several places. Meanwhile Cam and Kevin finished two more lines on what was becoming known as Stump Wall: "Route Sucker", 5.10-, and "Stump", 5.9+. All of these routes are 10-15 m. long on continuously overhanging rock, with weird edges, slopers and sidepulls. A Bosch Bulldog that Dave Dexter let us borrow was a big help in establishing these routes.

Finally I finished off my line: a thirty meter long route, it begins with ten meters of crack which you must protect naturally (take #3 Camalot, mid-size Friend or #1 Camalot, and small Tri-Cam), then swings out onto the main face, traversing 4m then climbing up through an easy section to a finish on smaller edges and steeper rock (five bolts, if using a 50m rope then rap, don't lower, from the station). There are a few 5.8 moves, but the central section is easier. The approach still needs some work, though! Looking through my enormous compendium of route names (I had about 6,000 at the time), I chose "Jugular Vein" for the route name, because of the size of the holds; the cliff got called "This Is Your Brain" after a climbing T-shirt.

That's about it for the finished routes. Cam and Kevin have a possible 5.11 project going, "Pyro Paver 300", on the "Your Tax Dollars at Work" cliff (between Stump Wall & This Is Your Brain), and there's still the big arete on Stump Wall, dubbed "Symbiosis" which will likely check out in the 5.12a range when it's finished. Some dudes from the Rockhouse put up a nice-looking two pitch climb, with elvis-type names, on the cliff tier below This Is Your Brain...a 25m. 5.9 crack pitch to 25m of 5.9 face climbing. Me? I have a few lines on the hit list too...a big wide crack (45m? of fist and hand), and a steep line to the right of Jugular Vein, starting up a dike, are the most compelling. And there are more cliffs around, too- if you climb 5.12-5.13, check out the steep, steep walls to the south of Tax Dollars At Work!

Is scrubbing worth it? The days of hard work make you question this-the dirt, the pain, the fear of your shitty anchors- but I think the end product is worth the motivation. If you have a few weeks free and sixty or seventy dollars for the equipment you'll need (plus drill rental...) then I'd say go for it! If you're just motivated by the pseudo-thrill of seeing your name in the guidebook, you'd best forget it- the grunge far outweighs any potential glamour.

Living in the Absence of the Cosmic Sugar Daddy

by Simon Caruth

From hence, ye beauties, undeceived,
Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved,
and be with caution bold.

Not all that tempts your wandering eyes
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize;
Nor all that glisters, gold.

-- Thomas Gray

Straining hard against the rope drag I finally waded up through the snow onto the summit ridge sucking hard for air. Straddling the summit I pounded in a stake and rigged up a belay for Paul. As he worked up against the steep snow I reflected back on the arduous 10 hours we had just spent on the face. The arching ice pitches, the blinding spindrift, the rotten rock bands and the deep snow that had bordered on diabolical. Paul finally summited and the two of us straggled silently down the west ridge in the dimming light. Headlamping down the moraines we began to chat sporadically about our climb up Athabasca. We both expressed the usual satisfaction that comes with pulling off a climb as planned. We also expressed a common fear with this mountain neither of us had ever felt before. It was a dark, forbidding feeling that made me sure that lady luck had been climbing alongside us that day. It's not that anything specific had made me count my lives but there seemed to be a malevolent streak in that mountain that was just waiting to strike.

The following day we watched a Yamnuska guided party climb the Silverhorn between the route we did on the north face of Athabasca and the west ridge. Later that evening we chatted with the Yam guides only to find that the route on the Silverhorn was in surprisingly good condition. Had we more time the preceding day we may well have descended by it. We were to find out later that our lethargic pace may well have saved our lives.

Paul and I waited a couple more days by the Columbia Icefields just to see if Andromeda would clear up enough for us to climb the west shoulder. Unfortunately the weather crapped out on us. The temperature was getting colder and a bit of snow began to accumulate on the upper reaches of Athabasca and Andromeda. In turn we headed south for a little sport climbing near Canmore.

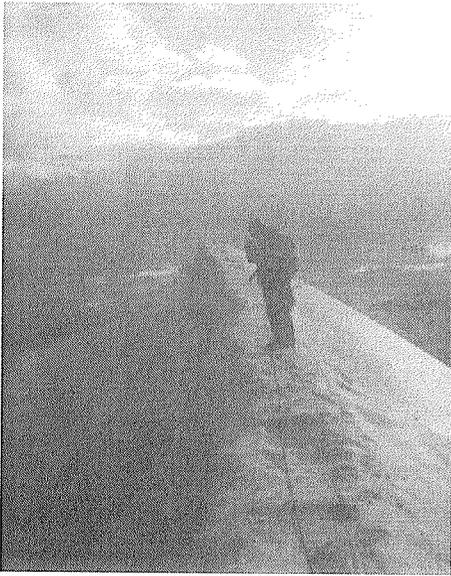
A couple of days later I straggled out of the van and into the Barbary Coast for coffee. Slurping away on my caffeine I waited for Paul to recover from the previous nights inebriated festivities. I picked up the paper only to realize my fears about Athabasca had come true. The headline read, "Climber Dead on Athabasca."

It was exactly a week after Paul and I had topped out, that Athabasca unleashed it's malevolence and struck out unexpectedly. Three aspiring ACMG (Assoc. of Canadian Mtn. Guides) guides and one certified guide struck out early on the 31st of August to climb the east ridge of Athabasca. The climb was apparently the conclusion to some course work the three students were

involved in. They quickly summited, traversed the summit ridge and began to down climb on the west ridge. Well within their ability, the four then decided to solo down the grade II Silverhorn instead of walking off the west ridge. The two rope teams walked off the ridge and onto the Silverhorn only to find themselves quickly in the midst of a small avalanche. One rope team managed to free themselves from the sluff but Tim Pochay and Simon Parboosingh were knocked off their feet and began to tumble uncontrollably down the Silverhorn. The tumble ended in a 100+ foot free fall off a serac and onto the glacier. Amongst all the superficial injuries Tim had broken both his ankles and several ribs. Simon was not so lucky. The air evacuation came fast and furious but within four hours of the fall Simon was in Jasper and pronounced dead.

I knew of Simon but I didn't actually know him. That's why I was surprised at my reaction. I would have expected to be very nonchalant about it. However, his death felt like one of a known contemporary. It was more than I would normally feel in a situation of that nature. Paul and I both had convictions that someone was going to bite it on Athabasca and now I had confirmation. Reading on, the paper unveiled some of the details. I shook my head in realization that Simon's death was the result of a very freakish accident. He was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. All the experience in the world could not have prevented the fall - someone was going to get it.

On the 2nd of September, two days after Simon's death, Paul and I trundled into Calgary for a friend's wedding. We crashed at the best mans house where we were amongst some non-urbanites. Stuart, who lived in the house and was a climber was good friends with Jim Preston who runs an outdoor education program in the south of Calgary and another aspiring ACMG guide. Jim apparently knew Simon quite well and was obviously impacted by his death. Jim talked about Simon briefly and had nothing but good words to say about him. Then again, "who says anything bad about a dead man" I thought. I tried to push Simon's death and the freakish nature of it out of my mind but I couldn't. Simon's death was all pervasive in the media despite the later death of two Brits on Mount Victoria (ironically, Paul and I had met these two on Robson the year before). I wasn't too concerned with Simon's death anymore but frightened about what may have happened to Paul and I. Selfish? Yes, it is; but I couldn't help feeling that way. It was just the absolute wanton randomness that took the life of a better and more experienced climber than myself that nagged and bitched in the dark recesses of my mind. You play with this chaotic idea in your mind, over and over. It fills your head with questions and apprehensions about your own climbing. One moment you're full of piss and vinegar ready for all hell to break lose and then the next moment you're a spineless wonder, full of doubt. Or is this simply bravado being replaced by prudence? To some degree I think we have all played this mind game with ourselves. On a tangible level though mountaineering is a game. It's a game of iron will and risk reduction. It is also a game of chance and luck where reducing risk can only add to your chance of survival. Yet we still cannot avoid the inextricable disorder that dominates an alpine climb. Sometimes I feel survival comes down to no more than a toss of the dice. You either let this bug the hell out of you or you shrug it off and move on. Eventually I let it go and Paul and I headed back to Vancouver for the beginning of school term.



Paul Bowes overlooking the North face of Athabasca from the summit ridge.

Photo: Simon Caruth

Driving out of Calgary late Sunday morning we stopped in Banff for a quick lunch. Even in the Subway, all people talked about was the death of Simon and the two Brits; Luke and Eva something-or-rather if memory serves me correctly. Pulling out of Banff we picked up a bloke named Chris. He was looking for a ride to Lake Louise and knowing that we were headed for Field I agreed to drop him off. With Paul flaked out in the back of the van Chris and I chatted. He was a lift mechanic on the ski hill at Lake Louise. Seeing the climbing gear he asked if we'd heard of Simon's death. Telling him the story of our climb and the irony I saw in Simon's death Chris became very sullen and pensive. Staring blankly at the highway he took a long drag from his cigarette. He gently blew it out against the wind-screen in one long sigh. "I knew him quite well" said Chris. I felt bad. What could I say? I didn't reply but just kept my eyes on the road. Chris broke the silence and talked about Simon furiously for about five minutes. I listened quietly. The subject changed as quickly as it had exploded and the rest of the way we discussed the

onset of the ski seasons in the Rockies and the Coast.

It was less than 10 days later that Simon's tragic death was dropped back into my lap again. It was a brilliantly sunny Tuesday morning and Don and I had just finished working out. Heading back out to the University we stopped off at the Pub for a late morning pint. Sitting in front of the wide open sliding doors we drank our grog and watched the people go by. One passer by I recognized as an old University friend named Padme who had spent the last year in Banff. I called out to her and she stuck her head through the doors. Peering into the dark Pub she strained to see who had beckoned her. Stepping inside she approached me and I could see she was a little worse for wear. At first she didn't recognize me but within seconds cracked a thin smile at remembering my face.

She sat down and the wispy grin faded quickly. We talked briefly for a minute about her summer and then I told her I had been in Banff and had missed her by a couple of days. The discussion quickly turned and made a beeline for Athabasca and Simon's and Tim's tragic bail off the Silverhorn. She simply looked at me blankly and asked if I knew Simon. She then went on to say how well she knew him and questioned why such a kind man can simply have his life snuffed out. She was evidently emotionally wrecked; crushed about the man's death. She was also obviously very

fond of him. It seems a lot of people were. An uncomfortable silence lingered. She then got up and left as quickly as she had arrived.

It was no more than four days later that my buddy Andrew and I were out one clear morning quickly swinging leads on the apron of the Stawamus chief in Squamish. By 8 am we had reached the top of the apron and were hootin' and hollerin' at the top of our lungs. It had taken us one hour to blitz the route and we were elated to be above the rest of the world so early in the morning. Unfortunately we roused two climbers bivying on the top of the apron. The four of us sat overlooking the water chit-chatting away. We all discussed our climbing during the summer and eventually I came to the story of Paul and I on the north face of Athabasca and the freakish death of Simon Parboosingh. One of the sleepy climbers stared at me blankly and said, "Simon's dead?" I stuttered in surprise with the question and replied hesitantly, "Yeess. Haven't you heard?"

"No. I've been out of the country until last week. Simon's dead?" he asked again.

"Ya. Sorry, did you know him well?" I asked.

"You're shittin' me, right" he retorted. The poor bugger still couldn't absorb this.

"I wouldn't shit you about a thing like this" I said. Silence hung bitterly for about five minutes and I let it sink in that his friend was really dead. All I thought was "what a shitty way to find out". Apparently this guy and Simon had originally met and climbed together in France. All I know is that losing a friend bites. I felt bad for the guy.

Running into yet another of Simon's social web left me with this god awful feeling once more that no more than three weeks prior a mountain had taken a man that, by our civil sense of justice, simply didn't deserve to go. However, we all know there is no justice on a mountain. One is quickly reminded that justice is no more than a civil construct created within the crazy walls of our societies. All mountaineers know this and have to deal with it when a friend dies. I've known a handful of climbers that have died but Simon's death was different for me. Maybe it's because I was on the mountain just prior to the accident and saw it coming. Or maybe it was because Simon didn't make a bad call yet the devil still came knocking. But most likely I think it's because I picture a little bit of Simon in myself and that has enabled me to get a glimpse of my own mortality and complete vulnerability. All the capacity, individual faculties and techno wizardry in the world cannot surmount the effects of categorical, down-right bad luck. I'd be lying if I told you this kind of realization didn't have a bitter taste.

Looking back and trying to imagine a fall from the Silverhorn I now realize the uncompromisingly shitty luck that Simon had that day. He had tonnes of experience, years of education and didn't make a bad call. This was all great risk reduction. Alright, time to toss the dice. Oh, look at that Simon - shitty toss. Sorry.

Every time a climber that I know takes the final ride I am intrigued with the emotional response it elicits from others. Some people run the whole gammit from anger, to sadness, revulsion to shock. Some people show nada. I am inextricably involved now to a lesser degree in the fall out of Parboosingh's death. A month after the fall I was still running into people who were visibly crushed by this accident. Jim expressed a sadness that was dripping into the all too familiar "That's just the way it goes". Chris was highly reflective and morbidly pensive. Sickness and disbe-

lief is all that Padme felt. I know from experience that it's that sickness that sits in the bottom of your stomach like a black, festering hole. The climber who I ran into on the apron in Squamish was simply surprised to hear of Parboosingh's death. Simon obviously wasn't his first friend to get the chop.

It's now a new year with new beginnings, for most of us at least. I ran into Padme a couple of weeks ago at the Mountain Equipment Co-op banquet in Vancouver. She was definitely a different person; smiling and cheerful. That summer seems so far away now, almost intangible. I am sure though that Simon's death still remains with many. I know that I've learned some new things throughout the whole process of sorting out my thoughts on this accident. Getting a handle on my own place in the mountains has gained me a respect for what I have done and what I aspire to do. It has also given me a respect for the delicate line between standing on the edge and stepping over it. While our skills and knowledge let us linger on this fragile boundary we are powerless to prevent the mountain from pushing us over it.

I've always believed that when your cards are up you play the hand you've been dealt. You run and shoot by the role of the dice. We all play this game willingly and are aware of the daunting possibilities that losing can entail. There are no guardian angels watching our backs. There are no safety nets. In essence we are indeed living in the absence of the Cosmic Sugar Daddy. This is however, a meagre price to pay for the wonders of the ways we tread.

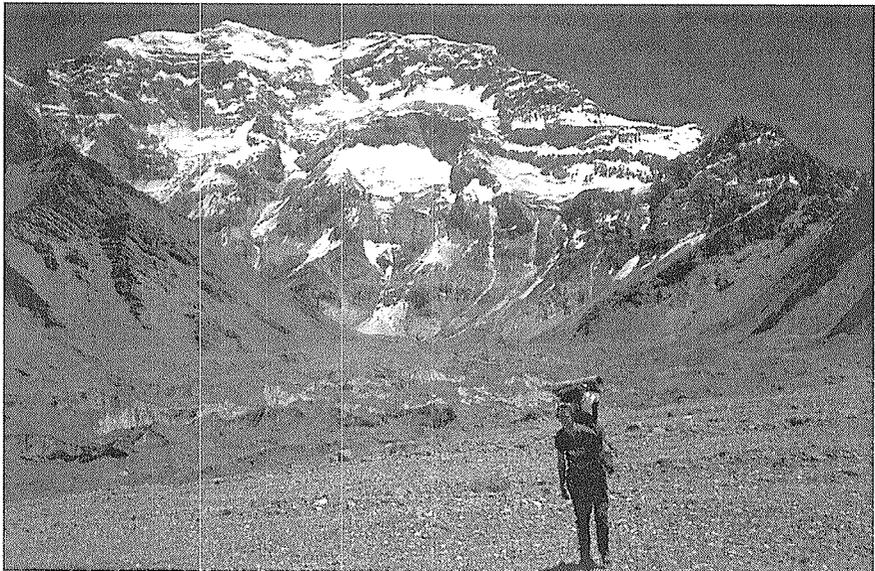
Aconcagua: The South Face

by Guy Edwards

I don't usually like to tell this story, as some parts are painful, and others just unpleasant. I originally went down to South America with no climbing goals, but only to see the culture and the land. This was in November, 1995: Vancouver's rainy season but South America's sunny season. I ended up climbing one of the hardest routes on the largest mountain outside the Himalayas.

On the flight down, with a Costa Rica airline, I realized that I had no grasp of Spanish. I couldn't understand the announcements on the P.A. , nor what other people were saying to me. We landed in Santiago, Chile, and I realized immediately I was screwed linguistically. With only a Lonely Planet guide in my pocket and no Spanish whatsoever, I was looking for a Godsend. Then what did appear: but Mountain Equipment Co-op packs...three Canadian climbers. It turned out that they were friends of friends, so I decided to hang-out with them - they could speak Spanish.

The first month passed quickly, with some surfing, a lot of walking around the city, meeting the Santiago climbing community, and climbing on the climbing walls. But we all needed a change. It was a three way split: one went to Patagonia, another went surfing, and Eric and I went to climb Aconcagua in Argentina.



South face of Aconcagua, Argentina, Dec. '95. Photo: Guy Edwards

Now, let me tell you a little bit about Eric Rubat-Dumerac. Formerly a romantic Montrealler, and now studying at Cariboo College, Kamloops, he was the biggest womanizer that I had ever met. He was also a super keen climber.

Eric and I took the bus to Mendoza and went to see about peak permits. We still didn't know what route we wanted to do, but we wanted to do something challenging. In our indecision, it was suggested that we go and acclimatize at a great area called Vallecitos. There were numerous 5500 meter peaks and one that was 6000 meters. Our first trip there was for five days, and we were discouraged by our terrible performances at this altitude. We would go up, and then have to come down the next day. So back to Mendoza we went.

At the Aconcagua park office in Mendoza, we were just about to cash in our permits and go cragging in the sun, when we saw some more pictures of the South Face. The South Face is said to be one of the biggest 'walls' in the world: so pictures of this 3000m wall are always inspirational. But neither Eric nor I were acclimatized, so we had to go back to Vallecitos. This time we had company: a woman from Montreal named Catherine. She was trying to acclimatize for soloing the normal route on Aconcagua.

Our second visit to Vallecitos was very successful, as Eric and I climbed four peaks over 5000 m. We were feeling much better, and slept well, with no headaches or pounding pulses. We felt that we were ready.

Back to Mendoza to buy food, socks, and gloves, and then up to Parque Aconcagua. Then the setbacks started happening. I had already lost my return plane ticket, and was busy amassing \$1100 US to pay for a new one. And that was scheduled to leave on the 29th of December. It was already the 20th. We were only allowing 5 days to do the route, although it has been soloed in 10 hours. At the park gate, Eric realized he'd forgotten his permit in Mendoza, so I loaded up all the gear and told him to catch up to me the next night at the basecamp.

On the afternoon of the 22nd of December, Eric and I started up the first part of the route. We were doing the Slovenian beginning to the French Route, with the Messner finish. Luckily, the main part the route was on a central buttress, protected from the frequent calving seracs, rockfall, and spindrift avalanches. The route has many crux sections: the Great Towers, the Central Rock Step, the Seracs above, and the mixed climbing to enter the Messner Couloir. So Eric and I had to travel light, ready for rock, ice, cold, and heat. We were taking enough food for 5 days, 1 more than how long we hoped to take.

The last few weeks had been sunny and dry in the central Andes, and combining this with a very low snow year, the approach couloirs and snow ramps were instead rock: the shittiest loosest rock I had ever had to scramble up. Very poorly consolidated volcanic sandstone! We couldn't rope up, as there was no pro and because I was dropping so many rocks, I took off for the ridge and our first bivy. After an hour passed, Eric hadn't even come into view yet, so I started running back down to try and find him. When I should have taken it as an omen for what was coming, I instead tried to convince Eric that he'd feel fit again the next morning. He had stopped carrying his pack as he was finding the 40 lbs too heavy to scramble with.

That night was like it had been in Vallecitos: clear with stars but not too cold.

The next morning we were off to try and get to the middle glacier (following the guidebook's description, it was only supposed to be 8 hours). The lower pitches were up to 5.9, but dry and not so loose. Then via some snow couloirs, we came to the base of the chimneys at the Great Towers. Not knowing if it was a good thing or not at this point, fixed ropes had started appearing on all the pitches. We were laughing and suggesting how only wimps would need them. The first pitch was a really neat stemming corner, with cracks and great pro. The second pitch was horrifying: a 2 foot wide gash, just wide enough to keep my pack on my back. I shimmied my way up, until a slight tightening, then I had to use the fixed lines. After that, the penitente'd snow couloirs started again so we were gaining elevation faster once more.

There were supposed to be quite a few bivy sites above the rock towers, so we kept on scrambling up. Then, where the middle glacier was meant to start, low angle loose shit-rock abounded. We were able to cut a sleeping platform half rock/half ice, on top of a horn, and pounded in some pitons to tie ourselves and our gear to. Luckily, once again the weather was perfect.

The next morning was gorgeous, and since the guidebook said that it should only take 6-8 hours to get to the next bivy, we lounged in the sun until 10 am. Just above our camp site, we encountered some more of the terrible shit-rock. This time it was a little steeper, with a 1400 m drop to the left - Exposure! I climbed up to a large protruding boulder, and standing on it, lowered a rope down for Eric to come up with. Luckily Eric didn't have any troubles, as I didn't want to test my precarious perch with any extra force. This was one spot that would be very difficult to descend if we had to retreat. In a sense, we were now committed to the ascent.



Horcones Inferior Valley, Aconcagua Park, Argentina, Dec '95.

Photo: Guy Edwards.

The Middle Glacier was a welcome retreat, but soon we were at the top of it. The central rock step was supposed to be four pitches long, and of a good quality limestone. But when we arrived at it, it turned out to be more volcanic sandstone, just that this time it had solution pockets. The fixed ropes had appeared again, and now I wasn't adverse to using them if I had to. I started up the first pitch in the warm sun, and after doing many hard (what felt like 5.10 in plastics)

moves, I found the pitch surprisingly devoid of protection. To make myself feel more secure, I

started tying knots in the fixed lines and clipping into them. It took me an hour to do the pitch and when I got to the top, it had started to snow. Where the clouds came from, I don't know, but now we had another handicap to deal with.

Eric followed quickly enough and in a clearing in the storm, he decided to do some leading, and go for the next pitch. He refused to trust the fixed ropes for any length of time and took two hours to do the lead. After that pitch, the spindrift from all the snowfall started coming down. This restricted us in how we climbed the third pitch: which was just jumaring up the fixed lines past a large overhang. I thought jumaring with a pack on was pretty difficult, but when Eric tried it, he found it impossible. I was stuck belaying at a semi-hanging stance for three hours while he tried everything he could think of. The spindrift avalanches were making it hard to communicate, and day had turned to night. Finally, he decided to scratch his way up a neighbouring gully as high as he could and swing on the top rope to end up below me. I was freezing, but I had to lead the next pitch to get us out of there.

The fixed line was a 9 mm rope, the rock was covered in snow, and the protection was minimal. We did have a good belay, but only two jumars between us. I took one with me, to half scratch - half pull myself up the scariest lead I have ever done. In 45 m, I had two rounded knobs slung, and had pulled myself up 20 feet where the fixed line's sheath had been cut away (the jumar wouldn't grip it).

Finally, on the fifth pitch, I made it to the ice. At that time it was 4 o'clock in the morning, the sky was clearing and the snow had stopped falling. We carved a bivy spot out of the ice below the seracs, hopefully out of danger, as we were on a ridge-like protuberance. We wore our harnesses to bed, because all our gear and ourselves were clipped into a few ice screws that we'd managed to place. I was so dehydrated that I couldn't allow myself to sleep, and instead melted water until 10 in the morning.

We found an easy way through the seracs, but once we were on the Glacier Superior proper, it clouded up and started to snow again. Then the clouds packed in, the wind started to blow, and we were in a white out. That afternoon, we took refuge in a deep crevasse, and managed to eat, drink, and rest. At this point, Eric was starting to get worried. He was wondering whether we would make it to the top alive, or whether we should try and retreat. He was relying on me for motivation, for leading most of the pitches, for routefinding, and for having the energy to cook and melt water. I was starting to feel pressured, but I was still enjoying the climbing.

The following morning it took us 2 hours to get going; Eric was definitely becoming slow. We had to get to the top of Glacier Superior, but after walking for 1/2 an hour, it was apparent that the avalanche danger was really high from the 30 cm of new snow that had fallen during the night. Whenever we suspected an unstable wind slab, it was necessary to put screws into the ice and climb around the patches. Very quickly, the weather crapped out again, and at that point all we could do was aim for the dark shadow of the headwall. We were both very scared, exhausted, and drained of enthusiasm. Eric ploughed ahead. We were both freaking out by the unstable snow, and we arrived at the headwall to be greeted by constant spindrift avalanches. We had no choice but to try and dig a snowcave, although without a shovel, it took quite awhile.

That night was very hard on us both, Eric had a harsh stomach ache and couldn't eat, while I had a pounding head, was claustrophobic, and couldn't sleep. We had been taking Diamox to try and prevent any edemas or AMS, but at 6000 meters, we were inadequately acclimatized. Our food was mainly soups, multivitamin pills, corn meal, baby food for breakfast, and dried fruit; it was almost all gone. We had enough for one more dinner, as well as some cookies and tea. Our fuel was also almost gone, only 250 ml left. We were now on strict rations, although hopefully, the next day we would make it to the top.

Although on day 6 we woke up at 5 am, we weren't ready to go until 8. The sun was out, the snow had stopped, and we had a wonderful weather window. The bergschrund was a 7 m high ice climb, followed by the rock littered apron above. After dodging all of the falling rocks triggered by the sun, and after we got out of their way, the weather turned bad again. The mixed climbing to enter into the Messner Couloir was the best climbing on the route, except for the spindrift avalanches that had started again. Once we reached the broad snow couloir, we could see the top of the route. It was 400 m of snow plodding and low angle ice to the ridge between the two summits. We unroped and started upwards, but the travelling was incredibly slow. We were moving at a step-breath-breath-breath - step-breath-breath-breath pace.

After a few hours of spindrift-free, no snowfall weather, it crapped out again. Eric was about 75 m behind me when the spindrift avalanches started. I made it to the bergschrund, before they became too big, but by then it was dark and the wind had picked up again. I yelled to Eric and he didn't sound too far away, but after I spent some time enlarging the slot to sleep in, I couldn't hear him any more. I spent about an hour yelling and flashing my headlamp, but because of the constant roaring and blowing snow, I realized it was useless. I passed the night worrying; didn't eat or drink a thing; my head was pounding; my legs and arms were cramping up; and I just generally felt like absolute shit. The elevation I slept at was about 6600 m: 900 m above the elevation where your body starts deteriorating.

The next morning I was ready to go as soon as it was light. I spent the first hour yelling for Eric and hoping that he had made it somewhere safe. Without much hope, I started up the last 150 m to the summit ridge. This took me a good hour, as I was close to being totally exhausted. When I arrived at the top I came to the conclusion that Eric was dead. He wasn't answering my yells, there was no evidence of anybody on the ridge, and it was already 9:30. I started bawling my head off realizing then how stupid dangerous mountaineering is. Eric was so keen about life and always energetic, I didn't want him to have died.

After resting for a while, I started up the ridge towards the summit, but then, incredibly, I heard a response to my calls from down on the face. ERIC WAS ALIVE!!

But instead of being keen to make it to the top, he was yelling for help. He yelled that he was going to dump his pack; he yelled that he had had a heart attack; he yelled that I had to come down to help him. I felt at a loss. I couldn't go down to help him, as the avalanche danger was extremely high. I tried to calm him down - to tell him that I'd lower him the rope, and that he'd be alright. He yelled that he didn't think he would make it, that he was going to die. I couldn't do anything but try and keep him moving. Eventually after 5 hours of continuous yelling, with me pulling

up his pack on the rope, Eric collapsed onto the summit ridge.

He had made it! With no water or food in the last 24 hours, and after spending the night in a crevasse he had half fallen into the night before, Eric had made it to the top!

We had to descend as soon as possible, but we didn't really know the way down. Both of us had sore hearts, and were totally exhausted. But nevertheless, we started down what looked like the normal route. On the north side of the mountain, there was 3 feet of snow, and no footprints or trail-markers. The normal route is usually a clean hiking trail type of thing, but we just walked down a scree ridge stumbling and falling all over the place. We then saw some footprints way over to our right: Thank God! Other People!

After walking down for what seemed like hours, we met our first people in over a week - computer programmers from San Francisco. They were wonderfully helpful, and fed us hot drinks, nuts, and chocolate bars. We continued down some more until we arrived at Camp Berlin: a collection of shabby huts with some old leftover food inside! We feasted that night on some Korean climber's leftovers: dried fish, seaweed soup, rice cakes and other repulsive delicacies!

The next day was the 29th of December, and my flight was due to leave that morning, so after getting a note from the doctor at the normal route base camp, I left Eric in the hands of some Chilean guides we'd met before in Santiago. The hike out was a beautiful 42 km out, long enough to allow me to reflect on the climb, life, and everything.

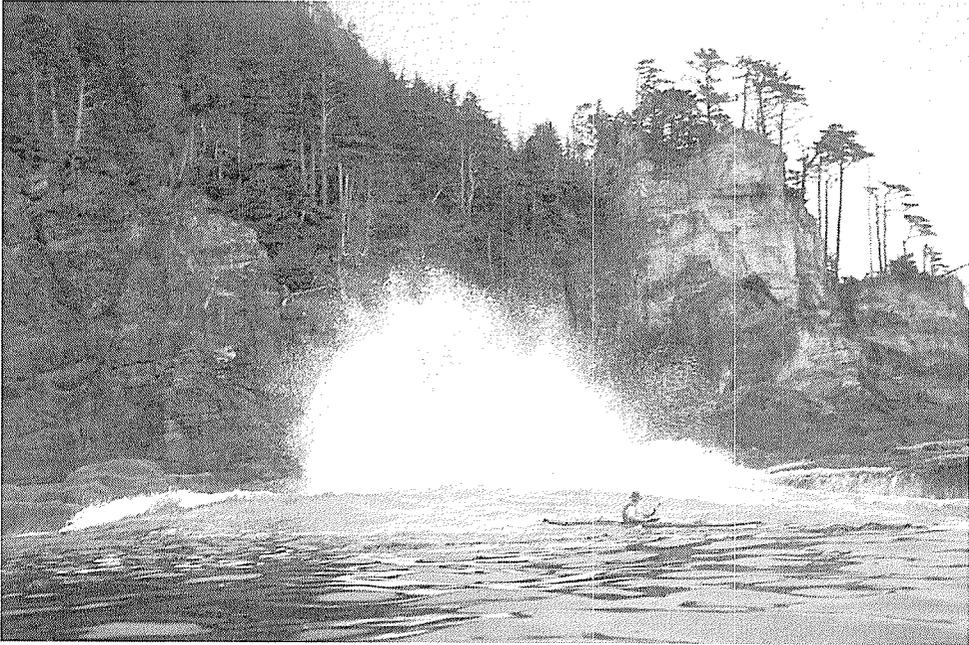
PHOTOS



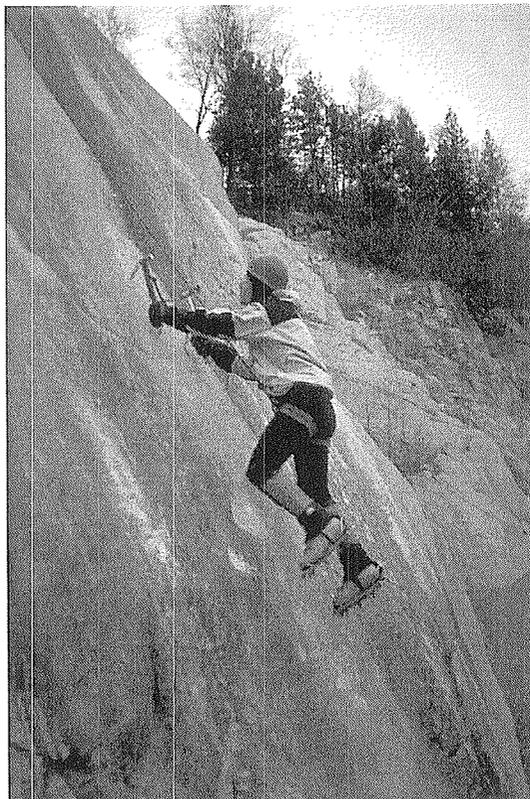
Markus Kellerhals shredding on Brohm Ridge. Photo: Mark Grist



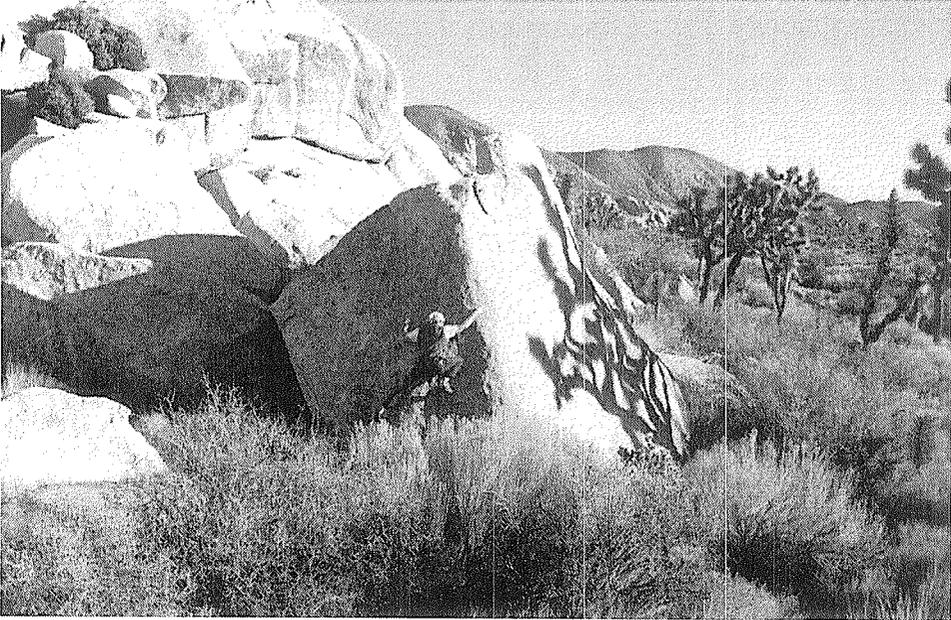
Louisa Pulfrey heading to Mamquam. Photo: Judith Shapiro



Kayaker on Skelu Pt. Photo: Markus Kellerhals.



Cam at Furry Creek. Photo: Drew Brayshaw.

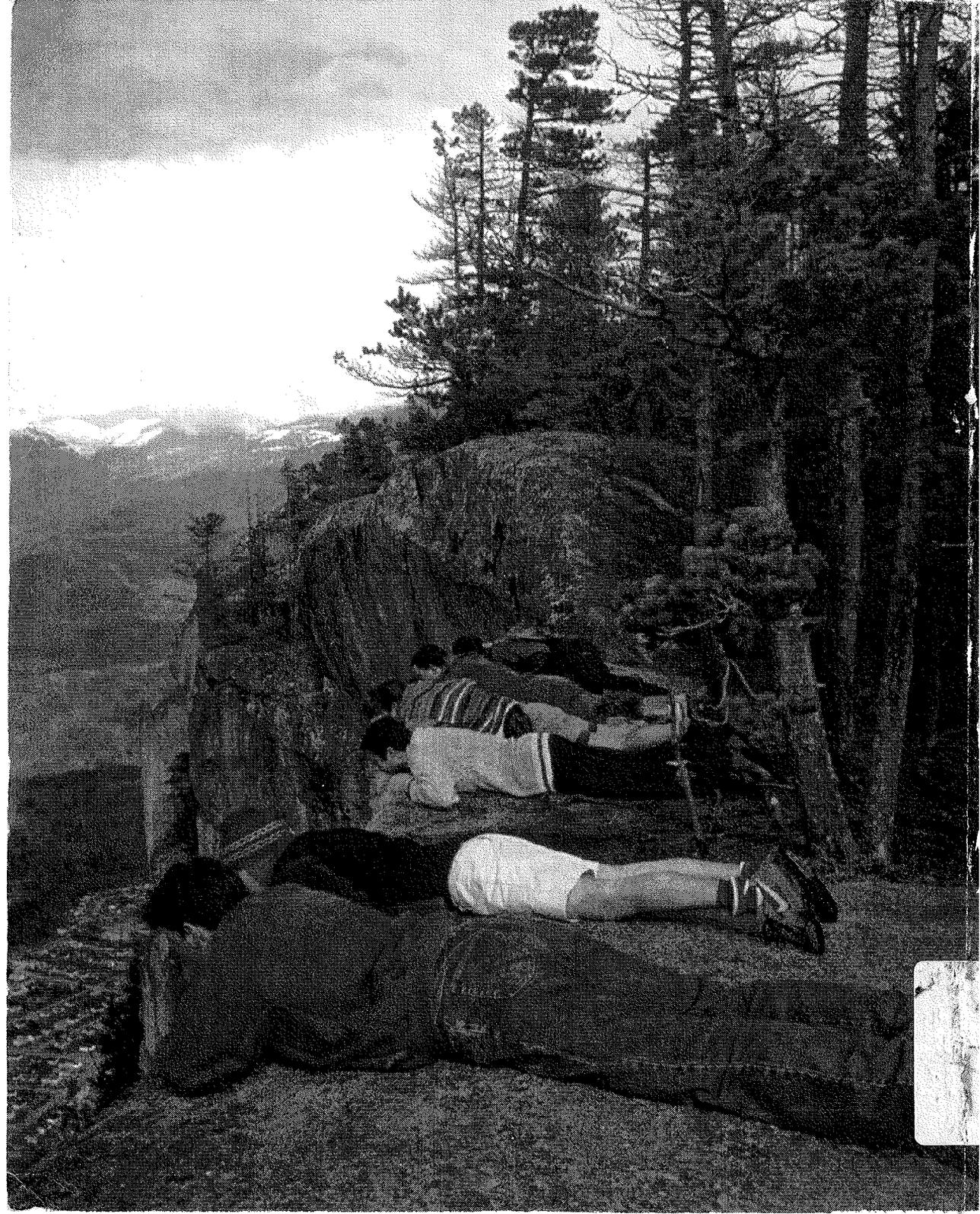


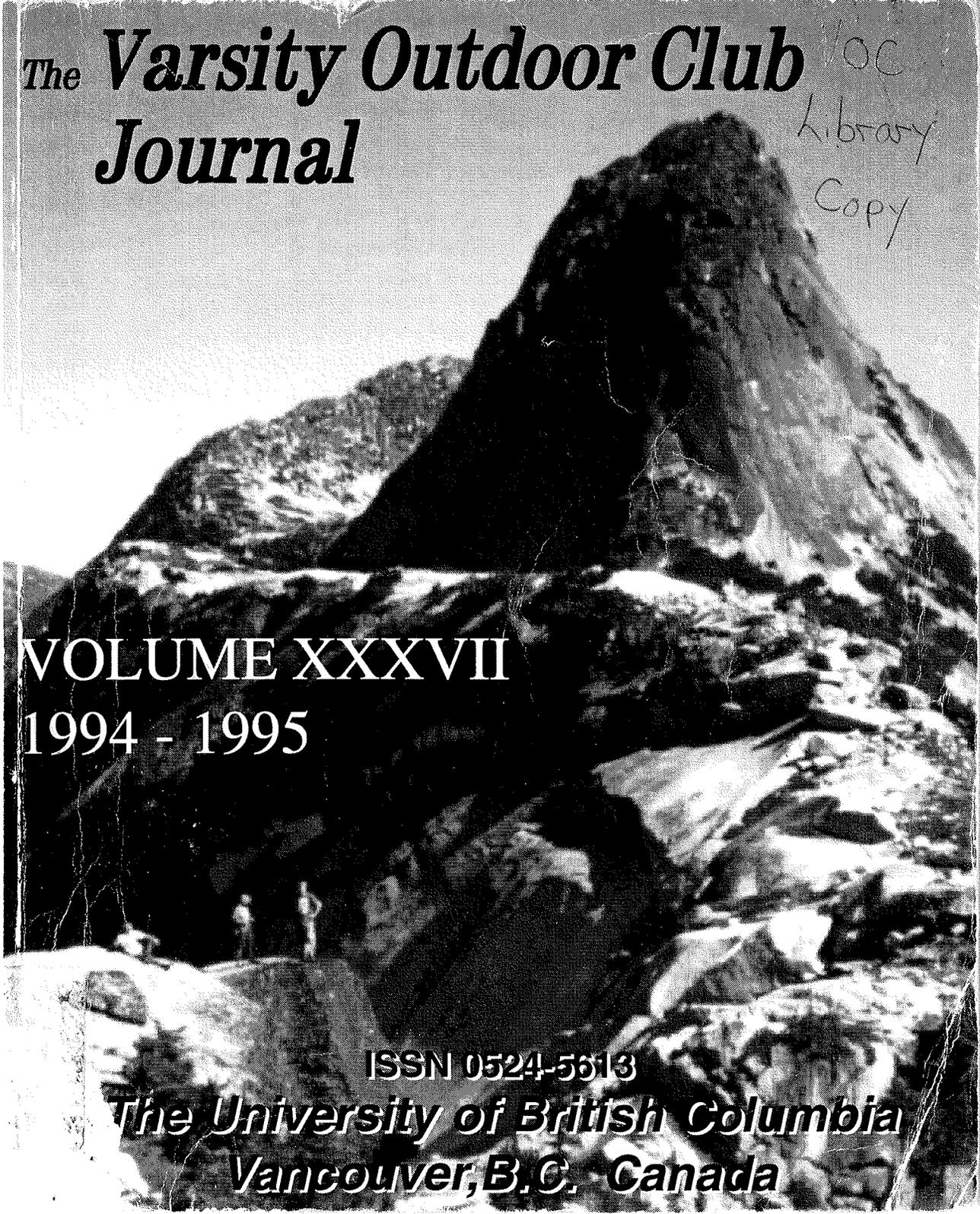
Paul Fearing boulders at Joshua Tree. Photo: Dan Perrakis

Back Cover:
VOCers looking down the North Gully
Photo: Judith Shapiro

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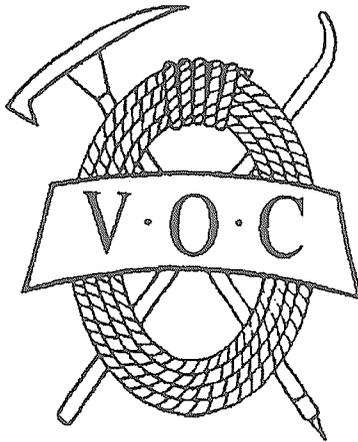
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Vicuna Peak from col with Alpaca.

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Presidents Message

VOCJ 1995

Well jeez, what to write. I've been dreading this bit of writing since October, because I don't just want to write what has been written a dozen times before. When I took this job I was assured that it was just a figurehead position and that all the work was done by the rest of the exec; wrongo! I discovered that if I wanted to leave my mark, it was going to be a bit of work, and it was. But I enjoyed it immensely. Having previously been a complete introvert, I found meeting so many new people and yaking so much pretty cool. In fact its become kind of addicting and I'll probably go through some kind of withdrawal when it's all over.

Now, when I walk around campus, I can't disappear into the moiling masses; almost everywhere I go there are familiar faces. I smile and wave to almost every set of eyes I meet. The less active members probably think "I can't believe he remembers my face" while those non-members are probably wondering "who is that happy goof that smiles and waves every-time I see him?"

So I think I have left my little mark. I don't mean that I peed in the corner, because I didn't. I mean that I've tried to make the club a little more welcoming than it has been in the past few years. With the help of all the other shiny happy execs and members, I think we've done that.

However, we haven't sacrificed anything to get this warm, fuzzy atmosphere. We've had more courses and a greater variety of trips than any year since I've been involved with the club. Two glacier schools, three rock schools, kayak school, avalanche safety, tele school... We've more than done our part this year in introducing the uninitiated to the thrills and wonders of our own backyard.

The VOC is more, however, than just a cheap place to learn how to do things and a cheap place to get gear. There was a joke running around at the beginning of the year that the VOC is like a cult: we take the young from their families, make them feel like they belong, take all their money (and give it to the Co-op) and brain wash them with the credo "all play and no work is good". The 6 + year bachelor's degree in VOC is still alive and well at U.B.C. But, all humour aside, the VOC does provide a sense of belonging for errant youth that might otherwise be lost at an institution the size of U.B.C. I have never heard an active VOC member say that university was not a positive overall experience for them.

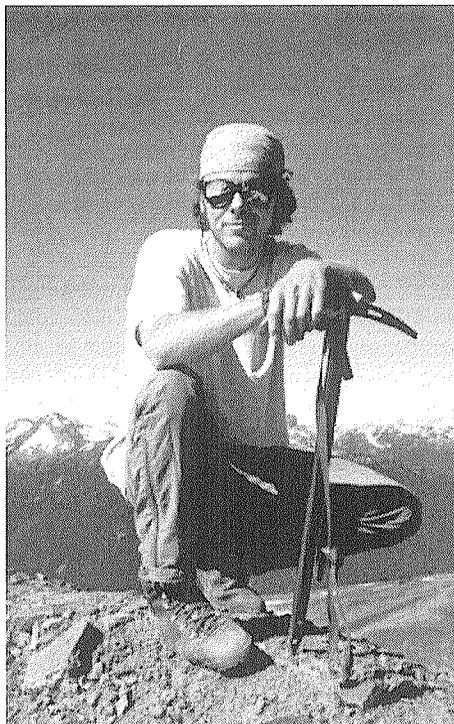
In February of this year I attended the 32nd annual reunion of VOC'ers from the early sixties. I was completely blown away by the camaraderie and friendship these people still share after all this time. Half of them seemed to have married through the VOC and many still take their vacations together; their kids have grown up hearing about the VOC and several have joined the club when they came to U.B.C..

These "old-timers" really emphasized how important it was to the club having a cabin up on Mt. Seymour during their era; every weekend there were people there doing something. This keyed into my mind an

idea planted by Markus: building a hostel of some sort on the Duffy Lake road as a jumping off point for that area. I think its a great idea and I intend to pursue it rigourously during my last term at U.B.C.

I guess I should consider wrapping up this little diatribe of mine, and it would be unjust if I didn't say a few thank-you's. By and large the board was excellent this year. We had a good blend of experience and fresh new faces that really allowed us to get a lot done. Caitlin was excellent in reminding me of all the little details I tend to slough off and was also the first treasurer in 24 years to discover that we've been paying for the water license at the Whistler cabin since it was snatched from us. Markus was also stellar. From his efforts (along with Mike, of course) to fix up Brew Hut (now one of the finest huts on the coast) to his involvement in glacier school, winter longhike and his work with the Fed he has really done far more than his share. Our quartermasters, Scott and Dave, have also got the gear room better stocked and in better order than it has ever been. Great job (and thanks also to Brody for helping them out). And, finally, Rebecca, who has quietly worked like a trooper, usually behind the scenes, volunteering quickly and efficiently doing anything that I identified as "secretarial" in nature. She has also done some mighty fine baking over the year and I must confess that not all the cookies put in my freezer survived their visit. Finally, thanks to all the members, especially the new ones, for making the club such a welcome place this year. It's been fun. All the best and I'll see you all up in mountains and on the ocean, rivers and lakes this summer.

Blair Hammond
President, 1994-1995



Onthe Summit of Mt. Fissile.

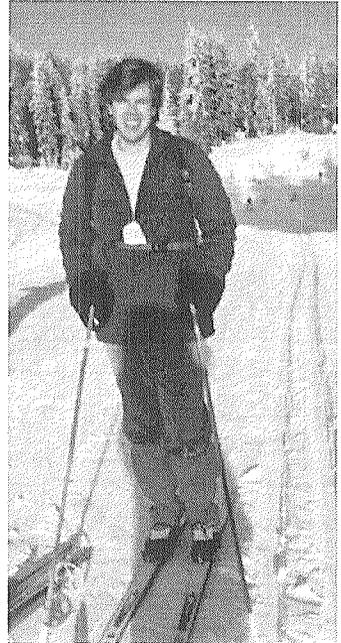
Editor's Message

It is commonly believed that the life of a Varsity Outdoor Club (V.O.C.) Journal Editor is fraught with anxiety and plagued by hard work. Indeed, it is, but as the 1994/95 issue of the Outdoor Club's Journal goes to press feelings of satisfaction are all that pervade as the Journal has now been given life. I hope you enjoy reading this, the 37th issue of the V.O.C. Journal. In reflecting the spirit of an outdoor club dedicated to non-mechanized wilderness travel the V.O.C. Journal embodies not only a look back at the events of the past year, but also serves as a link between ourselves, the first generation of V.O.C'ers in 1917 and those who in years to come will tread the same paths we have and who will forge new ones as well. With this in mind, I have attempted to include as many images as possible of people actually doing things in the great outdoors as opposed to merely recreating scenery.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the enriching experience of being Journal Editor and have taken great pleasure in reading the articles and viewing the slides and photographs which comprise this years Journal. Herein, I owe a large measure of thanks to all the people who helped to put the Journal together. I would especially like to thank Michael Surface who came down to Vancouver from Bella Coola (a 1000km journey) to put the final gloss on the project with most of his desk-top publishing business bundled into the back of his pick-up truck. Thanks Mike! Having already spent two months collecting the necessary articles, pictures, and advertising for the Journal, Mike and I, a few volunteers, and a fridge full of beer holed up at my place down on Kit's Beach where we set something of a record for final compilation of the Journal; a mere 72 hours (almost non stop). Additionally, the record number of advertisers who supported us this year deserve a large thank you as well. I don't think my fax machine will ever be the same after the volume of solicitations it sent out and the replies it received. It's been hard but enjoyable work putting the Journal together; 90 MB later, it is complete.

In closing, I would like to wish everyone in the V.O.C. all the best for the future. I hope that this year's Journal will always serve to remind you of the many adventures you shared with the many friends you made this past year in the Varsity Outdoor Club.

Othes Prosser,
Journal Editor, 1994-95.



On the summit of Mt. Strachen.

Social Scene 94/95

Blair Hammond

Ooh, smokin now, shake it, ooh ooh, ya ya. Sorry, but those are the kinds of things that come to mind when the term “social scene” is mentioned. I have the luckless task of trying to encapsulate a year's worth of gossip into a very small space. Curses to Phil for not being around during the second term (he's on practicum) and so getting out of this one.

