

KARABINER '90

THE JOURNAL OF THE KOOTENAY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

Volume 33, 1990



Dedicated to the memories of Jack and Jamie Steed

The last memory of Jack for many of us will be his humorous and entertaining puppetry at the spring dinner of the KMC, celebrating our 25th anniversary. Jack was involved with the KMC before the first anniversary, being instrumental in the birth and growth of this most disparate of clubs. Jack's wit, humour and gentle kindness is a loss to all members of the KMC.

KARABINER 90

THE JOURNAL OF THE KOOTENAY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

K.M.C. EXECUTIVE

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Treasurer.....Garth Thomson
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Trips.....Peter Tchir
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Karabiner.....Paul Allen, Lee Schaeffer,
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Camps.....Mike Brewster, Joan Harvey,
 Dave Adams



The Journal is Published by the KOOTENAY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

CONTENTS

PRESIDENTS REPORT.....	4	Rita Holmes
TRIBUTE TO JACK AND JAMIE STEED.....	5	Club Members
HIKING CAMP - WEEK 1	9	Earl Jorgensen
HIKING CAMP - WEEK 2	13	Garth Thomson
MT. TILICHO WINTER EXPEDITION	16	Norman Thyer
CLIMBING CAMP 1990	19	Paul Allen
Mt. Odin	21	Camp Members
Mt. Laag	21	Camp Members
Saturday Peak	22	Ross Breakwell
The Subtle Art of Down-Climbing		
Gracefully	22	Larry Smith
Kelly Peak	24	Rhonda Netzel
Mt. Gunnarsen	26	Gabriel Leger
Mt. Burnham	27	Kim Kratky
Mt. Grady	28	Kim Kratky
In Praise of Solitude	30	Steve Horvath
IMAGES FROM A MOUNTAIN KINGDOM		
NEPAL REVISITED	32	Peter McIver
CAMPFIRES: DO WE NEED THEM?	35	George Apel
ROGER'S PASS - BUGABOOS	36	Bert Port
THE FAT SKI PHENOMENON	43	Ken Holmes
MACBETH ICEFIELD TRAIL	44	John Carter
MONICA MEADOWS TRAIL	45	John Carter
THE MT. BLANC EXPERIENCE	46	Peter Tchir
CASTLE MOUNTAIN	47	Steve Horvath & Paul Allen
STEPHENS PASS TO LAKE LOUISE	50	Trip Members
URSUS MAJOR ROGER'S PASS	51	Earle Whipple
MT. THOR	53	Kim Kratky
BUGABOO SPIRE	56	Robin Laytham



PRESIDENTS REPORT

Rita Holmes

1990 started with tragedy, when Jack and Jamie Steed died in an avalanche in Kokanee Park. Jack will be missed for his songs and humour, I well remember the "Happy Yodeller" from our 25th Anniversary dinner.

Conservation and environmental concerns are well in the forefront nowadays and it's difficult to keep pace with the information we receive. In keeping with our past activities, however we are trying to stay abreast of what is happening in B.C. and particularly in the Kootenays. We have concerns about the efforts of Government to extend heli skiing onto areas accessible by the general public from the Kaslo-New Denver highway and also in Glacier Creek. We would urge club members to write and express their concerns.

We are continuing to liaise with the Parks Branch and find our meeting informative-you are all welcome to attend these meetings! The trip schedule has been varied and well attended, the Wednesday trips proved very popular and will continue next year.

The climbing and hiking camps were, as usual, well attended and all enjoyed good weather. In fact the camps have been so successful that we had to amend the constitution to allow only residents of the Kootenays to become "new" members of the club. (editors note, it was at the urging of Hiking Camp executive that this was done). We were reluctant to take this step, but because we rely so much on volunteer help to make the camps possible, we needed to make sure there were enough local members on the camps to help with transportation, shopping, cooking, etc. Naturally any club members from further afield will retain their club membership.

The mountaineering school had about 15 students and was limited by the number of available instructors. Unless new instructors are found the Mountaineering School will have a limited life. There is concern over the "for sale" sign at the Kinnaird Bluffs and the attitude any future owners might have towards use by climbers, so we are enquiring into the possibilities of its purchase by the club. Thanks to all instructors who made the school a successful event enjoyed by all participants.

Our Social Committee, who work hard to provide us with varied social events, find it a little disheartening to plan an event and then have very few people show an interest. Please try and support our activities, I've always had a great time at them. We have an enthusiastic executive who put a lot of effort into their jobs. I would particularly like to thank our retiring officers, Paul Allen-Karabiner, Jane Steed-Newsletter, Peter Tchir-Trips and Derek Willans-Conservation. They have done a great job on your behalf and now look forward to a well deserved rest.

Remember, a club is only as good as its members and the more we put into it the better it will be. I'm looking forward to a successful 1991.

TRIBUTE TO JACK AND JAMIE STEED

THE SONG OF THE SKI

Norse am I when the first snow falls

Norse am I till the ice departs.

The fare for which my spirits calls

Is blood from a hundred viking-hearts.

The curved wind wraps me like a cloak;

The pines blow out their ghostly smoke;

I'm high on the hill and ready to go-

A wingless bird in a world of snow:

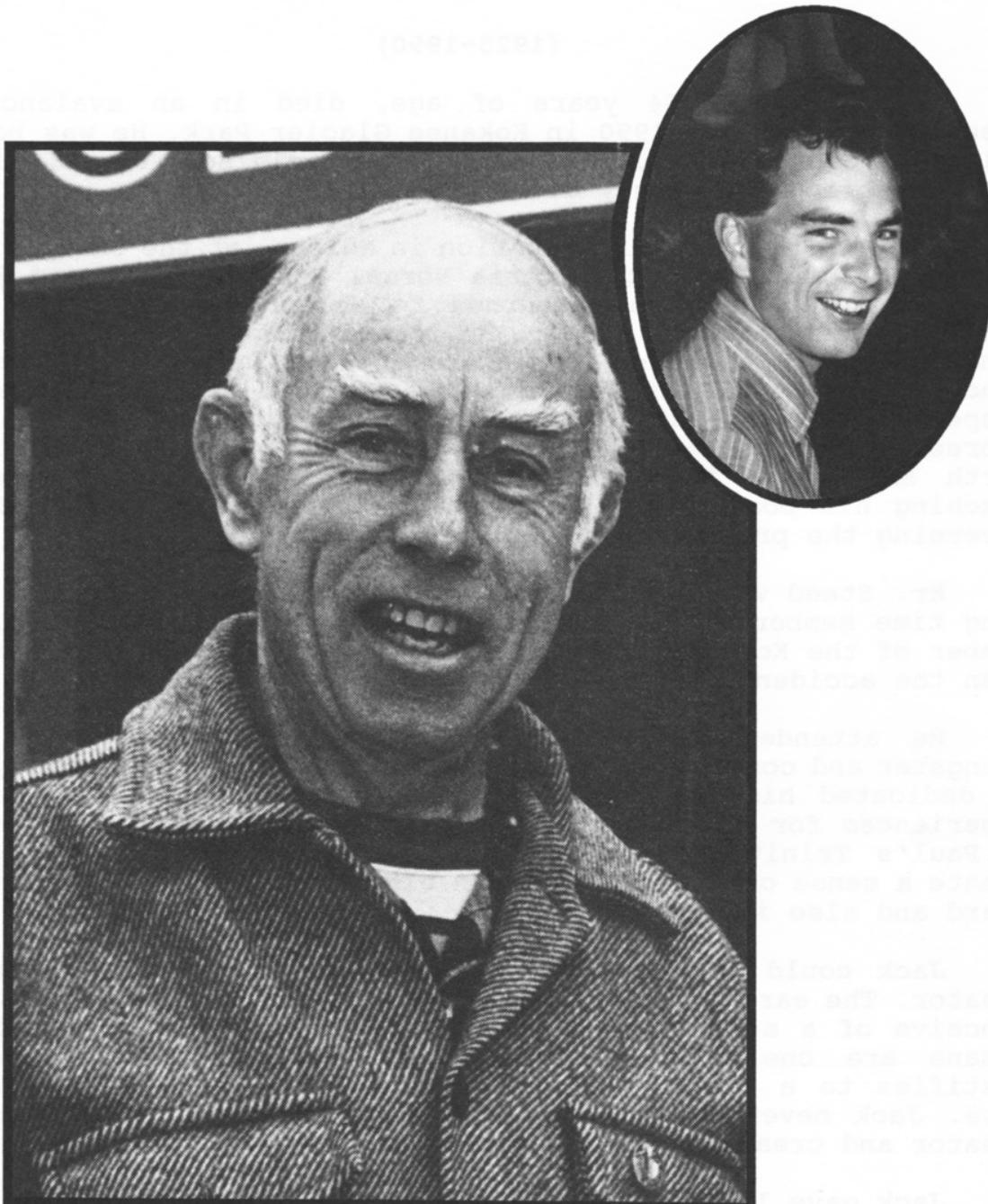
Yet I'll ride the air

With a dauntless dare

That only a child of the North can know.

OBITUARIES

OBITS FROM THE 2017 EDITION



**" THAT BEST PORTION OF A GOOD MAN'S LIFE
HIS LITTLE NAMELESS, UNREMEMBERED ACTS OF KINDNESS AND LOVE "**

OBITUARIES

JOHN (JACK) WILLMOTT STEED

(1925-1990)

Jack Steed, 64 years of age, died in an avalanche on Tuesday, January 30, 1990 in Kokanee Glacier Park. He was born in Nelson on September 17, 1925. His 27 year old son, Jamie, died at the same time which truly doubled the loss.

Mr. Steed gained his education in Nelson, at the University of British Columbia and at Victoria Normal School. He served in the Royal Canadian Navy and returned to Nelson to start his long, distinguished teaching career. Mr. Steed taught at Mount Sentinel Junior- Senior Secondary School and at Trafalgar Junior Secondary School for a total of 32 years. He retired in 1985, loved and respected. An enthusiastic and experienced outdoorsman, he had impressed his colleagues by rowing across Kootenay Lake from his North Shore Nelson home every morning, whatever the weather, beaching his boat and walking the two miles to school and then reversing the process each evening.