A good place to start would be with last year's banquet, which was well attended and, I'm told, was well catered too. The whole thing is still a little foggy for me, as I'd had my wisdom teeth out just a few short hours before and tried my best to anesthetize myself. Still I do recall the highlight: the video of Eric Clemson breaking his ankle paragliding. The nitrous induced smile and thumbs up were definitely “Oscar” material. This year's banquet does not yet have a painful injury on tape, so get to work all you reckless members.

The summer was pretty hip too. We managed several pretty good BBQ's down at Jericho beach that brought out a fair number of old and new members; I recommend that we should continue this coming summer, especially as it seems there will be so many active members staying in town this year. We may even get lucky and attract our very own orbiting “bacci” game, as we did last year.

Longhike was its usual roaring success. It sold out in about 2 hours, and once again we caught some guff from the AMS cabin people for having too many people in the building; this eventhough we had a small tent city surrounding the site. As far as I remember, there weren't any terrible things that happened there, such as food. Last years grub was somewhat lacking, whereas this year's culinary delight was superior chow, especially the pancakes en matin. Much thanks to phamous Phil for running such a fine restaurant (that's just one more career option for him).

Of course there were many other fine trips during the fall that provided many hours of gossip and chit chat the following week, but the Brew Hut fix it up sticks in my mind (especially since I was there!) Great weather and great attitudes made this “work” hike seem like fun. From skinny dipping in Brew Lake (who instigated that!?) to tanning and tipping around the garbage fire, it would be safe to say that it was a highlight of the year. There are other noteworthies, however. A small but way-honed group went to Yosemite, Skaha trips, glacier and tele schools, son of rockshool and the newly inaugurated shorthike. It's going to be tough to top this year in coming years.

And then there were the parties. Three house parties, the summer reunion pot luck and gas up and the evening at the Gallery. Our pot-luck summer reunions are a great idea and

should be continued. The slides, booze and food make for a great evening and a good way to catch up. The house parties were fun too. My roommates and I have had the good fortune to host three this year, and all have been roaring successes, especially on Halloween (see the article in this year's journal). It's great to have a place where we can bring together a large group of people without serious fear of being arrested. I would recommend, however, having a buckets and a hose convenient should things get out of hand. Somehow we have to make sure that there is always a house of VOC'ers somewhere close to campus for us to have parties in. Unfortunately, I and two (three?) of my hipper roommates are moving, so the Dunbar house is lost.

Special mention is due to Drewsome, for going for such a long drive on the porcelain bus at our last little fete. Should Drew ever, by some trick of fate, become rich famous and successful, we will have some recourse to bring him low.

Last, but not least, kudos should go to all the members, especially the new ones, who have made the club-room and our lunch-time hacky sack circles such welcoming places. Next year, I'm sure, will be even better.

EXECUTIVES

<u>POSITION</u>	<u>1994/95</u>	<u>1993/94</u>
President	Blair Hammond	Noel Buckley
Vice President	Phil Stringer	Pat Hajek
Treasurer	Caitlin Roberts	Fern Heitkamp
Secretary	Rebecca Johnson	Caitlin Roberts
Quartermaster	Scott Martens Dave Vocadlo	Drew Brayshaw
FMCBC Representative	Markus Kellerhals	Mike Surface
Trips Coordinator	Drew Brayshaw	Tracy Fraser
Archivist	Rex Bailey	Guy Edwards
Public Relations	Cam Cambell	Dave Vocadlo
Membership List	Susan Conner	Julie McCauley
Journal Editor	Othes Prosser	Mike Surface
VOCene Editor	Ann-Marie Conway	Jan Palaty
Climbing Wall	Andy Gabrys	John Simms
Special Projects	Mike Buda	Blair Hammond

VOC ALUMNI NEWS

compiled by Markus Kellerhals

Dave Williams is still working in the oceanography department at UBC and getting out on lots of trips.

Mike Sample has started a software business and just landed his first big contract. He's living in Vancouver. Mike is occasionally seen teaching at various VOC events.

Peter Stone is living in Melbourne, Australia and looking for teaching work. Peter pines somewhat for the Coast Mountains.

Brian Waddington is working for a geophysics company in Vancouver. Brian is married to another former VOC member, Betsy Fletcher. Brian and Betsy are active in the BCMC.

Darlene Andersen is living and working in Nanaimo. She's a frequent sailer with BC Ferries as she's always coming over to the mainland for ski trips.

Marilyn Noort works as a speech pathologist at Children's Hospital. She had an encounter with frostbite recently (see upcoming photo spread in the CAJ). Marilyn is active with the ACC.

Mike Miles (club president in the 1970's) lives in Victoria, is married with kids and run his own geomorphology consulting business.

George Fulton is back at school in the Geography department at UBC.

John Baldwin works 8 months a year, four days a week (sounds great!!) at UBC. He recently updated his ski guide.

Graham Underhill is living on Bowen Island and selling real estate. Graham is married to another former VOCer, Laura Koch.

Julie MacCauley finished work with BC Hydro and is looking for further work. She married former VOC president, Tony Webb, last summer. Tony is doing an MBA at UBC and is a director of the FMCBC.

Andy and Muriel Pacheco are living in Tuscon, Arizona. Andy is working on a postdoc.

Chris Gill is doing a postdoc in Los Alamos, New Mexico. Probably still climbing. According to the quartermaster he still has two club ropes!!

Erika Kellerhals finished interning in Newfoundland. Erika is back in BC practising medicine and doing ski trips.

Paul Kao is hanging around Vancouver. Paul is trying to set up a computer business.

Noel Buckley is finishing up his Physics degree at UBC. He's still an occasional visitor to the clubroom.

Jan and Chrystal Palaty are both in the final stages of their respective PhDs at UBC. Jan would like to return to the North Gully of Mt Curry with a bigger helmet and some body armour.

Kobus Barnard is still at SFU working on a graduate degree in Computer Science. Kobus holds the world record for most ascents of Mt. Judge Howay.

Pierre Friele is living in Squamish and doing geomorphology work. Pierre is perfecting the 'starvation ski trip' (see recent CAJs). Pierre is getting married in a few weeks time to Linda Dupuis.

Rich Lechleitner works in Mt. Rainier National Park.

Ken Legg works as a CA in Vancouver. Ken still gets out climbing and skiing regularly. Ken

and Barb Bell were married this summer. Barb is working as a nurse.

Dave Holloway is still working on a PhD in Chemistry here at UBC. Dave and Cynthia Monroe were married this summer.

Anders Ourom is current president of the BCMC

Bill Sampson was involved with the VOC in the late 60's. He is now homesteading along the banks of the Stikine River.

Denise Hart and Peter Celliers have moved to California because of a Physics job for Peter. Their house burned down recently destroying a great deal of outdoor gear.

Denie Robichaud is living in Vancouver and working in construction. Denie is planning to start his own business.

Mike Holmes has been working as a geologist in the Ivory Coast and other exotic locales. He's now back in town looking for work.

Heather Bury bought a house and is living in Smithers

Nick Folkard is back in England working at technical writing at Oxford. He escapes to the hills as often as possible.

Rob Driscoll has become a globetrotting doctor.

Alex Frid recently got married and is now living in a cabin in the Yukon (rumour has it)

Craig Hollinger works at a high tech company, Dynapro Systems, in Vancouver. Craig also teaches occasionally for the FMCBC.

Eric Clemson finished his Geography degree a while ago. Eric is now back at school doing teacher training. Recovering well from his glider crash, Eric can still frequently be spotted gracing the blue couch in the clubroom.

Mike Surface completed his degree in Biochemistry and now runs a successful desktop publishing business in Bella Coola.

Pat Hajek is doing nothing (E.C.)

Lorne Hoover, Tracy Fraser and Allan Kriss are all working at Coast Mountain Sports.

Apparently senior management is considering making VOC membership a prerequisite for employment there.

Fern Hietkamp finished her planning degree and is looking for work in that field. In the meantime Fern is getting out on lots of ski trips.

John McCarter is still at UBC in Chemistry

Jeff Greenwood and Lisa Moody are living in Seattle. Jeff's working on a postdoc. Lisa is playing for the Symphony Orchestra there.

Mike Spagnut is working at a mill in Drayton, Alberta. He's still doing lots of iceclimbing.

Fiona Manning and Scott Phillips are living in Calgary. Fiona is a doc'. Scott is looking for engineering work.

Dick Repasky is doing a post-doc at the University of Illinois in Bloomington. He's studying lizards in the California desert.

Bob Sagar is finished his PhD. in Soil Science and is now living in Prince George.

Carolyn Anglin and Eric Nodwell have moved out east where they are attending Carleton (?).

Derek Wilmott is working at the Co-op and jumping off lots of mountains (with his glider of course!).

Ross Bates is teaching Physics in Kelowna.

Peter Jordan is working for the Ministry of Forests in Nelson.
Anita Miettunen, Steve Dods and daughter **Sonja** are living in Toronto.
Henry Marsden is working as a geologist based in Vancouver.
Audrey Pearson is working on an PhD in Ecology at the University of Washington.
Judy Needham is married and living in Halifax working on a postdoc.

VOC AWARDS OVER THE YEARS

Markus Kellerhals

Silver Pin Awards

Silver pin awards are given to those who have contributed their time and energy to the club "above and beyond the call of duty". This award was instituted in 1950 and has since been awarded to about 60 people. An updated list of recipients is presented below. This list is compiled from records in past journals and therefore may not be complete.

1950-1954

Ev Walling	Dick Lazenby	Fred Bennett	Nick Hudak
Al Hall	Frank Martin	Harry Smith	Shirley Taylor
Jack Lintot	Marg Norris	Peter Girling	Fay Dobson
Doug Harvey-Smith	John Rivett	Sev Heiberg	John Ridington

Pat Duffy	1955	Dave Wingate	1969
Sylvia Ledingham	1955	Les Watson	1969
Jim Denholme	1956	Chris McNeil	1974
Dave Kennedy	1957	Marilyn Rode	1974
Lew Moir	1957	Maira Lemon	1975
Beth Chilcott	1958	Rob Boyce	1977
Al Smith	1958	Julie Ourom	1977
Karl Ricker	1959	Berni Claus	1977
Art Wooten	1959	Helen Lemon	1978
Carman Smith	1960	Peter Jordan	1978
Robin Clarke	1961	Paul Phillips	1983
John Pringle	1961	Leon Kolankiewicz	1983
Bruce Ward	1961	Jay Page	1984
Byron Olson	1962	Alan Dibb	1984
Dean Goard	1963	Bruce Blackwell	1984
Dick Culbert	1963	Darlene Anderson	1986
Ian Stirling	1964	Rich Lechleitner	1988
Carole Russell	1965	Muriel Pacheco	1992
Roland Burton	1967	Julie MacCauley	1992
Peter Thompson	1968	Fern Hietkamp	1993
		Mike Surface	1993

Gold Pin Awards

Gold pin awards are given to those club members who have not only devoted much of their time , over a number of years, to the VOC, but have also done some form of outstanding work for the club. In fact, this award can only be given after a vote at a general meeting has approved it. Since 1950, four people have won this prestigious award. They are listed below.

Ron Leslie, Club Treasurer 1950 - building the Seymour Cabin.

Karl Ricker, 1966 - planning, designing and building the Whistler cabin.

Byron Olson, 1966 - planning, designing and building the Whistler cabin.

Roland Burton, 1970 - planning and building the Burton hut.

Other Awards

Other awards are generally of a more humorous nature.

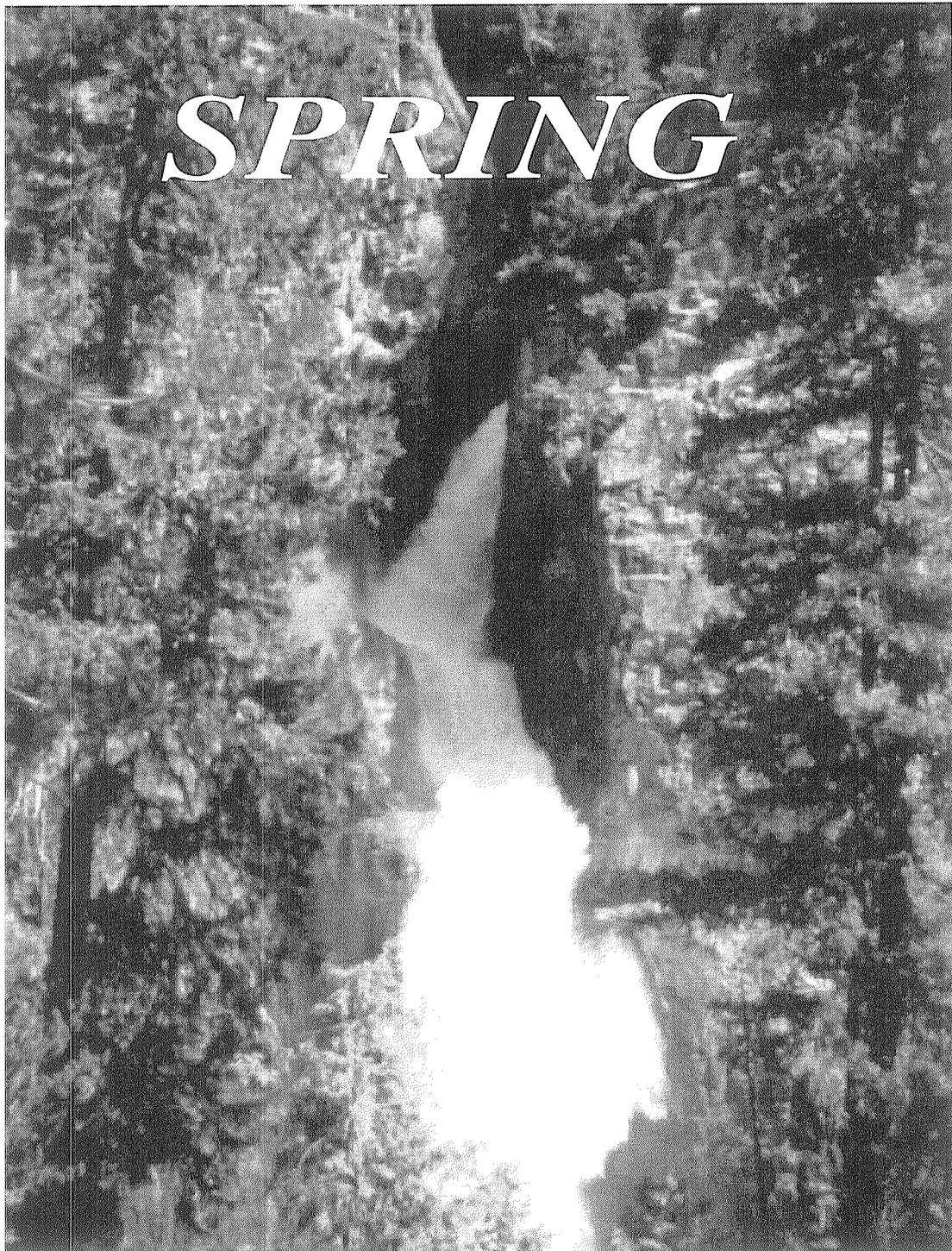
The “Old Geezer Award” was instituted in the 1980’s to honour long years of club membership. Recipients have included Andy and Muriel Pacheco, Peter Stone, Markus Kellerhals and most recently Drew Brayshaw.

“Goon Awards” are given out on an ad hoc basis for ‘stupidity below and beneath the call of duty’.

The “Loving Cup” is usually given to, either the years most illustrious new VOC couple or to an individual who has spent a great deal of time in fruitless pursuit of the opposite sex.

The “Broken Board Award” is awarded for foolishness too great to be honoured with a mere goon award. The award is a board from the old ‘Neve Hilton’. During the construction of the cabin it was dropped by the helicopter pilot onto the only rock around for miles. Then president, Mike Miles carried the board back to the trailhead. To honor this great foolishness he became the first (2nd??) recipient of this award. Over the years the award has been given out to honor particularly foolish incidents of personal injury or damage to club property.

SPRING



Spring photo by Blair Hammond.
High Falls, near Squamish.

Stikine Ski Country - A ski traverse from the Stikine to the Iskut River

by Markus Kellerhals

In the spring of 1993 a group of friends and I spent four weeks traversing on skis across the area of icefields that lies along the B.C.-Alaska border north of the Stikine River. At one point on the trip we looked across the Stikine River to an equally spectacular area on the east side of the river. We resolved on the spot to go there the following year.

We made more definite plans over the winter. It appeared possible to traverse on skis from the Stikine River to the Iskut River, crossing a system of glaciers, through some very rugged looking areas. The planned route would give us lots of opportunity for climbing peaks along the way. We would ski near the high peaks of Mount Hickman and Ambition Mountain, as well as countless smaller, mostly unnamed peaks. Although previous mountaineering parties had visited the area and climbed most of the higher peaks, we could find no record of anyone having visited the area on skis.

At the end of April we drove north through B.C. to Telegraph Creek, where we would begin the trip with a short boat ride across the Stikine River. We were a group of six: Dave Williams, Brian and Betsy Waddington, Steve Sheffield and myself, all from Vancouver and Peter Stone from Melbourne, Australia.

All of us felt that we should do the trip as much as possible under our own steam - that is without the use of aircraft for access to the wilderness. However, the thought of carrying twenty days of food seemed a bit daunting so we decided that we would fly in one cache of food.

Landing with the food cache was an adventure in itself. The day after arriving in Telegraph Creek, I flew out with ten days of food and fuel loaded into a small skiplane, piloted by Ron Jansen of TelAir. We reached the landing area after flying through a break in the clouds, but Ron was concerned about landing since the flat lighting conditions made it hard to judge the height of the plane above the snow surface. We circled round and round until Ron was satisfied that landing would be safe.

Once down we moved quickly to unload the plane and mark the cache location with bamboo wands. I took compass bearings off two nearby peaks partially obscured by cloud to determine our location. We took off at the last possible moment as the clouds were billowing up to surround us.

We began our trip the next morning, on the banks of the Stikine River, a few kilometres downstream from Telegraph Creek, at the establishment of Bill and Ruth Sampson, local homesteaders and trappers. Bill described the trapline trail that led towards Yehiniko Lake from his place. Following this trail saved us from having to do a great deal of arduous bush travel with our heavy packs.

The trail climbed steeply at first, bringing us quickly to the 3000' level where snow began. However, the following day as we continued towards Yehiniko Lake we traversed

onto a south facing slope where the snow was rather sparse. Our packs were heavy enough, that rather than carry the skis, we just skied across the bare patches.

From Yehiniko Lake we skied up a snowy valley towards the first glacier along our route. Steve spotted a group of mountain goats on the valley slopes above us. As we watched the goats we realized that a grizzly bear was stalking the group. The goats were able to escape to the relative security of some steep crags. We moved on glad to have been able to enjoy this spectacle from a safe distance.

We camped just below the first glacier in a gathering storm. The following day the weather was still stormy. Since we had limited time to reach our food cache we decided to cross the pass to the Scud Glacier despite the weather.

The weather was even more vile than it had appeared from our tents. The wind was blowing snow around so much that our visibility was limited to a few meters. I stopped to adjust my skis below the pass. When I looked up again the rest of the party had disappeared and the ski tracks were all but drifted in. I was cold, my pack felt unusually heavy and I greatly desired to be elsewhere. Oh well - no choice now! I hurried to catch the others before all traces disappeared.

Conditions at the col were the height of misery. Visibility was essentially zero since the blowing snow made it difficult to open our eyes and our glacier goggles were nearly opaque with the wet snow coating. We roped up to descend the other side since in our blinded state it would have been very easy to ski into an open crevasse.

When we poked our heads out of the tents the next day sunlight was streaming through shreds of clouds left from yesterday's storm speckling the glacier with patches of light and shadow. We glimpsed peaks above us as the cloud continued to break. We quickly packed up and started down the glacier, moving rapidly across a hard crust. Before reaching the toe of the Scud Glacier, we turned up a tributary valley that led to the next pass towards Mount Hickman.

The climb up to the next pass was strenuous but we were rewarded with continually expanding views of the group of peaks around the head of the Scud Glacier. From the pass we climbed a minor nearby summit (6600').

The next day we continued skiing south, along the glacier leading to the pass west of Mount Hickman. Before reaching this pass another storm overtook us and we were stuck for two days in the tents.

When the weather cleared we continued to the glaciated 7100' pass WSW of Mt Hickman. This area was filled with attractive looking peaks and we would have liked to stick around. Unfortunately yet another storm appeared to be moving in. We hurried up two small summits (7800' and 7900' 3 km W of Mt. Hickman) then descended towards the ice plateau south of Mt. Hickman where the food cache was located. The final part of the descent was on a large lateral moraine. Descending a small break through near vertical walls of cemented mud and boulders was easily the scariest moment of the trip.

The next day we skied towards our food cache in rapidly worsening weather. Unfortunately we skied several kilometers past the supposed location of the cache. We set up camp, then set out on a cache finding excursion. After skiing several km the weather became so bad that we had our work cut out just to follow a compass bearing back to

camp. That night as I cooked up our last dinner, I was feeling rather guilty about the situation, since I was the one who had placed the cache. Stealing all the remaining chocolate and making a break for the Iskut River didn't seem to be a good option so I knew I had better find the cache the following day.

We did indeed find the cache the next day. Betsy spotted it as we skied search patterns across the glacier. To my great relief it was actually very close to the location I had marked on the map. Amazing how that works!!

Weather was poor for the next two days - a good excuse for spending lots of time consuming the goodies from the cache. We did manage to climb most of the summits around the southern and eastern rim of the icefield during this time.

When conditions improved most of us headed towards the lovely 8200' summit 10 km south of Mt. Hickman. We approached the mountain from the east, but ended up circling around to climb the steep snow face on the west side. As we neared the summit ridge, the vibrations of our footsteps released a huge cornice down the east face. The resulting avalanche swept straight over a route we had considered on that side.

The following day it was time to continue on our traverse. Under perfect sunny skies we dropped to the 4500' pass at the head of Sphaler Creek. Spring was definitely arriving at the lower elevations. The snow in the pass was bottomless slush. We hurried across and up to a scenic camp perched on the opposite slope.

Continuing the next day we reached the large gentle icefield that we would follow for most of the remaining distance to the Iskut River. We climbed the 7100', 7700' and 7900' peaks due south of Sphaler Pass.

Over the next four days we continued skiing southwest towards Hoodoo Mtn. and the Iskut River, blessed by near perfect weather. The area is a veritable feast of ski ascents. Regrettably exhaustion forced us to leave a few of them unskied. We did climb Pk. 7004' and a 7300' neighbour as well as four peaks between 7800' and 7000' northeast of the Porcupine Glacier. Two snow peaks southeast of Mt. Pheno, that we ascended on skis, offered incredible views of the Stikine valley and 10000' of relief to Kate's Needle and the Devil's Thumb on the other side. On our second to last day we skied up Hoodoo Mtn., a recent volcano that stands above the Iskut River.

The final glacier along our route, the Twin Glacier descends towards the Iskut River in two great arms of ice split by a tree covered nunatak. We were treated to the amazing juxtaposition of blue glacial ice descending into lush green coastal rainforest. The final few kilometres of the trip were through a tangled forest of yellow cedar, cottonwood and alder and devil's club to the Iskut River. After our three weeks on the icefields, the profusion of life in the valley seemed otherworldly.

The transition from wilderness back to civilization is always a bit sad no matter how badly a shower is needed. However, we were not given much time to contemplate such ideas. Shortly after reaching the banks of the Iskut, we were picked up by the hovercraft that plies the Iskut River, bringing supplies to the nearby gold mine. Within twenty minutes we were at the mine. Shortly thereafter we were enjoying a visit to the mess hall. Though tired and smelly we felt incredibly inspired after 20 days of incredible

wilderness.

SUMMARY - Six of us spent 19 days traversing from the Stikine River downstream of Yehiniko Creek to the Iskut River at the confluence of Twin River, a distance of about 150 Km. We climbed 23 peaks enroute, most of them likely unclimbed.

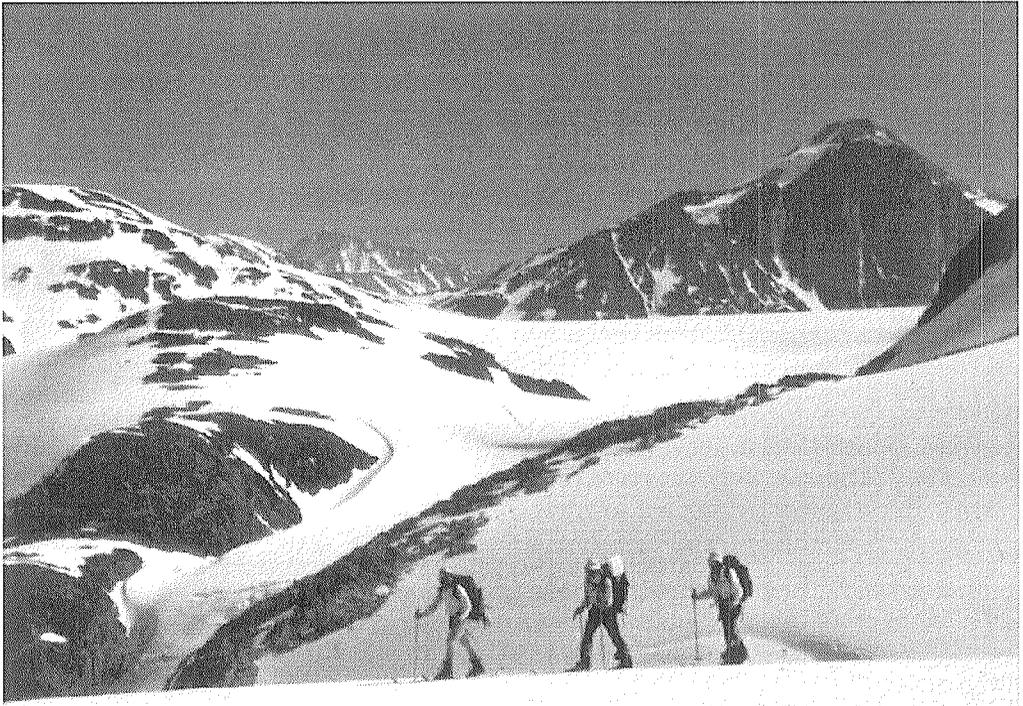


Photo: Markus Kellerhaus. Skiing on the Stikine Icecap.

A SKAHA TRIP-LET

(the good, the bad, and the jugly)

by Drew Brayshaw

This article describes three trips I made to Skaha over the course of 1994. Although they were only a few months apart, they seemed like radically different trips; almost like visiting different areas. Some of the time I had more fun than during other periods. So, I'll try to justify this article by breaking down what made these trips so different; maybe, someone who reads this will be able to benefit from it, and have a better climbing trip thereby.

The first trip of the year, during the first week of April, was an opportunity to escape for awhile before exams. I actually went to the trouble of putting a trip sheet up for this one, and about ten or so people ended up going. Lee acquired his parent's truck, with a King-Cab, and he, me, Andrea and my brother, Chris piled into it. In the Videotron van from Quebec were Davide, Ulli, Tanya, Dagmar and Dave (Sinister) Dexter. Driving up was OK, even though the truck was somewhat cramped. Luckily, it was a 350 series so there was a lot of room in the back for gear. As we followed the van through the Fraser Valley, we were kept entertained by the pseudo-drunken, signalless weaving from lane to lane which characterized Davide's Montreal driving style. The Videotron van only had two seats, so the passengers made themselves comfortable on the beds Davide had installed. The weather got better as we hit the dry Interior. We stopped for food in Keremeos, and I had a bag of "kettle fried" potato chips. When I had finished, I turned the bag upside down and poured out a half-litre or so of grease that had dripped off the chips as I ate. Live and learn, eh?

We camped at the OK Falls provincial campsite with a bunch of tourists in RVs. I don't really want to go into the climbing much, because I was climbing quite poorly; in fact, my best leads were a 5.8 fist crack and 5.4 arete. I even backed off a bolted 5.9 lead, and wimped out of a couple of 5.10 TR's. Basically, I sucked. We spent all 3 days (or was it 4?) at the north side crags like Chatsworth, Kids'Cliff, and FarSide. The first day, we arrived at the free parking and spent 2 or 3 hours wandering around lost, trying to follow Kevin McLane's peurile directions. This time was well spent because after that, we never had a problem. Probably the best climbing of the trip was done by Davide, who set many 10's, including some Robin Barley runout horrors.

What I remember the most about this trip was our attempt to do the Cave Hill cave descent. We became lost inside Cave Hill, again trying to follow the lame guidebook description, and spent a few hours crawling around by headlamp, at the base of hundred foot deep chimneys, avoiding mounds of rat feces and puddles of urine from the same source. There were some awe inspiring vistas to be had, with sunlight illuminating awesome overhanging cracks, that made me remember this place; I felt I was wandering the ruins of some great and desecrated temple. So despite the near death brush with hantavirus we all experienced, I remember this part of the trip with more emotion than the silly climbs I did.

The second trip took place a month later, in the first week of May. The weather was better, and there were only four of us; me, Lee, Sinister Dexter and Elizabeth Nethery. This time Lee brought his van, a supreme tripmobile with a CD system (the 11th of the 10 Essentials). We scored free camping at Elizabeth's grandparents' chalet at Apex. The cost was about the same as camping at OK Falls, though, because of all the gas we used driving up to Apex every evening. We split our time between the north and south ends of the crags, climbing at Top Tier, the Fortress East Face and Turret, and Ochre Wall. Despite it being tick season, and poison ivy blooming lushly everywhere, we had a rad time. Dave had gashed his leg open in a freak nail accident during the course of his construction job, and was climbing without stitches, just a tensor bandage, so he only felt like seconding. Liz and I did most of the leading, and Lee learned how to lead on some of Skaha's well protected, moderate traditional routes. I think that on this trip I was climbing at my best form ever up to that point. I felt confident of my ability to ascend any 5.9 around, (a first) and got in some climbs that I would rank with my all-time favorites: The Dream, a thin crack on the Turret which breaks through some ominous roofs by sneaky underclinging, and Plum Line, a really sustained 5.9/10a face climb up the vertical East Face of the Fortress-40 meters, 9 bolts, it's THE Skaha climb (yeah, it's on the cover of the guidebook!). Both deserve every one of their three stars. With the smaller group, we were more focused, and everyone was climbing well. I think that it helped not having a super rock god like Simms, Vocadlo or Guy along on the trip, because if I wanted to climb something hard, I had to do it, and I knew that I couldn't retreat and yo-yo the lead over to a rope gun. At any rate this was probably the best road trip I've ever been on.

The third trip was the VOC annual Hallowe'en extravaganza. Many people showed for this all time fun fest, and just like last year (see "Birth of a Rock Freak" or "Rocktober" in last year's journal) a Good Time Was Had By All. Once again we packed into the "closed" OK Falls campground, even though this year they had remembered to lock the gate. All through the wee hours of the morning screeching tires would signify the arrival of another carload of coastal climbers. The next day dawned to an ocean of tents and one surprised park caretaker who recommended we spend the next night somewhere else (i.e., somewhere open).

After a quick breakfast it was off to the crags, but first, a stop at the centre of all Skaha climbing: Tim Horton's. We headed up to the cliffs not knowing what to expect; after the big fire of the summer, would our Okanagan paradise be a big ash pit? First setback came at the northside parking lot, where everything was closed due to pipeline construction. So we had to go to the south end and pay like everyone else (except Guy and Luc who hiked in half an hour from Guy's "secret" free parking area.) Understandably, popular areas like East Face/Fortress and RedTail Wall were crowd scenes, so we headed back into the less crowded hinterland. AMC, Dave, John, Cam and I cruised off to Peach Buttress and Grassy Glades, where many bolted sport routes, and a few sand bagged cracks, fell before our onslaught. The newer sport routes especially seem rather "soft"- frequent bolts and short cruxes make them less serious than routes of similar grades elsewhere. (OK, Dave?) This makes the crack routes, which are generally wider than routes of similar grades at Squamish, seem harder by comparison: witness Dave uncharacteristically

nearing pump out on Grassy Glades crack, rated 10a. On this trip I had brought along both a pair of Aces (supposed all round/crack climbing shoes) and Vectors (sport/face climbing shoes) to see if I could notice a difference. Answer: YES!!! The Aces just weren't sensitive enough for the thin edging at Skaha: even on good holds, I couldn't feel that my feet were securely placed- as a result, I felt insecure and overgripped on handholds, and climbed poorly.

After a good day of climbing it was into town for dinner and then back to the "closed" campsite. Here we built a roaring bonfire and partied late into the night. A few "scary" stories were told, pumpkins carved (and worn), the Varsity Leaf Pile Jumping Club was reunited, and a Stay-Puft Marshmellow Man perished by roasting over a fire. We were visited by the local constabulary, but when they saw that we were helping out the local economy by drinking from the Springs, they graciously told us that we should stay at the campsite. Fine by us! The revels continued late into the night. On a trip like this, with only about 20 or 30 people, it is a good time to get to know some new faces. I had met Dave Quinn, Ai Sekiyama, the three "J"'s (Jen, Judith & Joanna), Carl and Tami before, but I really didn't get to know them until this trip. This is in contrast to the larger events like Longhike, where you become oversaturated with new acquaintances, usually while drunk

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as a skunk, forget everyone's name the next morning, and don't talk to the people you've met for another month because you are embarrassed you'll call them by the wrong name.

The next day Luc, Dave, AMC, Ai and I hiked out into the outback past Diamond Back in search of new crags. Actually looking for Diamond Back, we wound up at the southern end of the Grand Canyon of Skaha instead. Here we discovered a fine crag and began scrubbing, cleaning and bolting. When the dust had settled, and the holds had ceased falling, we had two fine new routes: Winnebago and Itasca, 10a and 10b, on the cliff Dave named Leisure Land after the Penticton RV dealership: both with mixed pro (bolts and gear) and healthy runouts to keep things exciting. And in the further distance loomed more unclimbed crags, calling for next year. Although the whole area had been blazed through by a forest fire only a few months before, there was little damage. The most noticeable effects were a new fire road system, providing quicker access to some crags, and a few areas of charred soil and holes in the ground where eflash flares had burnt out whole trees and root systems. But these scenes were transitory and by next year everything will be green



Photo: Dave Dexter. Drew Brayshaw on The Dream (5.9).

once more. The best thing about the fire was this note Ann-Marie discovered in a cave: it said "Find Me" on it, and had been written by a truant firefighter who was hiding in the cave over the summer, sick of work and avoiding her evil boss. The spirit of this slacker seemed like a kindred soul to us as we spent a beautiful fall day establishing routes while other people toiled humorlessly, or slaved away indoors. But all too soon the sun began to set and it was time to leave Skaha for another year and return to the dreary rain of a Vancouver winter. In the car on the way back I was already beginning to scheme and plan for my next trip to this inspiring area.



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Yosemite 1994

May 1994
by Mike Buda

It has been several years since a Yosemite Valley trip has been written up in the Journal, and perhaps indeed several years have passed since the last traditional VOC spring trip to this Mecca of rock climbing has occurred at all. I'm not sure if this sabbatical is due to involuntary combinations of conflicting commitments which conspire to keep prospective suitors away, or if it is the influence of the popularity of sport climbing and short-route cragging. There is no question that the days of the annual trip of 5 or more VOCers to the Valley inspired by such driven climbers as Eric Clemson, the Pacheco's, Kobus Barnard and others, have passed to less of a communal approach to these longer climbing road-trips. With the exception of large long-weekend trips to climbing areas closer to Vancouver, perhaps the committed climbers in the club have redirected their attentions to other arenas and other areas; perhaps too, people are more apt to go with a much smaller group, made up of regular partners.

In any case, there are signs of this trend ending, with a trip off to J-Tree at Christmas involving a fairly diverse group, and a trip to Yosemite planned for this summer involving quite a few different groups who's goal will be to continuously inhabit (on a rotational basis) Camp 4 for the entire summer. The return to these more communal trips is refreshing, as it provides an opportunity for a wide variety of club members to travel and climb together in many different areas - an opportunity that would not otherwise be available for individuals without the resources or skills to travel and climb in these far off areas. Travelling to other climbing areas is an important experience the sport offers, and it is great that the club is returning to a pattern of being able to fulfil this aspect for many members.

Anyway, perhaps you are expecting the description of OUR trip to the Valley as the first stage in this process of rediscovering the joys of VOC climbing road-trips: it is not. In fact, this trip is in direct contradiction to the set of conditions and attitudes which I hope will prevail in the club, as I described above. You see, a small group of us, Andrew Port, Mike Holmes and myself had planned to go on a 3-week ski traverse in the Coast Mountains for May. Unfortunately, only a few weeks before departure, Mike H. called to inform us that he had ripped up his knee in a geology exploration accident and was thus unfit to go skiing (or, in fact, even walking). Deprived of 33% of the team, costs rose, and the potential for personality conflicts of a 2-person team increased (i.e. get bored/pissed off at talking to only one other person for 3 weeks) such that alternative plans were made for the remaining members.

Andrew and I, spurred on by the accounts and glory written up by Eric C. in past VOCJ's, decided to go to Yosemite Valley. Our decision was influenced by the fact that

Andrew was unsure about any trip involving snow or mountains, as he was planning a trip to Denali right afterwards where he would see plenty (i.e. too fucking much) of snow and mountains for the month - hence it was decided to go to sunny and warm California to rock climb. Neither of us would describe ourselves primarily as rock climbers - that is that although we love climbing, we prefer to mix up our outdoor pursuits by doing things in the mountains (rock and ice climbing, as well as simple travelling over non-technical terrain). We were unsure about how or why we would cope with a place like the Valley where rock climbing was the only name of the game. Nevertheless, we were genuinely interested to see this legendary place in the history of rock climbing, as well as mellow out in the Californian sun.

So we were off in Andrew's new/old car early in May. The drive down takes about 20 hours of actual driving, and is mostly along the boring, boring, boring I-5. Refer to Clemson's article in VOCJ 1990 about great eating places along the way (he is an expert). The "House of Pancakes" just south of Oregon is a must-stop. In terms of roadside bivies, the first Rest Stop south of the California border is great, with a stream beside it, and well away from the highway. Avoid the Rest Stop in Weed, Cal. - it looks as bad as the town does.

We arrived in the Valley in mid-afternoon at the end of an afternoon rainshower. As we drove up the lower Canyon with the walls growing on either side, we were in danger of going off the road, as we craned our necks to see this place we had heard so much of. Suddenly, in front of us, overwhelming the previous features and completely defying our expectations of size loomed El Capitan. Lost high up in the clouds, so high that at first we took the features to be part of the mists, loomed the great Nose of El Capitan. I yelled at Andrew, who was driving, to stop, once I realised that what I was looking at was the height of one of the largest walls in the world....we ground to a halt in the middle of the road (only 100m short of the pull-out, but were weren't looking that low). We both jumped out and stared up at the biggest piece of vertical rock we had ever seen: the size truly took us by surprise, not being able to conceptualize something so massive and overwhelming without actually seeing it for ourselves.

It is really hard to imagine how powerful this place can be until you actually go there. For the rest of our visit, El Cap, and then Half Dome when it came out of the clouds the next morning, held us in thrall. Even after climbing in full view of one of these giants for hours, we would still pause frequently to gaze across at one of these captivating features. It is this grandness of the Valley - the great monoliths of El Cap, Half Dome, the Cathedral Rocks, Yosemite Falls and the Leaning Tower - which give the Valley a feeling unique beyond any other place I've been.

The grandness of the Valley also attracts about a billion RV tourists, and more than a few climbers - Yosemite is a very busy place. Most of the moderate routes, especially the longer ones, will usually have a minimum of 2 parties on it each and every day. However, if you can overlook this - and the setting, and number and quality of routes make this easy

to do - Yosemite is an entirely worthwhile place to visit as a climbing destination.

I have spewed for long enough. I will continue not by giving a blow by blow account of each of our climbs, along with complex route descriptions, but rather by giving addendum's and extra suggestions to existing information. Eric Clemson's articles in VOCJ 1989-91 give full and accurate descriptions of climbing and living in the Valley, and are probably required reading for anyone heading down to the Valley. Photocopy them as a valuable source, as well as perhaps calling the author himself (he loves talking about the Valley, especially late at night, and before 6am) for additional data specific to your goals. In terms of guidebooks, the Club copies of "Yosemite Climbs" by Reid and Meyers, until this year, have been the best available route book for the Valley. More recent guides, particularly "Yosemite Select" are of limited value, as although being more recent than "Yosemite Climbs" are nowhere near as complete, and as such make trying to find described routes difficult without the full topo's of the entire rock feature that the bigger volume contains. However, this year Don Reid has come out with a new version of his original book - now split into free and aid-climbs - that is apparently as complete as the original, but much more up to date. Look for it, or pester an Exec for the Club to buy a copy (unlikely). Before you leave for your trip, photocopy longer route topo's (perhaps even on a reducing machine) so that you can bring these valuable topo's on climbs without worrying about bringing/dropping/destroying the book itself.

Right then - on to Yosemite, itself. Camping at the traditional climber's campground (Camp 4, or now Sunnyside Walk-in Campground) is definitely the place to be to get into the scene. A campsite is apparently sometimes tough to come by, so, if you are arriving in a good-weather window during the peak climbing months of April, May and June, you'd better be in-line at 6am to get a spot (we arrived in the pissing rain, and as such everyone had left for J-Tree, although it was perfect weather the next day).

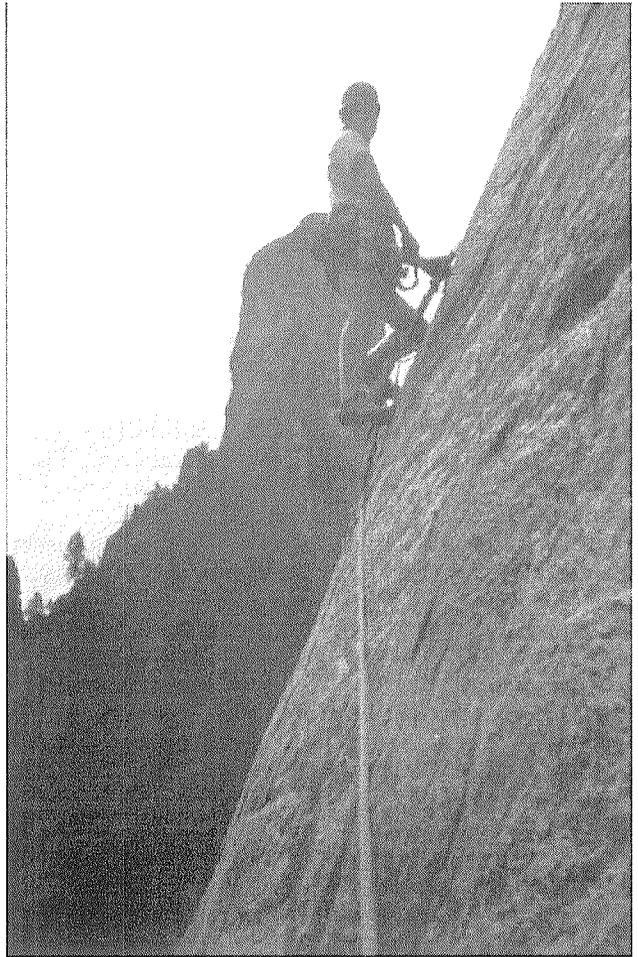
The climbing season runs from mid-April to mid-June, with the optimum time probably in May: less rain than April, and not as suffering hot as June. The weather is still very unpredictable, with thunderstorms apparently common in June. Our visit has 12 straight perfect days in the 90's, followed by a day of snow!! Go figure. Until you are sure of weather-pattern recognition, it will be a good idea to carry rain gear on long routes. The one day we set off on a long 10 pitch route with nothing but shorts and a T-shirt, it snowed, and we wished for the pig of a backpack we hauled fruitlessly up every route during the preceding 2 weeks. The key here is to have really lightweight rain gear so the pack is not too much of a bitch for the second - forget Gore-tex, and go lightweight coated-nylon.

The route descriptions in Eric's article in VOCJ 1989 are the most complete for those of us climbers limited to sub-5.10 leading ability. Routes of greater difficulty and commitment are best described in his 1990 and 1991 articles. I will add few thoughts and suggestions to these.

The best climbing close to the road (i.e. less than 5 minutes) was on the Manure Pile

Buttress and the Five Open Books. Both of these areas feature friendly rock and sun, and routes of widely varied difficulty. In terms of easy access and descent, sustained quality and difficulty, and good protection of the route, Nutcracker (5.8) on the Buttress is probably the best intro climb. It is five great, if busy, pitches of varied and classic jams, flakes, stems and corners, with the only difficulty coming on the last pitch at a mantle above dicey pro - not too bad if you take your time. The other great quick climbs we did were on the Five Open Books, and were perhaps the least crowded routes we did the whole time. Commitment (5.9), although only 3 pitches, we reckoned to be the best climb we did in the Valley. Superb handjamming, classic laybacking, and a good, steep turn around a roof, all with great protection, made this a fun and relaxing route, and the only one which we enjoyed alone, without other parties below us. Another easier route on this cliff, Munginella (5.6), is much better than it sounds. Mostly flake pulling and corner stemming, it was also some of the best pitches we climbed in Yosemite.

Of the longer routes, 3 stood out for their quality, setting and character. Snake Dike (5.7) on Half Dome is a must-do. Although the climb itself is a tad mundane, mostly of 5.4 dike climbing, with one-bolt per pitch, its ending on the summit of Half-Dome is incomparable. It is a good route for a hot day, as it is at a fairly high elevation. Leave early for this route, as it is a long day. Don't bother with a huge rack -



Mike Buda on A1 bolt ladder of East Buttress of Middle Cathedral. Lower Cathedral spire in background.

3 small-to-mid cams, and a small set of nuts, plus 4 draws is plenty for this route. Access for the route off of the Little Yosemite Trail is fairly well described: just make sure to spend the time finding the climbers trail where it intersects the Main Trail; once on it, there is no bush in the Coast-sense of the word (although the guide describes it in harsh terms).

The East Buttress of Middle Cathedral Rock, one of the 50 Classic Climbs, is of superb sustained quality, mostly steep laybacking on thin flakes, stemming in corners, and one great roof-pull/layback combo (5.9 with lots of fixed pro) above the A1 bolt-ladder. Take a couple of small tied aiders for the bolt-ladder - it is easy and safe, with short reaches between bolts. Freeing the face to the right of the bolt ladder at 5.10c looks feasible except that the bolts are quite unreachable from the face holds. Have fun though. This is a very popular route, and one with lots of rockfall, so get up early and wear a helmet. Of the two variations on the upper-half of the route, take the right-hand one (great flake liebacks, and stemming) rather than the left-hand choss-chimneys. The descent to this route can be tricky - at the end of the last gully pitch, unrope and complete an ascending traverse leftwards along the Catwalk until you can see into the Cathedral Chimney, then descend. The gully/Chimney itself requires one 50m rappel (with a station midway if you only have one rope) through a waterfall, then a second 25m rappel a bit further down. Be very careful in this gully, as any rock fall dislodged by climbers on the Catwalk are funnelled down the rappel route. Wear a helmet - sounds dumb, but we were actually the only party out of the 5 on the route that day to wear helmets, although the guidebook mentions this as a "famous bowling alley". You may be the only one in the Valley to wear a helmet (except for bumblebees) but it's better than being published in "Accidents in North American Mountaineering". The danger of rockfall on most long routes, as well as dropped gear from other parties, poses a risk far greater than on the relatively clean and compact rock of the Chief.

Braille Book, on Higher Cathedral Rock, is another great climb, more for its steepness and featured rock, than for anything else. At the top of the 5th pitch, it is almost dead vertical to the ground, such is the incredible knobby quality of the granite here which allows for steep but moderate climbing. Eric blithely notes the second 5.8 pitch as being slightly intimidating; well, it is very intimidating, being a dark gaping, overhanging wide throat of a crack out of which may spring a dragon. It turns out to be about 40 feet of mostly unprotectable chimneying/stemming, until you can reach far enough into the gash to place a #4 cam at a narrow enough spot. Above this point, pro becomes more regular and thus the wide stemming is much more fun. For this route, as for many, #3 and #4 Camalots, or at a minimum #4 Friends are VERY nice - the Valley has lots of big cracks ready for this big pro, in distinct difference to Squamish. The walk-off this route is easy and scenic, although we did it in a raging snowstorm - shit. Access to this route is probably the crux, as it is about 45 minutes up steep forest and talus to the base. Park at the last turn-out before the intersection/cut-off to El Cap Meadows, and take the well-defined trail heading up past the Horse Trail. DO NOT proceed up the slope until you find the right trail - it will only be a miserable slog. Merely traverse back and forth along the Horse Trail until you find the climber's trail upwards.

There are other long moderate routes noted in Eric's accounts, especially Royal Arches (5.7). The problem with this route is of its discontinuous nature, broken up as it is by numerous and large ledges. Either simul-climb the route really fast (i.e. to get to North Dome routes), or bring much food and drink, and go for the slow and decadent style, with much suntanning. Unless you treat it with these less conventional/more fun strategies, you will probably become slightly bored. A note about the descent: unless going to North Dome, bring two ropes and descend the fixed rappel route from the end of the 14th pitch. The North Dome Gully, the original descent route, involves some caution in route-finding, as if you descend too early, you will be caught on the "Death Slabs". Ignore the over-cautious guidebook in this regard, and rely on common sense - traverse all the way to the far side of the gully before descending. You will eventually see that the route is neither dangerous or difficult, and nowhere near as steep as from atop Washington Column. Anyway, unless you like unneeded hiking/manzanita-bushwhacking (a local prickly bush which will remove all exposed skin), just take the rap route. Due to the casual nature of this route, to make it worthwhile, one of the North Dome routes (South Face (5.7), or Crest Jewel (5.10a bolts - but EC says it's more like 5.9)) really should be included in the

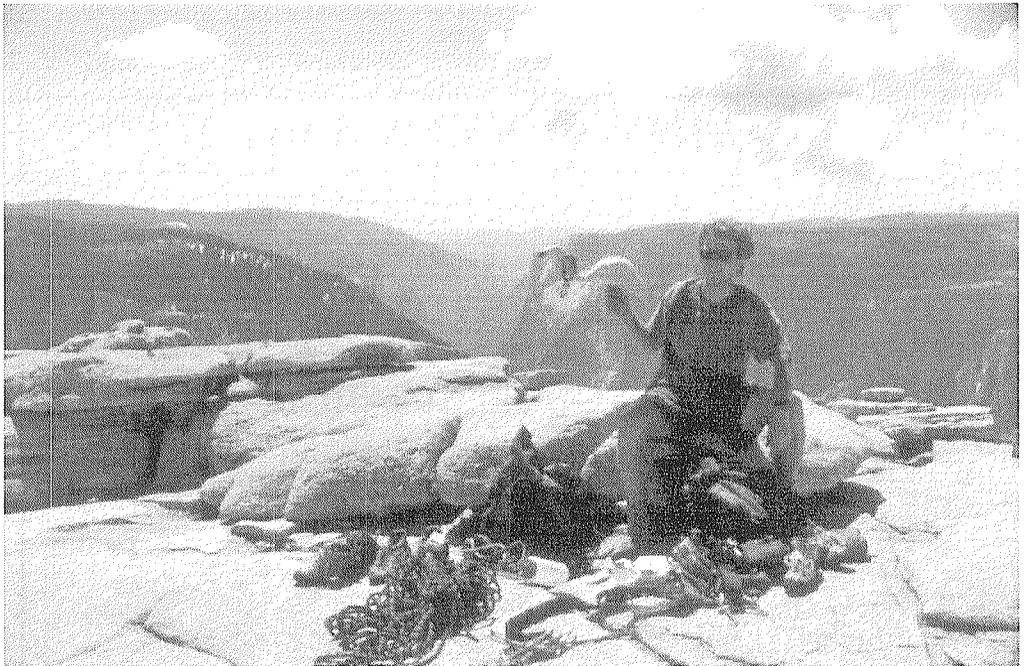


Photo: Mike Buda. Andrew Port on summit of Halfdome.

day. Adding one of these routes to the Arches route will probably necessitate a bivy somewhere along the trail back to Yosemite Falls - if the weather is dry enough though, why not? We were profoundly sorry, in retrospect, not to have exercised this option.

Well, I guess that's about all I can say. There are plenty of other areas in the Valley worth a visit, but which we did not get to fully appreciate. All I can recommend is that you try your best to experience fully the variety of which this place offers. Before you leave it would really be worth the effort to do some research - talk to other people, and read all the available literature to glean the necessary data on routes-to-do, access and descent routes, weather, and gear requirements. We were perhaps not as prepared as we could have been, considering the shot-gun nature of our decision to go, and we paid for it by missing out on opportunities which we could have easily discovered by researching a bit before leaving.

It is a magical place, but there are many aggravating, disappointing and annoying characteristics to it - maximize your time there by figuring out what to do, and how to do it, before showing up in the raw. Adventure is good, but fully enjoying your scant available time is better.

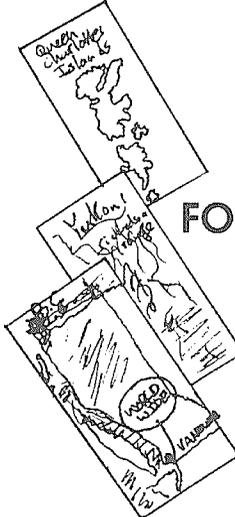
Hope to see you in the Valley this spring. Look for the VOC group that, with all hopes, will be immersed in this Mecca for the entire season.

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Panther Peak

By: Scott Martens

May 1994

Participants: Scott Martens, Kevin Driedger, Ken Krahn

I have wanted to explore the Tetrahedron area for a while now, since there are several summits there that are prominently visible from UBC. Access to this area requires taking the ferry to Langdale on the Sunshine Coast. From Langdale, we drove to Port Mellon, where the road to the bridge over Rainy River was blocked by a gate, since the area is owned by the pulp mill.

At about 11pm, we stopped by the security gate to see if they would let us through. The people there were a bit suspicious of us coming by at that time of night, claiming that we wanted to go hiking. They told us that the second bridge over the Rainy was washed out (we knew this), and therefore the river would be hard to cross. There was a shorter road along the west side of the river, but one guy they called in advised us to go in by McNair creek to a lake, where there is a cabin. From there we could climb Tetrahedron (our original goal) or Panther.

We followed two of the workers as they led us in their van up a gravel road into the McNair system. They didn't quite take us to the correct point but they were close enough. This road basically starts from Port Mellon. They also warned us of black bears and mountain lions, of which we saw neither, though there was plenty evidence of bears on the logging road. We had intended to hike up the road by headlamp, but elected instead to camp in a gravel pit by the car, since we weren't certain in the dark if we were in the Rainy or McNair valley.

We left camp at 8 in the morning, walking up the road with Kev's Logan bread for breakfast...it wasn't as bad as it looked. The weather was warm and sunny, and there was not a cloud in the sky. The logging road now goes much farther than it shows on the 1:50000 topo, and is not active. It could be easily accessed with a 4x4 for a long ways, until you would be stopped by debris flows, of which there were many. The road ended at about 2800 feet, and from there a trail continued directly up the valley on the east side of the creek. It kept well above the creek, and we soon came to snow. I quickly became glad that I was wearing my plastic boots, as Kev and Ken had only non-waterproof Hi-Techs on. Ah, the joys of warm, dry feet.

We came to the lake around noon, where we had lunch, and ditched the overnight gear at our new campsite. There was no sign of any other people, or of any animals, so we just left the gear out in the open. We decided to put all the summit gear in my pack, and to take turns carrying it. That was a mistake. The pack was fairly heavy, and we would have done better with several lighter packs. There was no trail, so we ascended the snow through the trees towards the south of a creek. We had to climb one rocky headwall of about 8

metres, which was slippery and difficult. From the next lake we could see the Panther ridge, and we decided to climb to the south-west of the ridge to get to the south-east of the lake. It was much easier to go over the snow than later in the year when the snow was gone. Some of the slopes were steep but our confidence was increasing and we climbed easily. The weather became increasingly cloudy and windy but we still had good views of Tetrahedron, Vancouver and Howe Sound at the top of the ridge. We could even see Mt. Judge Howay. The east side of Tetrahedron seemed like the easiest route, but access from the Rainy River valley might be tough. Anyway, Tet looked like a bit more of a challenge in these conditions than we were prepared for on this trip.

We walked along the ridge, until we got to a cornice over a cliff, just west of the peak. Fortunately, Ken noticed the presence of the cornice, and we stayed well back. The peak looked quite imposing at that point, with a near vertical cliff on the north side, and very steep snow slopes facing us on the west. I went first, kicking steps in the snow and using cautious self-belays with my ice axe. Step-kicking was hard work, and I went slowly. Ken and Kev followed in my steps. It seemed secure, so we continued, although I was not sure about our ability to self-arrest should someone fall, and the odd bits of rocks and trees scattered below would probably make a slide unpleasant. Near the end, as the snow got softer, Kev took over the lead. We couldn't see over the final bump to find out if the peak continued, or if there was another cornice. Eventually, we found that it was safe to continue to the east, and we reached the top at about 4:30pm, at 5550 feet.

We may well have been the only party to reach the summit these several weeks. There was no evidence at all throughout the entire trip of recent indication of other human activity, which was quite nice, compared to most of the areas around Vancouver. We took several summit pictures, but it was getting increasingly socked in with cloud.

Kevin's feet were very cold, so we went back down the steps that I had kicked. My companions were grateful that I at least had plastic boots to kick the steps with. We picked up my pack, and headed down the ridge. Kev and Ken did a lot of bum sliding on the slopes, and we all practised self-arrests with our axes from different orientations. The headwall was a problem again, as it was very steep, bushy and slippery. There might be a way around it. We made it back to camp at around 7pm, and had scarcely sat down when it started to rain. It was a good thing that we got back when we did, since we had left our gear exposed and uncovered. Ken and I set the tent up in the snow while Kev cooked supper under the vestibule. We were able to get all the gear in the tent or under the vestibules, but it was cramped. I felt a bit cool at night because of my damp sleeping bag.

It rained hard during the night, but was clear by dawn. We left camp by 10 the next morning, and arrived home at about 4 pm, not too tired, and pleased with ourselves. Next time, waterproof boots for everyone would be a good plan.

Through the Eyes of a Student Nurse

by Ann-Marie Conway

Oh yes! Another Tuesday! During the Spring term at school a group of three members, namely Drew (walking-guide-book), Jason S. (fortunate to own reliable transportation), and AMC (tag-a-long), ritualistically avoided the university and escaped with the goal to climb for the day (often encouraged by Dave V. "Hey, you should go climbing, man"...later to be followed with, "Hey, what'dya climb, dude?").

Well, this particular March Tuesday was different. I woke up late because, as usual, I was trying to catch up on some lacking ZZZ's, after returning the morning before at 3am from Frenchman's Coulee. When I awoke it was to the ringing of the telephone and Drew's musical voice, "Hey, you wanna go to Lighthouse, AMC?" Well, it was a beautiful day, and I would have loved to have gone all the way out to Squamish, but alas school assignments needed some [so far lacking] attention as well, so Lighthouse would have to suffice.

At 2pm Jason met Drew and I at the Cauliflower area at Lighthouse offering Benny's day-old bagels. Great! Well, we were just cranking hard now! Anyway, I won't bore you with the variety of climbs that we did at Lighthouse, as I'm sure a lot of you know each and every hold. We were amusing ourselves by dredging up old favourite songs from our high school days (which seemed to embarrass Jason...? His age?)

At around 4:30pm a man came running over to where we were, calling that there was another person below the cliff who was in distress with blood gushing down his face, yelling for help (and obviously in pain). So I began to think to myself that this was another climbing accident involving an inexperienced someone who didn't know what they were doing. We quickly threw on our shoes and ran to the sight of the accident, which was just under the Big Pin.

We found the guy who turned out to be Mike. For any of you who climb at Lighthouse sometimes he is always there, coaching young climbers about safety, etc. He's been climbing since the 1970's and he has a huge rack of gear. It turned out that he had fallen 60 feet or so into the water while soloing around and had lacerated his forehead on the ledges and broken his ankle. I changed my cape from climber to nursing student; I was to take on the role of "nurse in training" and did as much as I could to fulfil the role. I kept thinking while I was wiping up the blood and preparing a bandage for his head that if I were in a hospital I would definitely be wearing gloves. I was scared of acquiring some blood harboured disease (namely AIDS), and at the same time angry that I should think of my own safety over his. It's never such a dilemma in the movies.

Drew and I removed all of his wet clothing and donated all our dry clothing while he continued to shiver. Jason ran to call help.

A short while later the West Vancouver Fire Dept. showed up, and then the ambulance, and then the Coast Guard in their funky hovercraft. They all got their adrenalin flowing while traversing above the water in their army and fireman rubber boots to where Mike was waiting. They ended up rigging this hilarious rope pendulum and swinging across for fear of falling in the water and becoming casualties themselves. Drew thought it would be funny, "from hero to bumbley!"

There was a mass of people on the small ledge, all bumbling with ropes and oxygen. I was amused at their inadequate (perhaps rusty rope skills), and when they needed a loop in the rope in order to create a "harness" I offered to show them how to tie a bowline. Embarrassed, the WVFD character replied that he knew how and proceeded to tie a double figure eight. I didn't interfere for fear of seeming cocky.

They rigged up this stretcher with several ropes and much ado, and lowered Mike down onto the

hovercraft. We all waved goodbye as the hovercraft sped away, spraying us all rudely in the face. Drew and I also waved good-bye to our fleece jackets, a donation to a good cause (perhaps MEC will sponsor our efforts and supply us with another!?)



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Summer Photo by Dave Vocadlo.
Smith Rocks - Rupert on "Reason to Be"

CANNABIS WALL

by Dave Vocadlo

Each year that goes by while climbing inevitably results in the accumulation of some gear. In my first year of climbing I purchased my own gear, but as time passes a transformation of sorts takes hold of a climber's mind. A certain uncanny acquisitiveness emerges from deep in our subconscious. My own belief is that climbers begin to equate more gear with greater safety and skill and whether or not they know how to use or have need slowly becomes irrelevant to the climber. So it came to be that during my second year of climbing a friend of mine visiting from Toronto left a large number of pitons at my place. In retrospect I now feel he did so as some perverse slow acting joke.

Despite my ignorance and inexperience I would occasionally open my drawer and pull out the pins. Laying them on the carpet away from me I would peer at them for some time to make sure they were safe to touch and then, like a wounded dog would paw at them for a couple of minutes before actually digging my teeth into them. For some time this secret love affair with my pins went on and as my ignorance receded I realized I had some unusual toys.

After three years of climbing I had met my good bud John and settled into a partnership. Our style of ascent which, although not graceful, was certainly entertaining. We would find a climb at our limit shoot paper, rock, scissors for the lead and then one of us would grovel, thrash and tug at every hold in a desperate effort to reach the top. Style was not a concern and gear was packed into every available placement, often resulting in a shortage near the top of a 25 M pitch. With a stout hearted partner I felt obliged to bring out the pins and to my surprise he produced a number of his own. Occasionally we would bash in a pin at the top of a potential route and slowly my mind grew more comfortable with the idea of steel gear.

So it was, that in my fourth year of climbing I began to openly speak about my pitons and the possibility of actually using them to aid climb. Not really expecting anyone to call my bluff I felt content, even happy, to talk about aid climbing as though it were something I was itching to do. Foolishly, however, I made the mistake of doing so in a room with the highest density of keen folk I had ever come across. Trapped as I was between two or three voluntary aid climbing partners I had no choice but to agree enthusiastically to do some aid and then rush off under the pretext of going to work. At the lab I slumped over a stack of papers and thanked the constellations that no plan had been laid and freedom to escape from the trap with pride intact was still an option. Days past and I forgot about aid climbing until one afternoon when Mike found me talking again about aid. Then and there he slowly tightened the noose, finalizing dates, transport and gear. Reckoning there was no way out but bluffing I suggested that anything less than A3 would only be tame and boring. Mike, out of some innate poker skill or just plain ignorance called my bluff for the second time and so it came to be that our sights would be set on Cannabis wall.

Being rash, but not right out fools, we consulted with as many available sources of route information as possible. Luc, who has climbed several walls in Yosemite and in Squamish including Cannabis, grinned widely as he described some sections of the route and explained how we would need some copperheads.

Copperheads, never heard of them, but I figured Luc should know. Additional esoteric gear purchases were made while aiders, jumars and any available gear was rustled up with the aforementioned uncanny acquisitiveness. The week before the deed I went climbing to Smith rocks and on the way back had the bad luck of finding a book entitled "How to Climb Big Walls". Within those pages I discovered how little I knew and worse; I found out what A3 really means. All this time I had figured the numbers were so low they couldn't be that bad, I mean I do free climb double digits:

A3 is where the going gets "real." This is advanced work - flaky, incipient cracks, micro pitons, hooks, copperheads, bashies - the whole panoply of aid gimmicks pushed close to their limits. Some wall climbers claim that as far as individual placements go, A3 is near the limit, that A4 and A5 are just more of the same. However most veterans consider A3 to mean the placement is good enough for body weight, but little more. It will not arrest a fall. A3 is marginal going, at best.

And moreover,

Hard aid. Testing methods required. Involves many tenuous placements in a row. Generally solid placements (which could hold a fall) found within a pitch. Long fall potential, up to 50 feet (6-8 placements ripping), but generally safe from serious peril. Several hours are required to complete a pitch due to the complexity of the placements.

Marginal going, "generally" safe from serious peril, 50 foot falls, body weight only. Whoooooe, now the joke which Dan had laid for me when he left his pins unfolded slowly before me. I began to understand what a dupe I was. Until now my ignorance had sheltered me from the truth. I had never climbed an aid pitch in my life and now, before even trying, I was eager to give it up.

The sun was shining and the air was crisp that first day. Lorren picked us up in his brown beast and we sped along the highway toward the Chief. Figuring we would do things right, like the veterans, in hopes that their spirits might help us we splurged on some Rotting Ronald's grease breakfast and chowed down the grub with lost arrows. After the mandatory gear spread and classic Nose stance were recorded for posterities sake, a brisk, short, hike brought us to the the base of the route. After delaying a time by racking and psyching up the, time came when stalling anymore would be seen as cowardly and so I launched up the first pitch.

I negotiated the first little wet free section and remembered how Luc had talked about this pitch and the rusted quarter inch bolts separated by two or three aluminium dowels as though it should be dreaded. Of course he had taken a big whip in the valley and ripped out a stack of dowels and old bolts. This ladder however didn't seem too bad; things were a bit confusing but definitely under control. I skipped along jolly like, shouting down to Mike and snagging each dowel as it appeared from the top steps. Some excitement was had when thirty feet above the only good 3/8" bolt on the pitch I was forced to traverse up and left onto a bat hook and then onto a fish hook. I placed the hook gently into the shallow quarter inch hole and clapped a hand over trying to hold it there by shear force like plugging a gusher with your finger. I had heard that sometimes hooks pop out with such force that they can rip your undies right off and so I continued pushing onto the bat hook as I moved over onto it. A weathered 6mm static line hanging down from a bush above seemed like fair game and as I grabbed it it slid down lifeless into my hand. I had heard aid climbers had a weird sense of

humor but rigging fake line? After tugging on the bush and tying the line to it, I hauled on roots up a slippery dirt groove to reach the belay. With a whoop of triumph, I tied into the belay and began hauling the pig of a pack along with Mike's lifeless flamingo which he carried to every summit.

When Mike arrived at the ledge the belay became a maze of ropes, slings and aiders. After untangling a rope out of the damned conflagration Mike, saddled with about twenty to thirty pounds of gear, teetered rightward to the start of the left leaning corner. Amazingly, Mike managed to stay upright and get some gear in after which he pulled out the aiders and hopped into them as though they were the back seat of a car. Mighty pleased with myself I figured now I could relax and go to sleep while I belayed Mike on aid. I tied in a knot about four feet down, hooked in a jumar as a brake hand and began to wave my hands wildly as I shouted encouragement.

Mike started slowly, at first, getting a feel for actually standing on gear. Placing gear with the fore knowledge that it will undoubtedly be called upon to support your weight changes the game from placing gear a la fifth class and each placement, like marriage, requires careful consideration before a final commitment. After Mike got out about fifty feet, frivolous communication ceased and I was stuck alone on a eight inch wide ledge with only the wind for company. I settled in on a mattress of ropes and slings, kept awake by the sudden jerk of my harness on my waist as I slipped off every five minutes or so and payed out a couple of feet of rope each time. By mid way through the second hour the chill became too much and I began to keen and wail to tunes of the Doors and Led Zepplin while jumping about. Mike peered down to check if I was OK and we exchanged words of encouragement, me for his awkward lead, and he for my chilly belay. Halfway up the pitch Mike shifted into top gear. Making a few hook moves he cleared fifteen feet in five minutes leaving me with blood in my arms from the sudden flurry of belay activity. A few tedious placements later Mike arrived at the crux and after winging in a baby angle and alerting me to actually pay attention he top stepped and slotted a blind nut around the corner. Testing it like a gyrating break dancer, he decided it was safe to stand on and from there he clipped into a copperhead. Bouncing wildly again, he moved up to the belay letting go with a whoop and a wide grin he shouted down, "All Riiight. Kinda easy, a little soft for A3 probably!"

Inspired by Mike's chicanery, I hooked into the line which he had just fixed. I had not yet read the book about this seconding stuff and so after fiddling for a minute or so I figured I'd ask Mike, "How do I jumar Mike? Do I clip in with daisies?" Mike laughed and shouted down instructions. I juggled up as fast as possible, cleaning the gear with sparks generated from wild blows of my hammer and assistance from the aptly named funkness device. Here, at the top of the second pitch, we looked on out over the town and then up at the wall above. After five hours we had bumped off two pitches and so content in our conquest of A3 we fixed the hard pitch and then rapped off to make a possible 4:30 rendez-vous with Lorren.

Our spirits buoyed with the taste of success, we planned to carry on with the route the next available sunny day. I was convinced the weather was conspiring to stop these two aid neophytes and me in particular from having my fair chance at leading A3. Only after a month at the very end of November did the weather break in collusion with a clearing in our schedules. Mike was now equipped with a car and so we left at 8:30 am to arrive at McD's at 10:00. There, much to the amazement of the locals, we sorted and racked the gear. After doing so I picked up a used coffee cup and as I loaded up on free refills people badgered us with questions like: "Isn't it a little cold to climb?", "What are those for?" and from a well dressed elderly yuppie "I'd like

to go with you but..." Mike and I responded kindly to these. "Na, it'll be OK. We have warm clothes" as Mike and I wagged our down parkas. "For climbing with, you bang them into cracks," even though some of the stuff we had I wasn't even sure how to use. "Oh well," I responded to the last question but understanding what he meant. Longing for the freedom of adventure but mired down with responsibilities he envied us.

There at the base of the climb I had to climb the first pitch again and managed to hook my way up the first section after hacking some ice away from the rock. CCR and the Doors spilt out of the blaster we had brought along to keep us sane at belays. The aid ladder went by quickly and this time the fixed static line sped the hook moves up. Soon we were perched at the first belay. Some aid joker had tied our fixed line in a bundle and swung it into the middle of the face. After managing to hook it with a hook attached to an aider Mike offered to jug up the pitiful 8.5 mm line and I gladly capitulated. I suggested that I put him on belay as he jug up in the event that the line should break and soon he was nearing our previous high point about ninety feet above me. Suddenly Mike let loose with some explicative and I looked right expecting to see Mike hurtling by at terminal velocity. Luckily he only dropped a few inches as one of the old slings at the above belay broke but the others held. Mike clipped in and began to set up the belay as I came up the line Mike had trailed. At the belay I began to pity Mike as he had to belay me in zero degrees temperature from a hanging belay with only a two by two foot square plank as a ledge.

Anxious to go, I was already stuffing in my first piece as Mike put me on belay and unhooked me from the anchor. Three good placements brought me to what should have been 5.7, but with snow covering the ledge it was a toboggan run. The crack had petered out and I was forced to hook a couple of moves. With the faith of Moses I moved onto each hook and then at the third hook move while watching the hook hee and haw from side to side I began to move onto the ledge. Ping! off it went sending me down, down toward Mike, toward the ground some two hundred feet below. Not really worried I managed a smile as I fell onto the best and only lost arrow I had ever placed. Only fifteen feet down from my high point I laughed and hauled up the rope to my high point. Mike had visions of my bottom crushing his skull and pointed out that I had no chance at Jim Bridwell's record of twenty years with no aid falls. I retorted that the twenty years could start now and with that I moved onto hooks again. Moments later I shot off again this time almost losing my undies. Mike and I laughed again as I hauled up once more to my high point. This time I was more careful, each move from hook to hook was a gentle, oozing. Like a puddle of slime I shifted into each aider. Watching each hook as it flexed under my weight I began to feel time slow and the music grew dim leaving my mind. I formulated a plan requiring more hook moves but easing the transition between each. I began to intuitively understand a good hook placement from a bad one and soon I stood on the ledge breathing easier and laughing.

A little 5.7 right traverse across some snow brought me to the first gear in twenty five feet. I clipped the bolt and tensioned into the left leaning corner. Moving up a bush and a fixed pin, I was soon struggling in an odd corner. I understood now when Mike said it had been awkward. I felt like a flounder in jello, flopping around unable to make progress. I couldn't get on to the top steps without serious exertion. Combining some lay-backing with standing on the aiders proved useful for high placements and soon I was moving up. The gear became increasingly poor and my psyche suffered commensurety. Soon I was forced to top step and place a blind cam. While stuffing in the cam I almost fell out of my aiders backward but managed to grab the placement I was on. Aha! That's why people hook into their last placement with a daisy chain. I was wishing I had read Mike's book a little more thoroughly. A leeper pin, a wire, a cam, a fixed pin, brought me to a half

driven fixed pin, which I forgot to tie off, above which came the real excitement. I looked up at a rusty quarter inch bolt, as though it were diamonds and beyond it at some frayed copperheads sticking their loops at the sky with trepidation.

Well, though I almost wet my pants, I managed to retain a few shreds of my frail masculine ego and carry on. A series of copperheads brought me within reach of the belay which I gratefully grabbed and pulled up on to the safety of good 1/4" bolts. In retrospect it doesn't seem so bad and as I read over this tale I think to myself how melodramatic it all sounds. But in truth I can honestly say I have never been more gripped on any other route in my climbing career and I long for the excitement of aid and the taxing of the will which it brings.



Dave Vocadlo taking a whipper at Smith Rocks.

The Garlic-Heads Paddle and Eat: a Kayak Trip from Nootka Island to Tofino

Jan Palaty

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I used to be a keen mountaineer. 7 AM on any given Saturday morning would find me in a vehicle speeding northwards en route to some death-march or other. Maybe a hike. Or a ski trip. (Not rock-climbing, that came later and besides we don't get up that early). On most weekends I was out there getting in touch with my inner warrior, inflicting gruesome wounds to my feet and being convinced by others that I was having fun. Then suddenly it all changed and I was on my way down that slippery slope from which few return: Chrystal and I bought sea kayaks. Enchanted, we explored every nook and cranny of Burrard Inlet between Wreck Beach and Stanley Park, including an unexpected discovery of the vicious riptides off Ambleside one stormy January afternoon, in anticipation of bolder adventures further abroad. The following is an account of one such adventure on the west coast of Vancouver Island which I hope will explain why so many mountaineers have fallen in love with ocean kayaking. Interestingly, I have yet to meet a kayaker who has been smitten by the spell of blistered heels and glacier travel.

So, who went on this trip anyway? There was Chris, the so-called "Trip Dad", who was a more experienced kayaker than any of us were ever likely to be. He even knew how to roll! Both ways, up as well as down! Then there were Chrystal and myself, the type of novices who wonder if paddling around English Bay is really a sufficient warm-up for such an outing. Finally there was Marilyn, an all-round hardwoman not afraid of anything that I'm aware of.

Day 1

Drove to Tofino. Chris and Chrystal entertained their respective companions with tales of terror about kayaking trips, ballistic windsurfing boards, etc. We stopped for an awesome dip in the river at one of those places where the highway comes close to the water. Clear and cold but without any current. Would you believe that it was a beautiful sunny day without a cloud in the sky? However, this soon changed with the standard monotonous overcast upon arrival in Tofino. We spent an hour in the local alternative bakery, which can best be described as a cross between the Bread Garden and the Naam. The odd mix of hippies and Hawaiian T-shirt-clad tourists here is quite remarkable, especially since there's hardly a normal-looking local in sight. Do they even exist?

We loaded our stuff on to the Beaver amid the fascination of the tourists milling around on the dock. The pilots did not seem particularly optimistic about getting it all on the plane, even making us empty out most of our water. The main concern was the drag from the kayaks "which means we might have to come back and dump some of the stuff if we can't take off". Faced with the embarrassing prospect of failing in front of the

assembled masses, we were determined that the plane was going to leave the water, even if it meant flying at treetop level all the way there.

Anyhow, the plane and pilot did what they were supposed to and we were off! Marilyn and I were particularly terrified by the experience, Chris was immersed in a map and not very aware of it and Chrystal was absolutely enchanted. We flew north to Nuchalitz Inlet past many fjords, forested slopes and clearcuts. The fog cleared soon after we left Tofino, affording us great views. We landed at a dream sandy beach beside the sparkling windswept waters of the inlet. The surrounding hillsides were mainly logged but what the hell. I was positively enchanted and loudly vowed to give up mountaineering here and now. We set up camp and then Chris and Marilyn paddled off to get water (there was a wonderful waterfall going directly into the sea, they said later) while Chrystal and I went for a random paddle. We spotted a river otter and discovered a half-concealed cave behind some bushes. Since we were too scared to go inside, what with the spirits of dead Indians and all, we decided to talk the others into going there after supper afterwards. Following the aforementioned supper (an enchanting veggie stir-fry with bulgur), we went to check out the cave. Chris and I crawled into one beside the main opening and discovered that the two were actually linked. It was a huge cave well above waterline though judging by its sandy floor and contents this had not always been the case. We scared the daylight out of Marilyn as she walked in saying "wouldn't it be really spooky if Jan and Chris jumped out ...". We then crawled on our stomachs into the back recesses of the cave: neat! There were stalactites and stalacmites (not very large, but growing) as well as a bizarre white fungus way, way back in the eternally lightless ends of the cave. We were all enchanted.

As we got out, we saw the beginnings of a most totally awesome lightning storm. We downed our hot chocolate with Drambuie seconds before the heavens opened and it pissed big time. Fell asleep *sans* Thermarest, just in the sand.

Day 2

We are greeted by fog and drizzle this morning, which doesn't improve the already apprehensive state of mind of this member of the party. After an alarmingly small breakfast of 1/2 cup granola, we pack our boats with some difficulty (oh no, will it be like this every morning?) and paddle off under overcast skies. The wind soon picks up and makes for slow progress. I have to pee. As we round Point Ferrar, we see several sea otters in the distance 'cos Chris says so. Once we start down the outer coast of Nootka Island, the (very respectable) wind and waves are directly against us, making for very slow progress indeed. My bladder is bursting. For some reason, nobody feels really scared despite the large waves and forbidding rocky shoreline. By a pure fluke, we find an amazingly sheltered sandy lagoon where we retreat from the elements and have a well-deserved lunch and pee. It is really quite amazing to find this beach, as the entire shoreline seems to consist of black rocky cliffs being pounded by equally immense waves.

After an hour or so, when it became obvious that the weather wasn't getting any better and that the beach was rapidly losing ground to the incoming tide, we set off into

the maelstrom again. It actually wasn't all that bad, since our excitement at being out here outweighed any fear or sheer frustration at going at such a snail's pace. Despite my best efforts at snapping away for all I was worth, I only took a fraction of the photos that should really have been taken so I'll have to use this account to tell the story rather than in my slides. The shoreline was low featureless country with wind-sculpted trees and the looming mountains (>3000 ft, actually!) in the background. This aspect was particularly prominent from the plane, where one got an impression of a vast ocean being held at bay by a fortress-like wall of steep hillsides: quite neat the way they rise straight up from the sea like that. We paddled past the remains of a freighter on the rocks: there wasn't much left, but the mutilated sections thrown nearly into the forest were an ominous reminder of what kind of land we were in.

But to return to the action: there we were, splashing away, when we suddenly became aware of an awful smell. Well, there weren't nobody out there but us, so we just shrugged it off as one of those things. A few minutes later, though, Chris spotted a spout of water followed in short order by the tail flukes. Grey whales! Bonus! Later, I was just casually looking around when I saw this huge tail pointed skyward a couple of hundred yards away. Spectacular and very moving.

By mid-afternoon, the weather had settled down quite a bit, leaving us with rippled seas and rays of sunshine poking through holes in the clouds. We arrived at a charming crescent beach pressed up against the steep forested slopes disappearing up into the clouds and decided that this was home for tonight. Our first real surf landing was avoided by a "back entrance" without any problems. We wandered around for a bit, during which Chrystal found a Porta-Potty-sized buoy that she fell in love with and dragged several hundred yards back to camp. While the others were messing around with supper, I went out fishing with a Zinger. No luck, of course, if you count fish: however, I did find myself eyeball-to-eyeball (10 m!) with a very surprised sea otter. We looked at each other for a while until he swam off and I decided that I really wasn't keen on feeding him my Zinger, so I returned to camp. Supper production was directed by Chris (curry and rice) and was followed by a sunset worship and a most pleasant sit around the campfire. This is another one of those great things about 'yakking compared to mountaineering: you get to have real campfires without the environmental concerns. Let's face it, for pure atmospheric ambiance you can't beat a nice cedarwood fire on a sandy beach a few yards away from some gentle breakers. An MSR "Saturn V" X-GK just doesn't do it. You still have to get the fire going, though, which represents a problem for modern ethics-conscious mountaineers who are characterized by their inability to start a fire unless provided with a gallon of kerosene and a ton of oven-dried shavings. "Campfires", they sniff in an attempt to hide this inadequacy, "are for rednecks".

So there we were, having a great time, until someone realized that we'd be getting up at 6:30 tomorrow to try and avoid the lousy weather. Some old mountaineering habits die harder than others.

Day 3

Fog greeted us when we crawled out of the tents. The sun was trying to break through, but having very limited success. The water is like glass, though, so it's easy going. Already it feels like we've been out here for ages! A debate has started in this group of four die-hard ski-tourers and three recently-converted paddlers: which is better, sand or snow? We're starting to get weary of sand in our feet, hair, sleeping bags, food, etc.

The several hours we spent paddling in thick fog out of the sight of land and, mostly, beyond the sound of the breaking waves were an almost surreal experience in this still water. Chris' navigation was right on, though, as we arrived at Luna Bay. We enjoyed a quick pee and snack break before heading back out into the fog. There were lots of kelp beds around here which made for moderately annoying paddling for us but also provided a home for... sea otters! We spotted an intrigued group of a dozen at one point. Further navigation through the shallow but protected waters of Bajo Reef brought us to a lunch stop at Bajo Point at the end of a long pebble beach. After lunch, we found that this beach stretched on for several kilometers as we zipped along with both wind and current behind us. The sea eventually turned into a shade of turquoise, at least in my eyes, giving me the impression of paddling in some exotic tropical locale. Despite the easy progress, we needed to keep an eye on the big swells which briefly lifted us up to the sky before falling over with a thunderous crash as they approached the beach. The swells themselves are obviously harmless but still very impressive on account of their sheer size, especially when you see one of your companions silhouetted against this huge watery slope. It's fascinating to watch one of these smooth swells gradually steepen, grow, break apart and finally collapse. You find yourself completely entranced as you follow the life cycle of one wave after another.

Chris eventually located what might be Bajo Creek and looked for a way in through the surf. Now, breakers are neat to watch from the safety of their seaward side, but present a very real hazard if you want to paddle through them to the beach. However, we got lucky: even though the last couple of km's of beach had been pounded by apparently impenetrable rows of breakers, there was a distinct gap in this menacing wall which looked and turned out to be free of anything bigger than a ripple. The long-promised surf death landing would have to wait for another day. The fog lifted and the sun shone away on four paddlers sprawled out on the warm black pebbles. Unfortunately, what we thought was a creek was only a gap in the trees, implying that Bajo Creek was still some way down the beach. Being the restless and dynamic types that we are, we ambled across the pebbles in quest of this body of water. It wasn't far off and boasted some great camping spots on a pebble shelf above a most picturesque little bay. We returned to our boats and paddled to the bay, experiencing our first little surf landing in the process. A supper of noodle soup turbo-charged with miso was fed to the ravenous and salt-deprived masses followed by hot chocolate with Frangelico. The clouds lifted completely by sunset, affording a clear right down the coast to the crux, our nemesis, the final conflict... Estevan Point.

Day 4

We awoke to low fog this morning and a dozen charter fishing boats in “our” bay. The wind and wave action were up, though certainly not up to the standard of Day 2. We paddled past steep cliffs and many more boats on our way to Maquinna Point and Friendly Cove.

And now for a few words about micturition. True wilderness, to use the words of long-time VOC hardman Dr. David E. Williams, is “a place where you can piss anywhere and anytime”. In this sense, kayaking does not always qualify as a wilderness activity although it can certainly be one if you bring an appropriate receptacle. Unfortunately, I had not only forgotten mine but had discovered that the gentle motion of the waves had a powerful activating effect on my kidneys: even the most careful avoidance of fluids at breakfast was unable to prevent powerful hydrostatic forces from gripping my midsection minutes after starting the day’s paddle. So here I was, with a full bladder and no yogurt container, staring up at these big cliffs, cussing myself for not taking advantage of the last little beachlet we passed and wondering what to do next. What about that twisting narrow channel here? It led to a “beach” the size of a handkerchief but that’s enough, isn’t it? Well, the trouble with these little channels is that they greatly magnify the incoming waves and tend to toss your boat uncontrollably against the rocks. Consequently, the whole adventure took nearly a quarter of an hour before I managed to beat my way back out again, leaving the kayak somewhat bruised but otherwise unharmed. *Vive le plastique!* I should probably mention that my noble vessel, known variously as *Dugong* and *The Blue Whale*, was a sturdy Necky Narpa plastic hull rescued from an unhappy rental career of being punished on the rocky beaches of Galiano Island. In other words, it could accept the punishment as well as mete it out, as some windsurfers at Jericho have discovered to their cost. However, it was less accepting of being paddled at speeds exceeding one knot, a situation not improved by its owner’s tendency to stop and gawk at seabirds.

Of course, there turned out to be a wide sandy beach just around the corner. Isn’t there always.

Friendly Cove is an interesting but memorably sad place. Your first welcome is a lonely little church out on the point, looking oddly out of place amongst the beaches and forests. You paddle around Maquinna Point to be greeted by thunderous blasts from the lighthouse located there, before putting in at the sheltered beach. The Cove is a popular camping area with local sport fishermen, but there is only a handful of local residents. We visited the church which we found had been largely converted to a display area for newly carved totems. Wandering around in the pervasive blackberry bushes, we were directed to a fallen totem pole in the weeds: it was intricately carved and painted but had been shattered into several fragments when it had toppled, and it was now just a question of time before it would be reclaimed by the forest. Its earthy spirituality was in sharp contrast to the immaculate but soul-less church. It was sad that the fates of these two could not be exchanged: surely the history of Western religion on the west coast is hardly one we wish to preserve with such care?

There was still much low cloud and wind around when we began our crossing of

the channel separating us from the mainland. Minutes later, a huge ocean freighter crossed our path: considering that neither of us could spot the other until it would have been too late, we gulped and applied some serious muscle to our paddles. We all breathed a sigh of relief on the other side, then proceeded south through more friendly waters to the vast lagoon forming Escalante Bay, a most deceptive place indeed. There we were, each just paddling along at their own easy pace on water as smooth as glass, until we were nearly at the beach: suddenly, we became aware of being propelled forward by significant breakers rather than the innocent little wavelets they had appeared to be from a distance. Nobody flipped, but there was a noticeable erosion of confidence in the three novices.

Day 5

There was a noticeable lack of motivation on part of the group this morning, probably associated with the overcast weather and the fact that we don't have far to go today. Alternately, could it have something to do with the half-kilometre of sand sitting smugly between our boats and the sea? Escalante Bay is rather like Spanish Banks in that when the tide goes out, it REALLY goes out.

It seems appropriate, at this point, to dispel the completely untrue myth that kayaking involves the use of only the upper body muscles. Since you're sitting down all day exercising your arms, claims the argument, you should come back from these trips with the physique of a sport climber (joke). Wrong, all wrong. Kayaking is in fact a highly lower body-intensive workout because of the endless carrying of stuff sacks, tents, small dogs, kayaks, etc, etc. from one spot to another. No item, apparently, is really happy where it is but would much rather be somewhere else. Since you're invariably walking around on sand (or worse) carrying a heavy load, the exercise value is out of all proportion to the distance actually covered.

Since nobody was keen on covering that Sahara-like expanse more than once, we loaded up the boats where they were and then carried them down to the water. Not fun. Then we had to paddle out through the hefty breakers to reach the open ocean. This part is enjoyable in a twisted sort of way provided that you are willing to get completely drenched (which we were) and have your spray skirt fastened securely to prevent the unwelcome entry of twenty gallons of Pacific Ocean. This latter I omitted to do. Anyway, we eventually got out there and paddled away into a modest wind but a strong current. Nearly four hours of such frustrating progress brought us to Barcester Bay, a thoroughly delightful little cove with a friendly sandy beach. The breakers, however, were rather feisty and claimed one victim. Marilyn, by forgetting the magic rule to paddle like hell, got turned sideways, tried a brace and, well, that was about it. Over she went, but as the water was only about 4 feet deep, not much effort was required on the part of the rescuer. The other potential rescuer stayed on the shore snapping photographs and laughing unsympathetically.

This was initially only meant to be a lunch stop, but our slow progress, the proximity to Estevan Point and the picturesque location argued against paddling further that day. We spent a couple of hours playing a game ("Land") involving running around in

the sand and throwing sticks at people, both equally enjoyable pastimes. We also tried our hand at surfing in the breakers, during which they claimed one more victim to the obvious delight of Marilyn.

While sitting around later that afternoon, we spotted a few whale spouts in the distance, followed by the characteristic tail flukes. Then, we suddenly saw a huge black shape jump out of the water! It was at least a kilometre off, but made one hell of a splash. Wow.

Supper was prepared by chef Chrystal. There's something truly special about munching on veggie sushi rolls while sitting around a campfire on a deserted beach at night. However, all good things must come to an end, so the four weary paddlers soon crawled off to bed, painfully aware of the upcoming 5:30 AM rising.

Day 6

"...Estevan Point: clear, winds five to one-zero knots, seas calm..." We had been supplied with a marine radio which saw a good deal of use this morning. The camp was quickly dismantled and we set off under sunny skies and on glass-like water, except for the never-ending swells. Chrystal had read that the Point was a minefield of boomers (rocks which are just below the surface of the water normally but are exposed when a wave passes over), sarcastic fishermen and whatnot, but we encountered none of these problems. We swung wide around the Point and settled in for a pleasant paddle under bright sunshine with a gentle breeze. The team fisherman decided what the heck, he'd already lost enough hardware in his fruitless pursuit of fish, let's see if we can lose some more before this trip is out. The denizens of the deep were offered a Buzz Bomb and the fisherman leaned into his paddle in an effort to catch up with the rest of his party. Minutes later, there was a tug, so the line was hauled up and, well, guess what? there was a real live rock cod in there! The trophy (christened "Fred") was triumphantly lashed to the kayak (rather like hunters do with deer) and later proudly displayed to the now respectful remainder of the group.

We paddled through Hesquiat Basin, stopping at Anton Spit for lunch ("an unmemorable place" reads my diary entry), and continued south in search of an esthetically pleasing campsite. Our muscles, some previously unknown, were whining after being required to paddle for some seven straight hours. It was evident that I had the slowest boat there, unless my companions were deceptively strong or had some well-concealed outboard motors on their vessels. Our destination turned out to be a pebble beach accessed by a narrow passage through breaker-infested rocks. We spread out wet tents and, on Chris' suggestion, set out in search of a large lake which the map said was so close that we should virtually walk right into it within a couple of minutes. We made a rather comic sight: four people in sandals carrying towels, parasols and various bathing and personal hygiene accessories hacking their way through a muddy creek and that luxurious west coast undergrowth. Remember that neat scene from "The African Queen" when Bogart's been pulling the boat through the swamp and then he turns around and his back's all covered with leeches? We thought about it quite a bit as we squelched our way

through the mud. After an hour of such getting back to our mountaineering roots (“what’s a coast trip without a bushwhack?”), one of us climbed a tree and ascertained that the lake apparently existed only the mind of the map-maker. We conceded defeat and retreated to the beach.

Fred was filleted and fried up with some garlic to afford four respectable and most tasty portions. The great thing about rock cod is that they have very few bones, and these are mainly of the big and thick variety. Fred was followed by fettucine Alfredo, cocoa with Frangelico and the daily chocolate ration. Chris has been delegated the role of Chocolate Keeper, meaning that each night he divides a large chocolate bar among the rest of the party, none of whom could be trusted with a Mars bar for more than five minutes. It was a beautiful clear sky that night with great views all the way down to Scorpio.

Day 7

Another fine day. Since we were just a short paddle away from Hotsprings Cove where we were to meet Julie and Tony that night, we spent the day exploring the seashore, crawling into tidal caves and generally being lazy. We realized an unidentified member’s fantasy of unlimited coffee and pancakes.

At midday, seven kayakers appeared offshore. “Please go somewhere else” we prayed but no, with several beaches available they of course chose ours. “A pushy bunch of bastards” notes my diary entry. Several tents promptly appeared right beside ours and Chrystal and Marilyn were subjected to some highly distasteful remarks. Well, what do you expect from seven middle-aged males? Against their warnings of hostile seas, we paddled off in the late afternoon into moderate winds and bright sun but quite complex waves, probably due to the continuous cliffs along the shoreline. It wasn’t scary, but required concentration and made for slow going. We reached Hotsprings Cove by an amazingly calm narrow channel winding its shallow way through the forest. Julie and Tony had left a note saying that they’d be around the corner, which is where we duly paddled, stopping en route to examine a particularly impressive cave, a huge chamber in a big wall of vegetation.

Day 8

There was some light rain during the night, but had ceased by the time we eventually got out of bed. We made the lengthy trip to the hotsprings by an apparently never-ending boardwalk through a magnificent old-growth forest. Hopping around the rocks at the springs, I managed to twist my ankle in a very painful way which, combined with a major outbreak of UV-induced swellings on my hands, made me feel very sorry for myself. The hotsprings themselves certainly lived up to their name! They were OK for 5-10 min but escape then became a necessity. Their situation in the rocky cliffs right beside the sea was completely natural and most pleasant.

We returned to camp, packed up and paddled off southwards under gradually

clearing skies. Several hours of micturition denial brought us to Cow Bay, a huge sandy crescent beach situated below the vast virgin forested slopes of Flores Island. There were several cabins hidden in the woods here, which Chris said likely belonged to squatters. Since I was having trouble walking and didn't feel like just sitting around, I headed out for a couple of hours' fishing in the setting sun. It was most enjoyable just drifting and thinking around out there. Fish were neither expected nor caught.

Day 9

We woke up to gloomy overcast skies this morning and paddled over to Bartlett Island against a strong wind and large waves. Slow going. There were a few tourist boats around, characterized by large "crews" all wearing bright red survival suits. Wonder what they made of us! Bartlett was one neat place: lots of little sandy coves, rocky islets and that fantastic wind-sculpted vegetation. We said good-bye to Julie and Tony after lunch and, after a circumnavigation of the island, headed to the mainland. We'd been saying how little food we have so they gave us a fair bit of stuff. They even shared their "soup" at lunch: Tony claimed that it was clam chowder but it was more like whipped-up oatmeal and later turned out to be falafel.

We camped on the last sandy beach in the inlet going in. Supper that night was rice, lentils, coconut and lots of spices. It was rather reminiscent of a Christmas pudding: lots of good things going in only to get lost in the mess. I finally realized that Chris is one of those incurable veggie/health food types. After supper, we sat around the campfire with our hot tea and brandy (actually quite good!) discussing society's expectations of personal appearance. Do men with ponytails really make better lovers?

Day 10

Since our plan was to catch the 2:30 flood tide into Herbert Inlet and the Moyeha River, we got up at our usual hour (8:30!) and paddled off. Beautiful sunshine, moderate tailwind and current, rapid progress. There were many spectacularly gorgeous forested slopes, but also a fair bit of logging. I caught one of Fred's smaller brothers, but he got away even after being strapped on the deck and bashed on the head a few times. Further in, though, we met a friendly boater who offered us two large rockfish: I guess he was after salmon but he kept catching these damn things. In view of our dwindling food resources, we of course said yes. There was a neat little archipelago here with shallow water and starfish lying on the bottom like autumn leaves. It really didn't look or feel like the sea at all here. It was a pity about the clearcuts, though, which come right down to the water and rather spoiled what would otherwise have been a wondrous area.

After a lunch considerably supplemented by our previous companions' rations, we proceeded up the Inlet with a strong tail wind. It made for fast going but also made us apprehensive about the return journey. The estuary was a most peaceful place: we found a handy gravel bar and set up camp. This was, however, after Chrystal and Marilyn had guided us up an increasingly swampy side-fork which also prompted the adoption of

Louisiana-type accents. We retreated, laughing hysterically, to find the main fork of the river.

In view of the bear etc. hazard, I paddled to the other side of the inlet to clean the fish. There was an impressive series of streams going down a rock face into the sea. The bottom of the wall was covered with a bright green moss/seaweed and there were masses of an almost luminous seaweed. No camera at the time, of course!

I returned to find our camp in some disarray, as the island was rapidly shrinking with the rising tide and its prospects for survival didn't look good. As a matter of fact, it vanished eventually. Our cooking area went first, fire and all, then the tents gradually crept closer and closer to the water. Tents were set up about fifty yards away, but it soon became obvious that this wouldn't be enough. We paddled a few hundred yards upstream to find a nice high gravel bar apparently out of tidal range. It was a quite small island (50 yds long by 15 yds wide) but most appealing. Frank and Foster were cooked with oil, garlic and herbs (dill is important here). They were followed by split peas, barley and cheese: not bad, but the appearance by candlelight was, well...

Bird status: a few Black Turnstones and some Phalaropes were swimming out on the ocean a few days ago. Lots of Guillemots and Murrelets. Also a few Wandering Tattlers and the odd Yellowlegs.

Day 11

We sat around for a bit this morning, writing and farting, before paddling upriver under blue skies. Wow! Thanks to the fact that the Moyeha River is actually a narrow corridor of Strathcona Park leading to the sea, this area is in a wonderful pristine state, with beautiful green-blue pools, huge unlogged mountainsides and the odd rocky peak poking up high above. The river itself doesn't have much oomph, but just lazily winds back and forth among the gravel bars. However, it's not particularly deep, so it was 2/3 paddling and 1/3 dragging. There were numerous giant uprooted trees along the river bank: you don't realize the size of these things until you see them horizontal. We parked the boats after about an hour and continued on foot. We followed gravel bars pretty much all the way, but the river had a malicious habit of extinguishing the gravel on one side each time there was a bend. Consequently, we had to cross the river now and then: not too cold and not (much) past the knees, so it wasn't too bad at all. We had lunch by the river, then retreated under increasing wind and cloud. We scooted down a few small rapids (fun, especially if you have a plastic boat), banging the bottom a fair bit but not too severely. A supper of pasta, dried tomatoes and cheese sauce was followed by a major veg-out session where people sat and read for a couple of hours.

Day 12

Got up at 5 AM (!) to be met by fog and drizzle. A most uninspiring morning. We ground and portaged our way down to the bay (low tide) and then proceeded down the inlet. Light winds made the progress easy until Chris suggested swapping boats. I haven't

had this much fun since I hiked 4 km barefoot owing to blistered heels. The back rest in his Nimbus Seafarer was apparently designed for the sort of humans whose skeletal remains are routinely discovered by anthropologists in central Africa. I suffered with horrendous back pain for 2 hours while squirming around in the vain hope of finding a comfortable position. Between bouts with the back rest, I spotted a black bear wandering around on the shore.

Chris paddled up to a fish farm and after assuring them that yes, he really would like to buy a fish, he obtained "Floyd", a freshly caught and gutted 10 lb Atlantic salmon for absolutely nothing. Sometimes it pays to be a lawyer. We had lunch at our camp spot of a couple nights back: following a somewhat less than tres exciting meal of humus and ichiban noodles, Marilyn pulled out a special suprise chocolate bar. We dozed in the sun for a bit before making the last 2 h paddle to Ahaus Bay on Vargas Island. There was a big swarming of birds around one area, which revealed several Rhinoceros Auklets. Later, I spotted some Red Phalaropes from very close, just bobbing up and down on the swells.

Ahaus Bay is a huge arc of a sandy beach, 2-3 km long. Unfortunately, it's also within a few hours of Tofino, so we encountered quite a few kayakers in this area, but the beach is so long that it worked out to about 1 party per kilometre. Floyd was seasoned with lemon juice and dill, wrapped in aluminum foil and cooked on the coals (40 min) to perfection. My oh my! Even the fish cynics Chrystal and Marilyn were convinced that there was some merit to this seafood thing.