Mr. Steed was a skilled and enthusiastic mountaineer, and a long time member of the Alpine Club of Canada. He was a founding member of the Kootenay Mountaineering Club, the group he was with when the accident occurred.

He attended Camp Koolaree, a United Church Camp, as a youngster and continued his association with it through many years. He dedicated his skills to the continuing provision of outdoor experiences for children and adults. He was a lifelong member of St.Paul's Trinity United Church, where he worked very hard to create a sense of community, as an elder, Chairman of the Official Board and also in the choir.

Jack could not conceive of any separation of creation and creator. The earth is God's and the fullness thereof. Nor could he conceive of a separation of any of the elements of creation. We humans are one with plants and animals. The whole universe testifies to a fundamental unity that can only be described as love. Jack never doubted for a moment the essential oneness of creator and creation, the love that binds us together.

Jack gave life expression to this belief. He was among us as one who served, not with flash and thunder but with the steady tenacious energy that is constant, that can be depended upon, the love that never ends. So, of course, we took Jack for granted and lo, he never wearied of well doing. Why not? Because he loved us. Because he knew the constant dependable love of the creator for creation.

JAMES (JAMIE) STEED

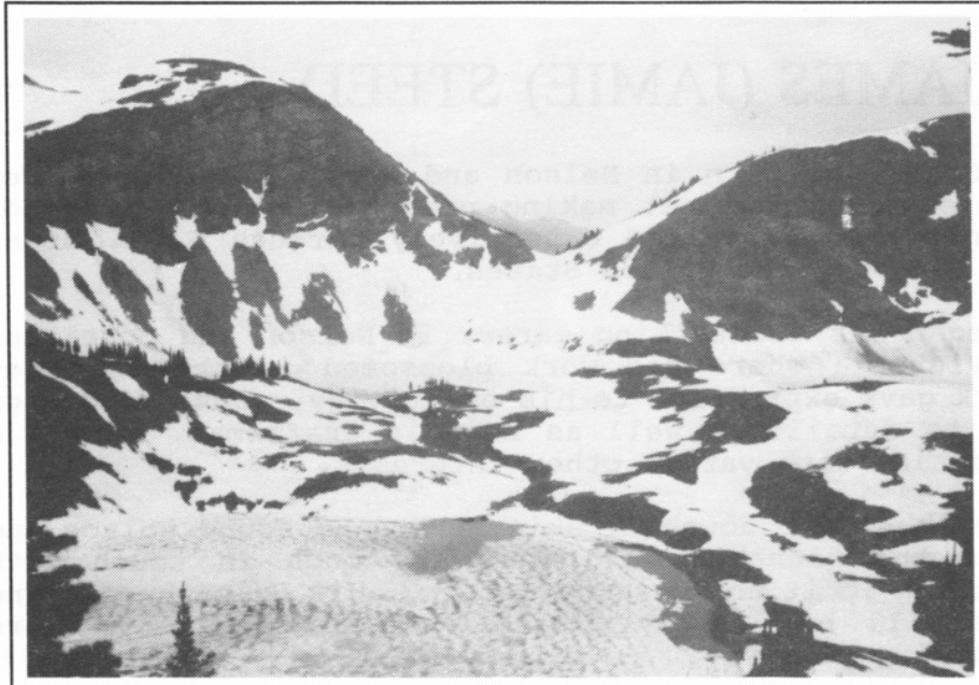
Jamie Steed was born in Nelson and went to school there, where he completed the cabinet making program at David Thompson University Centre. He travelled extensively through S. E. Asia, Canada, Costa Rica and the United States.

Jamie began his woodworking career in Nelson and continued his work in Victoria where his work blossomed in the last few years. His work gave expression to his creativity, sense of design and attention to detail. As well as being a craftsman, he was a designer and artist with varied other interests.

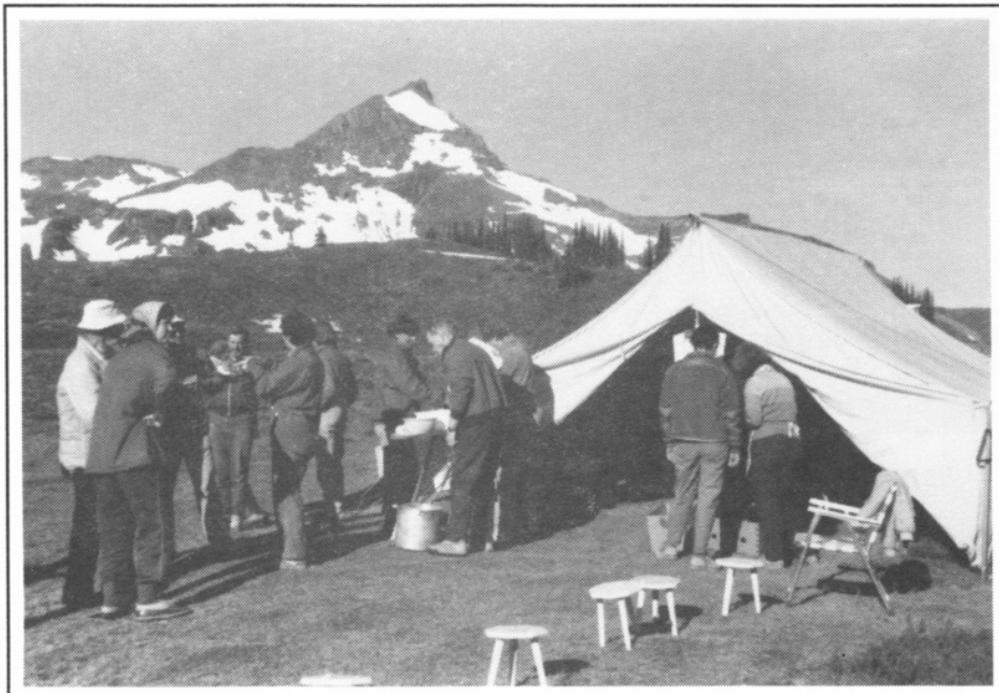
Jamie was a superb downhill skier where he found solace and inspiration in the mountains and was very much in touch with nature, delighting in it and missing nothing. His quiet humour and thoughtfulness will be greatly missed by all whose lives were enriched by knowing him.

HIKING CAMP 1990

GHOST PEAK AREA, COLUMBIA MOUNTAINS



Camp area, Week 1, looking south through helicopter Pass. Cave Mountain and the cave on the left. Camp is middle of the picture.



Dinner cleanup at Camp 2, looking towards Mt. Cartier.

FIRST WEEK ACCOUNT

by Earl Jorgensen

For about the last half dozen years, Hiking Camp has been organized as 3 consecutive 20 person camps of 1 week each camp. This account reports on Camp 1 of the 1990 camp from July 21 to 28.

The location of the camp was the Cartier, Ghost Peak alpine area approximately 11 km SE of Revelstoke at 6650 ft. Access was by road south past the Revelstoke airport to the end of pavement and then onto good logging roads for a further 6 km. At that point we branched off and climbed 6 km to a loading area up on the ridge south of Drimmie Cr. From there a 5 min helicopter ride north carried us up to the camp area.

Camp 1 arrived on a bright and sunny Saturday to find the terrain 90% covered with snow. The major lakes surrounding the area were completely ice bound except for a small patch of open water at the outflow. There was enough open "high" ground here and there for campers to locate their tents and for the set up of the cook tent. Most campers walked over snow to get to their tents from the cook tent. The area was open with only a few scattered trees within a 200 meter radius of the cook tent.

Mt. Cartier, 8900 ft., was the dominant neighbourhood peak to the west. It was the first project for the majority. 14 people climbed it by various



Camp Area as seen on first arrival. Mt. MacKenzie far distance extreme left. Camp is middle of picture.

routes in perfect weather on Sunday. The views; south to the Upper Arrow Lake, Mts. Thor and Niflheim where the climbers were doing their thing at that very instant, Blanket Mt. and Glacier, west was Mt. Begbie, the Columbia valley and north the city of Revelstoke. Eastward we surveyed our camp and most of our hiking area. Excellent boot skiing was enjoyed because of the unusual amount of snow. Wildlife (other than some campers) seen this day were 5 goats and several Ptarmigan and chicks. Supper was salmon accompanied by white wine, followed by a dessert of strawberry shortcake with whipped cream.

A section of turf was surgically removed and saved by our parks specialist, Ric Bivar of the Nelson Parks Dept., and a fire emitting only biodegradable smoke was built with wood that we flew in! (an executive policy decision which needs everyone's support)

Above camp to the north was a spectacular rock wall rising to the top of Fang. (as we called it! subsequent camps said it was really Ghost Peak. We identified Ghost as a lesser summit east of Fang.) In any case on day 3 the camp split into smaller groups to explore the ridges and summits to the north and east. Two people circumvented Fang while the ridge northwest of Fang was discovered to have the best flower show including; Moss campion, Spring beauty, Anemone, Yellow violets, Fawn lily, Paintbrush, Mountain heath, Heather, Columbine, Veronica, Phacelia, Penstomen,

Pearly everlasting, Valerian, Pussytoes, and Baby toe heads. Carl and Earl clawed their way up to the cave(in Cave Mountain of course) to find the interior large, dripping, moss covered, a slippery, smelly and very loose under foot. Each step produced a shower of rubble. It was not a reassuring spot to be in, so the visit was brief.

Tuesday was Day 4 and camp awoke to rain showers, hence the pace at breakfast was leisurely. Two people went to the top of Fang. It turned out to have a nice tourist route manageable in two hours and the top was nice and flat. Two campers set out and achieved Mt. Mackenzie while five others followed later and went about half way. The route included the "Lake of Clear Reflections" which was a favourite swimming lake for some. Today a four point white tail deer was seen on the slopes east of camp. The weather cleared in the evening and became quite cool.