Day 13

The weather was deteriorating quickly as we packed up our camp this morning and consumed the few scraps of food remaining. Exiting through the surf was like being slapped with a large wet mop. It started to rain shortly after we began paddling, along with some wave action happening as well. We picked our way among the rocks through sort-of protected waters under gray and decidedly unfriendly skies. Chris evaluated our position as quite a long way from where I thought Tofino might be, which didn't add to the positive feeling in the party. At one point, while maneuvering between two large islets, Chrystal was surprised by a large breaker coming at her from behind. All went well, though, and she wasn't dashed to bits on a boomer as the horrified onlookers feared for a few seconds. We got thoroughly drenched in the downpour which hit us shortly before we entered the archipelago around Tofino, but the sun appeared quickly so we were very nearly dry by the time we pulled up to the wharf. Kayaks and contents were soon put away and, following a quick bite at the Maoist bakery, we were on our way home, having completed a trip that few of us will forget for all the best reasons.

Irrelevant sentimental note

Seeing that this is my last ever Journal article, I'd like to say that the VOC has been far and away the most memorable aspect of my (excessively lengthy) university education. If nothing else, I've learned that it never pays to stay home and study when

you could be out there in the wilderness. I've never regretted going on a trip, but there have been many sunny weekends spent in the lab kicking myself for not being with my friends on an unforgettable outing. To all the wonderful people I've met through the club: consider yourselves hugged!

Participants

Marilyn Noort

Chris Rolf

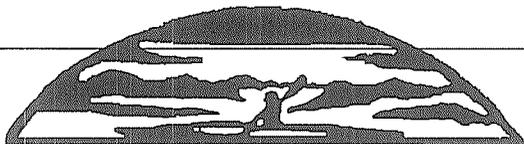
Julie Webb

Fred, Foster, Frank and Floyd

Chrystal Palaty

Jan Palaty

Tony Webb



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GALIANO ISLAND V0N 1P0

Summer Mountaineering - the Neverending Adventure

by Fern Hietkamp

Trip Participants: all of the following, on various trips: Markus Kellerhals, Denie Robichaud, Marilyn Noort, Tanya Behrisch, David Williams, Claudia Schwab, Greg Statter.

I will briefly describe here what I was doing this past summer (1994) when I wasn't writing my thesis. Don't get me wrong; most of the time I was writing my thesis, but the weekends were reserved for the mountains. Here are a few of the highlights, some more epic than others, but all extremely enjoyable.

Meslilloet Mountain

Meslilloet (6565 ft.; 2001 m) is cited as being the closest glaciated peak to Vancouver, and has become part of the Pinecone Lake - Burke Mountain Fool's Gold Trail. Meslilloet Mountain is a massif surrounded by "pocket" glaciers. From this area, the Pitt River, Boise Valley, and Pinecone Lake area, are visible. Curious to see this area, but not having a lot of time, we decided to make it a trip of a day and a half, which is possible by following logging roads, bushwacking, and some fast hiking.

We left Vancouver on a sunny Saturday afternoon in July, giving ourselves enough time to find the correct logging road and set up camp. Or so we thought. After turning off Hwy 99 just past the Stawamus Chief onto the Manquam logging road, we headed toward an access point which would allow us to bushwack up to Meslilloet from the north. However, somehow we found ourselves on a logging road on the west side of the valley, taking us farther and farther away from our destination. Since darkness was falling, we stopped driving, pitched the tent, and left routefinding to the next day. In the morning, we backtracked and finally discovered a logging road which led to the desired area. We knew we were in the right place when we saw Greg Statter's vehicle parked at the end of it; Greg and Sharon, and Dave Williams had gone up earlier on Saturday.

What followed next was a good bushwacking exercise. First we descended down toward the river through a clear cut, from which the logs had not yet been removed, and then through the old growth forests' understory of devil's club and other spiny vegetation. After crossing the raging river, we ascended for about 1500 ft. through slippery mountain rhododendron ("mountain misery"), alders, and some dense conifers. Once atop the ridge, we swore that the next time we would come in May or June, when snow is still covering the vegetation, making travel considerably easier. Descending about 500 ft., we were ready to begin the hike up into the alpine which would take us, via snowfields and glaciers, up to Meslilloet. Once on the snowfields, we spotted the tracks of the other three, and although we heard voices, we never saw them that day at all. As we traversed the glacier, approaching the summit massif, we watched black clouds rolling in from the west. About 400 ft. from our destination, clouds lowered over the peak, emptying themselves of their contents. With more of the same blowing in from the west, we decided the best thing would be to retreat as

quickly as possible. We needn't have worried; we got thoroughly soaked anyway. Sliding down our steep, mountain-misery-covered-slope was even more fun with a good coating of rain, as was crossing the torrential stream. The ice axes proved helpful in shinnying up and across the massive trees lying horizontally and vertically across the last slope. Reaching the car was a relief; time to get dry! The other party had already gone home; perhaps making an "alpine" start on a Saturday morning is actually a good idea.

Miller Creek

The next weekend, we decided to visit our Swedish friends who were staying at Miller Creek, northwest of Pemberton. Hjallmar was doing his field work for his geography research, and Asa, his partner (in real life a dentist) was his field assistant for the summer. They had told us about the beautiful meadows, about the research cabin (so we wouldn't have to carry a tent), and the great views. Who could resist? After introducing ourselves to the farmer through whose fields we had to travel to get to the trailhead, we drove as far as the second bridge. After this, the road is only accessible by ATV, so it was time to hike the five hours to the cabin.

We followed the trail, which is actually a cow path, for about four hours and then came out into the open meadows where Miller Creek flows and the cows roam. This last sentence makes everything sound a bit pastoral and is somewhat misleading. What actually happened was that it was the hottest weekend of the summer, and the mosquitos were out in full force, and we had forgotten to take bug repellent. In the midst of the forest, we had a choice between dashing for higher, cooler ground and the windy, open meadows, or dashing back down to the car and the valley. Of course there was never any doubt that we would "reach the summit at all costs", so we pushed onward quickly. The hike would have been a good model for a questing trip. First "The Forest of the Bloodsucking, Stinging Beasts", followed by a crossing of a glacier fed "Icy Raging Torrent," followed by the ascent of a "Steep Desolate Slope" (we were a bit off route).

Finally, when we next peered through our swollen eyes at about 6000 ft., there was the cabin, and there were Hjallmar and Asa to greet us. We had supper on the rocks overlooking the Pemberton valley, with grand views of Garibaldi Park, Rhododendron, Ipsoot, Sugarloaf, and the Overseer group, all around us. The next day we scooted up Sugarloaf (8000 ft; 2440 m) and then raced back down through the woods to avoid the stinging beasts to the safety of the car and the coolness of the waterfall at the bridge.

MacDonald and Webb

The next weekend, we decided to go into the Chilliwack Valley, a beautiful hiking area with a variety of destinations. The goal of the weekend was to do some free climbing in the mountains. Both MacDonald (7300 ft.; 2225 m) and Webb (7097 ft; 2163 m) offer interesting low to mid class 5 multi-pitch routes. After a pleasant three hour hike up to Radium Lake, we pitched our tents by a small stream, had a quick swim and frisbee game, and headed up to the west face of Webb. Although climbing routes are briefly described in Fairley's Guide, we found it difficult to locate a sustained route. In addition, the lichen made it difficult to stick onto any route we could discern. With darkness imminent, we finally rapped

down in the middle of our second pitch.

The next day we hiked up to the col and across to the east ridge of Macdonald, hoping to climb the 5 pitches of “blocky solid rock” (as described in Fairley’s Guide). After some scrambling, we found the described blinkety blank rock, and did indeed have some fun protecting and climbing the granite. The lunch spot on the top afforded excellent views of Rexford, Baker, Tomyhoi (remember?—site of VOC 1994 Introduction to Summer Mountaineering trip—lots of people, limited visibility), the Lucky Four, and more.

Joffre Peak area

The aim of this weekend trip was to play around on the glacier, practising some ice-climbing skills, and climb Joffre if we could. After hiking up the trail and setting up tents below the glacier on Saturday afternoon, we spent the rest of the day hiking up Mt. Tszil (7800 ft.; 2380 m). The climb involved crampons and ice axes since it was late summer and a lot of ice on the glacier was exposed. It rained that night, and the next day dawned cloudy and overcast. With little indication that it would clear, we decided to head up the Matier Glacier, cross it, and climb a smaller peak on the other side if there was time. The amount of ice that has melted away on the glacier over the past few years has changed what has been a fairly straightforward walk on crampons up the glacier, into a minor ice-climbing exercise. Thus, we were able to practice our ice-climbing en route. Markus led the pitch, put in some ice screws, and belayed the rest of us up as we kicked our crampons into the ice, and swung our axes above our heads to pull ourselves up.

Once on the glacier, we followed each other through the maze of crevasses, exposed due to the summer’s melting of the snow. Further up the glacier, the crevasses were still snow-covered, so we roped up, putting Markus first to sniff out the crevasses. We headed for Mt. Spetch (8500 ft.; 2590 m) since it looked do-able within the amount of time we had left. After skirting a deep berschrund, we kicked steps onto the steep snow slope above it, and proceeded cautiously to the top, where we were rewarded with views of Matier, and Joffre under cloud. Descending quickly and backtracking our path across the glacier, we arrived in camp just as the clouds were lifting and the sun was lighting up the sky for a beautiful sunset.

Mt. Athelstan

A few weekends later, we ventured into the Meager Creek area, northeast of Pemberton, to climb Mt. Athelstan (9100 ft.; 2770 m). The logging roads now give easy access to the forest on the ridge that leads to the meadows below Athelstan. The ridge is marked with flagging tape and there is a thin trail, visible for most of the way. After about three hours of hiking, we reached the meadows, some of the most beautiful I have seen. They were like large fields, with a multitude of summer mountain flowers. The meadows give way to slopes of hardened ash, left by an eruption from Plinth Peak, which is across the valley, about 2000 years ago. This unusual surface is delightful to look at but somewhat difficult to walk on since the lightweight stones keep giving way beneath the feet. Of course, this makes for easy boot-skiing on the way back down.

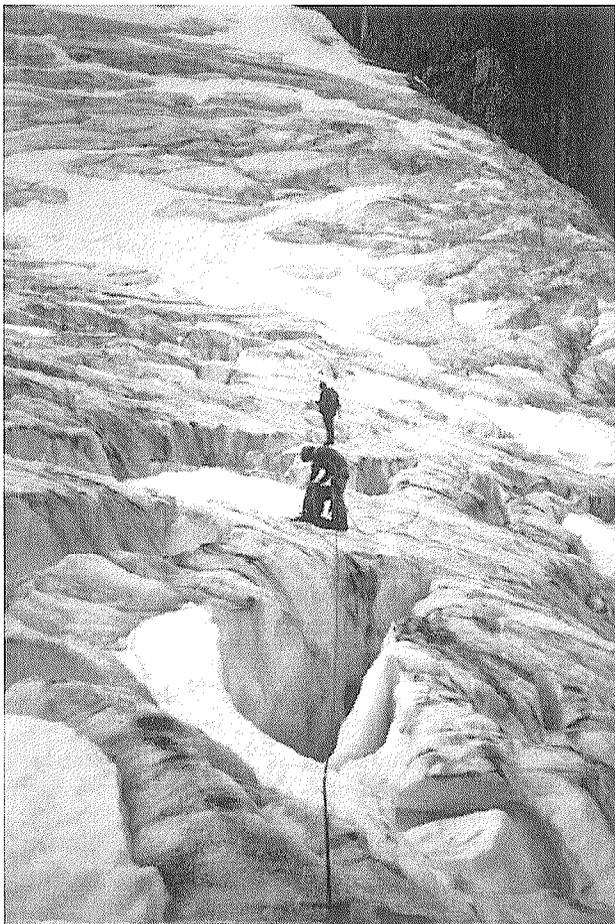
Ash fields were succeeded by snow fields, and it was time to pitch the tents. Streams

are difficult to find, since the snowmelt quickly percolates into the ash. Denie went on a water hunting mission, while the rest of us began to prepare supper. Or tried to prepare supper. Much to Marilyn's chagrin, she had forgotten the stove she had been designated to bring. We made the best of it, feasting on crackers and curry paste and raw vegetables. Then Marilyn and Denie treated us to a concert of pennywhistle and song.

After a solid sleep (as solid as possible with no supper), we were up early the next morning to climb Athelstan. The route to the top offered fascinating footing and scenery. With ash flows giving way to rock and snow fields beneath our feet, and the Meager group across the way, and the Lillooet river far below, the mountain was a delight to climb. The clouds broke at just the right times to allow us to see our way across the glacier fields so that we could decide when to rope up. After about two hours of tramping across glacier and snow, we gained the west ridge, and began to scramble up. In another hour and a half, we were at the top, catching glimpses of glaciers all around us, and the Lillooet Glacier far below. We flew down on the descent, using ice and ash as boot-skiing surfaces. After we packed up the tents, we wandered down into the meadows to linger a bit in the wonderful smells and colours before heading back into the forest and down to the car.

P.S. Marilyn's forgetting the stove more than met its match by Markus forgetting to pick up Marilyn for a ski trip later that year. She ended up skiing at Diamond Head with two total strangers.

These are a few of the adventures I had this summer, and yes, the thesis did get written.



Joffre Glacier, August 1994.

SPORT CLIMBING IN THE WEST

By David Vocadlo

SMITH ROCKS

After the car broke down by the Mount Hood state campground and Rupert's mountain bike tire blew its sidewall as he went for help, I resigned myself to spending the next ten days in sleazy small town with dishonest mechanics. We peered into the front end of the car speculated as to what could have prompted a loss of engine power. Fuel line, plugs... Hmmm? An elderly couple with weather worn friendly faces from Arizona with a large mobile home were acting caretakers of the park. They came over and looked at the fuel injected Volvo station wagon with obvious disdain. "Import Eh!" he chided. "Check the fuses?" We had and so he swung up to the front end and poked around for a few minutes. With a sudden movement he tugged and pulled out a fuse from the front end. "What about this?" The fuse was indeed blown and after replacing it with a loaner from him the car fired up. We thanked them profusely and headed for the rocks, Smith Rocks that is.

Rupert, Deepa, John and I climbed at a lazy pace preparing for the summer of climbing slowly. We had a great stay here and snapped a few good photos including one wherein we wrapped Deepa up in rope from head to toe (no, nothing kinky). The weather was fantastic and I highly recommend early May for a visiting time. The climbing is mostly sporty but from other trips I can attest that there are quality cracks with fine moves and of a generally continuous nature. We climbed casual routes and also dogged on a few evil routes. The scene is so conducive to tugging on draws and hanging that I couldn't escape the pull and so a precedent for the remainder of the summer was set. The summer of sport had arrived.

I won't bore you with another article about the climbs or restaurants around Smith but let me say how wild the country is. The sage abounds and the smell wafts through the air constantly keeping a pleasant tang in the air. The rocks rise like flames from the canyon bottom licking the azure sky as the sun rises. The silence is layers the area and even nearby shouts are muffled as the rock bends the sound. Clouds of dry dust rise up as climbers tread back and forth along the base of the forboding walls. The whole place carries a feel as though this was where the west was won. The Ponderosa pines and babbling cattle sooth the mind. A special place worth visiting even if you don't climb.

SKAHA

"Soup! No way. Soup has so few calories per dollar. I can't believe you bought three packages of that filthy pseudo food. I'd rather eat corn flakes all day. We're not mountaineering here, we're car camping. We need calories not delusions of food," my tirade against soup barely heard over the laughter as Chris pointed at me with glee. Over reacting? I don't think so. Soup is a waste as far as car camping goes.

We exited Hope's only food market and I squirmed back into the blue beast pushing aside the climbing gear. John raced the poor over taxed diesel engine up to 90 kph while Holly Cole bellowed from the defunct stereo speaker into my ear. The road sped by as we made our way to Skaha and after eight or nine chocolate bars we

were there. The terrible tetra we were composed of John Simms (aka Radster), Ann-Marie Conway (aka Aggro), Chris Maddox (aka Smooth One) and me Dave (aka Long Limb).

The temperature was a balmy 35+ in the sun and as we walked across the scorched earth down the trail I marvelled at the verve of this abundant lush green plant with white berries. Growing everywhere it didn't seem to mind the heat. Compulsively paranoid about poison ivy I skirted around every leaf. The area was beautiful with many slender pines forming a gentle forest which permitted easy wandering. Carefully following the directions in the guide book we managed to find our way through the mazes of rock. Each day we would visit a new crag and bump off a few routes. There is not much to say about climbing routes there. The rock is rife with horizontal edges especially on the east and south facing crags. I guarantee that the ubiquitous Skaha move will show up on every face route. Edge high on one of the rife horizontal features lock off with opposite hand and reach up for an edge. The climbing is fun with low commitment and is conducive to climbing well. The fact that the grades are a little soft also helps. In truth the sport routes are almost as good quality as Smith Rocks and the environs are much more pleasant with less dirt, fewer people and green things.

After every day of climbing we would retire for a while to eat dinner and swim at Skaha Lake. There we would watch the natives and frolick about on the grass or bask on the warm sand. The water, purported to be very warm (for some anyway) is also fun to play in or clean off the sweat of a days toil at cliff side. We met some great kids and their family who suprisingly invited the tetra to dinner. After gorging ourselves like the voracious scavengers we were we talked for a time about life this summer playland. Many thanks Sandy and Ed.

After spending ten days here we had explored most of the crags, clipped a few hundred bolts, had Tim Horton's donuts for dinner twice, been invited to dinner at the home of a kind family and cruised the town exhaustively. We even managed to purchase Cream and Midnight Oil tapes so as to avoid having to endure Holly crooning into my poor ear.

LAKE TAHOE - DONNER SUMMIT

The sweat trickled down my nose and dripped off only to vanish in a cloud of disturbed dust. Yakima at 43 C. The peanut butter which had been stored amongst the gear had undergone a phase change to a liquid with a viscosity lower than water. I quickly spread it onto the bread worried that it would soon turn to gas and never enter my starved stomach. John raised his head from the paper and grimly pointed out that City of Rocks was having similar weather. Unable to believe that such heat could cover so much area I checked the paper myself. Seeing it in print I could no longer delude myself. We had to go somewhere else. We did what any decent climber would and stalled for time. Pointing the whites of the the blue beast toward Smith Rock we gunned out down the highway.

The marathon drive paid off and we arrived at Smith shortly. John slept while AMC and I were fired by a few climbs. Marathon (driving) man arose at 1:00 and we then visited Redpoint Climbing supply. Kudos to the folks there for their kindness in providing the Johnny cans at the grasslands. Once there we conspired where to go. I had passed through Tahoe on my way back from Yosemite earlier that summer and it had seemed pleasantly cool. After interogating the guy at the counter and consulting numerous guidebook which all

corroborated my own observations, we now aimed the blue arrow toward Lake Tahoe.

Another marathon drive brought us there after a brief stop at Sal's gun and gas. The stereo was worse off and the emanations made Paul Simon sound like a demonic possessed Bob Dylan on 'ludes. We stayed for free, as usual, up by Donner Summit. The highway was closed a little further up for construction of an observation centre and so no cars disturbed us. The weather was much better with highs of 28 C. This place is hard man central. The grades for sport climbs start at 5.11a. The rock is granite and angles from about 80 to 100 degrees. Nice thin edges and good friction. Every morning we would wake up and take a secret ballot as to what climbs to do. Climbs which all three of us agreed on we did. The routine would involve "warming up" on some 11b somewhere followed by cranking (thrashing) on harder routes. We met a couple of interesting folks there. A Swiss German fellow who complained jovially that he hadn't managed to send Penguin Lust (12c) but succeeded on a few other hard 11's and a couple of low 12's (poor guy). Another fellow from Arizona (Matt) had been guiding at Smith Rocks and was kind of burnt out. He and his dog were mellowing in his trailer and would occasionally boulder or come swimming with us on our rest days.

After climbing we would rustle up some grub from Safeway and head down to the lake (Donner Lake). We would cook up our pitiful meal and then wait for tourists to leave remnants on the grill or hand us scraps out of pity. Aside from the jet skis the lake was beautiful and the climbing area very scenic. Truckee is much like Bend in that both are very tourist oriented except that Truckee has a university which lends some more flavour. The folks are kind and there are two climbing shops to hang out in plus... a Taco Bell.

The last couple of days climbing I missed as I realized I had acquired tendonitis (damned sport climbing) from not warming up, taping and crimping furiously. I couldn't close my hand and climbing was out for a while (I went kayaking in the Gulf Islands, but that's another story). We went to Truckee River Gorge for our last day and I watched them crank many overhanging routes of volcanic rock. There we met a trio of radsters who were climbing some 12a as we arrived on the scene. When AMC commented that she would flail away on the route they responded that she must say to herself that, "They were weak and pitiful, I will climb with grace and style." It actually helped, a little.

I recommend Lake Tahoe as a climbing destination. There are many areas with different characteristics some such as Lover's Leap have multipitch gear routes others such as the Emeralds, Donner Summit, Truckee River Gorge, have many quality sport climbs. The area is beautiful, the people friendly and \$2.50 all you can eat buffets are but an hour and a half away in Reno.

BACK OF THE LAKE

My fingers were still giving me some pain and so unable to pull any crimps we planned to yard on the quartzite jugs at the back of Lake Louise. The terrible tetra were assembled into the impossibly small space of the Blue Beast and were sped off to the Rockies. We once again scored free camping and set up the AMC sieve tent which is little more than a barrier to keep the sun, the bugs, and a small sprinkling off of one's face. Guy Edwards and Kaj were having a hitching race to Lake Louise and so we were not surprised when we encountered Guy at the crag.

The climbing is as suggested by the area name is at the back of Lake Louise. Park at the chateau and walk to the lake and along the lakeside trail (a veritable road really and by coast mountain standards a divided highway). This was my first visit to the Rockies and the pointed mountains which poked their teeth at the sky inspired awe and respect in me. On a later ski trip in the fall Mike Buda pointed out some of the classic climbs which made my mouth foam with anticipation. This trip was however a sporty trip and so the steep and shorts waited for us. The climbing was excellent with the grades a little stiffer than usual. The holds are large and friendly and the routes unrelentingly steep.

Our stay was cut short by rain and so we beat a retreat to Banff where we met a few local climbers and chatted about climbing and skiing. A brief break in the weather permitted us to climb a six pitch sport route on Guide Rock called Sea of Dreams (Fun route). The rain then continued forcing us to find real shelter which brought us to Calgary and the hospitable home of Martha (a friend of Chris Maddox's family) and later Chris Hull's (An old bud from UBC now doing grad work at UC) place. The summer done with return to school for AMC, work for John and Chris and UBC for me imminent we scattered like the leaves with Chris Maddox flying out of Calgary airport to guide kayaking trips, John enjoyed Chris Hull and Stephanie's (Chris's significant other) company as they returned to Vancouver for a concert and AMC and I hitched across Canada to visit our brothers in Montreal (Which is a story in itself).

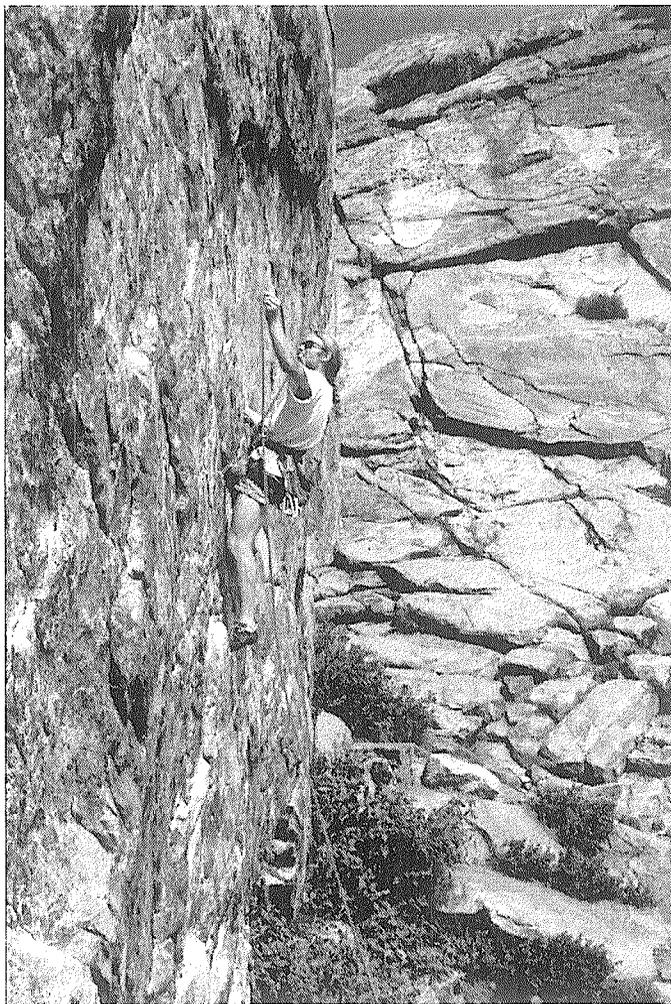


Photo: Dave Voadlo. John Simms eating rope on Goldilocks, Donner Summit, California.

Mt. Adams, Washington

By: Scott Martens

June 1994

Participants: Kevin, Ken, John, Adrian, Joel

This is my third in a series of west coast volcanoes (after Baker and St. Helens). We left Vancouver on Thursday evening at 6:30, only half an hour after our intended departure time. (Douglas Adams came up with the concept of the recipriverseclusion, which is a number defined as anything other than itself. For example, if you plan on leaving on a trip at 6 pm, the only time that no one could possibly be ready to leave is at 6. The corollary to this law is that no one will be ready sooner than 6, either.)

Anyway, we turned off the I5 in Washington at Highway 12 east, south of Chehalis. That was dumb (I wasn't navigating), since we should have turned off on the #7 south at Tacoma, and saved maybe an hour of driving. After a very long time we arrived at Trout Lake. We turned north at Trout Lake, and drove to the Morrison creek camp (4700 ft) where we found John and Adrian's tent and car. We set up camp, and got to sleep at about 2:30 am.

It was a premature wakeup call at 9 am by John. The campsite was very beautiful, and deserted. We had steak and potatoes for breakfast which, thanks to Kev, was really good. We were in no great hurry to get going, since Kev thought that it would only take us about 2 hours to hike to the base camp on the Avalanche glacier. The drive from Morrison to Cold Springs was only a couple miles but quite rough, although passable with the Mazda. There were patches of snow at Cold Springs camp (5600 ft), and the snow started soon on the trail, but not soon enough for Ken, who was hiking in downhill ski boots. We all had reasonably heavy packs, and I was carrying the 10.5mm rope. I had always thought that everyone should carry the same percentage of their body weight, but this never happens. Lighter people (like me) always ended up with the same amount of gear as those who weighed 50 pounds more.

Up to Timberline camp it was warm and sunny, but some very dark clouds in the south were moving towards us. At the big red butte we turned west to head towards the Avalanche glacier. We crossed several large fields of moraine, a totally pointless move which was hard for Ken and his ski boots, since we could have avoided them all simply by descending 100 feet, but some of the group loathed to lose any altitude.

There was one steep snow slope which led us to a windy ridge with several rock walls for shelter. It began to snow in earnest, so we set up camp there. Kev and I thought that we were close to the Avalanche glacier, but in reality we were still far to the east. We set up the tents, and the snow stopped while we had chicken and noodles, and lots of trail mix for supper. The snow started again at around 9:00 and became more intense, so we went to bed a half hour later. It became extremely windy, and Kev and Ken were worried about Ken's tent in the wind, but it turned out all right. Kev had to bang the snow off the tent a few times

during the night. It probably accumulated 6-8 cm where we were, and 15 cm in other areas. We were going to get up at 2:30 am to check the weather and see if it was good to go for the summit, but when all three of us in our tent got up at 1:30 am to pee in the blizzard, we decided to give the summit a miss that day.

John woke us up at 7:30 and said that it was great weather. He, Adrian and Joel left right away for the summit. We got up after a while and decided to go for it too. Some snow had drifted under the vestibule and into our boots, but it was ok. We ate breakfast (Logan bread with apricots and prunes) and spent about an hour melting snow for 2 litres of water for each of us.

The clouds were at about 7000 ft and rising slowly as the air warmed; the sky was perfectly clear above that level. We took turns breaking trail, as it was more difficult to walk in the freshly fallen snow. The wind was not bad as we left camp. The hiking was quite gentle over a large snowfield, until we got to the bottom of the ridge leading to the false summit. We stopped for some trail mix and I took off my rain pants, as I was really sweating hard. There we pushed our own trail straight up the ridge, rather than follow in the zig-zag pattern of others. Halfway up this ridge, there were large balls of ice in the snow, and some ice under the top layer of snow, from older snow melting and then freezing. Here we put on our crampons to make climbing easier. We also stopped for lunch (more Logan bread and trail mix). I was getting slightly tired by the time we reached the false summit at 11600 feet, and as soon as we popped up over the ridge it became very windy, with a biting wind chill. I stopped to put on my rain pants again, and got cold in the process. It's definitely time to buy some full-zip goretex pants—having to remove my crampons and boots to put on wind pants is a pain.

From the false summit, the true summit looked quite a distance away, and was 700 feet above us. We plodded down a bit, and then began the final climb. I was really getting tired here, and could start to feel the altitude in my breathing, that I was not getting a good air exchange. Kev made it up first, with Ken and I plodding along behind. We summited at 2:30, at 12,276 ft which is my current altitude record. I got John to take some summit pics for me, and I took two for a guy whose party had not made it to the top. We could see just the top Rainier, and Hood, as the clouds were at about 10000 feet in some places, with a solid layer at about 7000. We drank the bottle of Samuel Adams Lager that Ken had packed up. This is the start of a new tradition. Adams lager on Adams, Black Tusk Ale on the Tusk, Rainier on Rainier. In fact, I hear there is a Mt. Everest Ale...

Walking down was not easy, as the balls of ice made us have to watch not to twist a knee from the crampons. Near the bottom of the false summit ridge we were finally able to glissade, and I brought out a garbage bag to sit on, which was good. We made it back to camp by 4:30, and found, to our surprise, that a number of people who were going to climb with us had arrived. They had hiked up that day, since it was pouring rain when they reached the trailhead the night before. Coincidentally, they were setting up camp at our spot when John and Adrian had come down and recognised them. The clouds disappeared during the evening, and we got a beautiful sunset view of St. Helens and Hood.

The next morning we had Logan bread (this is becoming a theme) for breakfast, melted some snow for water and left for the cars. We took a more direct route down and got back at

the car in about an hour's time. After passing through Trout Lake, we then headed west, trying to find the road back to Randle. There were no signs pointing the way back, and we ended up taking a wrong turn and coming to a dead end along the logging roads. Basically, we could only navigate by looking at the volcanoes, since our map did not show this maze of roads. We were running very low on gas, and so even Kev, who thought that running out of gas in the middle of nowhere would be fun and adventurous, concluded that we should head south to the Columbia River and get gas. The gas station there did not take MasterCard, Visa or Interac bank cards!?! Fortunately I had American cash. We then took the #14 to Vancouver, Washington, and the I5 home.



Photo: Scott Martens. Kev and Ken, false summit behind.

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Psyched in Summer

by Guy Edwards

Last Spring I had pretty bad tendinitis in both of my elbows. When it had finally gone away in the early summer, I was really psyched to start climbing again. But after a short three weeks of living at Squamish, it was off to work for a month.

After returning from my field job, I was now incredibly motivated. All my energy went into climbing.

John Simms and I zipped down to Index for five days of getting spanked on their sand-bagged routes. Then on the night of our return to Vancouver I decided to go to the Rockies. So I called my good friend, a former climbing partner, Kaj Paget, and challenged him to a hitchhiking race to Banff. We both left early on Saturday morning and I arrived at dusk in downtown Banff. When we finally caught up on the following Sunday morning, it turned out that I'd beaten Kaj by only ten minutes!

Anyway, we decided to go off right away into Edith at Louise. We left the trailhead at about noon and after a while came under the East faces of Edith. Then we made an instantaneous decision to climb the East face of the central peak of Edith. There was one route up the left side, but we decided to try a route up the right - using a prominent chimney.

I left the ground and the first pitch at about 3pm, so we didn't have too much time until dark. We also didn't know if the route would go, or if we needed bolts or pitons - neither of which we had. Oh well, at least we had a one headlamp.

So the first pitch wasn't so bad, with alright gear in a corner. The second pitch was sort of runout, up an arete. The third pitch had some loose rock, but it wasn't too hard. Then we reached the chimney, which was 50 meters of perfect stemming on good rock. After this, the climbing got serious. The next pitch was strenuous with great gear and the best belay yet. That was a good set up for the sixth pitch - which was the crux.

The crack we were following petered out after about 20 feet, then there was a blank 15 foot section before a ledge. It had only small edges and ripples, between which I had to move up and feel for the next holds. At one point I got quite gripped and I started scratching around with my feet. It seemed like I wasn't going to find another hold above. But I calmed down, and laybacked off an edge and moved to the right. A line of holds appeared again, and I made it up to the ledge.

The rest of that pitch wasn't bad, but it was still runout and the line was treading right. This was terrible for Kaj, as he was in a position for a big pendulum. He got wiggled on the pitch, but luckily scratched his way up.

We finished the climb with one last runout pitch to the top, just as it was getting dark.

The elation we felt after finishing was great! I'd almost been thinking that we wouldn't be able to finish the route by dark or get blocked by some hard section. Oh well - We scratched up it, and we won!

Well, the next morning the clouds had moved in and sprinkles of rain had started to fall. Kaj decided he didn't need rockclimbing in his life anymore, so he started hitching back to Vancouver. I stayed in the Rockies for another week and did some more great routes; no more new ones though, and nothing quite so dangerous or stupid.

ANGEL'S CREST

By David Vocadlo

Clip, clip. The sight of bolts whizzing by tortured my slumbering brain. Back in Vancouver after yet another bolt clipping hiatus my mind yearned for some exercise and so, under the pretense of keeping in touch with placing gear, John, Ann-Marie and I decided on climbing Angel's Crest. Undaunted by John's previous unexpected bivouac and subsequent retreat we were in high spirits despite the mostly cloudy skies. As we walked along the trail John trotted along happily eager to have a second go at the route.

The steep thickly forested slope below the North Walls reluctantly stopped its advance on the Chief only at the very base of the granite wall. Left to myself I peered at the trail marker which indicated that we were at the base of the Crest and then gazed dully at the dirty rock about. John smiled and swung up into a well worn spruce and soon after twenty five or thirty so feet of mad swinging jumped onto the rock above. Following more sedately I writhed slowly and inelegantly through the branches to step off of the swaying tree onto a good ledge. Ann-Marie jogged up and soon after a little fourth class traverse we were standing at the base of a pretty left leaning splitter (Angel Crack). I offered to lead the pitch and John chuckled that he had been planning to give me the "good" leads anyway and so with his blessing I roped up.

Soon, at the top of the crack I struggled to get a wire in to protect the crux. The crack would have none of it and so like a good sport climber I jammed a cam in until I felt secure enough that it could support a tide of mad lemmings. Now protected I let myself upward to deal with the Angel and after a few moves reached the belay of what I thought to be a fine pitch albeit hard for 10a. The next pitch, billed as the technical crux, involved a few reaches from edge to edge with good bolts for protection. Soon Ann-Marie had the belay and was tugging the line as we shot up. John sprang onto the rock and scurried up the next pitch, clawing over a couple of small bushes to the belay in only a minute or two. After a couple of moments and a pause to grab the rack I was swinging across some jugs into a great but short dihedral. The next couple of pitches were made quick work of by John and soon as I heaved through an odd section we were one pitch below the Acrophobe Ledges. Here we considered the fine looking off-width variation to the left but blood flowed back into my head enabling clear thought and Ann-Marie led us up the crack to the right. Here on the Ledges we followed the trail for a hundred metres or so and arrived at the base of the Acrophobe Towers.

John led us through the valley of evil to the correct rappel station which is for the sake of good beta: up the acrophobe slab to the ridge and along it (5.4 no gear) to a station after a split between the towers. The next station, hidden from view but only 15 feet away, is the correct one. After a thirty foot rappel the route finding is simple. For us however the fun had just begun. The clouds had pressed together overhead and began to unload their burden on us. The rain came down and by the time we reached the base of the last 10a pitch

small stream had formed. A sudden anger grew inside me as I imagined the route unfairly resorted to unjust tactics in its challenge. My hackels raised, I snatched the rack and began to lead up the fist crack. Water ran down my arm and soon I ran out of the right sized gear for the crack. Irked by the rain I kept on shouting how I was going to free this sucker or whip. John and AMC below must have been worrying about my mental state but I carried on finally pulling through and dashing to the belay. John and AMC followed and soon I was going at the next pitch. The cold seeped into me and soon my whole body began to shake like Kobe during an earthquake. Reaching the belay worry about hypothermia became increasingly present in me mind. Barely able to operate I managed to belay the dynamic duo to the anchor and forcewd the lead on John. John pulled off what I think was one of the most impressive leads of this climb when he scaled the final slimy chimmney pitch as the clouds swirled below his feet (the exposure here is great).

We summited just as the clouds broke and sun poured down on our drenched bodies warming us. The day had turned beatiful. It was as if the chief had conspired to give us a lesson and now that we had learned how fickle and dangerous the weather can be it relented. After views and homage to the rock we descended in silence.

Participants:

Ann-Marie Conway
John Simms
David Vocadlo

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Canoeing in the Canadian Shield

Garner River system (Nopiming Park) Manitoba/Ontario.

By: Scott Martens

August 30 - September 3

Participants: Corinne, Scott, Kevin, Janice

For a different sort of trip at the end of summer, Corinne and I decided to join some friends for a canoe trip in the Canadian Shield. Our goal was to do a long circuit, starting in Manitoba, crossing into Ontario and then around back to where we started in Manitoba, which was possible since the whole area is an interconnected maze of lakes and rivers. The area was very remote, and we expected to see little evidence of people once we were on the water.

We drove with Janice to Brandon, Manitoba, where we met Kev at his parent's place and picked up a truck and canoes. We left the next morning, and drove around Winnipeg and into the shield. Kev, as usual, significantly underestimated the amount of time it would take to get to our destination. I have determined that the Kevin safety factor for times to destinations, etc. is about 1.5.

We left the truck by the road at the Manigotagan river mid afternoon. Kev and I started canoeing together, but we soon switched partners with Cor and Janice so as to arrive at Garner lake that day. Cor and Kev, the more experienced sternspeople, took the backs of the canoes. The river was wide and wandering, with beautiful trees and rocks along the sides. We came to Grassy Rice lake, which lives up to its name, where we were baffled by the amount of rice for a while. We debated on whether we were actually in the lake or the area before it, and which direction to head towards. After trying several directions, we finally set off in the correct one. For a distance we had to forget about paddling, and moved along by pulling on the tall rice on each side of the canoe. This was hard work, and visibility was about 5 feet unless you stood up in the canoes and looked over the rice. After a bit, Janice spotted a channel through the rice, which made the going easier.

Not long after the lake was the first portage, a short one on the right bank. The stream went through two small rapids carved through the rock. We took two trips per person, and Kev took both of the canoes. The next portage came soon after. This was a bit longer, and I tried my hand at the canoe for the first time. I had the one with the shoulder pads, which was nice. We took the next portage on the left, and there was no trail. This one was longer (several hundred metres), and through some trees and rough ground. I blazed a trail of sorts, and the women followed behind. Kev took one canoe, and then we headed back for the rest of the stuff. This portage was very gruelling, since it was tough bush we were pushing through with the gear. The food we had packed weighed a tonne. After this there was one more short portage. I took our canoe for this one, which was class 3 rock plus canoe. The

canoe helps to balance things though, so it wasn't too hard.

By now it was after 6 pm, and getting dusky. We had a long winding section to go before we reached the lake. This bit was about 4km in linear distance, but 10km in actual distance. We canoed hard to try to beat the darkness to the lake, but we ultimately failed. Janice wore Kev's headlamp to navigate us along the river, and we arrived at the lake at about 9:30. It was very dark, and there were no moon or stars. We stopped as soon as we found a likely spot for a campsite on the left bank, where a rock slab met the water. We pulled the canoes up, and Cor, Janice and I set up the tents while Kev made a fire. There was no clearing to put the tents in, so I pulled up the undergrowth in an area between the trees. The stuff was not rooted in too well, so it was easy to devastate a small area. I didn't want to eat, as I was far more exhausted than I was hungry, but Kev insisted on making supper, so I fell asleep on the rock until supper was ready. It was steak bits, potatoes and peppercorn gravy, and it was really tasty. Kudos to Kev for the good food, as usual. Kev and I hung the packs in a tree by the water, and then we all went to sleep.

Breakfast was pancakes. It was sunny, with a few clouds. It took us about one hour to canoe the length of Garner lake. We stuck mostly to the northern shore, or the banks of some islands. Near the east end we had a 5 minute rain squall, the only rain of the trip. Incidentally, mosquitos were also negligible on the entire trip, which was amazing for Manitoba. We went ashore at the mouth of the Garner river, which looked more like a trickle of water. This was the Ontario border, and there was a large sign to this effect. There was a long portage to start, which was very painful on my shoulders. The moss was beautiful along the trail. The river after this was shallow and rocky, so the going was slower. We came to another long portage on the left bank. Here I figured out that if I wore a life jacket to pad my shoulders while carrying the canoe, I would reduce the pain significantly.

After this, we were not canoeing for long before the river got really narrow and shallow. We had to lift the canoes over a few obstacles, standing in muck and water up to our thighs. Then we saw that the next part of the river was just a trickle between large rocks. Kev and I walked ahead in ankle deep water to see how far it would be to get to canoeable water. After about a kilometre, there was still no sign of the next lake. This area was just getting into a region of burnout, where it was quite scenic since you could see all the rock, and farther into the distance. At this point Kev figured we should go back, and hoped that the women would not be too disappointed to abandon our plans to complete the circuit. In reality, I knew, from talking with them earlier, that they were glad to stop here.

We took some pictures at the most easterly point of our trip, and then worked our way back through the muck. From the topo map, it was not possible to tell that the river became only a trickle at this point. In BC, when we refer to a river, an image of the Fraser comes to mind. In Manitoba and Ontario, it appears that a river means water at least 10 centimetres deep and 1 metre wide. It does not have to be flowing.

Back in Garner lake, we explored around a bit. Kev and I looked at the private cabin we had seen earlier, while the women looked for a "cute" island to camp on. They found one in a string of small islands. It was about 100m long, in the northeast corner of the lake. We landed on the south side of the island, and found a place to camp near the west side. Our eating spot was on top of a small cliff on the very western point, with a great view of the

sunset. The whole setting was quite breathtaking. It was also nice to not have to worry about bears. There weren't even any mice on the island. I felt like a true Canadian sitting in the dusk on a remote lake in the Canadian shield, listening to the cries of the loons.

Thursday we spent fishing on the lake and relaxing, since our circuit was cut short, and we only needed a bit more than a day to canoe back to the truck. Kev and Janice each caught a fish (pickerel), which we ate with corn and rice for supper. It was good. We played Rook on our clifftop and watched the sunset after supper.

We packed up on Friday and left our island at 11. We had lunch in the canoes in the winding section of the Garner river. Janice and I took the sterns of the canoes to practice our steering skills. Every now and then one of us would "Moses" - veer off into the grass and reeds at the side of the river. On the first portage after the Beresford branch I fell down in the class 3 rock with the canoe and scraped myself up. I was getting tired, as was Cor. On the second portage, we saw another canoe on the bank opposite where we had come from. There was a trail here, which eliminated the bushwhack with canoe. Bushwhacking with a canoe on your shoulders is tough, since you can't see where you are going, and the canoe keeps getting jammed between trees. Furthermore, your turning radius, which is very large due to the long canoe extending in front and behind you, makes it hard to manoeuvre around obstacles.

We canoed a bit, and then floated our canoes down the next set of rapids, wading beside them and lifting them where needed. We again floated the last portage. Kev helped us with our canoe, as Cor was getting really tired. Near the entrance to Grassy Rice Lake, we saw several eagles. I got out of the canoe and snuck quietly through the brush to get a close picture of one. Then I wanted to get a shot of it in flight. I shouted, jumped up and down and waved my arms, but it wouldn't move, even when I got to the base of the tree it was sitting in. Finally I threw a stick at it, and it flew off lazily. We also saw several beavers, and many lodges and beaver dams in the rivers. After making our way through the rice, we canoed up the Manigotagan river. Kev wanted to canoe the rapids on the Manigotagan and camp there. The river was again narrow and shallow, but we made it to the rapids, which were not canoeable with the low flow in the river. Kev and I scouted about and found a nice campsite up the portage trail at the other end of the rapids. In the meantime, Janice caught another fish.

We broke camp at 10:30 on Saturday, and did a bit of fishing in the pools by the lower rapids. Kev caught and released a northern pike, but all I got was a couple of hits on my lure. It was easy canoeing with the help of the current and wind, and when we got back to the Garner river, Kev devised a sail from a tarp and two paddles. Kev and I held the sail, and the women who were in the back steered. This worked a bit, but we could have paddled faster. We eventually went back to paddling. At one point when Kev and Janice were just ahead of us, I grabbed onto the rope from their canoe. Janice said "what happened to the current?" and Kev replied that it must have changed direction. After a nice tow for a while, once of them noticed by accident that I was hanging on to their canoe and we weren't paddling. We arrived back at the truck at noon. We had canoed about 65km over 5 days.

On the drive back we saw Winnipeg's ski hill, with a 80 foot vertical drop, and a total of about 8 chairs. There is a lift tower at the top of the hill, and one at the bottom. One does

not appreciate how nice it is to live in B.C. until you see this sort of thing.

Overall it was a really good trip and a new experience, but I am not sure I would drive all the way to eastern Manitoba to do it again right away. Saskatchewan can seem to be infinitely wide.



Photo: Scott Martens. Janice and Scott in Grassy Green Lake.

REX AND DREW BREW UP AT BREW

Drew Brayshaw

It was the first weekend in September. I had just got back from the Island and I was desperate to get away for some time in the mountains. During the week I went cragging with Rex at the Bluffs and we hashed out a plan: carless, we would hitch to Brandywine and head up to Brew Hut, then go and do some peak bagging, with the ostensible goal of Tricouni Pk.

Thursday morning (we were going the Thursday, Friday and Saturday of Labour Day weekend if I remember rightly) I was out by the roadside at Horseshoe Bay, riding the thumb. My first ride was with a boilermaker who had come over from the Island to go up to Prince George for a job. He had the Eighties hard rock cranked up loud and I was sorry I was only hitching to Squamish with him, but I needed food. I did the usual Overwaitea blitz and got the essential supplies: dried apricots, bulk chocolate, and tea - lots of tea.

Back at the side of the road, just beyond the lights, my next lift was with, strangely enough, a young woman driving by herself. I was so flabbergasted when she stopped (usually women, driving by themselves, don't pick up male hitchers, especially the ones with huge, sharp ice axes hanging off their packs) that I nearly didn't get into the car - I assumed I was hallucinating. She was only going as far as Cheekye - unfortunately, we had decided not to go to Tantalus, or I would have had a ride right to the cable car! My final ride, from the Alice Lake road to Brandywine Park, was with some fat German tourist who spent all his time bitching about how stupid it was to have speed limits on roads. When I arrived, Rex was already there - he'd bussed in (\$10, ouch!) and arrived about 15 minutes before me.

Shouldering way too heavy packs for a weekend at a hut, we set out along the railway line. Twenty minutes later, after passing some very interesting crags, we found the trail and began climbing through nice open forest. It was late enough in the day that all the day hikers were ahead of us, and we had the trail to ourselves. The scenery was reminiscent of Skaha to me, only steeper overall - lots of little ridges and valleys to cross. As usual, Rex was much faster than I was, and led the way while I toiled along behind. After several hours we toiled up the long, tedious scree slope to the last flat spot before the lake. Here we met a pastel fleece and Hi-Tecs person. She had abandoned her husband and was waiting for him to return. She warned us that there was a bear nearby. Five minutes later, we were startled by some bushes crashing, but it was only the pastel, Hi-Tec mate returning from the lake, which he told us was fifteen minutes away. Sure enough, half an hour later we were at the lake.

After a water break, we set out in search of the hut. I had heard many legends

about how hard the hut was to find. Indeed, for a while after we came out onto the ridge, there seemed to be no hut in sight. But as we headed towards the summit of Mt. Brew, suddenly it appeared, concealed next to a pond in a very obvious to find spot. After bagging the bump of Brew, we headed down to this hut, which was supposed to be in a sad state. I didn't think it was too bad. If you ignored the broken window, holes in the roof, leaning outhouse and drawbridge style door, it was just like any other VOC hut. The ladder entry to the sleeping loft provided many opportunities for chinups and sneaky stemming moves in case the occupants decided they missed the training facilities of the Edge. We made the first of infinitely many cups of tea and I cooked dinner (ichiban and Kraft Dinner special of course), then we hung around watching the sun set. We decided that the hut was fairly isolated, and therefore we probably wouldn't catch hantavirus from all the mouse shit, so we were able to fall asleep untroubled by worries about our health.

The next day dawned bright and sunny as we set off for the main Squamish-Cheakamus divide. After a prolonged session of bump traversing, we came out on a bare ridge of fine volcanic rock, mainly sandy, with some great views and lots of goat tracks. Dropping down into a bowl at the head of Roe Creek, we slogged up more volcanic junk and an excellent series of granite staircases made by natural jointing. By the time I hauled myself onto the main divide, clouds had started to build up, and Cayley was partially obscured. Rex had scouted out the lay of the land while awaiting my arrival and we decided, after a quick consultation, to go for Cypress Peak, instead of Tricouni, as it seemed to be more feasible. Some more granite ridge traversing, plus a rad 20 m. class 3 step that we could have avoided, but chose not to, put us on top of Cypress, where we realized that we were actually closer to Tricouni than it had seemed, and had we not chosen to go for Cypress, Tricouni would have been feasible. Oh well. We hung around for a while, eating, taking pictures, and checking out the view, then headed back the way we came. The clouds became grayer as we headed back towards the hut. I was actually in the lead of Rex at one point, because he stopped to meditate for an hour, but I lost pole position when I stopped to photograph some interesting natural volcanic arches near the ridge above Brew Lake. By the time we made it back to the hut it had become clear that it was just going to piss down with rain that evening.

After more tea, and dinner (Rex's turn this time - the ever popular Pasta n' Sauce), we retired to our bags. I kept dreaming of the Chinese water torture because the roof leaked horrendously, and most of the loft turned into a lake, with the exception of narrow strips along two of the walls into which we crammed our bags. Everything stayed dry except one of my boots, which ended up right under a drip. But it was wet anyways, so no great loss.

Next morning, the clouds had dropped to hut level and it was so gloomy you couldn't even see the outhouse from the hut window. After tea and breakfast, we headed out clad in layers of GoreTex. As we dropped back into the trees below the lake, the clouds parted, and by the time we reached the highway (2 1/2 hrs. down vs. 6 up),

everything was sunny and our clothes were steaming. We hooked a lift with a professional chauffeur deadheading back from Whistler, and ended our trip on good note, reentering civilisation with such amenities as bucket seats, a 10-disc CD player, a stocked car bar, and best of all the generous driver shared a big roll up with us. How 60's, yet how appropriate.

Note: several weeks after this trip, a big workhike fixed up Brew Hut; it is no longer a shithole. Don't let this article stop you from enjoying the unique ambience and scenic charms of the VOC's own Brew Hut - if you can find it!



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YAK CRACK

by David Vocadlo

Having come off a summer of clipping nothing but bolts I was itching to do some long routes. Squamish had lost its appeal after enduring the white water ascent of Angel's Crest and so my eyes roved through old CAJ's. Slesse involved a 4x4 road approach and if done in one day required some planning which in the summer just after graduating was simply too taxing for my poor overworked brain. I sought a climb with a minimal approach, good rock, long and aesthetic. Finally Yak came to mind. After milking Drew for his knowledge I read the old VOC article and the CAJ article. Drew kindly provided a topo of the route and directions to the parking area.

An eager partner was easily russed up and Ann-Marie and I planned our assault. We would make an early alpine start by leaving Vancouver at 8:00 a.m. arrive at 9:30, be at the base at 10:00 and finish the route sometime in the day. A couple of days later we were just clearing the city limits at 9:15 and making good time when a cop pulled us over. "Yes, officer I know I was going 130 km/hour," says AMC. So with little delay we had a ticket and were again speeding along the highway toward Yak. Drew claimed the second pullout was the one we wanted and so dutifully we parked there at 10:00. Unfortunately Drew was... WRONG (There's a first for everything I guess) and we ended up making a swift bushwack over slabs and through scrub. There at the base I looked at my watch: 11:30. Well, I always figure on delays of up to 2 hours so in my opinion we were 30 minutes ahead of schedule.

The sheer walls of the Chief and El Cap are more awe inspiring and the gentle domes of Tuolomne more beautiful but Yak has a charm which derives from its peak. The initially gentle slabs at the base of Yak rear up and eventually form a sharp apex. The idea of a summit, a sharp singularity, adds something to climbing. It's difficult to explain but its there. Soon we were racked up and we soloed the first easy 5th class pitch. The next pitch was 5.2 and then we were on our way. The next pitch (3) involved some fine, protected face moves (5.7) onto the large flake to avoid the original chimmney pitches. The next two pitches (4,5) was an excellent finger to hand crack. This was followed by a groove (6) and a couple of face moves to gain a good belay.

From here the highway unfurled both ways like a dark spotted serpent and Needle peak looked enticingly good. Here the wind was picking up and it swept over the face squealing as it played with the rock features. While belaying I noticed a party on Reality Check. The leader was fourty feet ou from the belay when all of a sudden he stood up turned around and ran down the slab, ending up ten feet above the belay. A well taken slab fall if I had ever seen one. He hung there for a while and I yelled over to ask if they were OK. They were but I guess a little frazzled as they backed off the route.

The next pitch (7) followed the diagonal fault seen on the topo with a series of good edges. The following pitch involved the same type of climbing and brought us to a good belay (8) where we scooped a good locking biner. From which some slab to a fun layback and undercling (9) brought us to below an overlap and a good comfortable bush. The supposed crux of the climb (10) had a fixed friend (I wish I had had an 1/2" angle and hammer) and involved a high step followed by easy slab. The next pitch (11) had much deteriorating rock and went through a sort of chimney bottleneck to a cave. While looking at the topo the wind playfully snatched it from my hand and floated it down far away. Sans topo I got us off route by following a fixed wire (which we unfixed) and a bolt out right to some well protected 10d slab moves. Be careful here (12), the original line goes right into the cave (I think) and then out right over the wall. After the bolt a few slab moves brought me to a block in a groove (nice belay). The next pitch (13) (seen in the topo as a prominent dihedral) was an evil groove into which I put stacks of gear (It has a couple of fixed pins). Twisting, stemming, chimneying and thrashing I made it up. The next pitch (14) was a great layback which brought us to the summit. Here we spotted the bivy wall built by other illustrious VOCers several years ago. After poking about for a half hour we found the descent. Descending wildly through the beautiful alpine meadow, the ground sped by as I loped over small bushes, a feeling of freedom took me and the world seemed simple for a time. The road seemed far and my life in Vancouver even further.

Participants:

Ann-Marie Conway

David Voadlo

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A Summer of Ascent of Mt. Fissile

Blair Hammond

It was summer and I was unemployed and bored. I had a few days where I felt I needed a break from school. I just needed a companion and a ride. Enter Smolensky. I don't recall exactly where and when we met, but I and my future roommate decided on an easy backpacking trip to Russet lake, via Singing Pass, in Garibaldi Park.

It was the middle of August (or thereabouts) and the weather was the best: Sunny, warm and with a light breeze. Aside from some minor dickering with packs, the long slog up the Russet lake trail was a genuine pleasure. It was just so nice, especially once we broke into Singing Pass. The bugs weren't bad at all and we were in no hurry.

We arrived at Russet Lake in the late afternoon; the campground was occupied, but not nearly as busy as one would have expected (I don't remember if it was a weekend). There was still some snow in the shady areas, so we poked around a little and thus spent a lazy afternoon. The Spearhead range, Mt. Fissile and the surrounding area all looked spectacular. The BCMC hut was not so spectacular and was definitely in need of some help. It was pretty dilapidated, and nobody opted for the hut over their tents. The "biffy" on site however was great, and deserves to be nominated for the "best biffy view award". It had, at the time, only one half of a door, allowing one to look out upon the Spearhead range and plan a traverse from afar.

The next day we rose fairly early and looked upon Mt. Fissile, which lords it over Russet Lake, and which promised an easy ascent and a fantastic view from its summit. Off we went with considerable enthusiasm, narrowly escaping soakers as we hop-scotched over a snow covered stream.

Jason mentioned that he seemed to remember that "Fissile" translated loosely from geology-speak, meant "shitty, loose rock"; it lived up to its name. We scrambled up loose scree, going from one vein of solid rock to another until we finally got on some decent rock.

Most of the climb is class four, but there are some sections where you should be roped and should place protection. We were not and did not, but after some pretty darn exciting moments, walked up the final ridglet and summited in finest alpine style. The view was, of course, stunning. The Overlord glacier, Black tusk, Cheakamus lake, the hanging valley up to Veeocee Mountain and the Lecture-cutters; it made our death-defying ascent worth it. We followed the ridge from the summit and eventually achieved another smaller summit close by (Whirlwind?) Then it came time to head down; it was early afternoon.

Coming down was less fun than going up. You could ski down on the loose rock just fine, until you hit a solid vein underneath, which would bring you to an abrupt halt. Somehow, we managed to avoid burying each-other in the small landslides of loose rock that came down with each step, and we were eventually able to follow a moraine to a small snowfield, which allowed us to glissade gracefully back to camp.

Hastily we packed and hit the trail, arriving at the bottom totally pooped and ready for burgers and beer. Pretty fair burgers and good beer (though pricey) were had before the long drive home.

This is an excellent three day excursion (we did it in two) for those looking for great scenery and a technically easy summit. Bring some rope and pro; even though you can get away without it, you'll feel much better with it and while the view's great, its not quite to die for.

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Glacier Living—

Hiking the Stein-Nahatlatch Divide

Trip Participants: Denie Robichaud, Fern Hietkamp, Gunnar Olafson, Lynn Erikson, Marilyn Noort, Markus Kellerhals, Martin Carver

Imagine living for days in the alpine, traversing and sleeping on ice or snow. This is what we (seven of us) did while travelling along the Stein-Nahatlatch Divide late last summer for nine days, from September 3 - 10. This infrequently done traverse features everything from green mountain meadows to fields of glaciers, from numerous easily climbed peaks to exhilarating miles of ridgewalking.

A lot of work went into the preparation of this super holiday. First, map reading and route drawing; guidebook descriptions of this route are sparse since it is not a much-visited area. Then, sitting down to meticulously plan the amount and variety of food to take. Since we were carrying food for nine days, the amounts had to be exact, or we would not be able to carry our packs! Using tried and true measuring techniques, established by the likes of John Baldwin and Craig Hollinger, amounts of oatmeal and pasta were counted to the gram. For gear, we packed two 9 mm ropes (for two rope teams), crampons, harnesses, ice axes, a few ice screws and a small rack. (All was used except for the rack; we didn't have time to climb anything requiring protection.) Add to that three tents, two first-aid kits, winter camping clothing and gear, group food and personal snacks, and you have pretty fair-sized packs (60 - 65 lbs).

All of this equipment and food went into a rented van and three vehicles early on Saturday morning. We drove to Lytton, turning off at Boston Bar to drive as far as the logging road would allow us along the Nahatlatch River and Log Creek. Here, we parked the three vehicles, and all piled into the van to drive around through Lillooet, down the Duffey Lake road, and up to Lizzie Lake, where the hike would start. The van made it most of the way up the road, but balked at the last section, where a four-wheel drive would be helpful. Fern resigned from driving at that point, and Markus took over to turn the vehicle around. Seven p.m. saw us standing on the logging road, waving goodbye to Blair (VOC President—drive on, Blair!), and eyeing our packs warily. We hoisted them on to our backs and hiked the half-hour in to a camp site along the lake for the first night of our hiking trip, which so far had been a lot of driving! (Another VOC group, who did the same traverse in 1972, managed to stay out for 14 days by flying in a food-drop just past the Rutledge Glacier. See VOC Journal 1972, Sue Golling's article).

Since it was the long weekend, we encountered many hikers as we passed the Lizzie Lake cabin and Long Peak. We got lots of stares and comments at the big packs—all that for just a weekend? We explained with pleasure that we were headed for a week into the wild icy yonder, not just a weekend jaunt. After lunch at Arrowhead Lake, we meandered

onward to camp at Caltha Lake (5760 ft.). Here we saw the last people, other than our group, for the rest of the trip. The packs were thrown off and we found ourselves suddenly light on our feet again, playing hackey-sak. Hearts grew even lighter later on that evening when we decided we had to lighten the packs by drinking one of the two bottles of rum we had brought with us to ward off the cold, even though we weren't cold yet!

By the end of the next day, we had pulled out our ice-axes and kicked steps with our plastic boots up icy snow. We had also put our crampons, harnesses and ropes to good use, crossing glaciers with open crevasses. We followed the tracks of a wolverine up to the ridge of Skook Jim, where we set up camp on the ridge (at 8300 ft.). Before supper, we hiked to the top of Skook Jim (8600 ft.), where we could see Tundra Lake far below, and where we could pick out peaks all around, such as Skihist, Mt. Baker, Joffre, Mattier, and Wedgemount.

Most of day four was spent travelling in the sun, on ropes across snow-covered glaciers, climbing a few peaks in between, such as Crevasse Crag and Mt. Klackarpun. Later on that day, we encountered a steep ice slope which few of us felt comfortable simply walking down. Markus and Denie set up anchors in the ice, and belayed us down. After just a few metres of descent facing in, we were able to turn around and duck walk on our crampons, angling down the rest of the slope. Markus and Denie followed, and we were quickly on our way again in order to avoid camping on the open glacier. Camp was set up late, and supper was eaten in the dark, but at least we were camped in a relatively protected spot behind rocks.

The next day we scrambled over a rocky ridge, surprising a few mountain goats, until we dropped down to the pass beneath Crestline Peak, where we could see the Rutledge Glacier, which lies in the middle of the traverse, and, because of this, remains quite an untouched area. We thought it would be ideal to camp at the foot of the glacier, and started the 2000 ft. descent, but soon ran into difficulty when it became apparent that there was a band of cliffs below us. We retreated back up the slope, decided to camp when we reached a beautiful field of cotton grass with a stream running through it. We decided to stay, and leave the routefinding for the next day. However, the increasing wind and clouds surprised us with a present of snow overnight, and the storm continued through the next day. We couldn't have had a better place to be tent-bound though, and, after five days of hiking, we actually were ready for a bit of a rest. We still had some exercise, in the form of an energetic card game in Martin's tent, where we were treated to the collective smells of everyone's well-functioning sweat glands and digestive systems.

On day seven, we packed up our wet tents, and found a grassy ramp that led down to the lake at the foot of the glacier. Once more, crampons went on and we began winding our way around the maze of crevasses up the glacier. We kept our eyes on Kwoiek Peak, at the head of the Rutledge Glacier, which we hoped to climb. We roped up again when the

crevasses were hidden by snow, and headed for the ridge to the west of Kwoiek. However, the closer we came, the more the clouds descended, until, when we stood on the ridge, we were in a complete white-out. All we wanted, standing there in the howling snow and wind, was to find shelter and have some hot soup; this peak would have to wait until another time.

When we woke up the next morning, we were still in a white-out. After waiting for a few hours, we decided to pack up camp, rope up, and proceed cautiously through the shifting clouds, since some of us had to be back at work in two days! The travel schedule for this day was to cross another field of glaciers, whose crevasses were thinly covered by soft snow. By constantly testing the surface ahead with ice axes, and by other members of the rope team always being ready to go into arrest should someone go down a crevasse, we passed through the area safely. A break in the clouds afforded a glimpse of the surrounding peaks, allowing Markus to take a quick compass bearing before the clouds closed in again. This bearing helped us to navigate toward a final ridge, from which we descended onto the Chochiwa Glacier where we would camp that night. A two-kilometre walk across the glacier brought us under Long Slog Mountain, where we set up tents, and hurried up the peak before another rain / snow storm set in.

The morning of our final day broke clear but cloudy. There was some talk of getting up early to scramble up Tachewana Peak (8100 ft.), but we opted for sleep instead, and a leisurely start. After a quick scramble down the end of the glacier, we bushwacked through a steep gully to the river-bed of Log Creek, and bushwacked a few more hours through alders until we reached the logging road in early afternoon. The valley's colourful fall shades welcomed us back from our icy and isolated world. Back at the vehicles, sharing a few beers brought on a wave of early reminiscing about our visit to the mountains held by ice, reluctant to turn our faces back toward the highway and Hope.

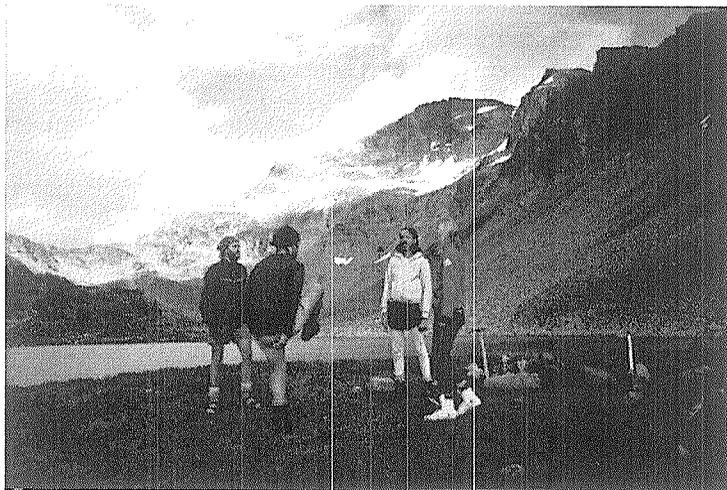


Photo: Fern Heitkamp. Caltha Lake.

Adventure at the Pointy End

Backpacking Around Cape Scott

Blair Hammond

Cape Scott is the extreme north and west point of land on Vancouver Island and is about a 5 hour drive from Nanaimo. Several years ago we bombed up there for a weekend during the middle of December, and despite being chased out by a hurricane, we were still totally mitten with the place. We were determined to return during a friendlier season and with more time.

This past summer provided the opportunity, but it there was a hitch: we had no transport. So, we made getting there part of the fun. Bus from Nanaimo to the turnoff to Holberg, the nearest town to Cape Scott Provincial Park and then hitch into the park. If you do this, make sure you tell the driver where you want to get off when you're in Nanaimo so as he can have your stuff at hand when he stops on the highway. This part of the plan worked well. Fare to Port Hardy, one way, was \$57.00. Hitching went well too. The second car that went by picked us up, crammed us in the back and gave us a ride right to the trail head. Turns out the driver and I had several mutual friends and later had a class together.

Our total travel time was about 9 hours, including ferry, and when we arrived we didn't really feel like pounding along the trail at high speed, so we did a 25 minute hike to San Josef bay, set up camp, lounged and crashed. It rained over night, but not badly, and we were ready to go by 9 am. The trail leaving San Josef starts off well, but then rapidly deteriorates into one of those legendary coastal quagmires. It had rained for 5 days straight prior to our arrival and the trail was a mess. All that saved us were our hiking poles (ski poles). At the end of the trail, you could tell who had one and who did not.

Even though we had 9 days, we decided to pound for the Nel's bight, the biggest of a number of huge beaches around the cape. All told, it was 26 km, a hard 26 considering the condition of the trail. We had the option of stopping at another campsite 12 km along, but it didn't inspire us and we were feeling macho.

Nel's bight blows you away when you meet it. Having walked through typical rainforest, bogs and cool fields that are partially natural and partly the result of a failed farming attempt, you are greeted with a 5km long crescent beach of the whitest sand. It was a beautiful sunny day by now and we were looking forward to the rest of the week.

The beach was a little more crowded than we expected, and it continued to fill as we went into the weekend. We lounged around for the first day, recovering from the poundings our bodies received on the way in. We also started a tradition that our neighbours may or may not have appreciated: skinny dipping in the Pacific, followed by naked cart-wheels and other nude antics on this huge beach (always at low tide so as to put some distance between us and the rest of the beach. The days drifted by slowly as we went on excursions from our well fortified position on the beach (we were afraid of a storm blowing in and so spent the better part of our second day building a wall that could have kept out Atilla the Hun).

We hiked to the light-house, the lagoon and everywhere else we could go. After a few days at Nel's bight, it got too busy for us and as such we moved to Nissen bight, which is only slightly smaller: 4km long, and much to our surprise, we had the entire beach to ourselves. We did more day hikes from this location, met the ranger, brought her a birthday bouquet and munched on berries for the better part of another day.

When it was time to go, we were ready, for we were out of fuel and nearly out of food. The hike back was much easier, for it had been sunny for 8 days and the trail had dried up considerably. Still, there were some tense moments which culminated in Patrick catching his toe and doing a face plant in a bottomless mud puddle all the while yelling "stop laughing you bastard and help me get up".

We made it back in good time, hitching a ride with the first car that went back (actually a pickup, in the back. Unfortunately the last ferry did not coincide with the last bus, and we spent the night sleeping under a tarp at the Tsawassen ferry terminal, a fitting end to a great trip.

Now, a couple of points you should be aware of if you intend to do this trip. First, just because we had good weather, doesn't mean you will. We were prepared for rain and

wind. Second: water, believe it or not, is hard to come by at Cape Scott. There might be lots of it, but its all brown and muddy. This means that you should either bring lots of fuel for boiling it or a water filtration system of some kind. Third, there were a lot of cars in that parking lot and almost a third of them had their windows smashed. Leave your valuables at home and leave your car unlocked-it'll save you money.

I highly recommend this trip if you like coastal camping; there is tonnes to do and see there. But the area can be crowded during the peak season, especially on weekends. I would recommend going in September, once the crowds have thinned a bit.

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AUTUMN



Photo: Drew Brayshaw.
Tricooni Peak (from near Brew)

PURPLE PEOPLE EATERS

Drew Brayshaw

Looking through Fairley's guide in the dead of winter, February, rain pouring in a steady grey stream from the dirty clouds above, I keep returning to that one page in the Coquihalla section; Ricker's words echoing through my head: "excellent rock...lots of new route potential...five to eight pitches...east-north east face is one and a half kilometers long...little bush...one hour up from the road...". I can close the book, close my eyes, but the words and the vision of a grey wall rising in the distant sky are still there.

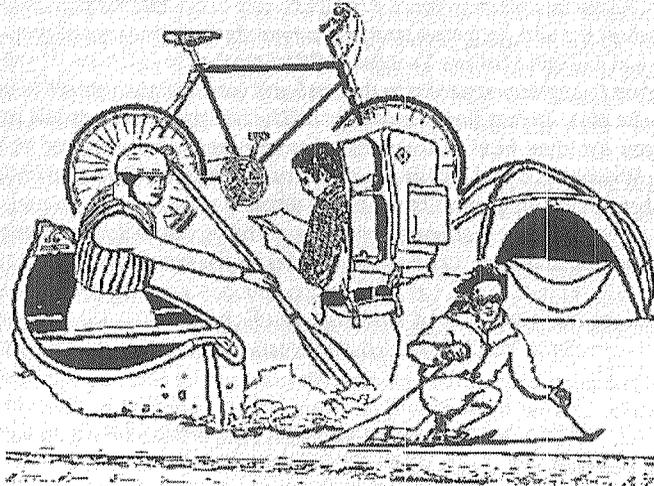
Summer; in the rain-soaked, bush-choked, bug-infested jungle of the north Island, or while smashing up chunks of till to an industrial soundtrack in an underground lab in Victoria, far from the mountains of my hope, the image and the words are still there, counterpoint to the wall of noise and mindless labour. On sunny evenings, crimping uselessly on some slick sloper at Fleming, or going up and coming down at Tolmie, with Baker and the Olympics floating out of a sea of haze, the vision gives me something to reach for beyond the next hold, the words a goal beyond a simple pump before dinner. In the evening, when it costs less, I call the mainland. My friends are still off having fun: at Skaha, in the Rockies, paddling in Bowron, or clipping bolts somewhere in America. I groan and disconnect the phone, but falling into sleep the domes are bulging up into my dreams.

Fall. Leaves on campus have begun to drop, but golden days and starry evenings say that a weekend in the mountains can still be had in the heat of an Indian summer before the snow falls. Everyone is back, and when I show them the words, a few are more than willing to pass up another weekend slotting chocks and fingerlocking at Squamish for a trip to the high country. Of course, the usual stuff happens: Andy has to jam when his wife and children need the car and him at home. Ann-Marie manages to snag her mom's machine and she and I, along with ropegun Dave, head off one Friday afternoon. In the Valley, we stop at Save-On for some supplies and someone has a brainwave. Another incoherent phone rant later, not that he needed much persuading, and our meeting with John is arranged; he's glad for any escape from hurling haybales in Kamloops. That night, we camp before the tollbooths, at the start of the Needle trail. High spirits; no one can sleep, especially with the trucks grinding by barely a hundred meters away, so there's a running battle of evilness: beard pulls, nipple tweaks, crushed fingers and full-on steamrollers. Dave wins, of course; evil comes more easily to him.

Rising early next morning, through the tollbooths and to the Coldwater turnout where we loiter about warming up in the sun. The Blue Beast appears, snorting deisel fumes, and we do a frantic dance to slow it down. Luckily, John figures out that the capering purple figures are the people he's supposed to meet. A tender reunion, then off up the road. Useless hills are passed by as the roads becomes rougher. Around a bend, we

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... A call to the wild

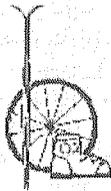


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see “big walls” awaiting us-stop! stop! where’s my camera?. Back in the cars, we follow the roads as far as they go. Pass some old folks in a pickup camper doing the wilderness camping thing-good, maybe they’ll keep bandits from pillaging our cars while we’re off pillaging the cliffs. Eventually the road ends. We scope the cliff, eying lines. Rack up. Gentle disrespect of my decision to take a pack. “Dude, you’re not going to climb with that thing, are you? You’re going to have to, because I’m not carrying it.” Alpine style is being replaced by cragging style: “If you plan for a bivy, you’ll end up bivying. There’s no way we’ll be out after dark, man, this thing’s a cakewalk!”

Away from the cars. An hour of rambling through the ubiquitous dew-soaked blueberry bushes. Ropes become caught on snags. Shoes fill with needles and leaves. Into a boulderfield, pause for a break. John displays his secret weapons: a “brick” of Black Cats. Explosions echo back from far cols and steep walls. Gummy bears are eaten.

Up again. Base of the rock. We realize that the “obvious” lines we have seen from the car are all choss- it’s the bushes that make them visible. Wandering left over the slabs, onto a perfect sidewalk ledge. Above looms an overhanging black dihedral/roof. My search for an easy crack line further on is quashed. “We’ve got to go up here; it looks hard, and people only repeat hard routes. Easy stuff is insignificant.” The decision is made to take the dihedral, and worry about what comes after when we hit the top.

Dave and Ann-Marie head off: straight up the slabs to the mid point of the dihedral. Dave runs it out (he has to): forty meters of continuous 5.8 slab. Reaches the dihedral, whams in pro, sets a belay. AMC follows as John leads off on the indirect direct start, underclinging and slabclimbing from the lowest end of the dihedral. He gets to the others as they begin pitch two. Following, I discover that while our route has pro, it also has seepage. A few wet spots make the 5.7 traversing interesting. John cruises off onto the second pitch, more of the same over increasing exposure as the slabs drop away below. He vanishes at the far lip of the dihedral. A faint cry of “Off belay!” Again, I follow, smearing slabs and underclinging the dihedral, with my helmet bumping along on the roof. More 5.7, traversing down around wet spots and back up to the crack. Around the corner and a contorted move as I pass Ann-Marie belaying in a vertical corner from a hanging stance. John has used our 10m extra rope length to reach a comfy ledge at the top of the corner. Actually, the whole corner so far has been the underside of a semi-detached exfoliation roof. From Dave’s grunts and comments above, the next pitch seems cruxy. Shoot a few photos, have a gummy bear, while AMC heads up. John offers me the lead; I decline it. So he takes off again, getting in a few pieces: up a slabby wall, into a corner, out of it again, traversing faint holds to the right edge of a big ledge. A comment drifts back down to me: “5.8, with a 5.10 fear factor!” The exposure is big now, the climbing more sustained, and the runouts appear more meaningful. Following, the last move to the ledge almost blows me off as the pack shifts. I’ve just popped the last pro, a point-five Tricam, and the prospect of a huge cheese grater pendulum isn’t too appealing. Luckily a jug appears. Back along the ledge to John. “Dave put in a pin here, but he took it out again,” he tells me. Right on-

you can tell you're doing alpine stuff when you can wham in pins for fun.

John offers me the lead again. I decline again. The last pitch has left me feeling a bit shaky; besides, it's too much work to lead with a pack of this size on. So again it's John who takes off first from the belay, running it out up easy slab to a short steep step, and above weaving into a nice crescent shaped corner. Pretty casual 5.7, and just as well, because there are only two or three placements on the full ropelength pitch. Now it's time for the fifth pitch; Dave and AMC are kicking back at the next belay, because it's the end of the hard climbing. John cruises up to meet them, navigating through a bunch of "roof" steps that are really only vertical, and dodging the big block that Dave found was wobbly. Cruising up last, staying in the edge of sunlight (it's afternoon by now), I am exhorted by my companions to give this sucker a nice big push. John takes me tight; I brace and heave with my feet and the refrigerator-sized stone goes sailing out into space to many choruses of "Rock!". Rumbling and bounding head over heels it cascades down the slabs, blowing apart into smaller and smaller chunks with each impact until by the time it hits the Sidewalk, down at the base, it's so much gravel. And that was why we named the last pitch the Block Party, because trundling is always a social sport.

Above us, the slabs kick back. We cruise them. They're cake. They're casual. We still have the ropes on, but this is more of a gesture to propriety than for any real need. Ahead looms an island of trees. Dave is all for going right, and hitting some steeper stuff; but it's getting on in the day, and so we veer left, along a big pink feldspar dyke, and exit stage left. Off with harnesses, rack up, switch the shoes for Hi-Tecs, have some gummy bears. Someone hauls out the mandatory Powerbar. Drink the last of the water.

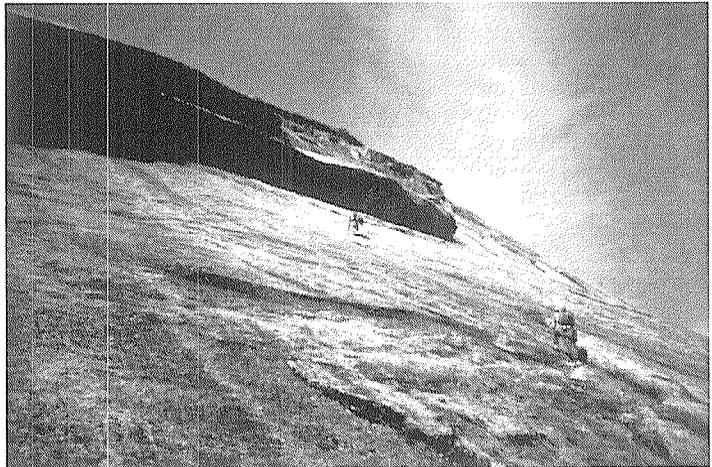
You can tell that some people have been raised at the crag, and others in the hills: AMC and Dave are ready to head down; after all, we've done the climb, right? But for John and I the summit is calling. So up we go. More blueberries, more krummholz to tangle up the rope on. Out on a knob and lo! the summit was a long long way away yet. Two people decide that this is enough. They crash and stare down the northeast face while John and I drop the packs and race for the summit. A kilometer of ridgerunning with better and better views. Drop a new stone on the cairn. Shoot a photo of the sun dropping behind Steinbok. Somewhere on that edge our friends Guy and Mike are pushing it, looking for freedom. Turn around and race back down, into the gathering gloom. Reunited, all four of us cruise down the southeast ridge, like going up but in reverse; finding and losing gametrails, dodging overgrown boulders, splashing into hidden streams. Eventually we push our way into a clearcut, receiving a fine coating of fireweed spores as we struggle over stumps and seedlings to the road.

Dinner that night is a hasty affair by headlamp. Kraft Dinner mixed with ichiban: my specialty. As the sun sets some hunters visit us; they have mistaken the explosions of John's pyrotechnic arsenal for the more familiar (to them) noise of rifle shots. We swap BS about the mountains and beta on how to dodge the highway tollbooths.

Later, the stars come out. Bedtime.

The next day, it's freezing in the valley, but the big face on Alpaca is baking above us in the morning sun. Photo op; our route is clearly marked by the white streak left by the tumbling block. Ann-Marie has already named it for us: "Purple People Eater"; because we all have purple clothing this weekend. A quick breakfast and we head back up to the cliff. We want something big this time. Cruising along the base, it's slow going for me; my cardio seems so weak after a summer of drive-by geology. We hike all the way up to the col with Vicuna, grab some lunch, and then try to start a route towards a beautiful handcrack somewhere up that face; but even before we intersect the slanting ledge line of the Ricker Route, reality sets in and we work out that we'll be back at the car past midnight at this speed. Oh well, the face will still be there next year. Rap off, back down the talus and snowfields, through the forest and the blueberries, into the car and the trip is over. But driving home, through the darkening Valley, following the north side route in a vain attempt to dodge traffic, I can't stop talking; we've done it! After all the dreams, the delays, the false starts, those grey days when summer seems like a forgotten dream; after those days at the crag when you wonder if you'll ever climb well enough to go out and just pick a line, any line, in the mountains; despite all of this, we have moved from consumption to production: we've put up a new technical climb, in the mountains. And so, even though the sun has set, in my head the face is still shining against the sky in the hot light of dawn, and always will. It's why I climb.

Summary: A new route on the east face of Alpaca Peak, in the Coquihalla area. Begins at the base of a prominent, right leaning dihedral, at the left center of the face. Five pitches of roped climbing to 5.8, with a few long runouts, followed by 200 meters of easier scrambling on slabs to the top of the face. First ascent of the route, called "Purple People Eater", by David Voadlo, Ann-Marie Conway, John Simms and Drew Brayshaw, September 1994.



Dave and Ann-Marie on 1st pitch of Purple People Eater.

Fall Longhike '94

by Jennifer Wild, Joanna Wood and Robyn Scott

The adventure of Longhike began days before the actual event. Tickets were scarce and desperate newcomers found themselves groveling at the feet of Exec members and camping outside the clubroom door. (Obviously it worked or we wouldn't be writing this!)

Saturday morning came early, and after a very scenic and extended trip to Murrin Lake, some of us arrived just in time to have missed all the set-up. Too bad. We spent the rest of the day learning how to crank, stem, smear, dyno....whatever the hell those meant! (Now, man, we spend our days searching for the most heinous routes!)

We were forced from the rocks by the fall of night and decided to congregate at the Whistler liquor store. From there we journeyed to the AMS lodge where we hacked by the light of the full moon, until the smell of "persistent" garlic bread called us inside. After consuming hordes of spaghetti and more alcohol per person than is drunk in the whole of France in one season, the hardcore partying began.

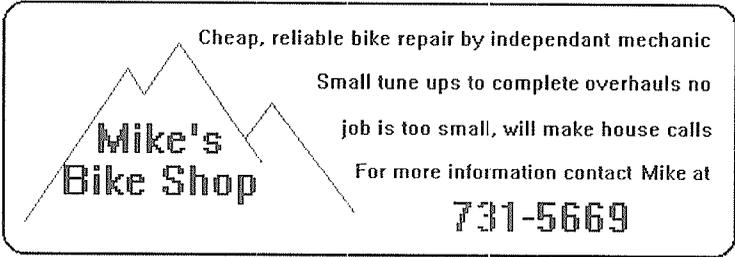
The pingpong table, foosball (that stupid man game), the hot tub and the stereo were going full blast. Many strange events were witnessed as many friendly people got to know other friendly people, and promptly forgot who they were. As the night wore on, the great search for a place to sleep began. The lucky ones had already snagged a bunk earlier, but hijackings were rampant and many prostrate bodies were found on the floor.

The next morning we awoke to the voices of Chris, Brodie and Phil crying "Snow!". Frighteningly enough, some of us believed them. We were not amused. Breakfast consisted of the best pancakes in the world, of both artistic (Hey, is that Mickey Mouse?) and road kill (Oh, I guess not!) varieties. Some of us still have dishpan hands from washing all of those dishes.

With breakfast over and done with, cleanup and detox began. A few people left early and we cleaned up all your shit. Some chose to climb, others drove to Lucille Lake for a day of fun in the sun.

Then we went home.

Participants: Who remembers? But we're pretty sure we were there.



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"Rock!" - Matier Glacier via Joffre Lakes

October 1994

By: Scott Martens

Participants: Kev, Wes, Päl, Scott

Notes:

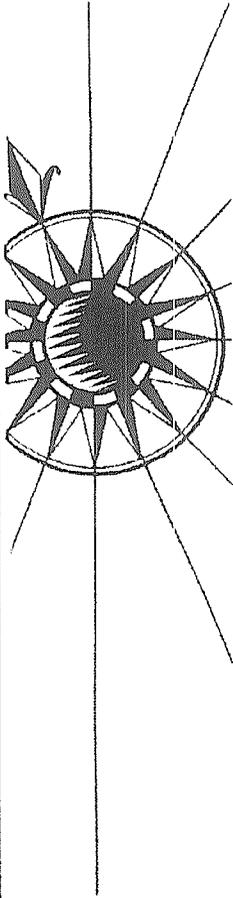
Thanksgiving seemed a great weekend for a late season climb of Matier. We approached from the Joffre Lakes side, and made it to end of the last lake around noon. We set the tents up beside the lake in some flat spots in the sand. It was quite windy, so we anchored the tents down with rocks. We could hear and see large ice blocks (up to the size of a small house) falling off the icefall, smashing and avalanching on the rock below. It was spectacular.

After lunch we geared up for glacier and rock travel, and started up the scree on the left side of the glacier. This looked better than the right hand side. We crossed the stream, which had incredibly slippery rock as a result of biological growth. Both Kev and Wes slipped and fell in the water a bit. It was a reasonable scramble, with a couple of class 5 moves on one section nearer to the bottom, and a few more (easier) higher up. The bottom cliff band could have been avoided by going around to the left, but the top one was squeezed between Joffre and the glacier. We got to the glacier, and cramponed up. Kev and Wes left their packs, while Päl and I brought ours as a matter of principle. It had started to snow, and was getting colder. The ice was a bit rotten and it was hard to get good placements with our axes. The glacier was heavily crevassed. We went solo until we came to a large crevasse which had to be crossed at a narrow spot. Here we roped up and set a belay. The roping up took forever. After this, we remained roped up. We got up to the large flat area on the glacier, but decided to head back to camp for the day since it was getting late by then. We debated a bit about going along the edge of the glacier or back to where we came from. Eventually we went in between the two, back through the same crossing of the crevasse we had come through before.

At the edge of the glacier, Päl stayed at the edge of the ice to remove his crampons while the rest of us got off. Päl called "rock" and a small one just missed us, and then again as another came down. I turned to look and just caught a flash of it as it hit me above my left hip, mostly on my backpack. This one was about the size of a volleyball, and had come from somewhere high on the cliff. It knocked me over, and I yelped. It was quite painful, but I could feel that it was on my side, not along my spine, which was a relief. Kev and Wes attended to me immediately, while Päl watched for more rocks. As soon as I determined that I did not have a spinal injury, they took my pack and camera off me and helped me up to shelter behind a large boulder. The others divided up all my gear, and Wes strapped my empty pack to the back of his. I had twisted my left knee as well when I was knocked over, so when we got going, my knee and hip made it was quite painful to move. Wes went ahead to set up a belay at the first cliff band that we had scrambled up, since it was too slippery



Photo: Scott Martens. Paul on Matier Glacier.



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with the new snow to scramble down. There would be no way that I could do it anyway. The anchor was a sling around a large boulder. Wes rappled first, then Kev, me and Pål last. It was quite painful to rappel, since my harness pressed on the part of my hip where the rock had struck. The rope made it down to a ledge where the others scrambled down from, but it was slippery and difficult, so Wes rigged another rappel for me for the last 20 feet.

After this, the long walk down in the rain began. Wes and Kev went ahead, but Pål stayed with me the whole way, which I really appreciated. It was slow and painful for me as I hobbled along, using my axe for support. I could see the tent in the distance (until it got too dark) and it seemed that it never got any closer. We went further to the northeast where there was a bit more dirt rather than just big boulders. Eventually it got dark, and we got out our headlamps. Mine was somewhere in all the stuff the other guys had distributed, so I took Pål's and put my spare, fresh battery into it. Kev and Wes went ahead again, and Pål walked with me using the light from my headlamp. Kev found an easier way down through the lower cliff band, which we managed to follow. From there we went straight down the slope, sticking to dirt as much as possible. We followed the bobbing headlamps ahead of us until they disappeared. This section also seemed to take forever. By now we couldn't see our destination, and had no real idea if we were getting any closer. We finally came to the creek, which we crossed by just walking straight through, with no thought for dry boots. It was raining anyway, and we were a bit cold. My ridiculous non-seam-sealed Goretex gloves were totally soaked through. The stream led to a bushy, swampy area. We could have found an easy way through in the light, but it was tough when we could only see a few metres. Eventually we made it to the beach, and back to camp.

Kev and Wes were starting to get supper together, and Kev's stove was acting up as usual (a useless Peak 1). He assembled mine (a reliable Whisperlite) to use, but then one ring came off, so I took the stove to fix it. I unscrewed the top, forgetting that Kev had already pressurised it. It sprayed gas into my face and left eye. I hobbled into the lake to rinse my eye with water which I did for several minutes. My plastic boots, which were dry until now, soaked through. After this, I got the stove going, collected my gear from the rain and shoved it into the tent, and then retired to the tent myself. I did not feel like eating. I sorted my gear into wet (large) and dry (small) piles, and then got into my sleeping bag. I finally warmed up, which was nice. I dozed off, and then woke up when supper was ready. I got Pål to bring me some, as I was now more in the mood to eat. Kev and I talked a bit about the risks in mountaineering before going to sleep.

During the night, I heard another large ice block fall from the glacier. I was stiff in the morning, but not as bad as I thought I would be. I was able to walk. Pål took much of my heavy gear, in exchange for his bulky gear. I had an absolutely massive pack, but it was very light. The way down was tiring and a bit slow, but not as bad as the descent from the glacier the day before. The drive back through Pemberton was very beautiful. Overall the trip was good, and I thank God I wasn't hurt more badly by the rock (it was Thanksgiving Day, after all). Later I found a big dent in the SAM splint in my First Aid kit, which had absorbed most of the impact. If the rock had hit my hip directly, things would have been worse.

GLACIER SCHOOL #2 - November 5-6, 1994

by : Markus Kellerhals

This year we had so much interest in the glacier school that we decided to run it on two consecutive weekends.

The dry-school took place on the Wednesday night preceding the trip. I gave a brief introduction, Lenny gave a succinct presentation on packing and dressing for winter camping trips, and Lorne and John from Coast Mountain sold us massive quantities of webbing and prusik cord. After the organization was taken care of everyone went outside and tried prusiking up ropes set up on the covered walkways.

On Saturday morning we all drove up to the trailhead on the Duffey Lake Road. We had to do some driving around to find a suitable place to leave the cars since there were already snowbanks lining the road. By about noon our group of 45 (!!!) VOC'ers set off up the Cerise Creek trail. Some were on skis, some on snowshoes and some on foot. Until the final slope up to the glacier there was not a clearly superior mode of travel. But on the final stretch where the snow was quite deep those on skis and snowshoes clearly had the advantage. Everyone arrived at the camp area before nightfall. A tent city quickly sprung up.

Soon dinner was cooking. The definite highlight of the evening was the mulled wine cooked up by Brandon and Mike S. Overnight a wind sprang up and gave some of the tents quite a shaking. However, the fearless leader slept through it all (helped, no doubt by the consumption of mulled wine).

The next morning was cloudy and snowing lightly, but we rose fairly early anyhow. After breakfast we divided up into groups and headed off to teach/learn the secrets of glacier travel. Self-arrests, self belays and the basics of roped travel were covered. The large amount of snow made it pretty impossible to find an actual crevasse for rescue practise. Nonetheless, we set up snow anchors using flukes, skis and bollards. Once we had secure anchors we practised Z-pulleys. The crevasse extrication was simulated by winching people across the snow surface.

All too soon it was time to pack up and head down to the cars. The last of the group straggled down sometime after dark.

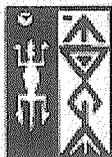
Overall, I would say the weekend was a big success. Many thanks to the twelve instructors who helped out: Jonathan Longe, Jonathan Wong, Mike Sample, Brandon Konoval, Mike Guite, Markus Kellerhals, Denie Robichaud, Lenny Thomas, Lorne Hoover, John ??, Gunnar Oluvssoon, and Lynn Ericson. And thank you also to the many enthusiastic students who made it all worthwhile.



Photo: Markus Kellerhaus. Glacier School, November 1994.

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HIGH TIMES AT SMITH ROCKS

Drew Brayshaw

This trip took place over Thanksgiving weekend. Instead of the usual Leavenworth trip, the VOC headed down to Smith. Leavenworth was burned out by recent forest fires, and we figured Skaha would be really busy, so off to Smith we went. Dave, Ann-Marie, Cam, Ashley and I piled in to Cam's brother's van and set off on the Friday afternoon. Things went well until we passed through Portland. At this point AMC, Dave and I had all fallen asleep, Cam was driving and Ashley was navigating. Well, Ash was the only one of us who had never been to Smith before- we ended up missing the turnoff for Gresham and continuing on to the Dalles, then heading down Highway 97. As we passed through scattered small towns, the gas gauge got lower and lower, and all the gas stations were closed. In fact, somewhere between Maupin and Madras the engine conked out, and we spent the night sleeping at the side of the road. So in the morning Dave and Ann-Marie hitched into town for gas. By the time they got back and we had gassed up, and driven into town, had breakfast, and gotten to Smith, it was almost noon. It was very crowded, and almost too hot to climb in the sun. Maya, Cam, Ash and I ended up climbing at the Pleasure Palace in the remainder of the day. As the sun began to set I queued up to lead the classic, Phoenix, while Cam and Ash headed way off to the southern tip of the Smith Group to climb Sunset Slab. This resulted in them climbing it AFTER the sun had set and they got back to the parking lot well after dark, by which time their annoying, 15 minute long car alarm had already been set off, to the annoyance of the entire surrounding area of Central Oregon. It was about this time that Alistair announced that he probably wouldn't make it back across the border unless we helped him destroy "the evidence". No one really jumped forward until Dave Dexter made the issue clear: "This guy is offering "it" to you FREE. Why don't you HELP HIM OUT and SMOKE IT???" That night we camped way out in the Grasslands (free camping area). Everyone had had a good day, ranging from some recent Rockschoool gradutes first sport leads all the way up to Guy and Yasser's work on Churning in the Wake.

The next day, Al, Gonzo and I headed off in search of an uncrowded area. We hiked all the way out to the basalt of the Student Wall. I had never climbed on basalt before. Al started this supposedly easy 5.8 route, which turned out to be overhanging fist jamming. Gonzo ended up finishing the lead, doing so with style and grace despite not having much experience placing no.10 hexes before. After this, still seeking punishment, we tried and were all eventually successful on the top-rope problem, Puppet Master. I discovered how it got its name as I spent many minutes hanging on the rope as I worked out the thin jamming moves on this 11a. After completing Puppet Master, we were all too burned out to climb any more, so we went back and failed on easy boulder problems near the bridge.

That evening we decided to head back at least partway rather than leave the next morning and get home at midnight or later on Sunday. On our way out, we picked up Alistair, who had just crashed his motorcycle. He sold the still-running wreck to some hillbilly in the parking lot of a Terrebonne grocery store for \$50, and we drove off into

the night, eventually stopping by the side of the road in Mount Hood National Forest.

At 3 AM, Dave woke up, and woke everyone else up, with horrible, agonizing pains in his guts. Fearing the worst, Ann-Marie (nurse) and Alistair (Industrial first aid ticket) consulted and decided it probably wasn't a ruptured appendix, but we should go to the nearest hospital anyways. So we drove like mad through the night with Dave doubled over in total agony, stopping in all these tiny hamlets only to discover that they either had no hospitals, or the hospitals were not open 24 hrs. Somewhere along this route one of my shoes fell out of the van and was never seen again. We finally got Dave to a hospital about 4 AM in Gresham, outside of Portland; we fell asleep in the E-room waiting room while he was diagnosed with kidney stones resulting from excessive dehydration, and put on horse tranquilizers and a force-fluids regimen. Luckily his emergency medical insurance covered the \$300 hospital bill.

The rest of the trip back was anticlimactic; we drove up the I5 through intermittent rain showers listening to REM's Monster, stopped off at an REI store but didn't bother to buy anything, and got home in time for dinner Sunday night. A good trip, even if the climbing was somewhat overshadowed by the numerous small epics.

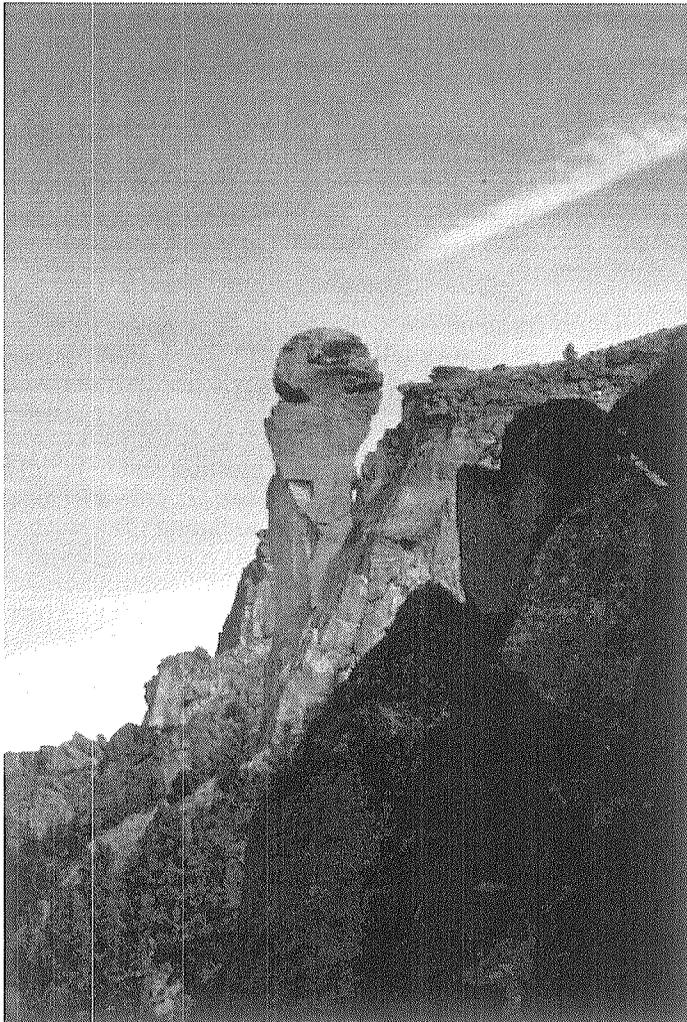


Photo: Drew Brayshaw. Monkey Face, Smith Rocks.

Halloween 1995

Blair Hammond

Boo! Halloween this year signaled a major change in VOC parties; there weren't 30 men circling like sharks around 5 women all night long. The place was well decorated and some of the costumes were great. Some favourites: Alan as Gore-tex; the tissue paper mummy (I'm still pulling it out of the shrubs) and, of course, Brody as the well dressed figure of death. There was even some demonic possession (what else could have inspired the long haired smasher of pumpkins?)

There was some excitement too: Drew having some kind of seizure (Oops, I mean his dancing); the pumpkin carving (some amazing stuff) followed by the post witching-hour pumpkin shell surfing on Dunbar. The most exciting event of them all resulted from a minor fire-works display: the "Burn Blair's house down event" in which several hedges and part of the lawn caught fire had the viewing galleries packed. Never a dull moment that evening, that's for sure.

Special mention should go to the City of Vancouver fire department for not loosing their cool, the boys in blue for telling us "don't worry about the pumpkin on the streets, the rain'll wash it away" and Dave Quinn, who not only destroyed countless works of pumpkin art, but invented the surfing and then had the decency to help clean it up.

All 'round I'd say it was a pretty good evening, and hopefully there'll be many more like it in the near future. Fire-works, however, are not welcome at the next one. Still, the fact that there could be so many drunks in so tight a space with fire, pumpkin knives and a busy street and still not have anyone hurt is an amazing feat. All I can say is that next time we've got to try and get the other two emergency service to show up as well. We had the police and fire departments; now we need the ambulance service and the coast guard. Until next year, boo!

by Guy Edwards

NE Buttress of Steinbok

The Northeast buttress of Steinbok Peak is one of the most beautiful and dramatic rock lines in the Coast Range. It is situated within the Anderson River group, quite a ways back from Yak Peak, the rocky peak once featured on the cover of the BCTel phone directory. The rock in the area is a rather coarse, but well weathered granitoid. The cracks are good, but the edges and surface features are even better.