The next day, Wednesday, produced light rain at times with faint sun. Hikers dispersed in all directions, some to Mt. Mackenzie, some to Fang and some to Ghost. The lakes are still much covered with ice but the snow is receding fast. All snow bridges are still in place and the food keeps well in the snow gulley. Pika, marmot and ptarmigan were seen.

Thursday, July 26, found us engulfed in thick fog with about 60 feet of visibility. Four undaunted souls set out for Mt. Mackenzie while the rest stayed in camp where a

large group played Slang Teasers for hours. All campers were dry and comfortable and appreciated the day of rest. The trekkers to Mackenzie changed course after four km. and detoured to a lateral ridge. They came back in midafternoon reporting no visibility whatsoever. At supper Larry Doell hiked in (much to Audrey's delight) from Revelstoke. He drove up the ski hill road on Mackenzie and reached to the alpine. He then took four and a half hours to hike in. The lack of visibility hampered his navigation considerably and thus extended his hiking time. The weather cleared at supper time allowing us to watch six goats (four adults and two juveniles) proceed across the face of Cave Mt. It was a special treat for us.

On Friday, our last full day at camp, we awoke to a gorgeous day, quite a change from the day before's whiteout. Everyone was eager. The area was quite familiar now and hikers were everywhere; Fang, Drimmie Peak, Cave Mt., cave exploration, Far Peak East Ridge (beautiful waterfalls) over the glacier and down to a string of lakes. Glen and Joan brought glacier ice for the punch bowl. This evening was special as it was costume night. Supper guests included The Great Pumpkin, Yellow Chick, Hagar the Viking, the spirit of Ghost Peak, Santa Claus, a New Guinea couple (fully prepared for their honeymoon), an Owl, a Blind Leper, a bug in a net, and a Hot Water Tank. While we did bring in our own wood for the

fire, hikers also picked up a lot of six foot two by two stakes used by Heli-ski companies. These were found on all the ridges and brought in for burning. New ones appear each season of course.

Saturday was the "turn around" day and was bright and clear. Ron Cameron served tea to everyone in their tents as a wake-up courtesy. Camp 2 arrived on schedule and their arrival and our departure was uncomplicated and exciting with quick welcomes and good-byes. See you again next year!

Members Camp 1

Audrey Gerein (cook)
Wendy Gagnon
Joan Harvey (cook)
Luba Horvath
Hazel Arnold
Janice Isaac
Alan & Mary Baker
Janet Jones
Ric Bivar
Carl Jorgensen
Ron & Janet Cameron
Carol Potasnyk
Glen Cameron
Kal Singh
Laurie Charlton
Steve Brewster
Mari Earthy
Earl Jorgensen (leader)

WEEK TWO - JULY 28 - AUGUST 4

by Garth Thomson

Week two was a winner. An excellent site, with marvellous scenery and great hiking, delightful food, pleasant weather and a congenial group. We had it all.



Enjoying the afternoon in front of Fang.

The site for the camp was about 14 km. south east of Revelstoke in a hanging valley

enclosed by a horseshoe shaped ridge of mountains with Mt. Cartier (8563 ft.) at the end of its western arm. This doesn't seem too exciting, being so close to a major town and the view of the area you get from the highway leading north from the ferry to Revelstoke doesn't add much to the excitement. But how wrong you can be. The area is generally above the treeline, so bush-whacking was at a minimum: several great ridge walks are available: we had great views of the main Selkirk ranges to the east, and the big glaciers of the Gold Range to the west where our more enterprising friends at the Climbing Camp were going straight up. Our pleasant little valley, with its lakes, meadows and streams, sheltered between the spectacular crags of Mt. Cartier and "Fang", made a scenic and comfortable campsite. Our timing was just right too. The week before, first camp had found most of the valley covered with snow. The week after, the snow was all gone, the meadow was dry and the bugs were out. Week two was an ideal compromise.

It was relatively simple to get there. Our initial rendezvous was at Revelstoke Airport. There was the usual happy time when we renewed acquaintances with old friends and met a few new faces; then

it was off to a logging landing site high on the Drimmie Creek drainage where we set up our heli-pad and sling load and shuttled in over "Helicopter Pass" to the campsite. The high departure pad reduced the flying time considerably below what was planned so there was a healthy refund on our fees.

The food was great at Camp two! This was due partly to the talents of our cook, President Rita, and partly due to the amount of pre-camp preparation that was done. Main dishes came in fully prepared and frozen and volumes of baked goodies were always available. Another plus was Lotto-Joe-Jobs; an elaborate system of drawing the various camp chores out of a hat. It makes a fairer distribution of the jobs and allows for trading - much better than "first come-first served" which is a euphemism for "last comes-completely shafted."

Drinking water was readily available making "water boy" a reasonable chore - but it came from a snowy meadow which would be dry later in the summer. The question is "Why didn't Camp one reserve the upper lake, hence the stream, as a drinking water source? Washing was something else. On Day one, John S. reinstated his perennial Polar-Bear Club. Some enthusiastically joined in; others participated

reluctantly--occasionally; and someone even imported a solar powered shower. John can't understand why anyone would do that when there was such refreshing total immersion available. Our sources won't reveal names, but one of our hedonistic members from the land of the eternal sun-tan is suspected.

Then there were the flowers --- everywhere. They were in the meadows, in the forests, growing out of cracks in the rocks and high on the steep banks of "Fang". By Day three, Muriel and Susan had a botany lab established to identify the strange ones. An impressive reference library of flower books was called into service - but some strange species were quite a challenge. Every evening the work went on. In the end over one hundred different species were identified - and the dream of publishing a Kootenay flower book was born.

Fauna were not as common as the flowers apart from the little guys that were everywhere. However, mountain goats were sighted on the slopes of Mt. Cartier and John and Muriel had the opportunity to study the drinking habits of a grizzly at close range -- but not for long! Several times, we encountered mother ptarmigans out with their broods.

MUKLUK



The weather was another marvel. It was like Camelot - it only rained at night. Several favourite routes were established. The obvious challenge was to climb Mt. Cartier and many of the group set off for it on the first day. The route crossed our perimeter ridge and then across a shoulder of the ridge, down into the big bowl south-east of the peak and up a long ramp to the south ridge. Then a long and delightful ridge walk led to the peak. This looked like a pretty formidable climb - until one came to the trail which led across some spectacular ledges to the forestry look-out near the top.

Another favourite was the long ridge walk to Mt. MacKenzie directly above Revelstoke and just south of Mt. Revelstoke National Park. The ridge is not as simple as it looks on the map and we descended 800 ft. down into the bowl south-east of the main peak before making the final climb. Another hike was up our perimeter ridge, a short ridge walk to Ghost Peak and then down the slopes to the east. There was evidence of heli-skiing activity here: it would be great skiing. These slopes ran down to the Greeley Creek/Drimmie Creek Pass, then there were a variety of options for peaks or ridge walks farther to the east. Another easier day was to set out in the direction of Mt. MacKenzie, bear to the right around the west ridge of "Fang" and then up into the col which gave views of the glacier on the north side of "Fang". Continuing on with a traverse of the ridge to the north led to a prominent point with views on all sides. It also had heli-ski landing markers: what a run that would be into the upper reaches of Greeley Creek!

From this lookout, we were treated to a spectacular display of fireworks when a small thunder cloud moved across the valley to the north and a lightning strike ignited one tree in the forest. It went up like a great flame, blazed for a few minutes and then burned out without igniting anything else; and a lone plume of smoke drifted off across the valley.

Then there was "Fang", the pinnacle which towered over our camp, challenging us to take it on. Actually it was simpler than it looked and a very enjoyable climb. Phillippe enjoyed it so much, he did it three times! Needless to say, there are endless variations on these themes.

What really made the week though were the people. Everyone seemed to enjoy each other at every gathering; the tea hour, the supper hour, the hot chocolate hour, even lunch break on the trail, great conversations flourished. The result was a very enjoyable experience. A special thank you to our very relaxed leader, John Walton and all who were involved in the planning.

We were:

John & Muriel Walton,
Rita Holmes,
Kathy & Bruce Bourdon,
Susan Knoerr & Lee Schaeffer,
Phillipe & Mirielle DeLaSalle,
Marieki & Frits Swenkels,
John & Kay Stewart,
Mary Woodward,
Carol Mousel,
Naomi Linstrom
and Pat & Garth Thomson.

1989 Canadian Mt. Tilicho Winter Expedition

by Norman Thyer

Having reached the age of 60 this year, Norman Thyer decided it was time to participate in a Himalayan climbing expedition. Some people he had met while working in Ottawa last winter were planning to climb Mt. Tilicho, north of Annapurna in Nepal, in December. He contacted them in August, and they told him there was still room for further participants. Their plan was to gather in Katmandu, then in mid-November walk north from Dumre, first to the east and then the north side of Annapurna, and around from Manang to a base camp by Tilicho Lake. From there, "Camp 1" would be established about the 18000 ft (5500 m) level, and thence the climbers would just keep going, with overnight bivouacs, to the summit. After descending to base camp, the return route would be via Jomosom, down the Kali Gandaki valley between Annapurna and Dhaulagiri to Pokhara.

After some discussion, Norman, wife Anna, and youngest daughter Linda decided to go along, and spend their savings on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Anna decided that base camp would be high enough for her. Norman hoped to go to Camp 1, but the likelihood of climbing higher was small because of the possible technical climbing difficulties and equipment requirements. For Linda, going above base camp was a possibility, though not likely. We started preparing equipment and making travel arrangements. There were problems getting airline bookings, but finally we received confirmation of flights that would bring us to Kathmandu on November 14, three days later than the rest of the group.

So we flew from Vancouver to Hong Kong on November 12-13, in the company of numerous Canadian real-estate agents who were hoping to find buyers there for Canadian land, and presumably make a profit in the process. We reached Kathmandu at 9 pm on November 14, met the other 5 Canadian expedition members, then 12 hours later left by bus for Dumre.