The route (shown very well in the photograph in Fairley's guide) was first climbed by two Squamish hard cores back in 1979. Scott Flavelle and John Howe climbed the route over two and a half days, using lots of aid and only freeing small sections. They rated the route grade V 5.9 A3.

Well, in the fall of 1994, Michael Spagnum and myself finally mustered up the courage to try and climb the route. We wanted to first just get up it, and then maybe later on give it a go at a free attempt.

On the weekend that we did the route the weather was perfect: the sun was strong, the air was warm, and the moon was full. We started early on the Saturday morning, basically simi-climbing the first few easier pitches. At the end of the greenery, the real climbing started.

The next pitches I found quite challenging, mostly at 5.10 level. Then came the pitch that was to be the scourge of the whole route. I was leading up a thin finger crack very similar to Crime of the Century at the Smoke Bluffs, but a little more laid back. For this pitch I had racked up the pitons and a hammer, which was very lucky. I put in two pins on lead and then tried to climb past the second when I started scratching around with my feet. I was just about to fall off when instead I grabbed the pin. Damn! There went my free attempt! Well, I just pulled up on the pin, stood on it and started free climbing again. This later turned out to be my only point of aid!

The next few pitches were of a consistent difficulty. Almost every pitch was sustained throughout, with minimal easy sections and technical cruxes of around mid 5.10. We were climbing every pitch with pretty heavy packs: sleeping bags, foamics, water, food, and other necessities, so by the time night fell, we were pretty tired. At the end of the first day we had climbed 10 pitches, 2 of which were easy, and the rest of which were about 5.10.

We awoke early the next morning, and got going when the sun hit the rock. I started leading away again, and for the next two pitches, I realized that we were on the old line. Wonderful rusty piton stations were comforting, but probably not very strong. We used them anyways! The climbing become more and more runout as I would try to go from crack to crack. But the face climbing was good, so I didn't get too scared. The pitches added up, and with each one taking about 1 hour, we really noticed the day passing. Finally, after still climbing everything free (except for that one pitch), we got to the top just in time to see the end of the sunset.

Overall, the route had been 19 pitches, with 15 of them being 5.10. We managed to do it all free except one point of aid. It was quite an accomplishment, as the initial intent had just been to do the second ascent. The route isn't really recommendable for repeats, unless you don't mind long runouts. A bolt gun and about 30 bolts would reduce the exposure, but if anybody put them in, I'd probably chop them.

2nd Ascent: Northeast Buttress of Steinbok
V 5.10+ with 1 point of aid
Guy Edwards and Michael Spagnut Sept 1994

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Murder, Rape and Pillage: Smith Rocks; The Epic Continues

by Jennifer Babiak

Participants:

Jennifer Babiak

Sarah Emard

Vivinder Toor

Once upon a time, there was a climber named Jennifer who wanted to go on Longhike. Then she heard about a Smith Rocks trip the weekend after and opted to go on it instead. "But," thought Jennifer, "I'll go climbing with Hudson this Sunday."

Saturday night, Hudson phoned and said,

"My car broke down and I don't feel like taking the bus. Sorry."

"Oh well," thought Jennifer, "I'm supposed to go climbing with my friends John and Vini in Squamish this Tuesday anyhow."

Tuesday morning, John (who owned the car) phoned and said,

"My back is in agony. I can't even walk let alone climb."

"Oh," thought Jennifer. "Well, I'll call Vini and see if she wants to go to Lighthouse Park." Vini did, and so the two hopped on the bus to West Van. The first thing that Jennifer did when they got there was set up the rope. The first thing that Vini did when they got there was dump the only carabiner she owned into the ocean. Jennifer convinced the much distraught Vini that a carabiner was not worth jumping in and drowning over, and lent her one instead. Then the Coast Guard came chugging up in their little boat.

"Did you hear about the Earthquake in Japan this morning?" They shouted to the two,

"There's a Tsunami warning all along the West Coast. Be off the rock by four o'clock."

"Tidal waves?" thought Jennifer, "Geez, God's getting really creative about not letting me climb this week."

So, an hour later, the two grudgingly tore their barely climbed route down and trudged dutifully up to the top of Juniper Point to wait for the tidal wave.

"Maybe the Tsunami will fling my carabiner out of the ocean." Vini mused hopefully.

They met Drew Brayshaw up there, and told him of their predicament. He was very polite about not laughing hysterically and calling them a pair of weenies for believing that a Tsunami was going to come hiking over the mountains of Vancouver Island and drown them all; but he was thinking about doing it. You could tell.

Four o'clock came and went. The tidal wave didn't. The sky was blue, the sun was warm, the sea was flat as glass and obstinately stayed that way. The two began to suspect they'd been had.

The following Wednesday, Jennifer was on her way to the Smith Rocks trip meeting when

she ran into Eric Clemson, who was holding the sign-up sheets.

“Got a whole bunch of people signed up for this weekend,” he said, staring thoughtfully at the two sheets worth of names in front of him.

“Great!” said Jennifer.

“And only three of them have cars.” he added.

“Oh.” said Jennifer.

“Oh shit,” was what she was thinking, “I’m not going to get a ride down, am I?”

And she didn’t.

“Dammit!” thought Jennifer, “The weather’s incredible! I have to get SOME climbing done this month. I know, I’ll go on the Hallowe’en Skaha trip.”

But Physics 319, a.k.a. “The Lab That Ate Undergrads For Breakfast”, had other plans for her.

“Well, at least I can go to the VOC Hallowe’en party, and the month won’t be a total write-off,” she decided, and told all her friends where and when to show up for the festivities. The day of the party she awoke and thought, “I feel like shit. I must be coming down with something.” but dragged her sorry butt off to class anyhow. By the end of the day she was too exhausted to do anything but lie comatose on her friends’ couch while they worked themselves into a frenzy of costume preparation. Jennifer was then thrown into a car and forcibly hauled off to the VOC party, where she was propped up on a couch and introduced as a reanimated corpse to anyone who asked. The next day, as she pondered the previous night’s fever-induced hallucinations of flaming hedges, firetrucks, a man with fish tails hanging out of his pants, and the VOC president yelling at a couple of his friends to get the hell off his roof, she thought to herself, “There’s another trip down to Smith Rocks in November...

AND NOTHING BETTER KEEP ME FROM GOING ON THIS ONE!”

And nothing did.

I asked Vini if she wanted to go to Smith Rocks also, and took the fact that she started to salivate like a Pavlovian dog to be a yes. That just left getting a ride down for the two of us. At the trip meeting, I descended like a starved vulture on the first person I could find who had a car. She didn’t look like the axe-murderer-bury-em-in-the-desert type, and even if she was, I figured Vini and I could take her. Sarah was obviously still trying to decide whether or not I was an axe-murderer-bury-em-in-the-desert type when she agreed to be Vini’s and my ride. We got the details and directions sorted out, and didn’t see each other again until that Thursday when we all tumbled into Sarah’s car and headed off. Oddly enough, given the shortage of rides on the previous Smith Rocks trip, it was just the three of us and the first all-female VOC trip I’d ever been on. Vini is by her own admission a lunatic behind the wheel and I can’t drive a standard, which meant that unfortunately Sarah was stuck doing all the driving. The conversation ranged from why women would get more use out of chest hair than men do (i.e. bouffant chest-hair-dos, etc.) to the precise technical term for urination (mitrication, in case anybody wants to know). As we observed Sarah’s driving, it rapidly became apparent to Vini and I that we were in the presence of greatness. Here was a woman who could change tapes, read maps, eat,

drink, smoke, flirt, do her nails, identify the make, model and year of classic cars, discuss music, perform high speed u-turns, do semi-strip teases, and telepathically move slow drivers out of our lane all while behind the wheel of the car and driving slightly over the posted speed limit. We were truly in awe. We hit Seattle during rush hour, and got trapped in an agonizingly slow bit of traffic until the realization struck us that, technically speaking, we were indeed a carpool. We raced the buses in that fast lane after that. Other than Vini and I accidentally locking the keys in the car at a gas station, Sarah standing in open-mouthed awe before a stack of beer priced at \$8.99 a case, and an enjoyable episode of trying to hit the "If you see a litterer, call 1-800-RAT-FINK" sign with the remnants of some vile mystery-meat burger, things went uneventfully until Portland where our only major turn-off on the way to Smith was. We found the correct road and got onto it without a problem. About an hour later we found ourselves on a creepy, fog-shrouded road, and Sarah began to express doubts in the navigator's (my) abilities.

"Are we on the right road?"

"Yes. All the signs say 26. That's the road we're supposed to be on."

"This isn't a very major road."

"I don't think Smith Rocks is a very major place."

"That sign says we're heading toward a town called 'Seaside'. Do you see it on the map anywhere?"

"Er...no."

"I thought you said Smith Rocks was in the desert. Why would there be a town called 'Seaside' in the desert?"

"Um,...let me take another look at that map..."

"Are we on the right road?"

"Oh shit."

"What? Are we on the right road?"

"We're on the right road; we're just going the wrong direction on it."

It was at this point that Sarah first demonstrated to us her terrifying ability to perform flawless hairpin u-turns at highway speeds. Then she put the pedal to the floor and that little car ATE road all the way back to Portland. Almost polished off a couple of raccoons too, but luckily the little guys were quick on their feet (and whatever the hell it was we did hit was dead already, so it doesn't count). We got ourselves back on track fairly easily, but I started paying a lot more attention to the map after that. Sarah stopped and frolicked in the snow on Mt. Hood for a while to wake herself up, and we got into the Smith Rocks camping area sometime in the small hours of the morning.

The next day Vini reported having had one dream about walking in ice cold water up to her ankles and another about hiking over to the nearby store to buy herself a pair of nice warm wool socks. I, being a physics student, dreamt of the mathematical equations that could be used to describe the amplitude and frequency of my shivering. In other words, we froze our asses off that night. After breakfast, Sarah went off to talk to some other VOCers who had just arrived in the parking lot while Vini and I tried to warm ourselves up by demonstrating to one another just how inept we were at playing hackysack. Sometime later, we got ourselves organized and hiked off to the climbing area.

In Smith, not being able to lead climb is a real problem. The only person in our group with any leading experience at all was me, and that experience consisted of somehow trembling my way up a pathetically easy 5.4 in Squamish. Rather than go through that again, we pouted, cajoled, batted our eyelashes and otherwise coerced John Ford into setting up our first anchor for us. I belayed for him - a somewhat dangerous situation considering John outweighs me by about fifty pounds and there was nothing I could anchor myself to the ground with. Sarah had hooked up with some friends of hers nearby and was already climbing by this point. To keep me from being launched into orbit should John take a fall, Drew clipped himself to the back of my harness as a human belay anchor (so much for Mom's advice to never let a man hold me down). We thanked John profusely and set about climbing. The day was overcast and very cold, which really spoiled things. If the only reason to keep climbing is to keep from getting hypothermic, nobody has much fun. That evening, being the dedicated, hard-core camping goddesses that we are, we said "fuck this" and headed into town to look for a nice cozy hotel and a good restaurant. The next morning, after happily irradiating our eyeballs on Saturday morning cartoons and eating cold pizza for breakfast, we managed to get ourselves packed up and out of the hotel room with a whole minute and a half to spare before the eleven o'clock check-out time. It had snowed during the night, but the sun was out and it was melting fast. We drove back to the climbing area and hiked in to Rope-de-dope rock, which had looked to have a nice accessible top when we'd seen it the previous day. It turned out not to be such a simple matter after all, so I gave Vinia a crash course in how to belay a leader, and set about my second ever lead climb up a simple 5.6. I was pleased to find that unlike the first time I'd tried leading, I wasn't shitting bricks the whole way this time. The sun was out, but didn't make things much warmer than they had been the previous day. Sarah proved to be the best climber of the three of us, despite having been at it the least amount of time. We ran into a pair of guys we'd met the previous day, and they unknowingly supplied us with what became our slogan for the remainder of the trip: Murder, Rape and Pillage. On the hike back that evening, we picked some of the wild sage that was growing alongside the path because it smelled so nice. When we got into the car we decided that it actually smelled pretty damn rude when you were trapped in a small enclosed space with it, and threw the stuff in the trunk. My gear still stinks of it. We had decided to drive as far homeward as we could that night, get a hotel room and drive the rest of the way in the morning. We'd already harrassed the Park Ranger's pregnant wife, his hapless aide and the guy in the climbing shop down the road in an attempt to get a refund for the nights in the campground we'd payed for, but not used. We never did find the Ranger, so we kissed the money goodbye and took off. We got a hotel room in Tacoma, giggled our way through a particularly disturbing episode of "Tales From the Crypt", and then went to sleep. The sun arose upon the mother of all bad hair days that Sunday, and Vini and Sarah did what they could to fight off the attack of the Rabid Frizzies. We stopped at the local McDonalds for a breakfast that was the nutritional equivalent of a bucket of lard and a salt lick, then headed for Seattle where the most anticipated destination of the weekend lay: Victoria's Secret (you go camping, you buy lingerie; makes perfect sense to me). We spotted our quarry on the second floor of

a mall and trooped in, our finely tuned hunting instincts guiding us. As it turned out, Victoria's Secret was having a bit of a sale that day. Remember our slogan? Murder, rape and pillage? This is where the pillage part of it comes in. When a store cuts it's prices in half it tends to cause a reaction in we human females similar to the one caused in sharks when a biologist cuts a fish in half and waves it in the water - i.e. feeding frenzy. The salesladies wisely chose to cower behind the till until we had finished plundering the store, and were sated. We left with our arms full of packages and our credit cards making little sizzling noises as they scorched the insides of our wallets. From there it was a quick trip to the border, where we stopped to buy such essential combustibles as alcohol and gasoline. Vini and I bought Sarah a bottle of her favorite whiskey to thank her for doing all the driving, and then we all settled down to the serious task of smuggling large quantities of lingerie across the border. Bags were garbaged, receipts fluttered out the window, and about three hundred dollars worth of lace bras and satin panties were crammed into the smelly bowels of our packs alongside toques and longjohns. In the traffic jam at the border crossing, Sarah's think-fast-buddy method of lane changing earned her a few nasty looks, but got us up to customs faster than anyone.

"Anything to declare?" the officer asked us gruffly.

We turned our angelic, smiling faces to him and fluttered our eyelashes in unison.

"Some alcohol and some underwear." Sarah said sweetly.

He waved us through, and we careened off homeward.

Usually these trip reports end with some reassurance that a wonderful time was had by all and that it was a fabulous trip, but the truth of the matter is that it was bloody cold in Smith Rocks this year, and the climbing sucked because of it. Still, I am glad that I went in spite of the less than ideal conditions, and I think Sarah and Vini would agree with me on that. If nothing else, our underwear drawers love us for it.

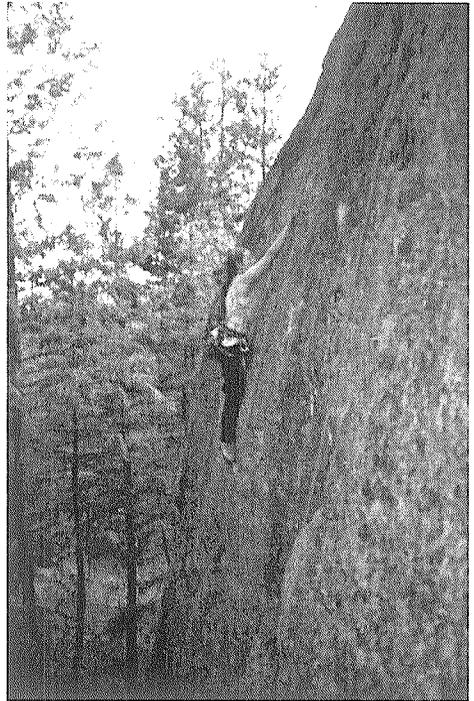


Photo: Drew Brayshaw.
Elizabeth Nethery, Skaha.

A Large, Heavily-packed Party Moving Difficultly over Easy Terrain

Blair Hammond

Short-hike was anything but in the minds of some of its participants. To the hard core, it was an easy stroll to Elfin lakes and then on to the Opal Cone and Mamquam lake the following day. The idea was to initiate the un-initiated to overnight trips in this case, two nights) in a kind and gentle way. It worked, more or less.

I think there were about thirty people on this trip, and many were totally raw recruits. The hike up to Elfin lakes was achieved, though not in record time, under low cloud cover and with some minor encounters with black bears. Most settled comfortably into the Elfin shelter, but a pretty good chunk braved the elements in an odd assortment of tents, surrounded by ripe mountain blue-berries.

I almost never venture into the back-country without my bear-spray, my first line of defense (see last year's journal for my final line of defense). I figured I could save the weight this time since I was in such a large group—wrongo! I seem to have forgotten that the Diamond head area is over-run with bears at this time of year chowing down on berries. I think almost everyone saw at least one, if not more. Blueberry jam was all over the trails. One fat little bear was happily feeding away on the bushes not 100 feet from our tents; this made me think a little, as our neighbours had been out berry picking and had several bags sitting on, in and around their tent.

Day two was fun, though windy and a bit wet. Everyone went to the Opal Cone, "summitted" and enjoyed lunch on the lee-side with a good view of the neve, Mt. Garibaldi and other summits in the area. Almost all continued on to Mamquam lake and were regaled with the mystical legends of the mamquams, a lost race of gremlin-like beasts known to an elite few to inhabit southern Garibaldi park. The lucky group was privileged to visit the ancient burial grounds of the mamquam kings and the site of the lost city of the mamquams (located in the lost valley of the mamquams).

On the third day the weather crapped out entirely, so people departed en-masse after breakfast (around noon). After an easy free-solo descent by all members of the party we retreated to Vancouver for a short night of revelry.

Special thanks to Jonathan Longe for all his assistance and good company.

Smith Rocks Indirect

6 pitches 5.7

FA: C. Slater, J. Clark, J. Wong - 10, 11 Oct 1994

This is a relatively clean but wandering climb. Severe routefinding difficulties may be encountered. A subcompact car, credit card, protection to 3.5" and a tow truck may be useful.

Approach via Totem Park residences. A narrow, but useable, three lane bridge may be used to begin the climb from the North Shore. Start the route by heading down Highway 99 and pad carefully onto the I-5, via a cruxy border crossing, at the Peace Arch(5.6 tarmac). Declare all fruits and vegetables. Proceed south and belay at the Macdonalds near Mount Vernon in order to begin pitch 2. Break down just outside Everett and carefully downclimb, using a tow truck and an underhood traverse, to the local Ford and Mercury dealer(5.4 broken distributor). Bivouac at the Best Western. Avoid using the coffee maker to make instant oatmeal if possible. Begin pitch 3 the following day with a Denny's breakfast and futile negotiations with the car dealership. Pay excessive amounts for repairs. Quickly zoom south again, bypassing Seattle and Olympia on good holds(5.2 highway overpass). Belay at a convenient rest station. Pitch 4 involves tricky routefinding and an awkward left hand traverse onto highway 20(5.7 concrete median divider). Ignore the instructions given in E. Clemson's Telephone Directions to Smith Rocks (1994) or you may find yourself on the middle section of Fast Track to Portland(5.11d) with no visible means of retreat. Belay just past Hood River. At this point a number of routefinding options are available to you. While the original ascent party opted for a wandering scenic drive around Mount Hood, another team chose to go even further East establishing **Smith Rocks Really Really Really Indirect**(FA: D. Brayshaw, A-M. Conway, D.Vocadlo and others.) and performing a forced bivouac when their vehicle ran out of fuel(5.10b not recommended). At any rate, proceed south on pitch 5 towards Bend on steep terrain. You can pitch off at Madras for the final easy left hand traverse via Terrebonne to Smith Rocks(5.4 obscure signposts). Despite some odd routefinding problems, this climb is sure to see a few repeat ascents.

J. Wong
17 Feb 1995

Next page photos by Elizabeth Cheu.
Top: Black Bear, Elfin Lakes Region.
Bottom: Elfin Lakes, Elfin Lakes Shelter, October 1994.





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Welcome to Longhike - Resistance is Futile...

by Dan Perrakis

The time had finally come. My last exams of high school done with, I paid my respects to friends and acquaintances and headed off where no Perrakis had gone before. "Go west, young man", the voices had called to me, and my heart was compelled to obey. Thus it is that I found myself on the steps of UBC, a long way from Ottawa and the Eastern way of life. Full of new hopes and aspirations, I drank every scene in readily - life after the parental home. Here out west, I was soon to discover that being hard at the core was more than a myth or catchy phrase - it was a way of life.

With classes and everything else that presented itself to me in my first month here, the VOC beckoned like a glowing Grail atop a mountain castle. I filled out the application form eagerly: as I checked off my interests one after the other, I envisioned doing each activity, elflike as I became one with the wild. I would learn to conquer any terrain that crossed my path, be it mountain, rock or ocean. Greenhorn I was, yet keen to be rid of the title.

Rock climbing seemed to be a logical beginning to my elvin transformation, so a few weeks later, I joined the ranks of the Rock I crew at Longhike, the "event of the year". Enshrouded in stories and mystery, Longhike would claim the new students as her prey and transform them into strange otherworldly creatures with a possessed look in their eyes, who would salivate at the very smell of rock. Where once were meek city boys and girls would emerge a group of hardcore radsters, ready to subdue any stony face by sheer force of will.

"Uh, this rock climbing thing, is it really difficult?" we might once have asked. But that language no longer being part of our vocabulary, a more likely comment would be "Dude, that was a sweet whipper! 30-footer, man! Just crank it....."

Longhike - the test, the ritual, the beginning.

On the morning of the event, tales of glory were far from my mind. October first had arrived, and I was wakened at a cruelly early hour. We were to climb rocks on this, drizzly, cold grey and forbidding morn? I could scarcely think of a less desirable fate. How soft and naive I was then! I laugh at those pathetic memories of my weaker self. Later that day, we found ourselves at the base of a towering cliff. Vertical, nearly featureless and smooth as glass it stared back at us, sapping our strength and draining our will to live. Silently, the cliff mocked yet another few foolish mortals who would soon be its own to toy with and destroy. Yet that moment would never come. For this, cruel and abrupt as it seemed, was the beginning of our training. A harsh day of rasped skin, gripped muscles and general bloodshed followed, as we pitted our forces against the lithic beasts as they attempted to shred our flesh, devour our innards and fling our flimsy corpses from their walls. We were nearly defeated several times, and became sorely abused in the process. The true meaning of what we were becoming took a long time to sink in, but brought with it power and vision. With the suffering came a new understanding of the world, the rock and our own petty importance.

After the physical aspect of the Longhike ceremony came the evening festivities. Feasting, drink and dance were had in copious quantities by all. A magical aura in the air supposedly blurred everyone's memories of that night, but perhaps that is best.

Following that fateful day, there would be no turning back. As new recruits we were like rabid dogs in our search for the meatiest climbing areas of the Northwest. This year's new climbers visited Skaha, Smith Rock, Frenchman's Coulee, Yosemite and Joshua Tree, as well as participating in dozens of journeys up and over the Squamish Rock. Tales of wonder were heard all over the continent of strange youngsters seen sprinting up vertical landforms. Once again, the climbing fever has spread like a virus.

The Varsity Outdoor
Club would like to
thank Rock Solid Mfg.
for donating Arc'teryx
climbing harnesses to
the club.

The Sound of Iron: An Odyssey on Squamish Granite

November and December, 1994.

By Mike Buda

Once again, that lovely sound of iron ringing its way into solid granite is heard over the great climbs of Squamish. In defiance of recent local tradition of free climbing and clean aid climbing ethics, a small band of VOCers have pushed back the ethical clock by hammering their way up old aid lines.

Not for a great many years, harking back to the days of Becky, Culbert, Burton, Sutton and Hatten, have climbers boldly strode forth, with hammer and pins in hand, to ascend thin and blank Squamish granite. Yet now, in this modern age of sport ascents and high technology, have a few wily VOC adventurers stepped forward to challenge the great granite faces of that place that is known as Squamish. Respecting no one but the great artists of grand routes in Yosemite Valley, Robbins and Harding, Salathe and Chouinard, these visionary climbers have ascended routes on the Stawamus Chief long forgotten, and ill-respected in recent times.

Their efforts with iron and hammer hark back to a Golden Age that is largely ignored now: bold ascents of rock that was as blank and unknown as one's own truths. The great pioneers fought up great expanses of rock harder than life, relying only on skill, courage and imagination. We sought to do the same, and in the process shun all the modern armour of today's rock warriors: closely spaced bolts, detailed topo's, and little risk were traded for adventure, the unknown, danger, and the artistry required of hammer and iron. Across the valley would ring our efforts at returning to old values, as pitons are sunk in to that wonderful granite of Squamish. Great art, for that is what climbing is, requires great vision; it is great vision that we sought to attain.....we would aid climb.

As several legends in Yosemite would have said, and as we would also say to the above spouting.....Ahhhhh, drink drugs! I just wrote it so people would think we were seriously self-delusionary and should seek professional help, as well as a thorough beating/flogging. It is good to keep people off-guard: it is easier to scam, or otherwise defame them.

No, me and Dave Avocado went aid climbing just so we could seriously offend Park Managers, Sierra Club activists and ultra-ethical trad's by mentioning in passing that we have hammered pins into Squamish cracks that will one day go free. Nothing gets people's goats more than bragging about defiling rock for such an antiquated sport as is aid climbing.

Well, actually that isn't totally true either....we went aid climbing because we were mildly

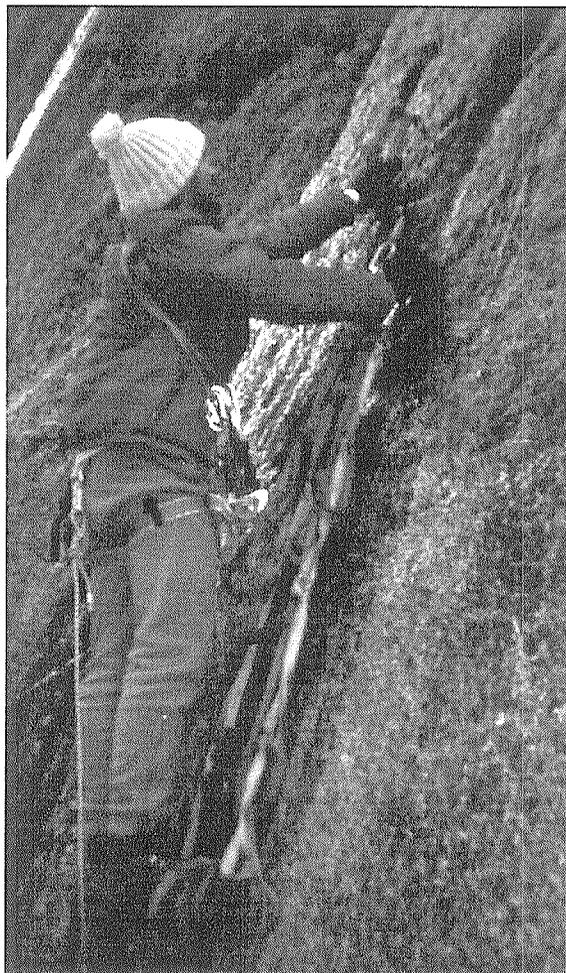


Mike and Dave , hardmen, ready for a big-wall odyssey (note similarity to photo of Long, Birdwell and Westbay in Yosemite Climber).

interested in broadening our climbing-related horizons, and mostly because standing on a tiny piece of bent metal barely poised above a bunch of other tiny pieces of bent metal sounded pretty cool. Plus, we would be able to take rad pictures of us with masses of aid gear in poses similar to those of John Long, Jim Bridwell and Billy Westbay in “Yosemite Climber” (see in VOC Clubroom). So you see, our intentions and motivations were actually pretty mundane: neither heroic, romantic nor vitriolic (note: AMC may have trouble with this last word). Unfortunately, the Coast Range granite, and at times, our sanity, bore the brunt of our tentative foray into the world of aid climbing.

Aid climbing, in the past few years of the rapid spread in popularity of climbing, has been seen increasingly as an esoteric and marginal form of rock climbing. We wanted to buck this trend, rightly seeing that experiencing different forms of climbing could only be beneficial to our own understanding of the sport and of ourselves. I am no keen and devoted rock climber, spending relatively little time doing it (at a low level, what’s more),

yet I do truly enjoy it for its qualities of challenge, boldness and uniqueness. We reasoned that to explore other forms and styles of moving over vertical rock would sharpen and focus the qualities that we originally found (and still do find, of course) in free climbing. Climbing is a means to personal growth, and we sought to discover and fully explore



Dave on A2 hooks of first pitch of Cannabis Wall - note the ice smear, indicative of the -10 C weather prevalent.

climbing as was unknown to us previously, as a means to furthering our own learning about ourselves. Learning is done in many different classrooms, and we realised that the sport of climbing has many different classrooms available should one be willing to venture into them.

This article then, is meant to encourage others to try something different in their climbing - to move into different realms for the sake of change, rather than for the sake of ethics, ease or pure enjoyment. Beyond perhaps learning a little more about yourself, which we may have, at the very least you may improve your free climbing skills.

Aid climbing is about terror and boredom - they tend to alternate with each other, and are liberally mixed with vast quantities of gear, and snarls of rope. There is no great secret to aid climbing, and just as you discovered, or will discover, with free climbing, the best way to experience it is to simply go out and do it. Provided you are marginally proficient with finding and placing protection, and rope handling, aid climbing will present few technical problems for you.

There is however the very often asked question of gear requirements:

you will need about 2-3 free racks (heavy on small cams), plenty (50 or more) of biners, aiders and ascenders, and at least some ironmongery (i.e. pitons of all sizes from angles, through to blades and RURP's, as well as those awful hooks). Between the two of us, as well as with some first class scamming of the specialised (non-free) gear, we managed easily to gather enough stuff to do a Squamish classic A3, "Kanabis Wall" (IV 5.10 A3). Selecting a route of a lower grade will mean you can eliminate most, or all, of the iron, and cut down on the clean gear.

Perhaps the single most important piece of equipment we had was a copy of John Long's book "How to Climb Big Walls" (part of his "How to Rock Climb Series"). This book saved us a few times, and we actually brought it up on the route with us to show the world what bumblies we really were. Anyway, it's mandatory reading, and it will get you motivated to go out and crush off some horrendous A5 death route in the Valley before you even stand on your first copperhead (your goals change quickly once actually standing on a hook or head, though).

Okay, this article has wandered widely and freely through mostly unrelated and confused themes - perhaps a product of the state of mind of the author. I will leave the exact description of our Kanabis Wall adventure - the birth place of this article - to Dave, as I know he reveals in extreme exaggeration, blatant lies, sandbagging and slander. I prefer to rant, discourse, and ramble on the wider consequences, ethics and arguments of our unorthodox activities, and thus limit this article to the above bullshit.

If you disagree with, take offence at, wish to criticise, or otherwise diss the contents of this article, my attitude, or our activities, please take your concerns to the toilet and flush them with a large log, because I DON'T GIVE A SHIT WHAT YOU THINK. If you think you are so superior, you may in fact be right, but it doesn't alter the fact that if you actually have taken a single word of what I have said seriously, you must obviously be way drunk. Failing all of what I have said to dissuade you reacting negatively to all of this, please feel free to throw rocks at the windows of Dave's house - that'll make you feel better, and be cool, besides.

Hah...bet I got you confused now. When you started reading, you probably expected some poncy romantic piece on aid climbing, then it seemed to turn into a general slander-fest, then perhaps a polemic against sport climbing, and then at the end a bit on why we climb in general. Then this cruddy article finishes by telling you that it all might be bullshit, or maybe not....

Or maybe it's something I whipped off at the last second to appease the Journal Editor's plea for more articles. Pretty screwed up, in any case, eh?!

SEARCH FOR THE BROCKENSPECTRE

Drew Brayshaw

This trip took place just after I arrived back in Vancouver from the boring flatlands around Victoria. I was desperate to get out and do some real climbing, but everyone I called was away on some sort or another of long trip, so it looked like I was S.O.L. To make matters worse, the weather was deteriorating rapidly.

I got in touch with Andy Cairns. He could only get one day off, and his wife needed their car (some things, like car access, appear not to change for climbers as they get older), so we scrapped most of our possible projects and decided to head for the Camel. It was pouring rain the morning of our climb. I was psyched, because in this old mountaineering book that I had found it talked about the "Brocken Spectre". This is a sort of optical illusion only seen on days of lame weather. When your shadow is projected onto the tops of clouds or mist, if the sky above is clear you may see a mysterious rainbow halo projected around your shadow. Even better, it is an illusion caused by the sun being behind you, so you only see the halo around your own shadow, not around anyone else's. I really wanted to see this!

The bus driver thought we were nuts; as we got nearer to Grouse, Andy and I were the only people on the bus, and the rain was falling heavily. When we got off at the Skyride parking lot, he stared in blank incomprehension at our bulging packs of gear, and humourously asked us if we were "going swimming?"

We started up the Grouse Grind. In the trees, the rain was not too bad. We passed, and were passed by, the usual sorts of people you see on North Shore hiking trails: kids with dogs, ultra-marathoners in training, and shirtless 90-year old men who cruise by you nonchalantly in their faded pre-war era knickers, mumbling to themselves. Someday, I will be one of them, with more endurance than Reinhold Messner and the mental wit of a common housefly.

It was really pissing down by the time we got to the top of the Grind, so we crept in the back door of the Grouse's Nest and huddled up to a heater, drying out and eating our lunch. Things were really dismal. We began to discuss blowing off the whole day and heading back down to the Edge. "Huey", the weather god, (ask Lorne about this one) must have overheard us, because almost immediately upon saying "Edge", the clouds lifted and things looked better. We could see the Camel, and it even looked dry! Of course, we knew this was nothing but a "sucker hole" in the weather, so we decided just to walk along the trail, and not actually plan on climbing anything. Well, we went all along the Goat Mtn. trail, slid down into Crown Pass on a total mud chute, and the sun actually began to shine! So we blitzed up to Crown, passing more North Shore Hikers and other knicker wearing jobs, and ran around the backside of the Pyramid. Andy had been here before and he

found the right way down the easy 4th class descent to the ledge below the Camel. I almost whipped as I followed him down when a foothold took a vacation on me, but luckily the holds are all so juggy that it was no problem to quick-step onto another, more solid one.

At the base of the Camel I was all for doing the regular route (5.2 if you wear full shank, nailed boots), but Andy had something else in mind. He had previously rope soloed something known as the “5.9 fingercrack” and wanted to deal with this creature on lead. Well, after I took a look at it, he was welcome to it. It overhung slightly (about 95 degrees), and although it had some finger locking sections, most of it looked like locking hands-one of my weakest areas. He took some gear and dealt with the crack, subduing it with his honed 20 years of climbing experience. Seconding, I was gripped like a pair of pliers when i tried to climb the thing. Fingercrack, yeah right! It was only slightly less wide than the offwidth to the left. So, maybe it was just because it was my first climb in 3 months and I sucked badly, or maybe for any one of a whole lot of other reasons, but I hung like a hound on the way up. Arf arf!

Well, eventually I made it up without too much help from the rope. Andy passed the sharp end over to me and I cranked the last few moves from the belay, in the neck, up the slab to the top of the Camel’s head. This was a lot easier, maybe because it was slab, or maybe because it was only rated 5.0 instead of 5.9? We took some hero shots and rapped down. The mist was beginning to boil up the sides of the mountain again.

We took a different, but also 4th class, route back up the Pyramid, which involved a lot of hidden holds and a totally exposed, but easy, chimney. I had to wear my pack on my chest like a male pregnancy simulator to fit in the chimney! On top of the Pyramid, I ran around trying to project my shadow onto the mist, but it was too cloudy to get any Brockenspectre effect happening-I could hardly even see my shadow.

Back down to Crown Pass in an increasing downpour. The mud chute was even worse going back up. A lot of heinous aid moves on bushes took us through this section. Both Andy and I took big air as our feet slid out on us at various times. By the time we pulled onto Goat Ridge, we were both coated in slime, but the steady downpour washed us clean as we walked back to the chairlift. Ah, the joys of coastal mountaineering!

At the chairlift on Grouse, we planned various schemes to scam our way on to the chairlift. Grouse had just recently changed its “free ride down” policy, and were now charging \$3 to use the tram to ride down. No way, man- free the tram! So we snuck into the washroom, hid our raingear in our packs, pulled out our cameras, and began talking in Pig-German: “Die Volkswagen ist fahvergnugen, edelweiss edelweiss, ja Gerhard? Ja Karl!” Then we hid in the middle of a large group of Japanese senior citizens, and sauntered onto the tram. No one payed any attention to us, and we didn’t have to pay anything, or show the attendant any sort of ticket. Scammed like the Scam King! By the tme wae got down, it

was dark, and we decided that we were too wet and hungry to go to the Edge, so we just went home. Oh well, no Brocken spectres, but it was fun to look for them, and I got to 'tick' the Camel.

Participants:

Andy Cairns Drew Brayshaw



Photo: Blair Hammond. View due west from approach to Goat Mountain.

The Old Settler

I'm not sure quite how it happened, but there we were, Sandy, Martin, Lenny and Joe, one sunny afternoon in September, bumping along past Harrison Lake in Marti's newly tuned Corolla. We were on our way to traverse The Old Settler, described in Fairley as "a highly recommended line involving a variety of climbing techniques on pleasant terrain." For once the directions in 'The Book' were perfect, and even Martin's custom low-clearance under-body spare-tire attachment had little trouble on the logging roads. Getting to the camp site was incredibly easy too: park, shoulder packs, stomp up through a bit of swampy stuff and steep-but-open forest for 40 minutes and, ta da!: we came out by the lake, with the massif looming around us on three sides. Came across the ruins of a pioneer's shack - perhaps where the mountain got its name? Gourmet food and wine, followed by port, as befits a Joe Jazvac assisted expedition. As the day turned to night we kept warm by playing invisible hacky-sac [see footnote].

Up early the next morning to find a light dusting of snow on the ground - the first new stuff we'd seen for many-a-month. Dawn was breaking as we headed up the scree to the south end of the massif. The Old Settler is an interesting geological anomaly: nice red gabbro on the south end and nasty flaky dark stuff at the north, with the boundary of the two running right up the middle. The route takes you along the crest of the ridge, over the three main peaks, with lots of intervening fun stuff. We cut up a short gully and onto the ridge to discover a nasty cold wind blowing in our faces. Did we have enough cloths along? Scrambled up the ridge, over a couple of very short class 4 sections which we roped up for and Sandy lead. The last section before the south summit was beautiful easy blocky none-too-exposed stuff.

Anxious to be getting on, we plunged off down the other side, icy underfoot, to a rap station. Lucky we brought two ropes, as the rappel was exactly one rope length, ending in a sharp notch between the south and central peaks. Getting four people down took a fair while, and I was beginning to wonder how pleasant it would be to have to bivvy on the route with less-than-adequate gear and in sight of our tents by the lake below. Then the rope stuck while we were pulling it down.

Getting your rope stuck is one of those nightmare occurrences that you hear about around story-telling camp fires and in climbing pubs, and you always shudder and pray to the good dervish of the hills that it never happens to you. The thought of prussiking up one rope while it is held in place by God-knows-what is enough to make the most foolish of climbers decidedly queezy (except perhaps Guy Edwards). Well, it happened to us, but luckily not for long. Much anguished flicking and silent praying brought the rest of our line safely down around our feet, and we headed off down the next section.

Sandy lead down and around to bypass the face in front of us and up a nasty little step, and we were soon scrambling up towards the central peak. Just before the peak is a half-pitch of corner climbing, which we estimated to be low 5th class, and which Martin lead with narry a hitch. Sandy and Joe simul-seconded, about 10 feet apart on the same rope, which is a technique I hadn't seen before, but one I'll definitely use again as it saves a lot of time.

The central peak is flat enough to boast a helicopter landing pad (seems like a strange place to want to land a chopper), and we hung out for a short while enjoying the clear, warmer skies and lessened wind. Then it was off again, two short rappels (mostly for safety's sake due to underfoot ice) and we were down into the notch between the central and north peaks. This col was historically filled by a snow dome, with an occasional moat problem, but there wasn't a trace of snow when we were there. We were definitely on the flaky black rock now, as Joe found out when a large block of it he was using as a hand-hold detached itself from the surrounding surface. First time I ever heard him swear!

Climbing right up the ridge to the North peak was relatively easy third class, but we roped up due to the exposure and the somewhat uncertain nature of the substrate. Feeling secure, it was easy to enjoy the splendid views, the great weather and the fantastic feeling that comes with climbing easy stuff fast. The North peak is the highest and boasts fantastic views out to the Island (Sandy's home), the Cascades, Judge Howay, the nearby Urquhart and across Harrison Lake towards the Mistys. The peaks looked beautiful in the rose-tinted late afternoon light. Late afternoon light? - better get going!

Getting down was slightly trying: watching the light fade as we rappelled down a gully to avoid downclimbing too much friable stuff. Picked our way delicately down the lower part of the gully amongst heavily fragmented rock in the fading light. Another quick rap and we were out on the scree slope - was it better to use the head torch or use the force (, Luke) for guidance?. Back at camp and it was definitely pitch black. Packed up quickly and headed off into the forest, Sandy the bloodhound car-finder in the lead.

We were at the road in under an hour, packed up drank the rest of the port and headed back to civilization. The road out seemed much longer than on the way in, and by the time we arrived in Harrison Hot Springs it was past 10 and we were RAVENOUS. Euphoria quickly turned to despair when we showed up at "The Old Settler" pub hoping for some free food for having climbed the mountain after which the place was named, and found they had shut down the kitchens. "You could try The Lido up the road..." the bartender ventured, but before he had finished we were out the door.

Unfortunately, The Lido was also closing down and, worse, the maitre d' looked us up and down with suspicion and asked "Are you climbers?" We glanced at one another anxiously (I was wondering if anyone I knew had been annoying the populace of Harrison

Hot Springs by trespassing on their property to go climbing) and Sandy stammered “Yes-s, we’ve just been up the Old Settler.” The maitre’s scowl turned into a beam of pleasure and he ushered us in to the empty restaurant. Turns out we had the good fortune to run into Mr. Lawrence Coagie, keen local climber and off-season waiter, who was happy to hear all about our adventure as he persuaded the cook to stay and make us absolutely gigantic platters of seafood linguine. Sandy actually finished his, and then proceeded to devour the rest of our left-overs. Full of great food, beer and somewhat sleepy, the four of us rolled back into Vancouver long after midnight...

In conclusion, I highly recommend this trip to anyone who enjoys open, easy scrambling on mixed terrain, short approaches and fine seafood dinners.

Notes:

Rules of invisible hacky-sac: The same as the regular game, except you play it in the pitch black with head torches. Also you don’t need a sac (less weight) so long as you’re prepared to make-believe.

References: Fairley (of course). Also check out an article by John Pratt in the *Island Bushwhacker*, Issue 20:3 (Fall 1992), which has a great hand-drawn picture and detailed description of the route.

Access notes: We used the Cogburn Creek approach described in Fairley (Page 220, approach A2). The area is currently undergoing extensive stand-level forest re-adjustment (it’s being logged), so the roads are nicely graded and highly feasible for 2WD. Martin’s car made it so yours can too! Remember to call Pretty’s Lumber ahead of time (796-2539) and arrange to pick up the key as the Cogburn Creek road is gated. Past the Pretty’s camp, drive for 1-2km to where the road crosses the creek and there’s a gated turning off to the right. Take this, following the main road on the creek for 15 km (or so) and take a spur road off to the left, which climbs steeply into a clearcut. If you’re still on the main and you cross the Cogburn Creek and emerge into a clearcut, you’ve gone too far. Climb to around 3000 feet through clearcuts, until the road crosses a small creek and doubles back on itself. Park the car and head up the hill through aspen and open forest to the lake on the East of Old Settler at 3700 ft.

Gear: Take 2 ropes, a whole bunch of webbing (lots of raps), a small rack of medium pieces (if you feel like putting in pro on the short section before the middle peak) and an invisible hacky-sac.

Participants: Sandy “Island Bushwhacker” Briggs, Martin “Lead Climber” Carver, Joe “F@*K - it came off in my hand” Jazvac, Lenny “Pass the Port” Thomas and honorary participant Lawrence Coagie, who saved our lives at the Lido.

Mt. Harvey and thereabouts

DATE: Saturday and Sunday, December 3rd and 4th, 1994

PLACE: Mt. Harvey and thereabouts

ORGANIZED BY: Marek Labecki

PARTICIPANTS: Ai (Aiichiro Sekiyama)

On Friday, Dec. 2nd, 1994, a sudden idea of a camping trip to Mt. Harvey was born in the above named organizer's head, i.e. my head. The idea quickly inspired the action of renting a snow shovel from the VOC. A subsequent hasty hunt for potential victims of the plan resulted in having lured the above mentioned Aiichiro Sekiyama (Ai, pronounced as the ninth letter of the English alphabet) into the event. As purists, we ignored the existence of skis and snow shoes in this world and found our way to Lions Bay on a Maverick coach rather than by car (which was not available anyway). A return trip to Lions Bay costs \$7.20 including tax, if anyone is curious.

Starting the hike from the highway rather than, as non-purists do, from the parking lot at the end of the logging road, required getting through a labyrinth of Bayview Roads, Sunset Drives and the like; which was itself an exciting orienteering exercise. Finding Mt. Harvey trailhead, which branches inconspicuously off the logging road on the way to the Lions, is another challenge which requires years of experience. For that, shortly before the Alberta Creek crossing, one needs to spot out an orange ribbon on a tree just by the side of the road and then boldly climb up a half-hidden slope which doesn't look (from the road) like a trail at all. Generally, the whole trail to Mt. Harvey was quite well defined. We reached the summit at sunset, i.e. at about 4:30pm, on Saturday and set up our (well, my...) tent rrrright on the very tip-top, 1705 m (5590 feet, 1491 ells) above the level of Howe Sound. The weather was very friendly on both days and so the views were superb in all directions. On the north side, covering about 60 degrees of the whole view from Mt. Harvey is a rambling multi-humped lump otherwise known as Mt. Brunswick, equipped with a special device that is continuously waving at everything in the neighbourhood.

The splendor and serenity of the surrounding mountains remained unspoiled until about noon Sunday, when wild stomping along with roaring recent Country & Western hits could be heard coming from somewhere near the highest point on Bowen Island. Dismayed, we packed up the camp and left proceeding eastward toward the Howe Sound Crest Trail. We crossed the trail and continued up the ridge to a small whatever-ya-call-it peak. From there we tried bushwacking to the south down to a whatever-ya-call-it pass but were forced to recede because the route suddenly became rocky and almost vertical. Unless someone is really fond of icicles, we do not recommend this part of the route. On the way down the open slope above Harvey Creek we saved some time by taking advantage of the fact that the parallel-to-the-slope component of the gravitational force was predominating over other, evil, forces acting on our bums. What may also be worth mentioning is that we saw plenty of hare, deer, human, and other animals' tracks in the s

now, most of which followed local hiking trails.

We were back in Lions Bay, in civilization, at sunset on Sunday. Afterwards, we were to discover that the Maverick buses returning to Vancouver from the Whistler area were densely packed with purists like us, mostly Japanese skiers and other cowboys.

Marek Labecki, Dec.5th, 1994



Photo: Blair Hammond. Aiichiro Sekiyama

Son of Rockscool

Blair Hammond

As usual, Longhike sold out. However, this year, it sold out in only 2 hours, and there were many sad faces. Fearing the rock-god's displeasure, and in order to satisfy Andy Gabry's workhike requirement, we organized a second fall rockscool. So off we went, a little later in October than we would of liked. We had a good turn out: 60 signed up and 40 turned out on two separate days: rock 1 on Saturday, rock 2 on Sunday.

To make a short story even shorter, a good time was had by all. The weather was clear and warm, there was plenty of "elvis leg" going on and everybody seemed to have a good time. Some were even treated to the spectacle of Guy soloing all the stuff (and more) that they were dogging on, while one or two bravely learned to rappel before anything else.

In the future, it might be a good idea to plan on more than one fall rockscool and perhaps charge a nominal fee to cover expenses in order to meet the obviously huge demand for this kind of stuff. Thanks to all the instructors and organizers.

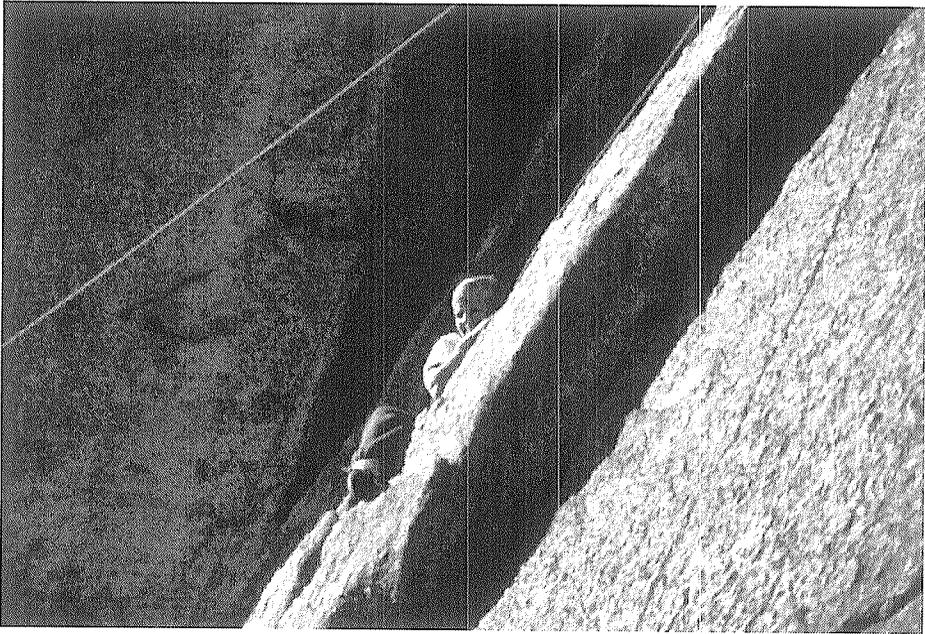


Photo: Blair Hammond. Son of Rockscool: A nervous, but happy neophyte climber.