From there, we started hiking up the valley of the Marsyangdi River. Typically we walked about 10 miles/15 kilometres in a day. We carried small packs with our needs for that day, while porters carried the rest of our baggage and camping equipment. A team of cooks looked after our eating needs, while a Sirdar, Liaison Officer and Runner (Nepalese required by the government to accompany every climbing expedition, who were paid many times more than the porters) generally managed operations.

Typically, when we and the porters had reached our campsite just before dusk, we set up camp, the cooks prepared dinner, and then we went to bed. In the morning, we were awoken as someone brought us tea. Then we packed up, and while the porters started

out with their loads, we had breakfast. For the first few days, the cooks gave us lunch packets, on some later days, they stopped and cooked lunch for us and during the later part of the trek we either ate what we happened to have with us or stopped at a tea house.

Changes were evident as we moved north. At first, the weather was warm, the valley was wide, and the rice harvest was in progress. As we moved north, the valley became narrower and steeper, the terraced fields on the steeper slopes were smaller, brick houses with sloping thatched roofs gave way to stone houses with flat roofs, and the religion changed from Hindu to Buddhist. Eight days of hiking brought us to Khangsar, just beyond Manang. We had gradually climbed from 450 m/1500 ft to over 3700 m/16000 ft, and now we were going above the level of human habitation.

Up to here, we had dry, mainly sunny weather, apart from some showers late one afternoon, but one day past Khangsar, a snowstorm forced us to have a rest day. Now there followed a long climb, which brought us close to Tilicho Lake, at 5100 m/16000 ft, about the level of base camp. However, as base camp would be at the other end of the lake, and the lake was unfrozen with vertical cliffs along part of the shore, we needed another day's hike to get there, over some passes to the north. Snow confined us to our tents for much of another day, and we made good use of our cold-weather clothing. At this point, most of the porters were ready to go down to the valley below. We were somewhat debilitated by persistent colds and coughs. With little likelihood of going above Camp 1, Norman might have had several days in base camp while the others completed the climb. So all three of us, plus another member who had altitude sickness, decided to go down the next day.

Leaving at 10 am, there was first a pass, then a glacier to cross, another climb to a ridge, and then it was downhill for 7000 ft/2100 m. But we had little food or drink, and it was 8:30 pm, 3 hours after dark, when we finally reached a village, with food and beds which were most welcome. That day of descent was the most tiring of all, and the next morning it took an effort to even stand up and move our legs. Fortunately it was only half an hour's walk from there to Jomosom, which was to be our base while waiting for the climbing party to come down.

After two rest days, we made a trip up the valley to Muktinath, famous for its Hindu and Buddhist temples. There we met other trekkers who had come from Manang via another pass, Thorung La. They told tales of hardships with snow and low temperatures, of people losing the route and getting frostbite. The same evening as we returned to Jomosom, our climbing party arrived there too, to tell their tale. Instead of establishing Camp 1 and returning to base camp to pick up their other equipment, they had carried everything up to Camp 1 at once. Two of them progressed a short way beyond there, but found that the combination of new snow with scree or loose rock underneath it was too unstable to climb on, so they soon abandoned the climb. While they were descending, two porters were on their way back up to Jomosom, but they did not meet

the descending party because they took a different route. So they were out longer than expected; one of them had frostbite, and was later flown out from Jomosom to Pokhara.

For the rest of us, there remained the 6-day hike to Pokhara - first down the gorge of the Kali Gandaki River, then up to a ridge at GhorRapani, from whose neighbourhood there were superb views of the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri ranges. Then we travelled through a forest of epiphyte and moss covered trees to Ghandrung, down to a road where we took a Jeep for the last few kilometres to Pokhara, whence a minibus took our party back to Kathmandu, where we spent a few restful days before returning to Canada.

Nepal is generally regarded as an "underdeveloped" country. This raises the question of what sort of "development" is desirable. Is it merely a matter of introducing modern technology? In recent years, plastic pipe has enabled running water to be brought right into the villages. Also electricity is available in some areas; it is used mainly for lighting and heating water, rather than the numerous electronic gadgets that obsess people in industrial societies. These two conveniences are undoubtedly welcome. The influence of road-building is more questionable. It can lead to erosion problems, and we noticed that dirt and squalor were prevalent in communities served by roads, whereas the cleanest looking communities were still accessible only by footpath.

Nepal still has a low life expectancy and high infant mortality compared with most other countries, so health is still obviously a problem, and hygiene standards are low. In Jomosom, we visited the hospital, which by our standards is primitive with very limited facilities. The doctor had recently arrived from Katmandu, where he had worked from morning to night in a large hospital, but in Jomosom he had very little to do. So is education more important than hospitals?

There is also much variation in the appearance of villages. Marpha is exceptionally clean and neat. The only signs of modern or foreign technology are the piped water and electricity. The streets (foot traffic only) are neatly paved with stone, and water and sewage channelled into conduits. In 1980, I had a similar impression of Salyan, in western Nepal, where there was piped water but no electricity. Just an hours walk from Marpha, Jomosom has not only piped water and electricity, but also an airport, hospital, government offices, and an army camp, yet its streets are muddy, littered and crossed with rough open channels of water and sewage. Apparently an important factor is the attitude, spirit and stability of the community. Generally, temporary residents anywhere cannot be expected to take so much interest in community improvement as those who plan to stay permanently. And what was our main impression from this visit? It was the contrast to the greed and wastefulness of the people in the industrialized countries. One may wonder whether such a lifestyle really brings happiness.

CLIMBING CAMP 1990

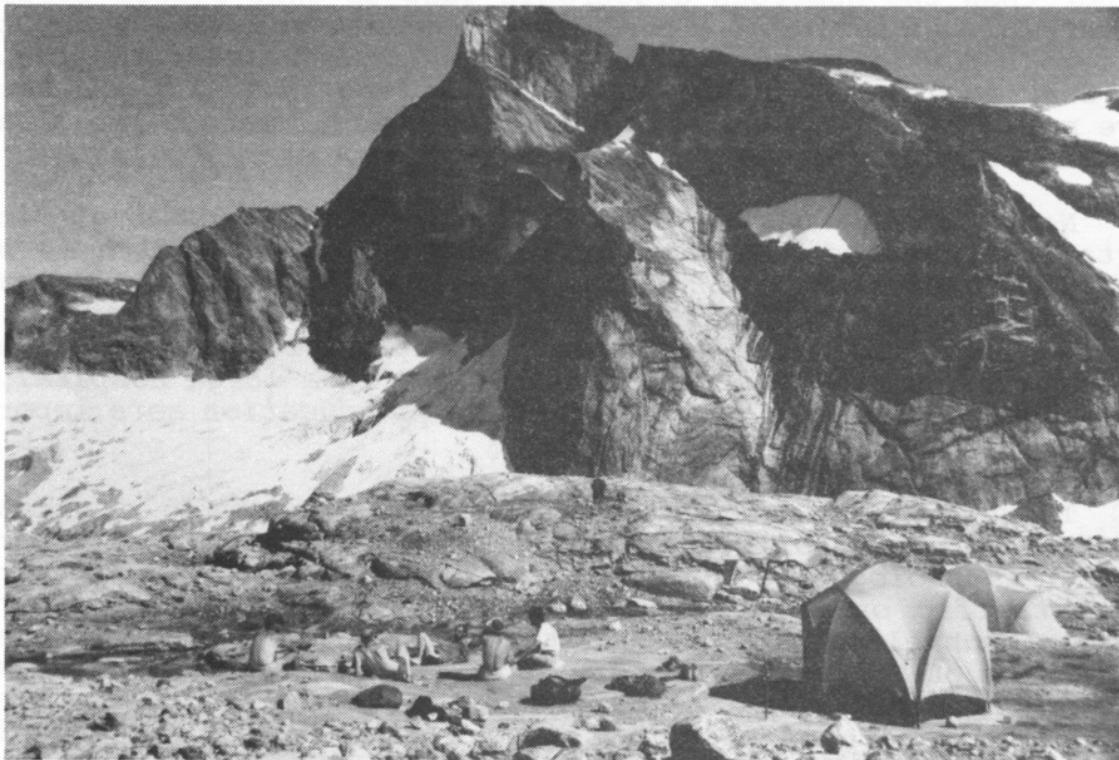
**Where were we?
Where was that?
Where's that?**

We were at the headwaters of Odin Creek
In the Monashee Range,
South of Revelstoke, across the Galena Bay
Ferry and due west a few miles as the crow
supposedly flies.

Camp was located in the same place as a dozen or so years ago, 6200 feet up in the air, above the headwall, at the end of Odin Creek, a rock's throw or less from the glacier. We camped on a glacier scraped escarpment, devoid of grass, soil, and greenery, but with some wonderful bathtub sized

left and Mt. Odin and on to Burnham and Grady in the unseen distance on the right. The "Big Top" circus peaks seemed to draw people's imagination all week, but few made the demanding trip down to them.