Some moments in the backcountry

November 1994 to January 1995

Saturday, November 5, 1994

Cerise Creek

10:00pm

And so it came to pass that Jonathan L., Jennifer and Jonathan W. lay in their Megamid, and the wind howled around them, and the blowing snow was upon them, and it threatened to rip their fragile shelter asunder and lift it, heavenwards, to the top of Rex's Pillar. And the spindrift swirled around them and, yes, they were sorely afraid and imagined the impending disappearance of their shelter. And, at last, one of them spake saying, "lowereth the pole, lowereth the pole!" So they lowerethed the pole, yet the Megamid(c) shook more strongly, and the pole carved ever widening conical paths through the fragile domicile and, yes, they were sorely afraid. Fearing that the wrath of the mountain gods was upon them, at length they spake again, and their cries could be heard across the toe of the Anniversary Glacier saying, "removeth the pole, removeth the pole!" So they removethed the pole and the bright yellow tarpaulin settled upon them, like a giant bivy sack. Yet, even with the snow anchor behind their heads, the spindrift wafted in, and the wind inflated the canopy, like the blimp of Good Year, and they lay in their soaked nylon bags and suffered and, yes, they were sorely afraid.

Participants: Jonathan L., Jennifer C., Jonathan W. and billions of glacier school participants.

nb. Megamid(c) is a registered trademark of Black Diamond Ltd. If they would like another endorsement like this one, the author would be happy to exchange one for some free stuff.

Saturday, November 12, 1994

Red Heather Meadows

8:30pm

We started down, cautiously at first, and then, with the icy powder whipping at our knees, we threw caution to the wind, slipping through trees and taking wild leaps into the unknown. We curved turn after turn, dropping almost silently through several hundred vertical feet of new snow, made crisp by the cold temperatures, towards the campsite. Suddenly, one of the lights in front of me disappeared through a narrow gap in the trees. There was a sudden quiet with only the hiss of the snow near my boots to remind me of continued movement. And then, directly in front of me, emanating from a sprawled bundle on the ground, I saw some words that encompass the essence of backcountry skiing.

"K2 Sintered Base K2 Sintered Base K2 Sintered Base K2 Sintered Base"

"Help!" said the figure.

Participants: Phil M., Jonathan W., Jonathan L.

Saturday, November 20th, 1994 **Taylor Meadows**

6:00pm

Saturday evening found us in the Taylor Meadows Shelter, after a fruitless attempt to wade up and find some turns in the waist deep new snow on the ridge below the Black Tusk. Being wise enough to avoid the slog, Blair and Judith had remained back at the cabin and had melted a large quantity of water.

Greatfully, I accepted the proffered bottle and took a couple of large swigs. It was only then that I looked down. Ugh!

"Hey look! There's a flattened beetle in my waterbottle. It must have been in the snow and gotten frozen over the winter..."

I did a rapid orbit of the cabin, showing around my new find. Only then, with the spreading grins around the party, did I realise what had happened.

Judith, the rubber insect purveyor, had struck again.

Participants: Phil M., Jonathan W., Jonathan L., Blair H., Judith R.

Saturday, December 3rd, 1994 **Singing Pass**

10:00am

"uh-oh!" said Phil.

"What is it?" we said.

"I think I've forgotten something."

What could it be? His beacon? Skis? Boots? Sleeping bag? Surely nothing important!

"The fuel bottle for the third stove."

Alas! The pack gremlin had returned to haunt us.

Participants: Phil M., Jonathan W., Jennifer C., Jonathan L., Judith R., Becky M.

Thursday, December 29th, 1994 **Mount Brew**
to Sunday, January 1st, 1995

Jonathan L., Jennifer and Jonathan W. set off up the Brandywine Creek Branch road in fine weather encountering breakable crust conditions on the way up. After eight

hours of slogging through breakable crust, they met up with Gavin, Jen and Heather who had broken through crust for two days to gain the bowl below the ridge approaching the cabin. The next day, the party succeeded in breaking through to the cabin, which was slightly encrusted in snow, and prepared for the New Year's festivities. A fun day of skiing in fresh, windblown, breakable crust, was had by all on New Year's Eve. The highlight of the evening was undoubtedly the no-bake cheesecake with its delicious crust of broken graham crackers. The next morning, it was discovered that the upstairs window/door/only means of escape had frozen shut and it was necessary to effect an exit using a Whisperlite to break through the icy crust that had formed over the lexan. In the midst of the descent from the ridge, Jonathan L.'s left cable broke due to crust on the wire and his ski attempted an unpowered run to the logging road without him on board. After a rather taxing ski through avalanche debris, and some remnants of breakable snowshoe tracks in the crusty logging road, Jonathan L., Jennifer and Jonathan W., made it down the logging road. Conditions were reportedly a bit crusty over this period.

Participants: Jonathan L., Jennifer C., Jonathan W., Gavin, Heather, Jen



Photo: Blair Hammond. Jonathon Wong carving gnarly turns at Taylor Meadows.

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Winter cover photo taken by Markus Kellerhals.
Unidentified "hardman" rappelling across a
bergschrund.

Joshua Tree

“We’re Good, Real Good”

Participants (Players):

Drew “All-knowing” Brayshaw
Doug “Half-Indian” Wilm
Eric “Spider boy” Hutton
Tami “Only girl” Rummel
Carlos “Fleet ‘O foot” Fleet
Jason “The Gossiper” Smolensky
Andy “Big Wall” Gabrys
Matt “Andy’s Friend” Wells

Well, where should I begin? This trip to the south held many possible surprises, both good and bad. Namely, spending Christmas and New Year’s With people I didn’t know. I’d met Drew once and I thought for someone with short hair and a goatee he seemed like a person I might be able to get along with. Except for somewhat contrasting taste in music we got along quite well. Everyone on this J. Tree expedition, give or take the odd tense moment, managed to co-exist extremely well. For me, most of 1994 was a shitty year and ending it by learning to rock climb with a group of cool fellow climbers was my Christmas wish come true. O.K., well I’m becoming self indulgent, so let’s begin this trip.

Day One. December 21\1994

Drew and I left from U.B.C. and had to make a slight detour to West Van because someone forgot his wallet. Between Vancouver and Portland, which amazingly only took four hours to reach, the car mysteriously lost four litres of oil. At the gas station we stopped at in Portland we experienced our first, and definitely not our last, phenomenon of Americans “not being the sharpest pencils in the box.” So to be merciful let’s just leave it at that. That night we stayed in Portland and the next morning we went back to the garage only to discover that by divine intervention the car had somehow repaired itself overnight.

Day Two. December 22\1994

This morning when we left Portland a strange coincidence occurred. At this point I must say that if it wasn’t for all of the strange coincidences that occurred, this trip would have really sucked! Coincidence #1: We needed gas so we exited from the I-5, and as we pulled into the gas station we noticed this place called “The Original Pancake House” and thought to ourselves is this the place that the other VOCers always raved about. If we had tried to find this place we probably would not have, so by chance we just stumbled upon it. The rest of the journey to J. Tree was uneventful, except for the fact that I learned that Drew only had a learners license. So let’s just say that, for myself, driving for 16 hours straight is not an enjoyable experience (what a long day, hey!) So, once we were four hours from J. Tree it began to rain, but we thought, “TT NEVER RAINS IN THE DESERT -

WRONG!!!”.

Day Three. December 23\1994

Arrived at Hidden Valley camp at 3:00am and Drew managed to awaken some fellow B.C.ers, but they were not fellow VOCers (they were not impressed). Nevertheless, we decided to set up camp and in the morning discovered we were camped right next to Tami, Carl, and Jason. (Another cool coincidence, hey!!) Later that morning we met up with Matt, Andy, and Eric and for the lack of anything better to do (due to the rain) we all headed to Cabazon to experience shopping at the factory outlet stores. To say the least, this wasn't my idea of a VOC rock climbing trip. Things had to improve, right? Oh yes, my tent was destroyed by a rainstorm that day.

Day Four. December 24\1994

We had a slight respite from the endless precipitation and we all had the opportunity to crank a climb or two. At this point I have to mention that Drew “all knowing” Brayshaw or the “human guidebook” revealed himself as having an endless supply of knowledge about just about everything and anything (not just rocks...bla, bla, bla). On Christmas Eve we all hung around the fire and enjoyed the spirits and Andy's guitar playing and singing prowess.

Day Five. December 25\1994....MERRY F#@KING CHRISTMAS!!

We woke up to a torrential downpour. And what I saw next can be described as a flash flood. A small river flowed freely and without inhibition through the campsite. Carl and Jason's tent took the brunt of the deluge of water, while the rest of us managed to escape the river's wrath. We then drove into J.Tree proper and lounged around at Kim's Cafe for FIVE hours, due to the shitty weather. Matt and Andy decided to go home, Tami and Carl drove Jason to Palm Springs to visit his sister and myself, Eric, and Drew headed to Las Vegas. Tami and Carl (T & C) would meet us later in Las Vegas in Caesar's Palace. It took five hours for us to decide this plan of action (SURPRISE, SURPRISE!!!!!!). We got to Las Vegas and acquired a hotel room for a couple of nights. I must mention that we had four or five hours of lead time on T & C, so meeting them at the hotel lobby of Caesar's Palace was looking doubtful, because we'd forgotten to arrange a meeting TIME. If it wasn't for another strange coincidence we probably wouldn't have met up with T & C. As we took the elevator up from the parkade from Caesar's Palace (fourth level) the doors opened at the second level and, low and behold, Tami was standing there. (Pretty weird, Huh!) So we all had the opportunity to experience American capitalism at it's best. Quite an eventful Christmas Day...not one I will soon forget. Drew said at best “we played the loosest slots in Vegas.” The hotel we stayed at offered quite a deal, five people in a room for the price of two.

Day Six. December 26\1994

FINALLY, beautiful, sunny, warm weather! So we went to Red Rocks. For those that are geographically inept we are in the state of Nevada. This is where the title of this trip was spawned. We had no guide book, so we asked a local for info. He asked us if we were good, and Eric replied, “Yes, we're good” . The local, “How good?”

Eric replied in an America drawl, "We're...REAL good..."

The local, "You guys are from B.C.? Why aren't ya'll climbing them rocks up there...Ya'll have lot's of 'em don't ya's?"

Eric (the seemingly delegated conversationalist), "Well, the weather's nicer down here." (a good conservative reply)

The local, "Ya'lls got to be careful, ya hear? There's a story back, happened last year...about one of you'all climber types. He was up on a steep rock face and he fell, smashing his head just like a punkin'. So you'all's better use them there pitons o' yours good, ya here."

This all comes back to the phenomenon mentioned earlier (not the sharpest pencil syndrome). Oh, yes, while this conversation was occurring Drew was off relieving himself, so he assumed that because this local told us some areas to climb at, that he thought the local was a climber. So we went to look for a route to crank, and while Eric and Drew were looking they came across this same local. I must mention that we didn't inform Drew about the nature of the conversation we had with the local (yet). Drew, thinking the local was a climber, pointed to a route that he had found. Drew, "all-knowing" Brayshaw did not know the name and rating of the route. We were all stunned. Drew said to the local, "What is that crack?"

Local, "Oh that, that there is the result of some geological weathering."

To say the least, we all had a good laugh about that American and his substantial IQ. Later that day we went to sandstone quarry and climbed a 5.8 face. That night, back in Vegas, we dined at an "all-you's-can-eat buffet" and then sampled the 99 cent margaritas.

Day Seven. December 27\1994

Another sunny, warm day, so before heading back to J.Tree we went to Red Rocks for the day. We did some radical bouldering and took some real good pics. At this point, I have to say that not all the Americans we met were clueless. There were a number that were bright and quite articulate; some morons discovered why Doug has a permanent tan. The return trip to J.Tree took two and a half hours while the drive there took four and a half hours. This may be due to the short cut we found and the "solar stealth" (radar detector).

Day Eight. December 28\1994

More sun and more climbing. The axe incident occurred and the un-named person had to receive a few sutures. Sutures aside, the person still cranked routes for the rest of the trip.

Day Nine. December 29\1994

This morning we woke up to a nice layer of ice on all of our tents. But the sun was shining, so it warmed up real quick. We hiked into Rattlesnake Canyon and cranked some rad routes at Corral Wall. One was the "Exfoliation Confrontation", 5.10 and the other was "Czech Crack", 5.10b. That night Carl and Jason headed back to Van, so now there were only four. We went to desert hot springs to recover from a most excellent day of climbing, oh yes, and have a few cervezas.

Day Ten. December 30\1994

The last few days turned out to be real warm and real sunny like and we were all real glad we had stayed. At this point, I must backtrack...We had met a fellow climber from Wisconsin. His name is John and he'd been climbing at J.Tree for fifteen years...straight! His climbing partner had died so he mourned

by climbing with us. He turned out to be a real good and knowledgeable climber. So, to get back to climbing, that day we cranked quite a few routes. Two routes that come to mind are "Overhang Bypass" and "Lucky Lady". Later on that day we went to do some souvenir and grocery shopping. We stopped at K-mart, so Drew could pick up some discount (free) firewood. We also managed to locate some free pallets (wood) so we could have a large, and very hot, burning at the stake (who would win the lottery).

Day Eleven. December 31\1994

Last year, on New Year's eve, I was in Costa Rica (Latin America for those inept in geography), on a crocodile safari (sight seeing, not shooting). So to say the least, the contrast between tropical rainforest and desert is something everyone should experience. It was twenty degrees celsius colder this year than last year, but no matter I managed to persevere. We all managed to climb hard that day. Drew, myself, and my good ol' friend Tami all hiked in to climb the "Aguille de Josh". Along the way, we discovered that Drew had led us along the wrong path (in some countries Drew would have been flogged!), so we traversed the mountains to the valley we were looking for (just like them good ol' explorers). The traverse turned out to be real cool, as the scenery was exceptional, so we forgave Drew (just this time...). Drew and I climbed "Josh" a 5.6 free climb and took some real rad pixs (see phallic shots). New Years eve we consumed copious amounts of liquids and had a huge fire (thanks to our free firewood). The New Year came in with a huge flash, courtesy of a can of white gas, which produced five meter high flames!!!

Day Twelve. January 1\1995.....HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

For some reason today seemed like a real ruff day for all of us - go figure. Did a bit o' bouldering and packed up camp and headed for one last visit to the desert hot springs. The drive home was foggy, dreary, long, and Drew's feet stank REAL bad. I have to say that I was tempted to use my axe to cut off both his feet and tie 'em to my roof rack to air 'em out. Once back home, the house seemed smaller, the dog bigger, the little white fence even taller. See what twenty four hours in a car does to one.

Epilogue

All-in-all, even with a few shitty days of weather, everyone on this trip had a wicked time. With spring just around the corner, there's Smith Rocks, Skaha, Squamish, and the Valley...the world is my aphrodisiac!!

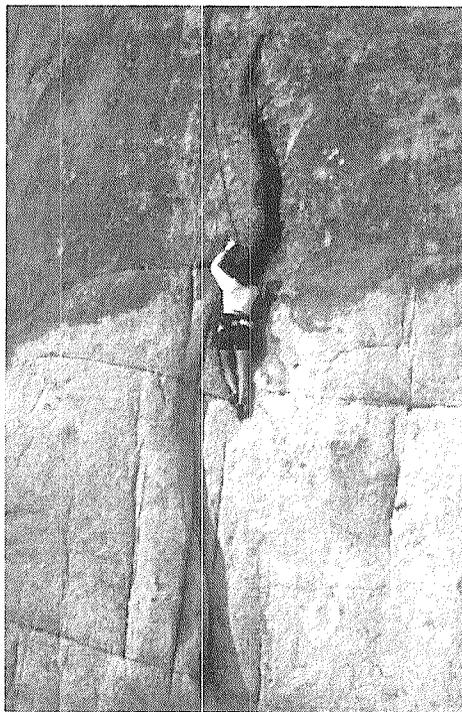


Photo: DB. Tammy Rummel at J-Tree.

“It’s only another one hundred Miles...”

written by:

Dave “Strider” Vocadlo, Ann-Marie “Am /Pm” Conway,
Doug “Pa” Wilm, and Tamara “woman! not girl “ Rusnak

Wednesday, February 15th, Vancouver woke up to just under a metre of snow and school was closed the day before a long weekend...oh! no! What to do?!

A brilliant escape was planned by our four adventurous free spirits, though a destination was not. Braving the intolerable conditions (snow up to your ears) and disregarding the heinous weather predictions for Smith Rock (a proposed traveling goal), the Fab Four set out for the vast unknown, and a CLASSIC (hint) road trip was born.

I guess things didn’t really get started until we entered southern Washington state. The Rock God saw that we were about to make a grave mistake by driving to rainy, cold, snowy Smith Rock, so, He gave us a flat tire. Not fully comprehending the gravity of this spiritual message, the Persistent Four persevered. They replaced the flat with a spare that was really no bigger (or stronger for that matter) than a bicycle tire. It gave way within five miles. But even this didn’t phase our unstoppable explorers... what finally did was the rocking, shimmying, banging and loss of control of the vehicle “This can’t be very good for the car can it?” DESTINY dragged the Fanatic Four into the parking lot of Spiffy’s Restaurant.

After chatting up our friendly and courteous waitress who provided us with One Pound Burgers, crudités and other such delights, we got the Beta on how to find the best camping spot in the area. Luck was on our side; we parked right next to it when we pulled into the parking lot.

We set up AMC’s sieve... I mean... tent in the rain, crawled into our sleeping bags and prepared for a luxurious fifteen minutes of sleep... Funny how camping next to a Truck stop can induce insomnia.

At five thirty, Thursday morning, we dragged ourselves out of our soggy sleeping bags and gave good old BCAA a call. After a tow, a new tire and Dave’s nine cups of tea (no wonder we took so many rest stops this day), the Most Worthy Four set out once again. A stop in Portland and a chat with a local climber (who is now completely stoked on going to Squamish) gave new direction to the road trip and Salem and Rosenburg were hence the next stops.

At 3:05 Pm we arrived in Rosenburg. Shit. Last call at all the coffee shops was at 2:50. So, the Disgruntled Four had to settle for an icy cold beer and a game of pool at the local saloon . Having such a vibrant and youthful appearance, it is no wonder that the Fantastic Four got IDed at this respectable establishment (the walls of the joint were plastered with posters of large breasted women, to give you an idea). The barkeep upon being presented with Dave’s Canadian Passport asked the profound question “ Don’t ya got any local identification?” upon which Dave adeptly replied “No. I’m not from around

here.” Acceptingly, this sharp fellow then snatched up AMC’s underaged ID, examined it for a good fifteen to twenty minutes after which he handed it back and dumfoundedly walked away.

Leaving Rosenberg, the Fun-seeking Four continued their as yet, aimless mission to the land of sun and shirtless climbing. Redding was not this place...but it did have a Denny’s.

Doug spent his lunch money on a few newspapers and soon the Odd Quad was frantically searching for the weather pages...D9... D10... D11... E2... E3...Ah! Ha! Rain everywhere! But wait! No! San Francisco! Images of Palm Trees danced in our heads! However very quickly the initial elation of a warm destination settled and it was realized that only short, sport routes could be had there. We needed more...Bigger...Larger...Taller...Badder...Better...we needed BIG WALLS. And with this realization our final destination was at last determined. Our goal was the Valley. It was definitely attainable. After all, we’d come this far and besides, it was only a hundred miles further than San Francisco.

We installed Doug, the driving machine, and pointed the wheels due South along the I-5. The towns streamed by and soon, (5:00 am, Fri.), we broke the silence of the Valley as we pondered the vastness of El Cap. out loud. We fell out of the car and bivouacked under the closest climb - all ready and prepared to hop onto it first thing in the morning.

AM’s and TR’s sense of direction was somewhat skewed that morning. So anxious they were to climb, they ascended the first route that they saw and set a precedent that they would follow for the rest of the weekend... they were off route. It is very possible that this Deadly Duo was still groggy due to the abundance of sleep (3 hours) that they got that morning, because DW and DV, the other (not the better) half of the Quad, with less than an hour of sleep was not quite as screwed up in it’s orientation. As soon as this Spirited Pair awoke, they jumped into their harnesses, laughed at the two females who were still at the top of the wrong crag, then effortlessly ascended Nutcracker’s first pitch. The two girls, after toying with death when they rapped off of a mangy stump, finally got their shit together, then climbed the Nutcracker like no woman has ever climbed it before...that’s right... they went off route again!

Following a joyous reunion after the last pitch, the Diabolic Tetra descended in search of more climbs to prey on. They climbed the next few routes with grace and style then retreated, with the sun, Home to the Red Rocket (DW’s car).

Curiously, there was not yet any sign of the two Dudes from Fresno who had followed AMC and TR up the Nutcracker. Did the route live up to it’s name and reject the two men from it’s towering heights? Or did they foolishly follow the girls’ example by going the wrong way? In any case, Dave “Strider” Voadlo was not going to wait until dawn to find out.. With his trusty head lamps, and a keen sense of direction, his intuition led him to these two men who would have been majorly screwed if it wasn’t for four friendly Canadians. Realizing this, the Fresnonians kindly offered libations to compensate for the Four’s heroic efforts.

At the Mountain Room Bar, their waitress quickly identified the Tetra as Canucks owing to her experience in dealing with heavy drinkers, such as her “man,” Hugh Burton.

Dave and Doug shot the shit with her so as to avoid having her ID AMC. She jazzed on about how Steve Sutton was crowding up her place with his stinky socks... And so the night went on.

Despite the fact that we slept on picnic tables in order to avoid having all the warmth sucked out of our bodies by the absolute sub zero ground below us, we froze our asses off that night. One less hardy Canadian even retreated to his car. Again.

After another fine night of superfluous slumber (maybe 4 hours) the crazy crusaders set off for another fantastic day of climbing in the sun. "Commitment" (has a nice ring to it doesn't it?) was the target of the morning. The Faithful Four climbed with style and grace (and stayed on route too... well sort of). An interesting down climb - waterfalls- concluded the multi pitch, but not the day of climbing. Their hunger for climbing cracks had not yet been satiated (could it ever in this Mecca of cracks?) so they went to take an edge off of this craving by cranking up "Book of Revelations" and "Bishop's Terrace." Unfortunately the Earth was still revolving around the sun, so dusk once again arrived and the climbing at Yosemite was finished, but the adventure was not.

Showered, refreshed, in clean nice smelling clothes and exalted from two rad days of climbing, the two newly initiated and the two veteran Crackmasters drove into the darkness with an entirely new goal...to make it back to Canada before class Monday morning.

The Red Rocket fired Northward stopping only for fuel and junk food. Exhaustion set in surprisingly early, (2:30 am), and so to avoid the crazed and the queer folk often found at rest stops, the Fatigued Four clandestinely idled into a closed state campground (Mt. Woodson). After a couple hours of chit-chat, sleep was finally at hand.

Another huge four hours of unconscious pleasure prepared the journeyers for the trial that awaited them that next day: 24 never-ending hours of sardine in the Red Rocket. Lunch in Weed, California and 2 hours of tanning at a rest stop in Oregon was practically their only respite from the Red Tin Can.

From now on this is what our mode of transport will be named because when we drove, it bloody well sounded like we were dragging some huge old rusty tin can behind the car...It turns out it was only Doug's muffler....Was the Rock God speaking to us again? Telling us to return from whence we had come? With too many responsibilities awaiting us in Vancouver, we denied that our Heavenly Deity was trying to contact us and we convinced ourselves that Doug's car was merely suffering from an illness- which Dave quickly remedied using Duct tape and Rope.

Despite the suffering car, DW managed to maintain an average velocity of 160 km\h NNW. Billy the Radar detector was of no avail when Smokey paced us at slightly above average speed. The kind donut gulper refused our bribe of a dozen Bavarian Cremes and laid down the law. Distracted with the recent turn of events, the group was forced to stop and appease the Rock God with worship at one of His shrines: Castle Crag.

Giddy with the thought of being able to put up a bazillion new routes at this newly discovered haven of cragging, the Delirious Four went into a meditative trance and started climbing the cracks on the road. Hark! Is that reality calling? Shit, it is...and with that, our for heroes were on the road again.

At 4:30 am Monday morning, we limped over the 49th parallel into the land of the mighty and even though we were no longer in The Valley, it did feel good (real good) to be back in Canada.

Monday and the days and weeks that followed, offered the Four an entirely new challenge: to deal with the banality of daily Vancouver existence now that they had been to the Valley. Thoughts of freedom and adventure dogged them all. Only the reassurance that the Valley, the ultimate temple of worship to the Rock God, remained constant, as well as the knowledge that they would one day return to this Mecca for the righteous, gave them the strength to carry on.



Doug & Dave on Nutcracker, Yosemite.

"WINTER" FROLICS ON NEEDLE PEAK

by Drew Brayshaw

The fourth annual VOC Needle Peak trip occurred sometime around the end of October, I forget the actual date. Twelve happy VOC'ers old and new headed off one fine fall day to climb Needle Peak, a great summit near Yak Peak on the Coquihalla Highway. My brother's trip sheet had dwelt at great length on the beautiful meadows, etc. to be found on this fine peak.

By the time we stopped at Rolly's Restaurant in Hope for the traditional pancake cramming session before the hike, we knew that this would be a bit different than the previous three trips we had made to Needle Peak. This time, the snowline was at 3000 feet. The various people on the trip were by and large prepared for the snow, but to different degrees; some just put plastic bags around their socks, while others, such as myself, had brought along plastic mountaineering boots.

The Highways works yard, the starting place for the Needle trail, was under several inches of snow when we arrived. The usual brisk hike up the trail was thus made more entertaining with clumps of snow falling from branches overhead onto the heads of unsuspecting hikers. Higher up, we began to find that the usual easy slabs which one scrambles over on the trail were much more difficult when covered with a thick blanket of fresh powder. Skis would not have been out of place here, but no one had thought to bring them. Above treeline, on the open ridge, there was over a foot of snow with a breakable windcrust in some spots. The post-holing was entertaining.

At the base of Needle's SW ridge (standard route up), we began to encounter difficulties. The usual gullies and 2nd class moves one encounters on the ridge were much harder with ice filling the cracks. In fact, slightly under half the group of twelve turned back to the meadows to search for blueberries under the snow and build snow angels. The rest of us persevered. Higher up, beautiful ice feathers covered the trees and rocks. I got the opportunity to try maneuvers I had only read about, like getting a glove wet and letting it freeze to the rock to make a hold. We reached the top and had lunch amidst clouds which sporadically opened to give us views, and at other times closed in to leave us feeling alone and isolated on our summit pinnacle.

The going was much quicker on the way back down, both due to the glissading potential and because we knew where to go to avoid the obstacles. We met up with the meadow group and headed off to the traditional Needle Peak boulder to work on the boulder problem which four years' worth of VOC'ers have conquered. I found it much harder to send this problem with plastics on; in fact, I couldn't use the crucial smear and had to try a wild dyno which ended up not working too well. After all who felt like it had played around on this boulder we slid back down the trail to the cars. No one got lost

this year. As we had hiked, the temperature had warmed up a fair bit, and the parking lot was now snow free, while the trees which had earlier dropped snow on us now dripped drops of meltwater.

On the way back we stopped off at Othello Tunnels near Hope to kill off some time. There is a very steep granite face above one of these tunnels which has some bolts near the bottom. I wondered at the time if someone had put a route up this fearsome looking face; I later found out that these are left over from the shooting of First Blood, the first Rambo movie, and were used by riggers to set up cameras for the scene where Rambo is hanging off a cliff and some dudes are shooting at him from a helicopter. So if you want a free bolt hanger, you now know where to take your crowbar - and unlike chopping a climbing route, this bolt may be chopped guilt free!

In summary, a comment Vance made probably describes this trip better than anything I could say about it: "With the snow, it almost made [climbing Needle] worthwhile."

Participants:

Drew Brayshaw

Cam Campbell

Vance Culbert

Chris Brayshaw

Ai Sekiyama

Dave Dexter

6 other people whose names I have unfortunately not remembered accurately enough to risk writing down.

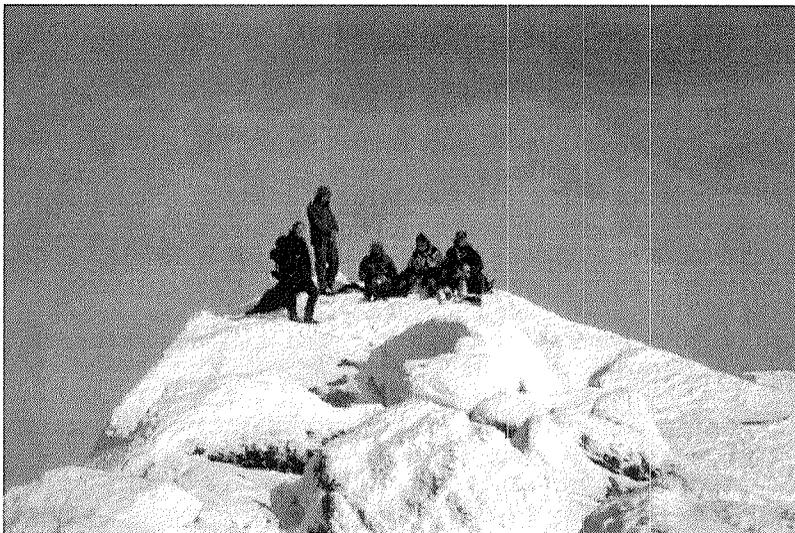


Photo: Drew Brayshaw. Summit team on Needle Peak.

'Yaking in Indian Arm

February 16 & 17 !!! , 1995

by Alex Mossman, who was there... and survived.

Faces were grim at the put in point. The rain came in a steady down pouring, only slightly warmer than the snow it was mixing with on the ground.

The trip meeting had been held a week earlier, and more than ten people had eagerly signed up, encouraged to an adventurous spirit by the warm sunshine and balmy breezes that prevailed. Now, in the aftermath of the worst snowstorm of the year, the volume of which had impressed even the east coast author, those who had not already bailed out were facing the prospect of carrying through with the unlikely plan of a kayaking trip in February.

Hunched shoulders, white knuckles, and eyes wincing from the elements, unloaded gear from the car trunks, and boots already saturated with cold water squelched their way down to the beach, under quizzical glances from passing cars.

The intrepid leader, Caitlin, was a pillar of resolve, unshaken by the realisation that half of her followers had never seen a sea kayak before, and were having trouble figuring out which of the three holes in the deck they were supposed to sit in.

At length the motley crew gathered on the beach with their gear, unable to understand why the rental agency had issued them with half a spare paddle each, shrugged their shoulders, and launched their craft. There was Louise, steadfast companion of Caitlin and a firm first officer for the expedition, shod with Texas, plastic bags and duct tape. There was Paul, tall, strong and determined, clad in Gore-tex from head to toe. Paddling strongly in the vanguard, Paul from the very outset of the trip had filled the indispensable role of official trip whiner.

The North wind gave of its best, as the rain whipped across the side expanse of the inlet, and those who had shirked the rent of pogies were quick to regret it. As the little pod gained confidence with its plastic flippers, they sped quickly out into the bay to ride the waves, or nosed along the shoreline exploring from the unique perspective a kayak affords. The bay widened out, and the feeling of being on the open water, flanked on all sides by the rising slopes of the mountains, quickly allayed any fears that the trip had been a mistake.

Setting their sights on a small mist-shrouded island in the distance, the fearless six set out across a wide expanse, across which the wind, funnelled down by the shape of the facing valley, blasted like a maelstrom. After battling wind and sea with their very lives at risk every second, the six poor craft huddled in the lee of the island, sheltered for the moment, and plotted their next course. Paul was for calling in Search and Rescue.

With grim resolve, faces encrusted with ice and sea salt, the six rounded the island and fought the fierce wind head-on on the north shore. Rounding Cape Horn can hardly compare to the crashing surf and wild banshee winds faced by these brave explorers, and it is to their credit, and to that of the firm paddle of their leader, that no one was lost. At the expense of soaked feet, and of the rudders of several rental 'yaks, the six craft eventually gathered on a tiny gravel beach that the elements had pounded from the cliffs in their relentless fury. With their neoprene skirts dangling at their knees like absurd paunches, they set out to

explore the island. And still it rained....

On the far side of the island they found a large clearing, where they pitched their tents, and an ingeniously strung tarpaulin afforded a measure of shelter. It would have been a cold, miserable night indeed, but the fire gods smiled on the little band, and allowed a cheery little blaze to flourish, and grudgingly consume the rain soaked branches it was fed. Never was a flame more revered, or more appreciated, as all six huddled around this wondrous source of warmth and light in the midst of the cold, dark night of driving rain.

A brief moment of panic ensued, after a huge moss covered log, against which the fire had been built, blazed up and threatened to light the surrounding forest on fire. It was a strange sight indeed, to see cold, wet people fighting to extinguish a great, rotten log in the middle of a rainstorm.

Well into the night they huddled around their fire, sharing tales and carrying out strange rites in the light of the flames, such as invoking rain words from A to Z, and doing the fire lambada a quatre. They laughed about anything and everything and nothing in particular, except perhaps worm sex, the rain meter, the North Gully, moisture gradients and strange exploding logs.

In the morning, a brief window in the rain allowed camp to be broken under a false hope of sunshine, but once they were on the water again, it came back in force. Dodging seals, and rafting contentedly beside a waterfall, they made a more leisurely return, as the storm's wrath had subsided.

The sun shone once, briefly, as they unloaded the boats at the rental agency, almost as if in jest.

Participants: Louise Blomer, Paul Fearing, Anthony Haw, Alex Mossman, Caitlin Roberts, Jackie Wu and MacGyver.

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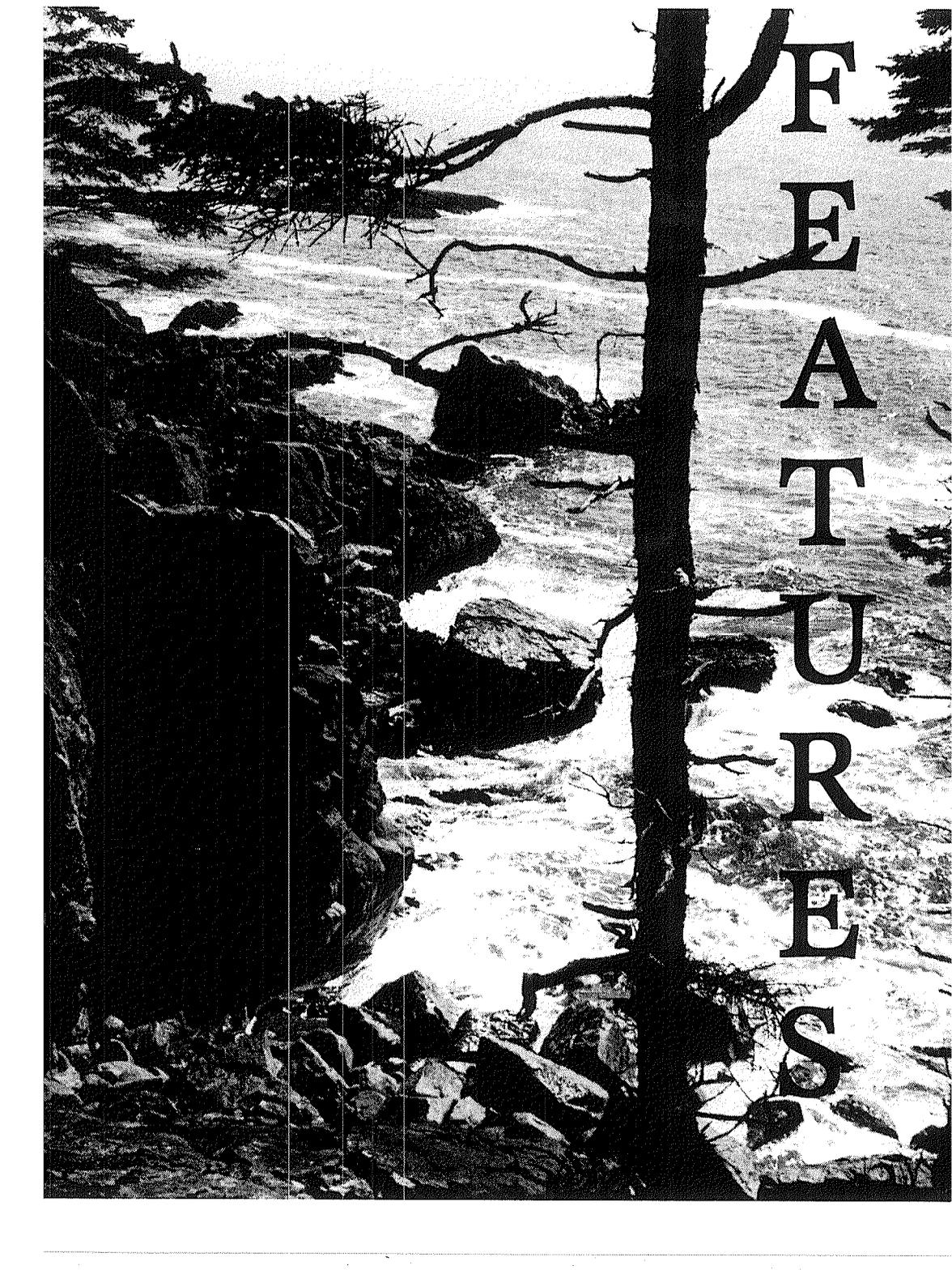
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Previous page photo Elizabeth Cheu.
Pacific Rim National Park, Aug. 1993.

Ethics - A Discourse

by Mike Adub and Dave Avocado

While hanging off dinky bits of metal on aid climbs, while thrashing up through the bush to some alpine wall, while labouring under a heavy load on a long ski trip, we have come up with a formal list - a description - of our firmly held ethics. Most have taken years to develop, in response to our experiences in the mountains of B.C., the St. Elias and the Karakoram. Some have developed recently in for the sole purpose of pissing off these new-fangled "sport" climbers. Either way, it does not matter - this list of ethics is what guides and limits our behaviour in the big mountains of the world. Not only does it guide our behaviour, it also serves as a template by which to judge, and react to, the behaviour of others. In other words, if you fail to abide by these simple, just and equitable rules, then you will have a problem. A big problem.

We have survived years of epics on all the big climbs throughout the great ranges of the world - we know much better than you. We have had stories written up about us in most of the climbing mags the world over - we are widely respected (as opposed to your limited exposure, and hence negligible influence). We, in short, have our shit together. You, on the other hand, do not. It is our duty to protect you from your own terminal banality and sheer stupidity. Here we go.

1) Any bolt you see, you chop. The only good bolt is a chopped one which is then subsequently forced down the throat of anyone who questions the chopping. Simple, and to the point. Never, and I mean never, place a bolt and deface the rock. The rock is life, and your life pales in its sheer insignificance to it. Once, we had to set up a hanging bivi/belay below an A5 pitch on Trango Towers consisting entirely of equalised hooks. If we can do that sort of thing, then everyone should. Make sure to chop all bolts seen, on lead and without question. If you are going to deface the rock, do it like a real climber, and pound the shit out of chro-mo steel pitons. Bolts are for European losers. Upon returning to the ground, find the person who placed said offending bolt, connect a chain of carabiners together, and flog him or her until all of the skin is flayed off. Then throw rocks at the pulpy mass until movement ceases. This is the recommended "humane" method - please ask Dave for other more suitable methods if you particularly want to make the bolter suffer.

2) Always run it out. Climbing is about boldness, and over reliance on gear placements is spreading like a cancer. If you are belaying a leader who is sewing up a feature beyond measure (i.e. more than 5 pieces per 50m pitch), simply untie and take the belay off, and call up said news to the shameless over-protector. He or she deserves nothing less than to look at a way huge whipper. The ground is the only place for these type of people (introduced to them from 8 pitches up). Dave regularly flagellates himself when some

genetic weakness inherited from his wimp-ass parents force his mind to place more than three good pieces in a pitch.. His mind seldom forgets these lashing, and so frequently Dave compensates for the previous effrontery to boldness by going out and rope-soling A6 on a 5mm rope as an extra object lesson. If you aren't looking at close to a death fall (i.e. permanent disability) at the very least, you are too secure and safe in your climbing methods. If the area you regularly climb at, due its natural features, presents altogether too many protection opportunities, simply fill the offending features with cement. While you are doing this, you might kill two birds with one stone by burying a French sport climber in a particularly well protected off-width.

3) Drive irresponsibly fast, and steal all you need for food and gear. Money and material goods are for lesser, non-climbing, human beings to worry about - the climber needs to live off of the fat of the land. If you own any fancy gear that has not been stolen, or stripped off of a fallen climber, you are a greedy, capitalist bastard who cannot possibly have the right to enjoy the benefits of a climbing life. If you do have this kind of gear (i.e. legally owned), give it to another, REAL, climber, and take up free-soloing in the Rockies as a penance.

4) Never work...ever. If you are not 100% committed to climbing - as evidenced by climbing every waking hour - than you are weak and pitiful, and barely deserve to breathe this earth's air. Nuff' said. Except that if you DO work - please leave large amounts of money in your car which is parked in a dark, quiet alley, with the doors open (won't have to bust the windows that way).

5) Relying on active camming units, such as Friends, and the use of chalk, is cheating. Cheating is punishable by surreptitiously severing the core of the lead rope of the guilty party. Death is easily too benign for cheaters. Friends, and the like, constitute a threat to the boldness factor as described in #2, and the previously described responses apply in this case. Protection should consist entirely of slung machine nuts, a pocket-full of pebbles with slingage to place runners around them, and a whole shitload of pins - from RURPs and Beaks, through to Angles and Bongs. Hooks and copperheads should constitute the primary freeclimbing protection in most situations.

Ahh, shit. I am getting tired of this discoursing bullshit on ethics - I gotta go climb. You know the rest - just use your common sense, and where ever the chance arises to place your own personal safety and sanity BELOW that of image, then by all means do it - safety sux. And remember - if you find yourself slipping occasionally, and end up ignoring what, in your mind, you truly know to be ridiculous, but hard-core, then start looking for Dave sneaking up behind you with a heavy, blunt object. You will pay for your misdeeds. After all, its NOT what you climb and whether you survive.....it's how you do it.

FOOD PLANNING FOR TRIPS

By Markus Kellerhals

For lengthy backcountry trips food is a critical component of the planning. Too little food will result in calory deficits and resultant lack of energy. A shortage of food will also tend to make food the unwanted focus of the trip, as it will constantly be on everyone's minds. On the other hand, an overabundance of food will result in excessively heavy packs and wastage, as the extra food will undoubtedly be turfed down some convenient crevasse.

This trip food plan is based on a scheme presented by John Baldwin in the 1984 VOC Journal. It has been further refined over the years by Craig Hollinger, Dave Williams, Jan Palaty, Markus Kellerhals and others. For lots more useful suggestions about planning for a long ski trip see Jan Palaty's article "Your Pot is Your Life" in the 1990 VOCJ.

The amounts given here are adequate for a group of people with large appetites engaged in strenuous activity such as skitouring or mountaineering traverses. Activities from a base camp or hut usually require slightly smaller amounts. Less strenuous activities such as sea kayaking would also require less food.

A group of friends and I have tested the following meal plan extensively on spring ski trips and summer mountaineering traverses of one to five weeks duration. During these trips the days typically involve 7-10 hours of travel, with occasional longer days, as well as some days of forced inactivity due to weather. We have found the amounts to be adequate though not plentiful. If the trip involves airdrops we often put some extra food, of the yummy but heavy variety, in the food caches. This relieves the monotony of the meals somewhat, as well as taking care of any giant calory deficits that the hungrier members of the party have been building up. The loads to be carried between caches are not made any heavier.

The menu is 'somewhat' vegetarian although it does include some fish as well as dried soup mixes which often contain various beef extracts. A strict vegetarian could easily modify the plan to exclude meat. Excluding eggs and dairy products, however, would require a fairly major redesign of the menu. The meal plan is quite simple, with about eight different dinner meals. Imaginative combinations of the ingredients can increase the apparent variety. Inevitably on a multi-week trip the combinations will start to seem somewhat repetitive.

For simplified planning the amounts can be input into a spreadsheet. Then the number of people and the number of days are typed in, and all the necessary amounts are output. On the other hand, if you are unsure of your computer skills, it might be wiser to check the calculations by hand. It would be an awful shame to find out that you only had half the food you need three days into a twenty day trip.

The menu presented here, is in terms of food amounts per person day. Unless specified otherwise the amounts are in grams. The full menu weighs slightly less than one kilogram per person day and provides roughly 4000 calories.

FOOD LIST

BREAKFAST

oatmeal	70*
cream of wheat	70*
granola	90*
raisins	30
brown sugar	15
whole milk powder	40
egg powder	5

*Choose one of these three staples per day

LUNCH

crackers	1/3 - 1/4 package*	*choose one
bread	1/6 of a sizable loaf (90-150 gms)*	
assorted cheeses	50	
cream cheese	15	
peanut butter	20	
jam	15	
honey	10	
salami	20	

DINNER

macaroni	125-150*
spaghetti	125-150*
rotini	125-150*
dried refried beans	125-150*
cous-cous	125-150*
rice	125-150*
lentils	125-150*
dried mashed potatoes	110-150*
margarine	50
soup mix	30 gms bulk or 1/3 pkg "Knorr"
Parmesan powder	20
cheddar powder	10
tomato powder	8
engevita yeast	7
simulated bacon bits	10
dried vegies	20
powdered coconut milk	10
canned tuna	25
dried fish	6

*Choose one of these per day (not all!!) or substitute a similar amount of another carbohydrate dish.

MISCELLANEOUS

chocolate	65
juice powder	85
gorp	100
hard candies	as desired
hot chocolate	15
tea	1/2 - 1 bag
vitamins	1 tablet

FUEL, ETC.

toilet paper	1/2 - 1 roll/week
white gas	150 ml (melting snow for all water)
	90 ml (all water available)
spice kit	

Dinner consists of a stew made from one of the starches and a mix of other ingredients. Lunch is crackers with cheese, salami and other condiments. Breakfast is hot or cold cereal with raisins, brown sugar and milk. The egg powder is used to make a paste to thicken the oatmeal (much less disgusting than it sounds). Items such as gorp, chocolate, drink mix and crackers can be divided up into individual portions beforehand. This will prevent the "tragedy of the commons" from occurring at each lunchstop. One litre measuring cups are ideal for eating from and also facilitate equitable division at mealtimes.

Famous Foods on Kingsway is an excellent place to buy dried food. They will often give discounts for large purchases. A wide variety of dried fish is available in Chinatown. The bulk bins at "Save-on-Foods" are a good place to purchase gorp supplies.

Finally, anyone using this menu for a long trip would be advised to try out some of the portions on a shorter trip to make sure it satisfies their appetites and palates. I would hate to be responsible for your slow death by starvation halfway across the Greenland Ice Cap.

Elizabeth's Travel's

by Elizabeth Cheu

October 8-10, 1994

Elfin Lakes

A sunny Saturday start from downtown Vancouver and we were on our way to the Squamish/Cheakamus area for a fun weekend of happy camping and amazing hiking. With our trip leader Blair at the wheel of the big, blue Vocer transporter, we all piled in. After a quick stop at the Bread Garden in Park Royal for the usual necessities and something chocolate we were off again! A quick rendez-vous in the Elfin Lake parking lot, and the entire group starting up from the trail head. The ascent up the lakes provided views of Squamish Valley, the summits of Garibaldi, Mamquam, Habrich and Sky Pilot. Fresh creek water and blueberries were both plentiful. Elfin Lake lodge was reached at about lunch time and the rest of the day was spent exploring the alpine meadows or settling in with a good book by the lakes in the warm sunshine.

The second day was highlighted with hikes to Opal Cone and Mamquam Lake. The trail crossed Ring Creek, through Opal Cone Meadows, past glacial moraine, through Skookum Creek, past Rampart Ponds and then to Mamquam Lake. The trail down (~850m) to the lake was a narrow path through blueberry-munching black bear habitat!

Jan 15, 1995

Brackendale Eagle Count and Bluff Scrambling

Brackendale is a bald eagle counting utopia. The annual eagle counting event consisted of many groups of people counting eagles in and around Brackendale. Our group had counted approximately two hundred eagles, both mature and immature. We also counted nine trumpeter swans, including five signets, several ducks, geese, several blue herons, and one woodpecker. This year the count was about two thousand five hundred eagles. The afternoon was spent scrambling up some bluffs near the North Vancouver Outdoor Club. We spotted an old coyote den and several 1000y old red cedars.

Aug 1993

West Coast Trail, Pacific Rim National Park

This was a 74k hike through Pacific Rim National Park from Port Renfrew to Bamfield. This fun trip consisted of trails, ladders, beachcombing, waterfalls, otters, whales, lighthouses, instant food, beachfront campsites and spectacular sunrises and sunsets. (See photo on page 159 - Features.)

Aug 1994

Haida Gwaii

B.C. ferries provided the stunning trip through the Inside Passage to Prince Rupert and then on to Skidegate. Camping at Tow Hill, Tlell (Naikoon Provincial Park), Rennel

Sound and Gray Bay was exciting. Hikes to Cape Fife, around Rose Spit, along Agate Beach, to Riley Creek, and along the Cumshewa were highlights as well as finding the Golden Spruce, Yakoun Lake, and a well preserved Haida Canoe hidden in old growth forest.



Photo: Elizabeth Cheu. 1200 year old Red Cedar at Brackendale, Jan. 15, 1995.

Phil and John Climb the Apron

A children's climbing story by J. Wong

See Phil and John head to Squamish to climb Diedre.
"Vroom, vroom," went their little red car. "Vroom, vroom."
Get ready to do multipitch, Phil and John!

See them gaze up at the climb from the road.
"It looks good," says John. "It looks good!"
"The rock looks a little bit wet," says Phil.

See them approach the climb from the trail.
"Bump!" goes John's head on a rock. "Ouch!"
"You should have worn your helmet," says Phil.

See Phil and John tie in and begin the first pitch.
"No problem," says John. "No problem."
"No protection, either," says Phil.

See Phil lead the second pitch. See the rope drag.
"Oops!" says Phil. "Oops!"
"I should have used some longer runners," he says.

See John lead the third pitch. See him run it out.
"I'm standing in a puddle," he says. "I'm standing in a puddle."
"It doesn't mention a puddle in the guidebook," says Phil.

See Phil lead the fourth pitch. See him stitch the climb like a sewing machine. See him gibber in fear on the slick rock.
"Why are you protecting every move?" says John. "Why are you protecting every move?"
"Maybe we should have done this another day," says Phil.

See John fall off while seconding the pitch. See him mysteriously lose his sense of humour. The rock is very slippery.
"Ouch!" he says. "Ouch!"
"Now it's your turn," says Phil.

See John lead off. See John run out of jug holds. See him run out of quickdraws. See him drop a carabiner and envision himself taking a slightly abrasive leader fall. See him try to dry his feet on his radpants. See him gibber in fear on the slick rock.
"How far to the belay?" he asks. "How far to the belay?"

"About fifteen feet," replies Phil.