Kim and Hamish ventured down to them at the end of



Playing hard at climbing camp with Mt. Odin in the background

pools glacially scraped into bedrock that we took naked advantage of on the warm summer days. We had a mountaineer's choice of views, with the aptly named Stegasaurus ridge on the

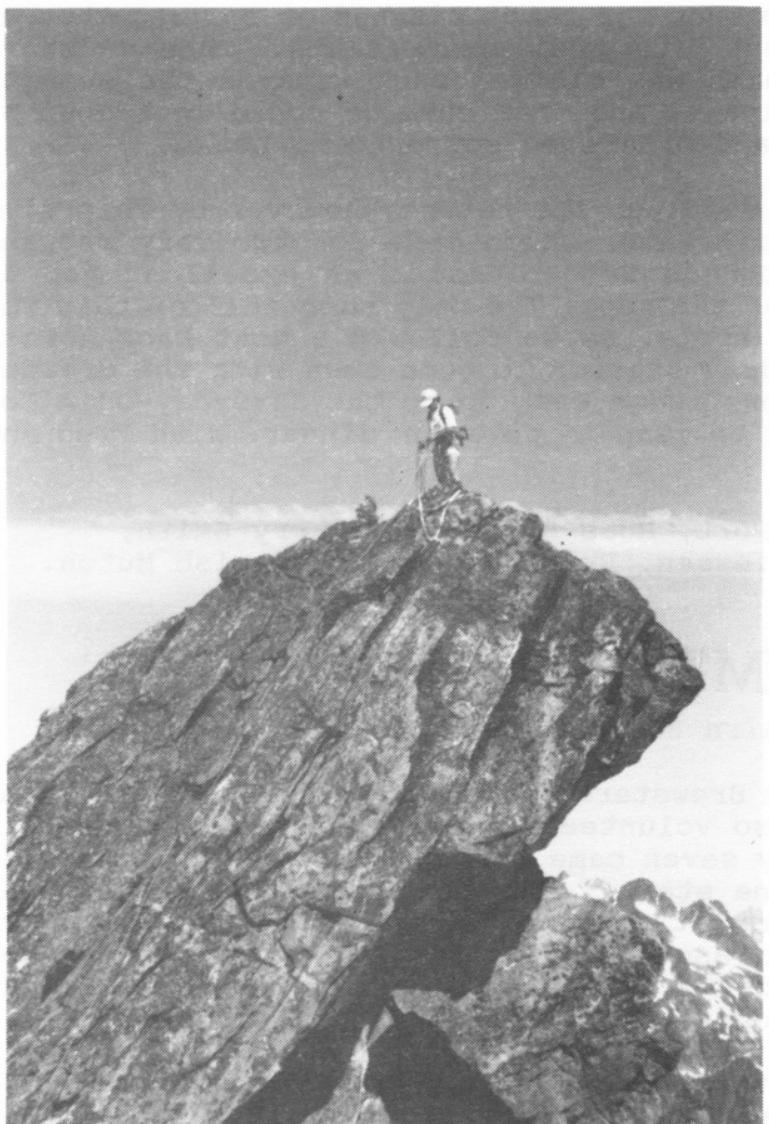
camp, however the rest of us stayed closer to home on day trips. Or we stayed in camp for another less than wonderful reason, the "Flu", as we experienced it, brought to camp

by Gabe' our token French Canadian climber. Interestingly enough the only two people in camp who didn't get the "Flu" were the two above mentioned characters who escaped camp for the "circus peaks" as we called them, but in all fairness I must say that they left camp

good, but the flu made sure that the three of us never seemed to meet. Fred said it was the sausage's fault, I said it was the onions', Steve said it was the meat, but Gord said it all when he just sat for four days and said nothing. So we all experienced it in some way, while Gabe' got over it soonest and then just tried to sell us his climbing gear as he had to return to medical school in the fall, leaving us to wonder if we were just his guinea pigs in some wicked experiment.

So we laughed and sympathized with Hamish for leaving one of his packs in his car (the one with all his climbing gear) and for Ross for getting lost on the trip in on his motorcycle, enroute to camp. In camp we lapped up warm hot summer climbing days with but one short two hour period of rain.

Who was there? Kim Kratky, Paul Allen, Steve Horvath, Fred Thiessen, Rhonda Netzel, Gordon Frank, Brian (Brain) Gagnon, Ross Breakwell, Andrew Port, Gabriel (Gabe') Leger, Judy Findlay, Gail Netzel(cook), Hamish Mutch, and Larry Smith.



Judy on summit of Mt. Gunnarsen

after the epidemic was over.

The cook was good, the food was good, the company was

MT. ODIN

We left camp at 5:15 in the still morning with the "boogie meter" on max and headed up the rock rib above camp onto the glacier where we trudged up to the Saturday-Odin Col. We went down the gulley closest to camp which Saturday's earlier inspection had shown us was the only reasonable access to the glacier on the south side. The top half was down climbed and then one rappel took us to an easy snow gulley. We step-kicked down the gulley, then traversed along the south side of Odin to another gulley just east of the Mt. Odin summit.

We climbed up steep snow for three pitches or so, and then up two roped pitches of wet dirty slippery slabs. Then a short scramble to the ridge which we followed back towards the summit. Everyone was on top by 11 a.m. and from here we could look down at camp and holler to them and others on surrounding peaks.

The same route was used for the return, however by this time the slabs were running with water which made for two very wet and dirty rappels. Thank goodness descenders do an excellent job of squeezing the water out of the rope. The only shortfall of this was the water landed in your boots. As we followed a goat back across the glacier, Fred and Andrew started to come down with the dreaded camp bug, so it was a slow trudge back up to the Saturday-Odin Col and then down the glacier to camp in time for dinner. With Fred and Andrew declining.

Andrew Port, Ross Breakwell, Larry Smith,
Fred Thiessen, Brian Gagnon and Hamish Mutch.

MT. LAAG

Cairn Building Party

We had observed from Brewsters Knob that the cairn on Mt. Laag was in need of repairs, so volunteers were requested to assist in this mission. Fortunately seven came forward and we made plans. It was decided that an alpine start was in order and we left camp at 5:30. By 7:30 we were at the col between Caribou Peak and Brewsters Knob. We quickly ascended the first peak and ridge-walked to the main tower. Expecting rotten rock we armoured our heads, installed gaiters, and donned shorts for the final assault.

To our surprise the rock was a firm pleasant class 3 scramble, first on the face, then on the ridge, culminating in a 3 metre rock pitch. Once on top for our first lunch at 9:00 we rebuilt the dilapidated cairn, expecting our repairs to last until at least the next lightning storm. An approaching lightning storm to the northwest hurried our descent to camp which we reached shortly after lunch.

Volunteers on the cairn rebuilding mission were, Larry Smith, Andrew Port, Ross Breakwell, Gord Frank, Brian Gagnon, Hamish Mutch and Fred Thiessen.

SATURDAY PEAK EAST RIDGE

by Ross Breakwell

Beep-Beep-Beep.... It's 4:00 am.. My tiny watch alarm manages to jolt me from a sound sleep. On go the socks, boots, and gaiters. Stumble through the rocks in the semi-darkness to the cooktent. Ahh.... Lots of fresh hot coffee and french toast. By 5:00 am. Gord, Brian, Larry, Fred, Andrew and I are off to climb Mt.Odin. We are stripped down to T-shirts and sweating before sunrise.

After climbing to the notch just below the summit we begin exploring possible routes down to the snowfield from which the summit must be approached. After finding the route, we consider the time and must save Odin for another day. Energy levels are still high, so we decide to climb Saturday Peak on a Sunday. Crossing the glacier, I notice Andrew has left the forward rope team and is coming back toward us, the second team. He yells down to me, "Ross do you want to climb the east ridge?" After glancing at the skyline ridge and thinking seriously for about 5 seconds, I reply "sure". So, while the others continue toward the tourist route, Andrew and I hop off the glacier and onto the rocks at the base of the ridge.

We scramble up the first bit, carefully avoiding some loose sections. Then we rope up and switch leads for four pitches to the summit. Easy going, except for the tricky layback with the obviously untrustworthy silver piton in the middle of it. We protect it, instead with a "friend". We were later informed by Paul and Steve that we could have bypassed this section with a detour to the left.

Once on the summit, we decide to hurry back to camp to catch supper. After an interesting down climb to the next col, we scurry across the glacier and down to camp, arriving with three minutes to spare before supper. A very successful thirteen hour day. The others told us we had a gleam in our eyes, and I know we both had a grin on our faces.

THE SUBTLE ART OF DOWN-CLIMBING GRACEFULLY

Tongue-in-cheek
by Larry Smith

For most of the participants in the 1990 Climbing Camp, the principle reason for being there was to climb up the mountains by which ever route skill and psych dictated. Once up, however, one must eventually descend. The simple act of coming down can take on many levels of grace or lack of the same. For the goat on Saturday Peak, unsubtly disturbed from its slumber by a dislodged boulder, or the silver-tipped grizzly surprised in the Gunnarsen-Skade col, speed rather than grace was the essential element in their descent. Similar thoughts drove parties who arrived at camp moments before dinner or when the lightning started to flash, but these are exceptions. On the average descent, grace was usually important.

The methods of descent used during the 1990 Camp climbs encompassed the usual variety. On steep snow, the rhythm of boots and axe as one backs down the slope was very graceful. However, one mistake and grace was lost and an unsubtle (and luckily short) slide resulted. As the angle of snow lessened, the climber can face out on the slope and post-hole down through soft snow. While relatively safe, the post-hole technique lacked the grace of the alternative, a beautiful glissade carving gentle turns through the snow. Even the demonstrated ice-axe arrest required when the glissader wiped out from excess speed or an icy patch in the snow was graceful when executed properly. For those properly attired, the bumslide allowed for a quick descent as well. To me, however,



Rhonda shooshing down the slopes

this technique, while fun and effective, is neither subtle nor graceful.

Over rocky terrain the standard methods of descent were used during climbing camp. The down climbing was graceful over solid rock but when the rock became loose or scree, preservation from rockfall became more important. The abseiling during the bright sunshine off Kelly, Saturday and Laag peaks and even in the clouds on Mt. Gunnarsen was graceful, but on the wet downsloping slabs of Odin the rappels became more of an endurance. With water running continually from the snow melt, the rappel ropes, anchored on a snow bollard quickly became soaked. Mixed with grit and gravel

picked up from the slabs, the ropes sprayed a continual stream of water on one's thighs as they passed through the quickly polished descenders. The fine mica dust produced a glitter on pants after the water dried. I sure was glad I wasn't wearing my lycra tights.

There was one other method of descent, other than the helicopter ride, which occurred during the camp. The Montreal flu, with which the majority of climbers came down, was totally lacking in grace but it was often subtle in its effects. It made down-climbing both rock and snow shaky and when the descent involved climbing up even a few feet, comments about feeling a hundred years old were heard to be mumbled.