"Oh hell." says John. "Oh hell."

See Phil lead the next pitch with relative ease. See him loop a sling over a horn for marginal protection.

"Just wait until you see my pro!" he laughs. "Just wait until you see my pro!"

"Where is your pro?" says John.

"I guess it cleaned itself," says Phil.

See John attempt to lead the crux pitch. See him gibber in fear in the sopping stream bed the climb has become. See him attempt to aid the pitch on a rusty piton and a purple Camelot.

"What are you doing?" asks Phil.

"I'm demonstrating very bad style and a complete lack of ethics," says John.

Dog it, John, dog it!

See the sun go down as they finish the climb.

See John try to walk off while wearing his sunglasses. See Phil try to walk off without knowing the way. See them both try this without headlamps.

Stumble, Phil and John, stumble!

See a kind person lead them down with his flashlight.

See Phil and John go to Squamish for supper.

"Wow, what an epic!" says John. "Wow, what an epic!"

"Maybe we should try it when it's dry," says Phil.

Reflections on Being Crippled and Gimped

by Eric Clemson

As a few of you may know, I severely broke my ankle in several places last March while paragliding. Although I underwent extensive surgery to repair it at the time, my ankle has recovered so well that it no longer inhibits my climbing at all and only slightly affects my carving pressure while skiing. Although the reparations have resulted in a rather Frankenstein-like foot, it seems to be working quite well. In any case, I have a few thoughts to share about the whole breaking and healing risk process.

“Did it hurt a lot?” Of course it did, although the immediate pain upon fracturing was somewhat subdued by the adrenaline pumping through my body, and then later by the nitrous oxide given to me by the paramedics - they were excellent, by the way. Later, while waiting for treatment at the hospital, the pain was quite intense. The physical pain, however, was minor compared to the emotional letdown of being so physically restricted for such a long period. Being a fairly active person, I was suddenly restricted to hobbling to the bathroom with a walker, trailing my IV unit behind me (I refused to use a bedpan!). Later, they gave me a wheelchair that I could buzz around the hallways in, but even that felt lame. Soon after, I graduated to crutches and at least regained the dignity to be able to stand up. Crutching from Geography over to Brock Annex became a major undertaking, as I had to make several stops to regain my breath and strength. Being gimped sucked, but at least I was getting a little bit of sympathy (well, at least people opened doors for me.)

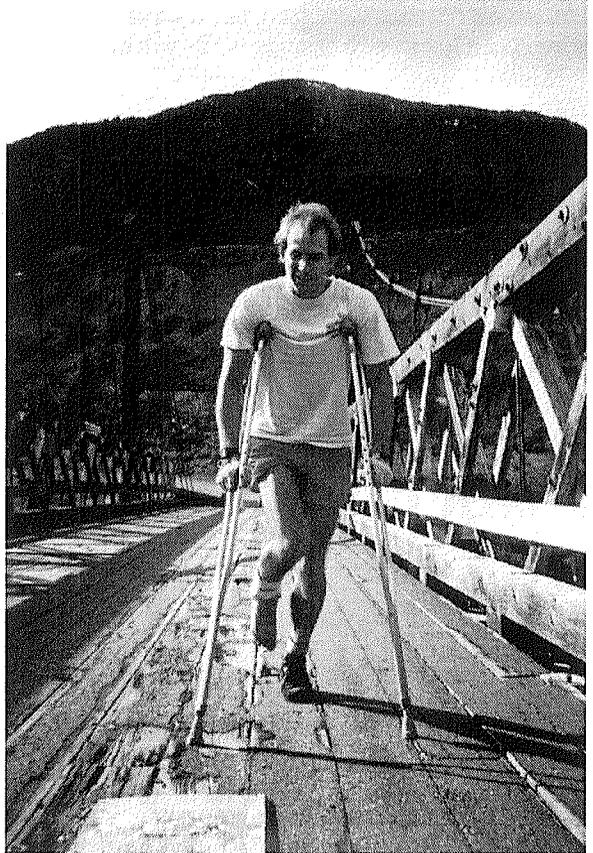
Throughout my six weeks on crutches, I was constantly counting down to the day that I would be allowed to walk. I was seeing an excellent physio in White Rock who got me to work on a variety of stretching and strengthening exercises, while at the same time putting gradually more weight on the foot. In mid-April, missing out on the planned trip to Smith Rocks, I went on a short photography trip to the Pallouse country of southeast Washington with my dad. Although I couldn't yet walk, I could still put my energies into taking pictures. It was also a great way for me to feel some sense of adventure. My dad and I just took off in the car, climber-style, and bivied wherever we could find a good free place. (My dad still insisted on putting up the tent every night!) In true Eric style we found good restaurants to eat in, and free showers (no jacuzzi though!).

Midway through the trip, the magic 6 weeks rolled by and I got up one morning and walked over to a tree to do something most people do in the morning. This time my crutches stayed on the ground. What a thrill (the walking, that is). I began walking around the campsite, simply because it was such a novelty. I walked here, I walked there.

I walked out into fields to get that perfect angle. I walked up and down the main street of Pullman just because it was fun. A week later, I started working at the golf course and started playing golf in a big way. It was a sport that I could put all my energy into without being held back by my foot. I admit that I did drive the first couple of rounds, then later on only took a cart out for the back nine. Working on my feet all day and golfing twice a week greatly improved the strength in my ankle, and by June I started climbing again. That was wierd at first. Not only did I have lousy edging strength, but my technique and fitness had gone to crap throughout the layoff.

I did a reasonable amount of climbing throughout the rest of the smmer, but was never focused or fit enough to do anything all that hard, due in part to an ingrown toenail that I developed. Only now do I really feel back to normal. My injury's behind me, my foot's working well (Yes, I got the toe operated on too!) and I'm now more driven than ever to maximize the use of my free time. Every weekend this term I've been out doing something, either skiing or climbing, as I feel the desperate need to make up for lost time. My skiing is as good as ever and my climbing is starting to feel a lot more solid. I'm totally psyched for Smith next week and heaps of climbing later on. I've made more climbing plans for this year than ever before and am far more driven when I'm out at the crags. In many ways, this injury and layoff have made me take greater appreciation of my life and potential. Although the injury sucked big time, I feel that I've gained a great deal from the experience.

"Was it worth it?" Paragliding, that



Eric Clemson hobbling across the old Lilloet Suspension Bridge.

is. Yes and no. To me, no sport is worth serious injury, yet saying this, I certainly don't regret taking up the sport. It's certainly a great deal of fun, and I've had probably the most thrilling experiences in my life while flying. My first flight, my longest flight, and my farthest flight were all moments I'll never forget. It's a great sport, but it certainly has its hazards.

"Will I fly again?" I don't know. Somedays I feel like being up there, soaring with the birds and enjoying the freedom and view. Other days, I figure no, it's not worth it. I get enough out of my other sports and don't need to paraglide. But it is fun and very alluring. I don't know. I'll have to see when summer rolls around. For now, though, I'm simply enjoying what I'm doing, whatever it may be. I've taken up playing ice hockey on Friday afternoons (I'm not very good, but it's a great challenge) and look forward to lunchtime when I can hack with friends in the sun outside the SUB. Life is instantaneous.



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Jen, Joanna, Judith and Robyn's Top 10 Reasons to JOIN the VOC

10. read the quotes on the back of the Longhike and Banquet tickets
9. read Ann Marie's shit column in the VOCene
8. go to Wednesday lunch slide shows and hear Drew name the obscure mountains in other people's slides.
7. Blair's soirees
6. free rentals of smelly, decrepit, decomposing climbing shoes that are too big anyway
5. to become a clubroom groupie
4. good chance to participate in death-defying acts of agility, balance and grace....NOT!
3. quick way to lose 500 bucks (shoes, harness, beer, skis, kayaks, etc.)
2. the blue couch (the place of Jen's conception?)
1. buy a t-shirt and be able to tell everyone you belong to 'Virgins of Canada'

In next year's journal, look for:

Jen, Joanna, Judith and Robyn's Top 10 Reasons to be on the VOC EXEC
(**preview:** get a key to the clubroom)

By: Judith Shapiro
Joanna Wood
Jennifer Wild
Robyn Scott

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TO SPORT OR TO TRAD, THAT IS THE QUESTION

by Dave Vocadlo

I've been climbing for a little while now and I've clipped a bunch of bolts and I've placed a bunch of gear. I'm no one really to be yakking about climbing style but I feel obliged to toss my two coppers into the pot since its empty. Owing to my lack of expertise I can only offer my own view and personal experience. I won't make a pretense at being unbiased, rather, I will admit that I favour gear climbing over sport climbing. That is not to say that I don't enjoy sport climbing, when in fact I enjoy it greatly.

I should define in which context I use the words sport climbing. I am not referring to any bolted route. Truthfully, some of the most terrifying routes are bolted ones wherin the bolts are spaced widely. When I say sport climbing I mean a clip and go climb where there is no danger to the climber. Where protection requires no thought and the consequence of a fall is perhaps a minor scrape, the loss of a couple of feet of progress and a loss of pride. To many this seems to be the ideal form of climbing: safe, friendly and physically challenging. To say that sport climbing is not really climbing would be foolish, at best, a bald outright lie at worst and for those whose fear is too great or the pain of jamming too much then let silver wings guide their way to the top of the cliff. The physical challenges of sport climbing are great and the technical problems mesmerize. I admire those who can perform difficult sequences gracefully but more still I admire those who climb with grace under duress.

Many, including sport climbers, when questioned would say that they climb for the excitement of it. The thrill of fear and danger enlivens us and for those who seek excitement I must say that trad climbing has no peer in the form of sport climbing. The nagging feeling that your gear could rip out only to slide down the rope to your pulpy remains keeps the excitement level high. The route finding skills required on trad routes never come into play on the sport crags and never have I heard of an epic on a sport route. Only a few sport routes can bring you high off the deck to where the birds fly and the air snaps with cold.

To compare the two only on the level of excitement would be unfair to gear style. The real clincher in my mind is the thought require to climb gear. Each pitch must be carefully planned. Each rest and each placement must be considered and too little or too much of either can spell doom for a no falls ascent. Too much gear and your muscles will fail high up, too little gear and your brain will fail up high. Placing gear is a skill, an activity on its own, which keeps you alive and so the choice of and arrangement of protection requires thought while under stress. Cowardice comes easily to people. The dominion of fear and

the strengthening of will to persevere on gear routes and climb gracefully as I see it is a major goal of climbing and no easy thing to achieve.

The camaraderie when flaking out the rope at the base of a long gear route or the base of a climb at your limit where you will be balancing your psyche, energy, amount of gear and will is intense. I have never felt as intense a feeling when roping up for a hard bolted lead. You know your friends at the bottom of a climb, the vibes wash over you and you look forward to climbing up over the rock alone in silence but also as a team. I've climbed with many people who were having fun and I have also climbed with a couple of people who wanted me to fail and flounder. In either case the rope acts as a figurative wire which carries the good and the bad. All trad climbers I know make time to climb with novices and are eager to show fledglings the ropes so they too can have adventure.

I enjoy clipping bolts when my mind is frayed. When I can't summon the mental energy to climb gear at my limit I flee to the silver wings. When I feel good though, and when the planets are aligned correctly, I yearn for the partnership, excitement and adventure of multipitch. The unease in the back of the head and the rectum and cramping fear of run out can only come from trad. For those with the gumption, gear is the way to go, after all trad does have the word "rad" in it.



Photo: Dave Voadlo. Half - Dome. View from Commitment.

I first decided I was going to climb when I was laid up with a ruptured disc. My bud brought me a climbing mag to cheer me up and turned the pages for me. I soaked up each image in that Climbing magazine and I can still remember the cover which has a fantastic picture of Headstone Arete (5.13b) in J-tree. That magazine was well worn after a month and when my back healed enough for me to walk I carried everywhere I went. I managed to, despite a shortage of cash which seems to still haunt me, borrow a rope, harness, biners and to buy a pair of Scarpa Fiammas from Extreme Mountain Gear. After outfitting myself I bought How To Rock Climb by John Long (which I feel has to be the best climbing book out there aside from the Yosemite guide) and round up a partner with the same foot-size. We went to Squamish and endured the gawkers as we tied in and compared our knots to the pictures in the book. At the end of each day we hithhiked back looking like bipedal zebras owing to our hip belays and Duflersitz rappels. Neither of us ever got injured and though my first climbing bud doesn't climb anymore I still remember fondly the smell of the shoe sole burning as we scampered desperatly up the Burgers and Fries slabs.

My first few leads came after a couple of months when I rustled up some hexes and I remember the desperation of trying to slot in those funky polygons. Soon equipped with wires and one camming unit I hooked up with my good bud and climbing partner John Simms. We hit it off both in climbing and life. He was as wild to climb as me and bolder. When I met him I thought he had some foul skin disease. His hands were scabbed and oozing puss on every knuckle and every phlange. The truth of it was that Simms would hurl himself at any climb with wild abandon, heaving up great gasps of air and clawing wildly at the inside of the cracks. Soon I adopted his style and we were fighting for the dubious privilige of being the first to thrash on any given climb.

THE CHICKENS AND THE FOX

or WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BORED ON A WINTER TRIP

by Alan Dibb (reprinted from the 1984 VOC Journal)

Mid-winter days are agonizingly short and people on trips often find themselves with surplus energy after dinner. Typically the cabin is crowded and either too hot or too cold. The solution? The game 'Chickens and the Fox'.

This game evolved from an ancient Eskimo form of 'tag' which was played in deep snow with all participants wearing a snowshoe on one foot and a heavy rock on the other. Thus, the circular tracks as illustrated (see diagram).

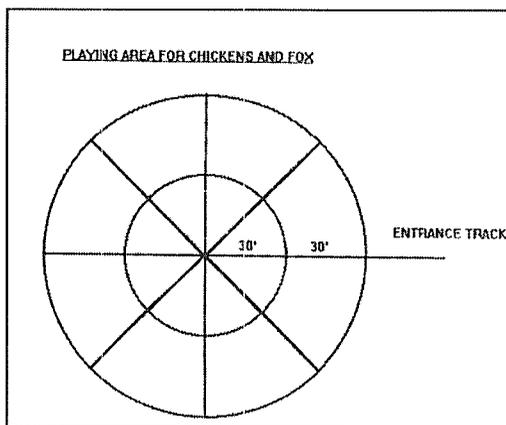
Today's game is played with all participants on two skis each. First, a flat clearing at least 30 metres by 30 metres is selected. The track setters then make a track consisting of two concentric circles and a number of spokes as shown in the diagram. The track setters must avoid creating any extraneous tracks which would confuse the players. More players require larger circles and fewer spokes.

The game begins with one person designated the fox and everyone else as chickens. The fox need only touch the chicken to catch it. The chicken then becomes the fox, and the fox, a chicken. Players must stay on the tracks, and are not allowed outside the large circle.

The fox may employ several strategies. One, it may try to surprise a chicken by a quick spurt. Two, it may select a particularly bothersome chicken and pursue it until it weakens from fatigue or laughter. Or, three, it may simply charge through the tracks chasing whichever chicken happens to be the closest at any given moment.

The chickens attempt to infuriate the fox with loud, drawn-out clucking sounds. Brave chickens ski close by the fox while it looks the other way. Such actions put the fox into such a rage that it may attempt a sharp corner while travelling too fast. The resulting headplant is, of course, met with a chorus of clucking, and the chickens come up to within several feet of the fox while it is helpless. When the fox does make a catch, the result is often spectacular.

The game is ideally played under a full moon, but headlamps allow the game to be played in total darkness as well. ENJOY!!!



The Freezing Our Butts Off Halfway Up Cypress Blues

My bum is cold
and I'm feeling old.
I've been on this chair
since I had short hair.

And the driving snow,
how it likes to blow
right up my nose
which is almost froze.

So on we ski
though we can hardly see.
(so we hit a tree)
We just don't mind
that we're skiing blind.

Through the snow and rain
we will ski again.
And if you think we're dumb,
Up yours - we're having fun!

Agent Ice &
Agent Snow
Feb. '95

THE BREW HUT STORY - CONTINUED.....

by Markus Kellerhals

The story of Brew hut began with its initial construction in 1982. The location proved to be unsuitable and the cabin was partially destroyed by snow creep. In 1984 and 1985 the cabin was moved and rebuilt at its present site. (For a history of the Brew Hut see Fern Hietkamp's article (1993 VOCJ) as well as the journals from 1981 through 1985.)

Since 1985 the cabin underwent a long period of neglect by the VOC. It appears that the cabin has actually been used quite a bit in the subsequent years by summer hiking parties, and the odd party of skitourers. A few VOC'ers; Eric Nodwell, Tony Webb and Denie Robichaud, continued to visit the cabin. They warned of the steadily deteriorating state of the cabin.

Over the last few years momentum slowly built for the idea of "doing something about Brew Hut". Last year \$1500 was set aside for repairs to the cabin. The new executive, elected last spring, seemed enthusiastic about the project.

Mike Buda, myself, and several others hiked to Brew Hut in early September to see what repairs would be necessary. We found the basic structure of the cabin to be more or less intact. However one end wall had virtually been destroyed by snow pressure, the sheet metal roofing would need to be replaced on one side and the door and windows needed fixing. In addition, there were lots of smaller repair jobs needed inside the cabin. Most of all the area around the cabin needed to be cleaned up as there were bits of lumber, asphalt shingles and metal roofing spread over a wide area.

After we had taken the necessary measurements we spent the rest of the day getting the garbage stacked ready to be flown out. Before heading out we quickly popped up to the peak of Brew Mtn. above the cabin. Truly a beautiful vista of peaks surround this cabin.

Two weeks later was the big weekend for fixing up the cabin. Over 40 enthusiastic new and old VOC'ers had signed up to come help out. Mike B. and I had been busy the week before buying \$1100 worth of lumber, roofing and tools. We met Saturday morning at Brandywine Falls. From there most of the crew headed up via the trail to Brew Lake. Dave Dexter drove all the building supplies to a staging area high in Brandywine Creek. Fern and I continued on to meet the helicopter in Whistler.

Flying the material into the cabin went smoothly. It took two loads to fly in all the stuff (we even managed to squeeze a few packs into the second load). We also flew out three loads of garbage from the cabin.

People arrived at the cabin throughout the day, the hour of their arrival determined by choice of route and departure time. Tasks were found for all hands. Two of our experienced carpenters oversaw the most important tasks. Denie coordinated the rebuilding of the end wall. Dave organized the replacement of the sheet metal roofing.

Saturday evening many of us gathered around a bonfire where we burnt some scrap lumber. (We had the fire on the rocks on top of sheet metal to avoid any damage to the

alpine meadows.) However, when Denie, Lenny and Katrina began singing most people headed for their tents.

Mike B. and several others arrived in the middle of the night, their arrival announced by Mike's bellowing. Many of we rudely awakened campers considered getting out of their tents to murder Mike, but fortunately (for Mike) laziness prevailed.

On Sunday most of the remaining work was completed. The roofing was completed, the end wall finished, the outhouse shored up and several coats of new paint covered everything.

Two weekends later five of us returned to finish off a few remaining jobs. We cleaned the inside of the cabin thoroughly and generally made the place livable. We noted in the log book that three different parties had already used the refurbished cabin in the intervening weeks.

I was very impressed with the energy and enthusiasm of VOC members that was so evident throughout this project. Many thanks to all those that came out and helped. The building and maintenance of Brew Hut by the VOC has been a valuable contribution to the whole mountain community.



Photo: Scott Martens. Brew Hut repair, VOC style.

Four Years With The VOC: Reflections on Times of Learning and Experiences

by Mike Buda

As my time with the University draws to close, after 4 years of academic and other pursuits, I look forward to a change in surroundings. Many things will change completely- no more 8:30's, no more exams, no more summer breaks - and yet I will continue to go to the mountains to search for the challenge and wonder which first drew me to them. Whatever I end up doing "in life", my time at UBC will leave me with a legacy of my love for the mountains. This legacy, although not altogether undeveloped before I arrived at this institution, fully blossomed and consolidated itself through the people and activities of the Varsity Outdoors Club.

My first tiny beginnings at the Club came during first year when I went on a couple of the November ski outings to Singing Pass and Diamond Head. I had missed Longhike and so I was relatively unfamiliar with the Club and its members. Never the less, I managed to gain some experience in the mysteries of winter backcountry mountain travel as well as no small amount of love and desire to return to the mountains. Although manifestly failing to "make contact" with other, more experienced, skiers and climbers, I still managed to get out into the mountains several times that winter, often without suitable knowledge of the sport. I had taken the Club-sponsored Avalanche Course, but I was still relatively blind in terms of evaluating my ability of travelling in the mountains. This lack of ability and knowledge culminated in a rather spirited attempt on the Spearhead Traverse (a ski traverse) that ended in a mini-epic which, in hindsight with more complete knowledge and skill, I see now as involving substantial amounts of luck - that is GOOD luck in allowing us to survive.

An epic, rather than dissuading me from further forays into the mountains, actually fuelled my desire to learn more in order to be able to travel effectively and adventurously in the mountains. Through the summer and following autumn (now the beginning of my second year) I worked hard at gaining as much experience as I could in whatever form of backcountry travel I could - walking, hiking, camping, climbing, skiing. It wasn't hard - I loved getting into the mountains, and took every opportunity to do so. Longhike and Glacier School came and went, and this time I was there, and was more formally introduced to the sport of climbing and mountaineering. More importantly, I met several other experienced, or at least keen, people, together with whom I would have in the future many excellent experiences. My skill level increased as a direct result of

going out on many trips - in fact, I did not miss a single weekend in the mountains for my entire 2nd and 3rd years - with many different people. It is these people who made my dreams and desires possible - technical course had little to do with it, as a sum of all the experiences.

Although technical instruction is important, as the Longhike Rockschoo and Glacier School are, it is the people I met through these events which most helped me in attaining higher skill levels in the applicable sports. The fact must be emphasised that it is the learning of skills gained through repeated experience which far outweighed the specific knowledge gained over the short time span of a technical course or clinic. Like many things in life, humans learn most effectively through experience, and not through instruction: nowhere is this more the case than in the mountains.

The mountains present a myriad of challenges and experiences, some of which although only appearing infrequently, are of the utmost importance to those who travel amongst them. It is the complexity of knowledge required that makes the mountains a not completely suitable place for formal instruction. Time is the best teacher - the climber, skier or mountaineer must first experience the wide diversity of conditions and situations that the mountains can erect as barriers to the safe enjoyment of a potentially dangerous place. This is not to discourage someone ambitious from attempting to do something in the mountains beyond their current skill level - nay, it is exactly in these situations where the most learning will occur. BUT, it must be remembered to keep the experience in perspective with the skill level; thus, soloing Mt. Logan or *The Grand Wall* would not be a prudent manner by which to challenge oneself beyond one's limits. Approaching the mountains on their own terms, with a real and honest evaluation of one's own limits, will net the mountain traveller the most complete and effective experience to further their own end goals. The mountains need to be respected by being honest with oneself - to do this will ensure an experience as beneficial and safe as possible.

The point I am making is that to become proficient and experienced in the mountains, attendance at the perennially popular VOC courses such as Rockschoo and Glacier School is not required. Indeed, perhaps too many attend these events with the unreasonable expectation that a course will do all that is required to transform themselves into regular and competent mountain travellers. Nothing could be further from the truth. In reality, a great many attendees of both VOC and other mountain-skills courses seldom, if ever, return to the mountains to apply the newly won skills. As I have said, it is repeated visits and experiences in the mountain environment which will expand one's horizons the most. The key to accessing these real and useful experiences is to meet other keen and devoted climbers and mountaineers, and follow in their footsteps, learning as events unfold.

I am not alluding, as it may seem, that some of the large VOC courses, such as

Glacier School, be cancelled due to their ineffectiveness. Rather, I am challenging all involved to refocus and concentrate on the reality of the situation: that one weekend of instruction makes not a mountaineer. It may seem trendy, or exciting to enrol in a climbing course with the VOC, the FMCBC or NOLS, but only with hard-won experience through frequent, low-glamour trips with others, will skill actually accrue. This is really a challenge to those signing up for the legion of technical climbing and mountaineering course out there to think whether the commitment to a course really equals the commitment required to learn the skill; or rather that by attending a course, one will meet other, potential, partners through whom one will be able to truly learn.

To approach a course with the intent to “network”, as it were, is the best, and only, approach to take. By meeting others, it is insured that future experiences will be possible. This means that the biggest, best and most expensive courses are not necessarily the best: being guided up some big peak does not ensure that one will make the contacts needed to establish a base of future partners. A short day course in one’s own town may go miles towards seeing you off to the mountains as frequently as desired.

I guess I am writing this article in response to the challenges raised by several experienced VOC climbers as to the value of me spending so much time organising VOC mountain courses. It is precisely the opportunity that such meagre (from a technical skills, point of view) courses offer for those attending, to meet others of equal and higher skill levels that makes them so worthwhile. Although I am not necessarily implying that “networking” actually occurs effectively on our courses, it is a very valuable and very accessible opportunity: you do not have to pay \$2 000 for a lengthy FMCBC or NOLS course simply to see what the sport is about, and to meet others with whom future experience can be gained.

So, to all future prospective climbers and mountaineers, save your money and time by calling up lots of other people, and go on trips with them, rather than attending many and diverse technical courses. Your skills will improve, you will have fantastic experiences, and you will gain a true and complete respect and appreciation for the mountains. With respect and appreciation of the mountains, comes a desire to be among them. It is only to be among the mountains that one can benefit from the experiences they can offer - sitting on a couch flipping through FMCBC Course descriptions can never offer the same. The mountains are there for whoever wants them - take a chance, step past your limits, and reach out - you will never regret your decision.

Winter Days at Taylor Meadows

by Blair Hammond

I'd been to Taylor meadows many times before, but never when it was under 10 feet of snow. This was going to be my first real winter trip into the Garabaldi lake area. It was the end of November, and there was tons of snow. There were five of us, including myself and the almost legendary team of Jonathan (Wong) and Jonathan (Longe).

We had a late start Friday afternoon, not reaching the furthest point up the Rubble Creek road until 8 or 9 pm. Even at this low elevation, there was heaps of snow, and we could only drive to within 3-4 km of the trail-head. We took off with head-lamps blazing, breaking trail through snow that was commonly over our knees. By the time we reached the trail head we were all ready to call it quits for the night. At around midnight we set up camp and hit the hay.

An early start (7 ish) and we were on our way sloggng up through the trees on the Rubble Creek Trail. The going was pretty slow, and everyone took turns breaking trail. The weather was overcast, quite chilly and with limited vis. We finally made Taylor meadows at about 3:30 and set up camp. The two Jonathan's and Phil took off in search of slopes. Judith (not THE Judith of the J's) and I stayed at camp, ate, and tried to stay warm. I busied myself

with a monumental excavation for two tents, complete with wall and shelf seating, so flat that a marble wouldn't roll. Judith starting digging a snow cave with the idea of sleeping in it that night. She also put together a little lighthouse for a candle lantern to guide the intrepid skiers home.

Shoveling in snow 4 meters deep kept me warm while I was doing it, but when I stopped, I went fetal in the warming hut with the stove turned up high trying to keep thawed. During this respite, I had visitors. Several "youth-at-risk" and their gaoler came and went collecting gear that they had left in and around the hut. A couple hours later the two Jonathan's and Phil returned with reports of poor skiing and mild to moderate hypothermia.

There was some mischief on this trip. Thinking "ho ho wouldn't it be funny if..." Jonathan put a ski, binding up, under Judith and Phil's tent. Retribution was extracted by Judith, who turned out to be quite a trickster. She dug a rather large hole under our tent with near disastrous results. Judith was also fond of putting plastic bugs, brought along for this explicit purpose, in our water bottles. Quite a trickster, that Judith.

The next day was still overcast. It had snowed a little during the evening leaving some

more light fluff on top of the ample amounts of heavy fluff already there. We toured a bit moving towards Black tusk, then going east to what looked like great ski terrain. After some pieps practice we proceeded to some steep but sheltered and tree covered slopes. We dug a pit and the Jonathan's and Phil decided to ski this slope, which was pretty steep.

Judith and I felt less confident about the pit and decided to take pictures of the other three as they were caught in an avalanche. No avalanche resulted, and the snow was so deep that the run was much slower than you would have thought it would have been. Some O.K. pictures resulted.

The ski back was less than spectacular, the highlight being some very fresh wolverine tracks. Being, at that time, totally inept on tele skis I decided to keep my skins on for the descent down the Rubble Creek trail. It nearly killed me, coming down in the dark. Still, I survived. Jonathan Wong only narrowly avoided skiing off the stairs at the bottom of the trail, and was nearly decapitated in his attempts to do so. The ski down the final 3-4 km was pretty fast. In fact, it was like a bob-sled track. I felt luck coming out of it with only one broken pole and slightly battered pride.

This was a grand trip and I would highly recommend it to anyone who likes "winter wonderlands". It's close and once you get to the meadows, the skiing is easy. If you exercise caution and leave time for some light, the ski down is survivable. I'll definitely do it again.



Photo: Blair Hammond. Johnathon Longe having a rest at Taylor Meadows.



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A Rocky Mountain New Year Dec. 28- Jan. 2

By Joe Jazvac

Thoughts of skiing in the Rockies contain, on one hand, images of thousands of feet of powder blanketing a spectacular glacially influenced landscape. On the other hand, there is notorious avalanche potential to consider, as well as the potential for a snowpack that is rotten with bottomless depth hoar formed during periods of extreme cold.

In early November, with full knowledge that planning a multi-day trip in the Rockies is a gamble, eight people crossed their fingers and planned to meet at the Yoho Park information centre in Field B.C. on December 28.

As it turned out, a travel advisory was issued Dec. 27 advising motorists not to travel. Fortunately roads remained open and Lenny, Katrine, Dave, Joe, Liza, Dick, Tesa and I all arrived from our various Christmas roosts. As we started our trip the snow that dominated the weather pattern yielded to sunshine.

Our original plan was to ski up the Yoho Valley into the Little Yoho Valley where we would spend a couple of days doing side trips. Then to cross Kiwetinok Pass and ski out via the Amiskwi Valley.

After arriving at the cabin in the Little Yoho Valley on day two, our thoughts about the Amiskwi changed. The plethora of terrain in the Little Yoho combined with low avalanche danger, high comfort in the cabin, glorious powder, and an invitation from Chic Scott to a New Year's Eve party in the Stanley Mitchell ACC Hut all helped us reach a consensus to stay where we were.

From our base we toured every day, always breaking a new trail in the inviting powder. Tours included, Kiwetinok Pass, President Pass, and McArthur Glacier. Returning after sunset to the cabin that was always sure to offer a feast, courtesy of everyone in turn, and a story or two courtesy of Dave. Not to miss the opportunity to see what happened when one tries to bivvy at -30 C, Len, Joe D., Dick and Dave all spent a night out and came in for breakfast the next morning happy to report that various combinations of vapour barriers or overbags made an ordinary winter bag a warm home for a night in temperatures as cold as you'll find (unless you look really hard).

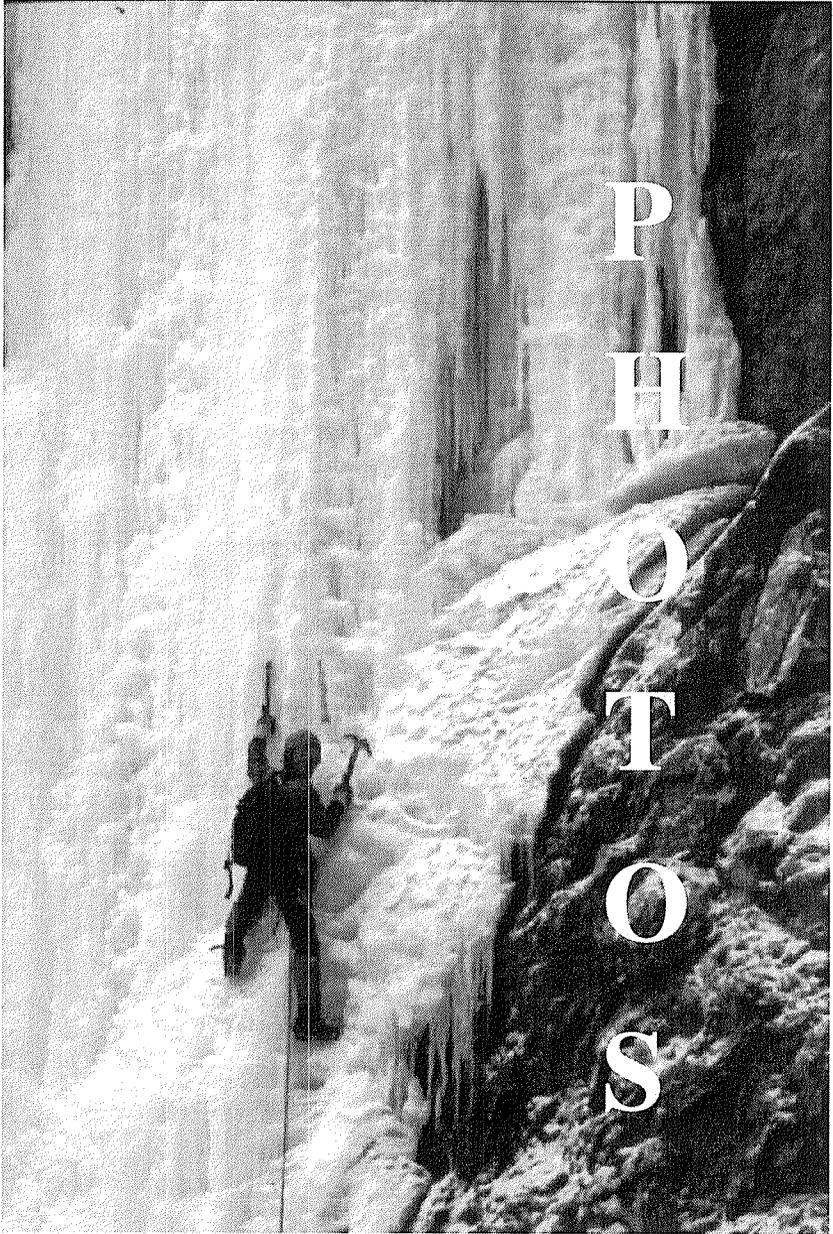
Wondering where all the time (and food, and schnapps...) went we all skied the 25 km back to the noise of the highway. We were all savouring the taste of the Rockies at

their winter best, and so, returned to the city, feeling that feeling that makes one dream of future trips back to “mountain” reality.

Participants: Joe DeGisi, Liza Hart, Lenny Thomas, Katrine Vogt, Dick Repasky, Dave Westcott, Tesa Weber, Joe Jazvac.



Photo: J. Jazvac. Dave enjoying Rockies powder.



Opposite page.
Gur Edwards on Jade Falls.
/ Photo by Mike Buda

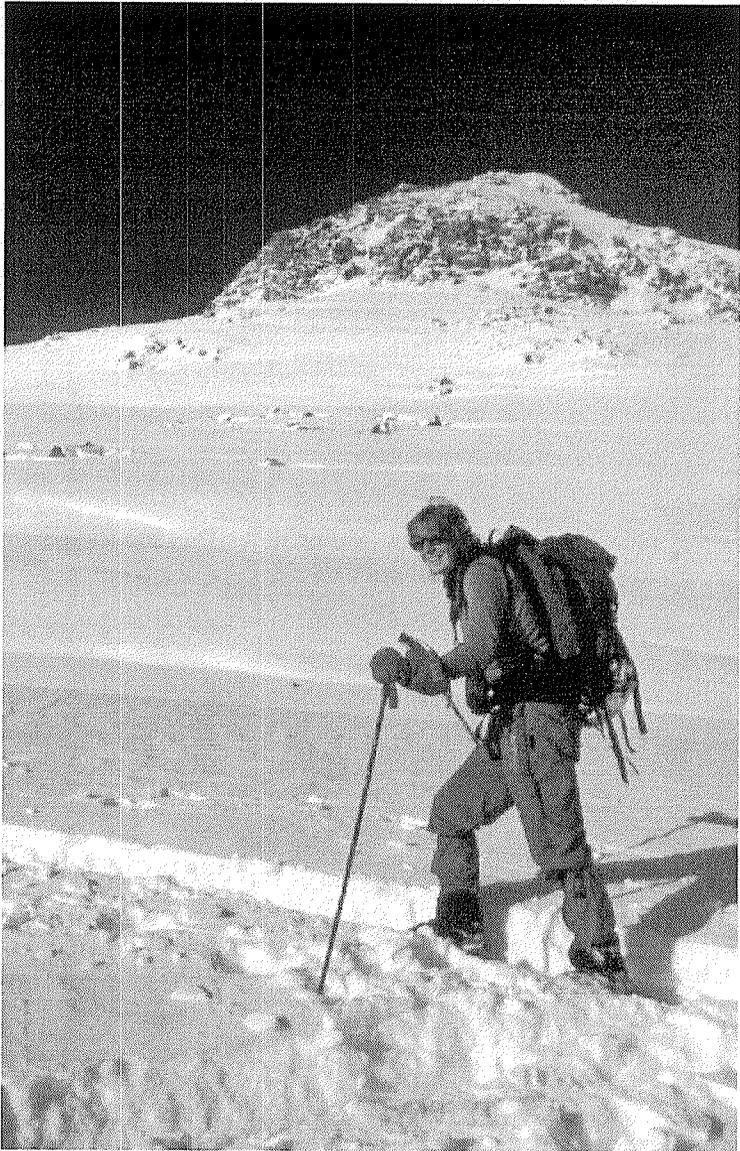


Photo: Markus Kellerhals. Fern Heitkamp skiing near Slim Peak.



Photo: Markus Kellerhals. Skiing in the Dickson Range - Southern Chilcotin.



Photo: Scott Martens. Canoeing on Garner Lake, Manitoba.



Photo: Fern Heitkamp. Near MacDonald and Webb Mountains.



Photo: Mike Buda. Hardman Cam belaying in Winter, Feb. 1995.
(See last years VOCJ for equivalent summer photo.)

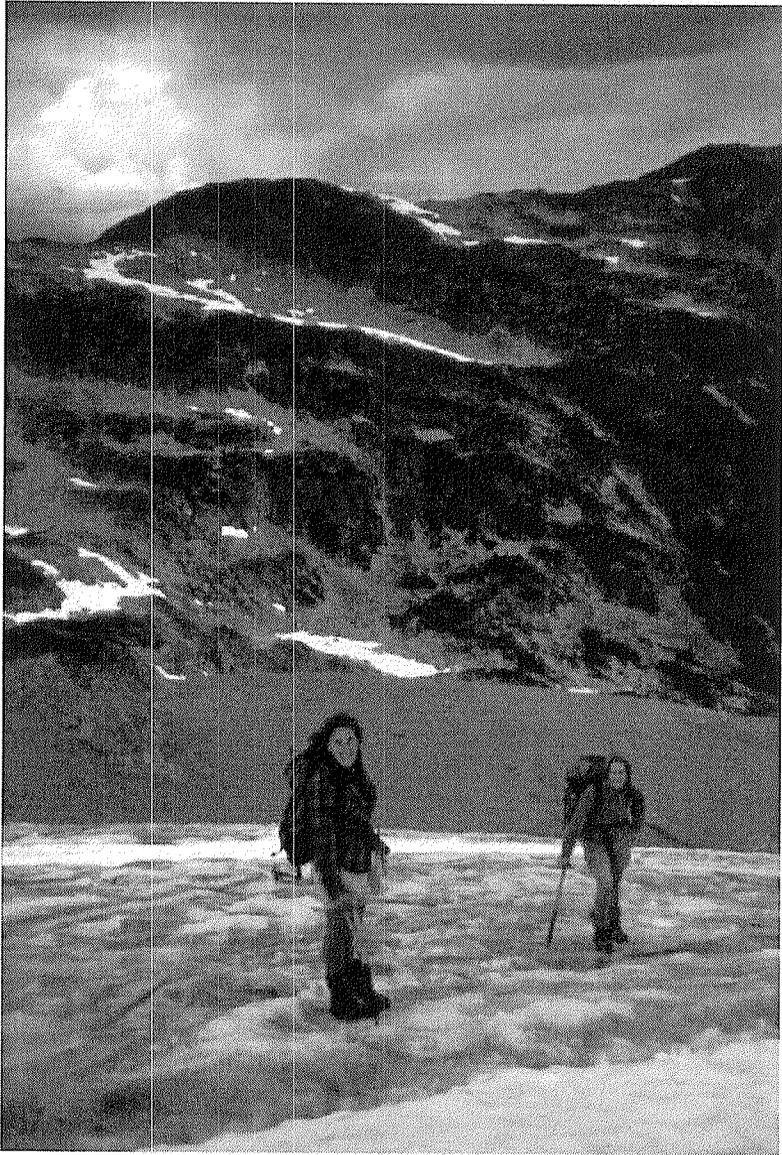
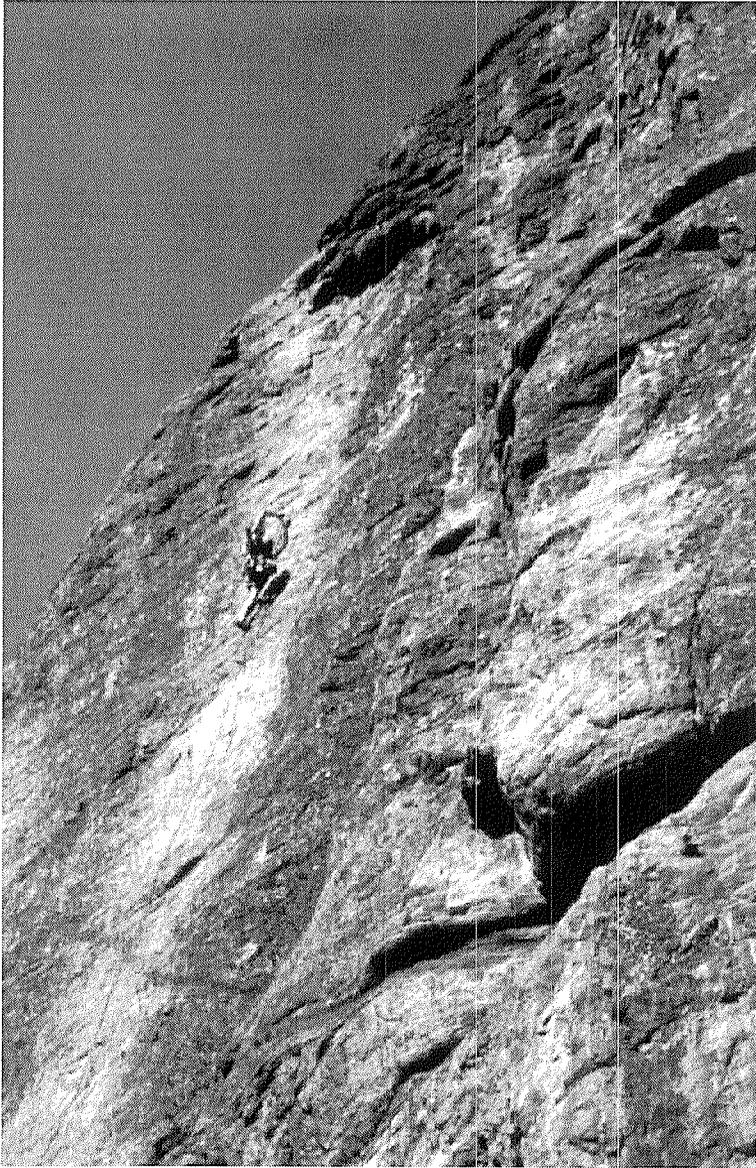


Photo: Fern Heitkamp. Mathier Glacier.



Phtoto: Dave Dexter. Drew at Skaha.



Photo: J. Jazvac. Early season tour at Singing Pass.



Photo by Fern Heitkamp. Fix-up at Brew Hut.

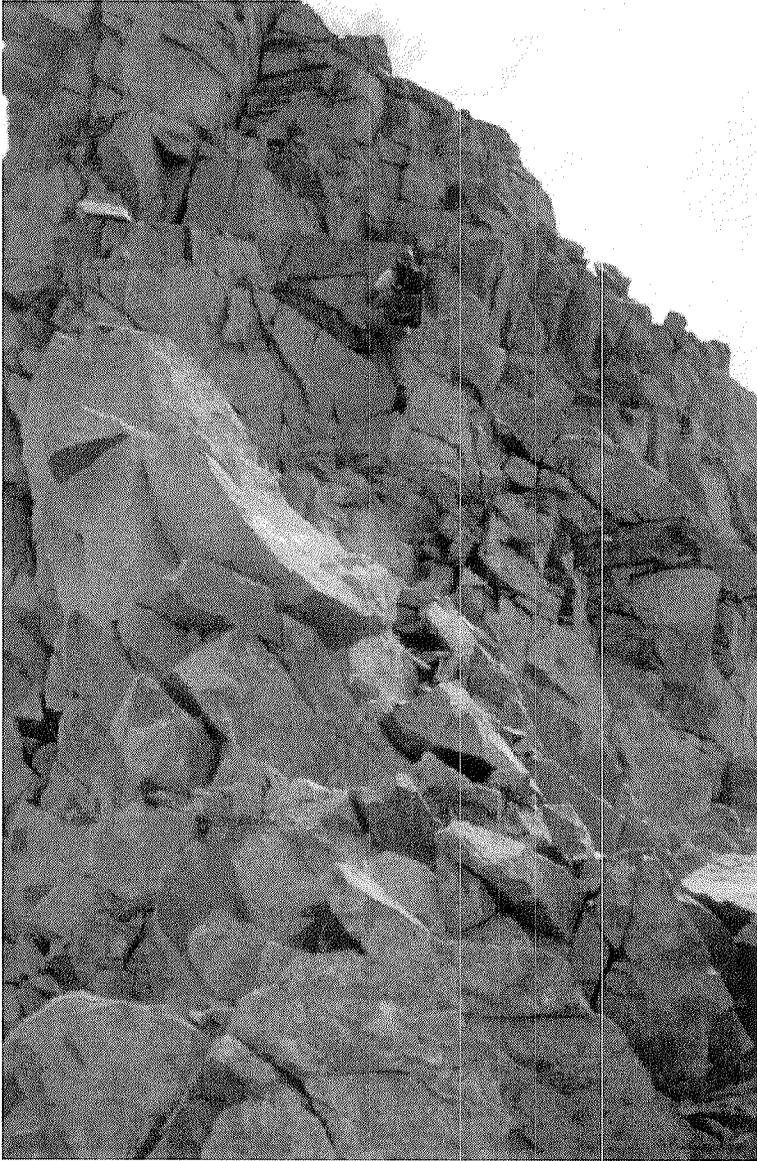
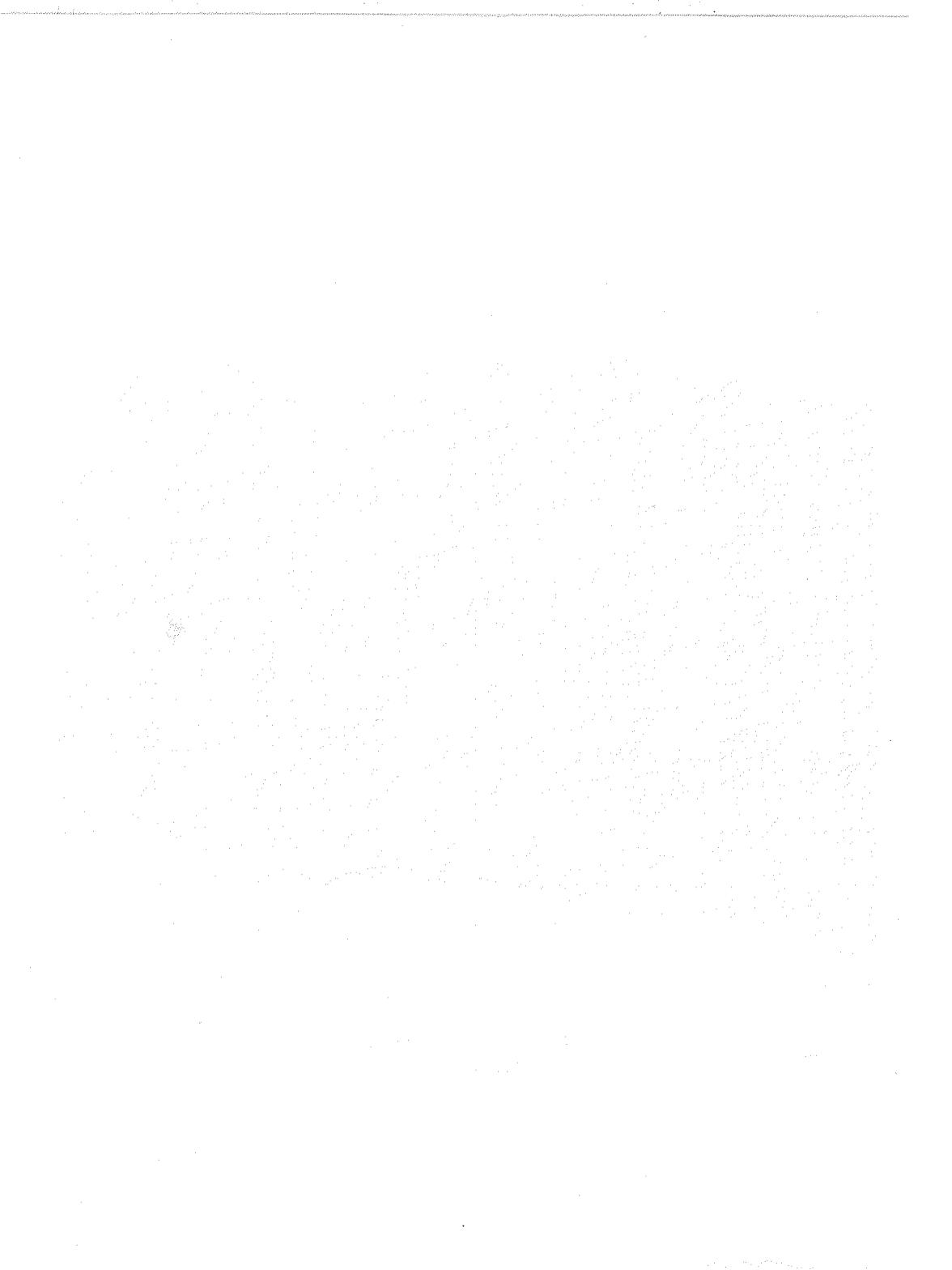


Photo: Drew Brayshaw. Rex on the 3rd class bit, Cypress



Photo: Fern Heitkamp
VOC'ers at Tomyhoc



Back cover photo by Scott Martens.
Hozameen Group, Manning Park.

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