Overall the climbing and descending was excellent, the weather was fabulous with a gentle but continual wind to create a noticeable absence of insects. In writing this article, I have not meant to put a blot on anyone's character or lycra tights. Remember to set the boogie meter to max the next time you go out on the hill. If you delay, you may find on your return to civilization, that someone has placed a ten years supply of Playboys in the back of your Land Cruiser.

KELLY PEAK - 9300 FT.

by Rhonda Netzel
with rebuttal by Paul and Steve

We set out on a seemingly perfect 2nd day of camp for Kelly Peak, a 9300 ft. summit SW of Stegasaurus Ridge. We zoomed up the 1200 ft. to the col west of Brewsters Knob while our energy reserves were still at peak levels. We had just stuffed our faces on a culinary delight prepared by the world's greatest cook, my mum, this years camp cook. (absolutely no prejudice here at all)

The snow on the backside of the col required some serious tiptoeing to start with then turned into a full tilt "Warren Miller" type glissade, blissfully forgetting that those foolish enough to go down must also slog back up afterward at the end of the day. At about the 7000 ft. level we stopped sliding down and scooted over between the two "10 cent lakes".

Now we started uphill on what we actually came to climb. We followed the creek nearest to Kelly up to its west ridge then circled around the back to the NW ridge on a boulder field. When we reached the top of the "significant bump" to the west of Kelly, Judy was looking frantically for Kim Kratky and Hamish Mutch's rappel sling from the day before.

" This must be the summit of Kelly, we certainly don't have to climb that thing", she said looking ambiguously at the real Kelly. More tiptoeing led us to the col between the bump and Kelly. Judy, Gabe and I short-roped along the ridge, easily scrambling up to the last 75 feet. There ahead of us lay the "easy 5.2" Kim had described to us earlier. No sweat, I thought. I have my sticky boots on and I have my rack. Helluvalot of good the rack was.... I wasn't able to put in any protection for the full 75 feet, enough to give this lazy Squamish

climber wet pits. At the top I hastily threw in a Rock and sling even though I was 4 ft. from the belay point.

Just when things seemed to be improving, i.e. the gross lead was over, the thunder and lightning started in from the NW and Paul and Steve, aka Felix and Oscar, appear over the summit from their route on the south face. Paul graciously belayed up Gabe after Steve rappelled



Highest point Kelly Peak

down our rope so that Judy and I could race up to the summit. We beat a hasty retreat under threat of looming thunderclouds. The descent was so non-descript I won't even mention the rain/hail/sleet storm that smoked us on the slog up to the col west of Brewster's Knob.

I would say the two most memorable events of the day were 1) Steve and Paul's "discussion" about Paul's herrings in tomato sauce and 2) the look on Gabe's face when we said we might not be able to bring him up because of the approaching thunderstorms. Heh-Heh.

Rebuttal, As either Felix or Oscar, Rhonda would never tell me which of us was which, I must point out that it was the knot in the end of the rope that Rowdy Rhonda threw down to Gabe that snagged. Which Felix and Oscar so heroically rescued, that made Gabe almost miss his summit bid! Heh-Heh.

STILL MORE EXCITING CLIMBING CAMP MT. GUNNARSEN

by Gabriel Leger

It was my second meeting with Mt.Gunnarsen. In fact, five of the eight which had met with it, not so fruitfully yesterday, were back. Andrew, Rhonda, Ross, Judy and myself were accompanied by Paul and Steve who claimed to be following the group as "tourists". We left our camp at about 0800 hrs. definitely not one of Fred's crack of dawn starts. The weather, well, looked just like it had the day before. I couldn't help but think that the low clouds would creep up on us again, hide our destination once more and force us back to camp.

As we walked northwesterly up the snow to the glacier supplying Odin Creek, behind us, Odin itself was already hiding. Once on the glacier we headed southwest to meet the controversial Skade. It was about 0930 when we got to Skade. From there we could see Kelly, northeast, covered with this big grey cloud. Fred, Brian(not Brain) and Gordon were heading there today. Judy was actually the first to make it to the base of Skade. As I appeared over the snow she motioned with haste and shouted quietly, "quick, quick, bring the camera" By the time I caught on, the whitish grey Grizzly, down wind from all of us, decided that he was to close to humans for his comfort and took off. When I arrived near Judy, the bear had bum slid down the other face away from us faster than Kim might have in a brand new pair of gortex salopettes. (that Gabe was trying to sell to him)

Once the bear was too far to see and everyone had a chance to ooh and aah about this first sighting of dangerous wildlife, we settled down, hiked up to Gunnarsen and all agreed that it was, for the moment, the only inviting peak around. Lest we wait any longer and have this encounter cut short once more, we set off in a hurry to beat the weather and put some distance between us and the bear. Our "tourists" took the lead and climbed the northeast face of Skade, the rest of us followed and arrived to a crest joining Gunnarsen. Paul and Steve had already started up the east face of Gunnarsen and suggested that we wait there to see if belaying would be required. Feeling somewhat inspired, Rhonda suggested that, while we wait, we finish the ascent of Skade and build a cairn. So we did, once back to the crest, Paul notified us that it was mainly a fourth class scramble, that they were going to continue upward and that we could rope up if we wanted to.

Paul was right, a beautiful fourth class scramble with plenty of good foot and hand holds, real jugs. Each scramble was twenty to thirty feet, separated by nice grassy walkways, often decorated with purple and mauve wildflowers. Maybe two hundred feet from the summit, the two sides of the mountain come together in a crest which abruptly stopped, jumped a few feet and then started again as a large flat slab with a small crack on its right side. The cairn at the summit was awesome,

someone commented that only Howie Ridge could have built it. It sat there like a Buddhist monument. I was expecting Paul and Steve to be sitting there waiting, but they were relaxing some two hundred feet further along on a false summit. We joined them for lunch as the clouds cleared away, leaving us a clear blue sky.

Upon leaving the summit we dropped down the south west face and onto the snow, where we circumnavigated around the backside of Mt Gunnerson. Short rappels brought us back to Skade and down to where we had seen the bear earlier. A few glissades, a trudge across the glacier in the hot sun and we were back in camp boasting about the fun climb.

MT. BURNHAM 9450 FT.

by Kim Kratky

Since no one climbed Burnham at this year's camp, I was asked to see if I could dredge up some memories of our climb of it in 1980. In August of that year Pat Taddy, Linda Allis, Janice Isaac and I spent four days at Mooncastle Lake at the foot of the Frigg Glacier about 2 km. north of Mt. Grady. This was to be a decadent helicopter camp; no bushwhacking up from Pingston Creek for us. As you shall see, it turned out to be a little less decadent than we planned.

Reading my diary, I am shocked to read that we didn't get away until 7:30 the morning after our arrival for a planned traverse of Burnham and Grady in that order. First, we had to descend some 800' through light timber to a glacial lake southeast of Mooncastle. Somewhere along this stretch, Janice slipped and sprained her ankle, she carried on for the rest of the day but wasn't in top form. Next we contoured east under the main ridge about a kilometer east of the summit. This we scrambled till we reached the main ridge at 8500 ft.

At this point the ridge was quite flat and we could see some kind of radio transmission cone below and east of us. We made easy progress to the first of the two prominent steps on the ridge. Here the climbing began in earnest. Pat must have recently climbed something difficult (probably Snowpatch), because he relaxed with smile of enjoyment and let me do almost all of the leads. The west ridge is more like a face at this point and is made up of slanting ledges, cracks, and near-overhangs that offer some impressive exposure. I can't remember anything of the individual pitches except that we decided the route rated a 5.4 level of difficulty. There were probably 3 or 4 pitches of roped climbing in total. By 4:00 we were on the summit to find no record; considering the late hour, the desperate looking notch between our peak and Grady, and some uninviting slabs to the south, we decided to go down the ascent route.

It took us three rappels to get off the steps and down to the flat part of the east ridge. A fourth rappel took us onto the north buttress we had ascended. After down climbing a bit, we decided to rappel off the side of our north ridge and into the basin below. This was a vertical 150'er using a tree for an anchor. Back in the basin and 800

ft. below camp, we found darkness closing in, so decided to bivouac on a rocky moraine at 10:30. Views of the Milky Way and some meteor showers compensated somewhat for our uncomfortable bed in the sub-alpine scrub at 6,200 ft. The next morning we thrashed up to our camp in an hour.

Moral of story: leave early.

MT. GRADY 9350 FT.

by Kim Kratky

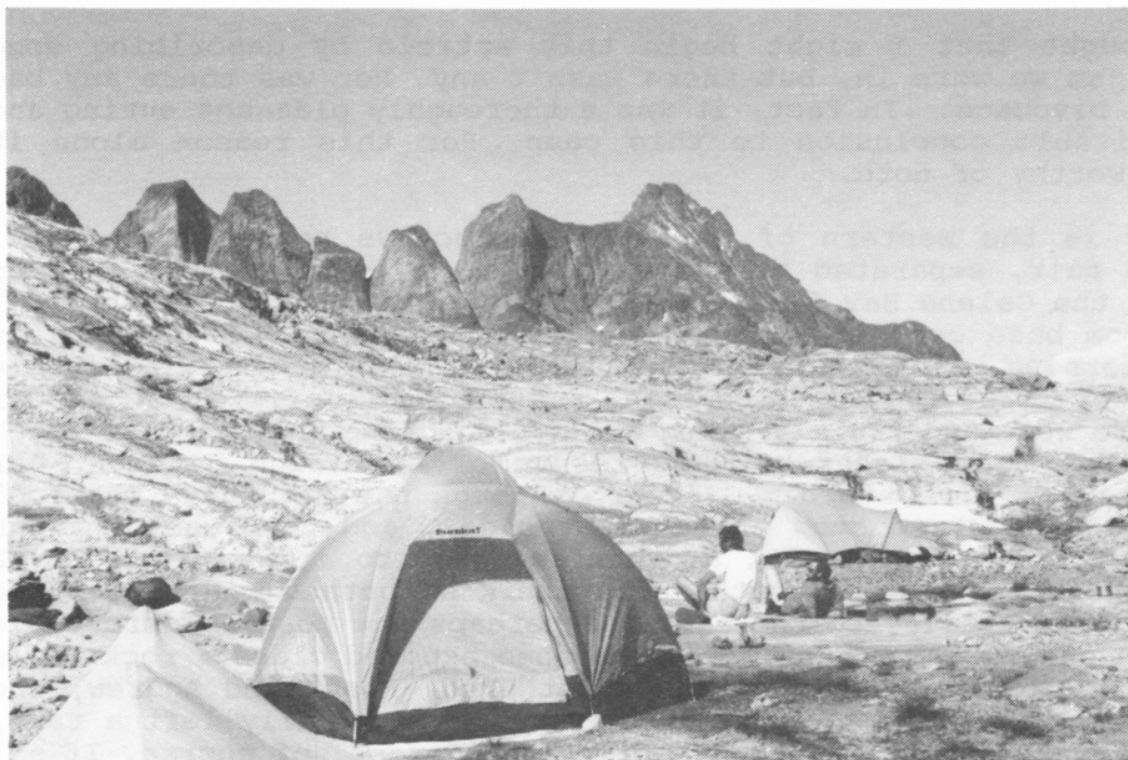
I thought that I might begin this article by describing some harrowing jam we were in, but there wasn't any. Nor was there any bad weather or bivouacs. In fact, it was a thoroughly pleasant outing and a most suitable conclusion to this camp. For this reason alone it should be worthy of note.

Grady is the western of the two distinctive peaks east of Mt. Odin. This pair, separated by a deep notch, can be clearly seen from Nakusp and the Galena Bay ferry. On Saturday, August 4th, Hamish and I set out from base camp to climb one and perhaps both. We got away in the late morning, thinking the route to high camp to be a leisurely outing. However, we misjudged the heat and intensity of the sun, so our tongues were well and truly hanging out after a five hour slog to reach a high camp by some lakes at 7400' south of the Frigg Glacier. Our route took us up the Saturday Glacier, through the Saturday-Odin col (one rappel onto steep snow on the southside), and then east through open country for about a mile. We then ascended to a notch just north of the highest tooth on a north-south shark's toothed ridge. Getting down to the next valley to the east was perhaps the most uncomfortable part of the outing as we had to descend some exposed class 4 rock while toting heavy packs. At this point we met Fred, Ross, and Andrew, who were returning from the high camp. They had thoughtfully left a tent, stove, and cooking pot for us--by prior arrangement, of course. If all went well, we hoped to be doubly blessed, our intention being for the helicopter to pick us up at high camp in two days when camp ended.

Gentlemen mountaineers that we are, we were off at the crack of 7:00 next morning to have a look at Grady. Fred had given us excellent directions as his party had climbed the peak two days before; we were able to benefit from some of their hard-earned experience. So here's how we did it. First, we crossed another north-south shark's toothed ridge to the east of our camp and almost identical to the one on the west. Then we ambled across a basin and headed for a point just below a prominent notch in the next north-south ridge, this one was a part of Mt. Grady itself. Strolling up this ridge, we reached an obvious buttress and veered right and up until we reached two gullies. Armed with Fred's knowledge, we chose the right or less obvious gully; it was

at this point that I put on my rock shoes, a decision that made the climb a very pleasant one. Hamish had already changed to shorts and Hi Techs so we were ready for a mid summer ramble.

Ascending the aforementioned gully, we soon reached Grady's long west ridge which we followed to the summit without roping. We occasionally detoured to the right or south side, the north being mercilessly overhanging in spots. An earlier comment that the ridge is made up of "false summits, clefts, and slabs" is apt; it did seem to go on for a long time. Just below the flat-topped summit, there is one short pitch of 5.0. The rest of the climb is fourth class and most enjoyable. Reaching the summit at 11:00, we lounged for an hour, gazing across the massive gap to the summit of Burnham where Janice, Pat, and



Climbing camp with Stegasaurus Ridge in the background

Linda and I had stood almost exactly 10 years before.

On our descent, which took 3 1/2 hours, we rappelled the steep pitch below the summit and down climbed the rest unroped. The only tricky portion one needs to remember occurs in the gully below the west ridge. Farther down, the gully forks. The left one presumably leads to the south face and much nastiness; the right one leads to safety and the ascent route. In summary, it was a pleasant fourth class route, fitting for the last climb of the week. Oh yes, the helicopter did come the next morning just about the time I finished reading my novel.

IN PRAISE OF SOLITUDE

by Steve Horvath

I've been sick for a few days with the flu. It felt remarkably like being at altitude again; take 5 steps and then rest to catch my breath. So I slept a lot, tried to catch up with my reading and tried to avoid the unexpected sprints to the "privy". But what views of glaciers and dark, water stained granite walls opened up when I finally made it to our one luxury - a real toilet seat propped up between two boulders.

Finally, a reasonably good night and a morning that is too perfect to just watch from the sleeping bag. So I pack up and leave for Mt. Laag. Paul assured me that it would be just what I needed; a nice, long and airy ridge, a fun scramble in E.B.s.

Walking slowly up a small pocket glacier I slowly become aware of - well, of something, something different. Then I realize what it is... I am alone, by myself, as I used to be in the mountains years ago when the world was still young , years before ambition led to safety considerations, a need for partners, someone to share responsibility and hauling the hardware.

I stop to think, catch my breath and look around. The things one can see when there's no need to "crank the boogie meter to the max", to get to the climb before your competition or beat the bad weather. A white moth lies on the snow, lacelike pattern of frost on its unfolded wings. Lichens form delicately tough abstract patterns on granite boulders that look like rejects from Henry Moore's workshop. A long cascade is hanging frozen in space from the escarpment to my right.I get up and continue walking. My pack feels just right, another almost forgotten bonus of going light and alone; no hardware, no ropes and slings, only the ice axe, camera and some goodies.

I finally make it to the ridge proper, sit down on a grassy spot, look around and then slowly change into my old E.B.'s. The air is still, with a strong blue presence. Too fast a move and it might ring with a clear high note of a crystal bell, the sound of Xmas past. I carefully store my books under some rocks, remembering my many not too pleasant experiences with the summit dwelling rodents. Like that airy bivi on Mt. Remillard when the little devils chewed right through the shoulder straps of my old Joe Brown as I was sleeping in it trying to use it as a bivouac bag and thus my surprise when I energetically shoulder my pack in the morning!

Paul was right, the ridge is a delight; narrow, quite exposed and not too steep. Then an overhanging section, but after some "look-see" I can bypass it on a steep and loose face to the right. Too steep for my present condition and too loose for my liking, but then as I stop to catch my breath I realize that I am in the middle of a hanging garden. Moss campion in glorious purple bloom, a

bonsai like miniature pine softly green against the white and grey granite, blades of grass, yellow arnicas, mountain asters and occasional hummingbirds dive bombing and inspecting my red pack.

I finally arrive below the summit block, some 50 feet of pleasantly exposed low class 5 and then it's time for a summit lunch and a siesta. I sleep for an hour or so, completely secure and relaxed, comfortably stretched out on a narrow grassy ledge on the lee side of the summit and then sit up, enjoy my pipe and watch the clouds slowly move across the summer sky.

A "nothing day"? No hard rock, no first ascents, not even a hope of an epic, no adrenaline rush, no expletives deleted and

certainly no
"boogiemeter cranked
to the Max' as they
say. Just a lazy
summer day with none
for company but
myself.



Larry posing for the camera

IMAGES FROM A MOUNTAIN KINGDOM NEPAL REVISITED

by Peter McIver

A porter was sewing the soles of his feet, closing the cracks, while a long haired (dirty, blond) American told Fred and I of the election of Ronald Reagan. He thought the end of the world likely. We hadn't heard of Reagan.

- Nepal, November 1980, Kharte, 2 days from Namche Bazaar, near Everest.

A little girl showing her baby sister how to greet a stranger, how to make "Namaste", prayer hands in front of bowed head. The tinier one couldn't quite do it and stuck her bent wrist into her eye.

- Nepal, November 1990, Karputar, a few hours from Pokhara, close to the Annapurnas.

The same azure skies, ice walls in the heavens. White teeth in laughing brown faces. The very young and very old all living in one room around the open fire. Saucy children on the trails.

And has Nepal changed - or have I? And do I compare two districts or two eras? - I close my eyes again and dream.

Lines of burdened porters bowed by their loads. Groups of porters cooking rice around a wood fire - chattering and smiling now, a friendly wave.

I compare the broad faced, oval eyed Gurung of Annapurna with the Sherpas of Everest, broad faced too, but narrow eyed, - different, but in many ways so similar - high mountain people of the cold valleys, many layers of clothes, grubby children, hands black from coals.

The villages of the Annapurnas - Manang closed, grim, stone corridorred. Streets without doors or windows - poles with steps cut provide roof access. Tibetan prayer flags tearing from flag poles. The village sits high on a bench in a glacier walled valley guarded by Gangapurna. People here unwarm; many-wrinkled old women in long black woolen skirts chanting, spinning prayer wheels. Conspiratorial groups of men and boys huddling over dice in the bitter evening. Incongruous lanky legged Swedish blondes in microshorts oblivious to hostile glares, chirruping in little parties - just 3 walking hours from the airport.

"Manang 30 minutes" say the "Air Nepal" posters in Kathmandu. Manang is 300 years from Kathmandu.

Still in the Annapurnas, over the Thorong La¹, Muktinath lies in an open, wide, arid valley with Dhaulagiri, laid back and huge, to the right, Annapurnas above and to the left. Little temples with domes and Hindu images stirred up with Buddhist shrines, flags a flutter. Inside one, magic comes even more to life as Buddha and many-armed Shiva watch over the miracle of the eternal flame - burning under water, it is said. People here less Tibetan featured than in Manang, they smile tolerantly at the puffing tourists 1100 M above the Jomosom airport (Twin Otters twice daily).

These memories crowd those of Namche Bazaar in the Everest area, tiered houses on a steep hillside, where, ten years earlier Pasang took us to stay with his sister on the night they clubbed the dogs to death. Dragged by their tails in the morning, young children took them to the dump and vultures. Grooves in the dirt.

Crowded too, is the mirage of floating Ama Dablang suspended over the Khumbu, its double peak peering through pines memorably pictured from all angles. It hangs there still - a traveller told me so. It is less real now than inverted Machhapuchhare floating and shaking in Pokhara's Lake, Phewal Tal, rising from the mists and shadows, suffused with gentle rose.

And how do the yaks of Khumbu compare with Annapurna's trains of donkeys, belled and plumed?

But Kathmandu is fixed. The same, overpriced hotel the first night. Thamel, the visitor section, still cramming more and more tourists into more (and better) reasonable hotels. More carpet shops, more pie places, more trekking agencies, more Westerners vying for clean road, avoiding filthy gutters as a car nudges by, dodging rickshaws, banging into locals carrying baskets as they avoid a taxi, choosing the cesspool instead.

The shrines are all there - the same red powder, the identical man praying to Hanuman, the Monkey God. Durbar square, the centre of the temple areas, is the same, yet it is different. There are few tourists here now, few stalls. "Freak Street" leading into the square, the 1970's Mecca for hashish, is deserted - some desultory bookstores and a couple of pie houses. Not all change is negative.

But Kathmandu is not Nepal. Thin ribbons of tourists wind their prescribed routes through tiny sections of the country. These passages are now marked by hotels selling milk, coffee, french fries, egg drop soup, coke and beer. And double rooms. Venture

¹ A 17,500 foot pass between the Marsyangdi and Kali Gandaki valleys, ten days walk from Pokhara.

one hour away and return to the world of dahlbaat² and chang³, leavened by potatoes and the occasional egg. Sleep on the family benches while they use the mud floor.

Nepal is now a constitutional monarchy. The previously obligatory pictures of King and Queen are no longer prevalent. Real elections are promised, as are real Communists. The Constitution, finally signed by King Birendra during my visit, has one chilling provisio. The King remains head of the armed forces.

Nepal is a very poor country, poor by our money standards but also with dwindling resources. Wood, essential for heating and cooking, is even scarcer than a decade ago, forests are disappearing even in the centre of Annapurna's conservation area. Lines of villagers carry bundles of sticks from the sacrosanct Chitwan National Park in the South (soldiers warn them when a raid is coming). Porters still toil for three dollars a day (ten cents a kilogram-day), sometimes under unbelievable loads. Occasionally people dress in sacks in Kathmandu. There is no welfare, or public health. Families are the only security system. Legless beggars shunt carts in front of money-change banks. A family grows, elder sons divide the land, the others must work for money. There is no money for work. But, as far as possible they support each other, wealthier villagers give to less wealthy. Children go to school, no longer unusual as it was ten years past. Electricity gives light to many villages, this too is new.

I must think of these things as I hear the clear, high tones of the bamboo flute, the laughter from a candle-lit doorway, the "Namaste-give me your pen" from grinning, giggling children. When I close my eyes, incredible vistas - a brooding, bleeding sunset near Ghorapani, magical mountains suddenly puffing pink into the night.

The memories remain: mixed now they form a pattern in my mind, a mosaic of place and time. Yes, Nepal is changed, yes, it remains the same.

² Traditional Nepalese food. Rice, lentil soup, usually with green vegetables and spices, eaten twice a day.

³ Alcoholic drink, fermented rice, filtered through cloth - very cheap.

Campfires: Do We Need Them?

by George Apel

We have all gone into the back country, where the image of pristine wilderness is shattered by a worn bare circle, charred wood, blackened rocks and limbs broken from mutilated trees. While trampling of sensitive alpine vegetation can retard growth or impede survivability, much of the lasting impact to lightly or moderately used campsites is the result of campfires. (Light use - five nights per year, moderate use - ten to twenty nights per year.) Campfires change the chemical make-up of the soil. Most nitrogen, sulfur, and phosphorus is lost. A single fire consumes 90% of the organic material in the upper inch of soil, while organic matter is altered to a depth of 4 inches or more.

Nutrients concentrated in ash can alter soil micro-organism populations and lead to compositional changes to the understorey. The moisture holding ability and the rate water is absorbed into the ground are reduced, possibly leading to erosion. The removal of firewood significantly affects macro fauna - ultimately small mammal and bird populations are altered from the elimination of important habitat. Ectomycorrhizal fungi, concentrated in decayed wood, have a necessary symbiotic association with higher plants, improving their ability to extract water, nitrogen and phosphorus from infertile soils. Decayed wood also has a greater water holding capacity than either mineral soil or humus and removal will directly affect nutrient cycles. The disturbance and alteration associated with campfires is typically measured at nine times the devegetated area of a campsite. Observations of fire site recovery suggest the revegetation will take 10-15 years. Is it all worth it?

Objectively, the problems associated with campfires are rather minuscule when compared to the massive threats held for wilderness and backcountry areas. Most people would fail to see any of the immediate or related impacts. This, obviously, is a retreat from our responsibility.

While there certainly are occasions when a fire is necessary, indeed survival may depend on it, how often have we experienced the situation of need over desire? While our forebears may have used fire's flame to maintain a sense of security from an otherwise isolated and hostile environment, is that our need during club camps? The social atmosphere of the firelight, after all hides things beyond the limited circle and intensifies the darkness.

(Source: Managing Campfire Impacts in the Backcountry: D. Cole and J. Dalle-Molle, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Forest Service, Gen. Report INT-135, Nov. 1982)

Roger's Pass - Bugaboos May 1990

by Bert Port

As a last selfless act Paul arranged the rented mini-bus before dropping out due to illness. Seven of us along with the return drivers arrived in Revelstoke late on May 3, where we stayed in a hotel which is the winter base for a CMH heli-ski operation. Considering how we planned to spend the next two weeks we were bemused by the hotel's size and luxury. In search of a final real meal we patrolled the refurbished but empty streets until we found the only place open in town, the ubiquitous chinese restaurant.

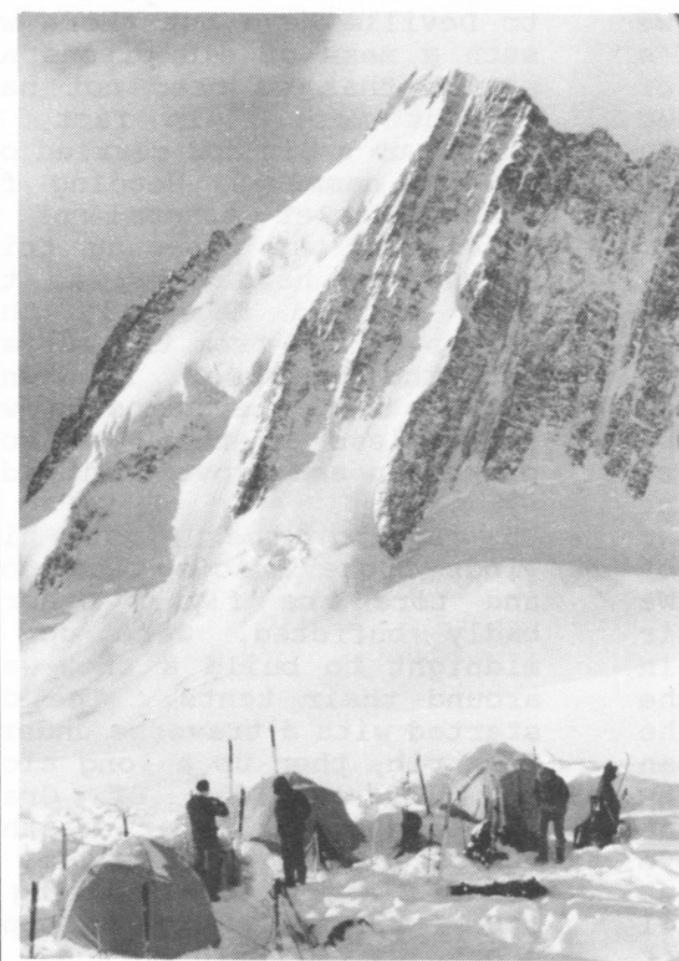
Next morning, after a last TV fix and breakfast in the bar we continued to Roger's Pass to meet Jeff and Delia who had bussed from Calgary. At 9:00, as Sue and Barb left, we were sliding up the old rail-line past the ghosts of Glacier House, eyeing the skyline of the Illecillewaet Glacier. We climbed on slowly, past Sir Donald with Mt. Fox growing in size until we reached the imperceptible crest of the glacier. Below us lay an unlikely forest surrounded by walls of ice and beyond that flowed the Deville Neve icefall. The ski descent became steeper and softer until most removed their skis to get through the last few trees and rocks at the bottom of the ramp. A disorganized search of the forest revealed the Glacier Circle cabin which was reached before 7:00. Although smoky and just large enough for our party it was satisfying to see, on the 70 year old window

frames, the names and records of first ascents made from here.

Up at 5:00 to a clear and warm morning, with avalanches booming off Mount Selwyn. The size of our packs and party made it prudent to set fixed lines in the chimneys leading to Deville Neve but there was such a mess of old pitons and slings that we need not have brought more. In fact, we tidied up a bit and carried off an ice hammer. Heading for Mount Wheeler several of us opted for the bag-drag trick across the hard snow, as the wind swirled magically thin slices of ice from the surface into the sunshine. It didn't matter that the campsite was featureless as the wind soon picked up and drove us inside.

During the night high winds broke Eric's tent pole and tore the fly. Others, badly buffeted, were up at midnight to build a snow-wall around their tents. The day started with a traverse under a rock rib, then up a long slope to the shoulder of Grand Mountain. In blustery weather we descended into the valley of Grand Glacier after fixing a 300 ft. line which stopped short of the bergschrund. A careful traverse on the hard steep slope led to the lower lip of a big crevasse where we waited for the weather to clear a little. As it didn't we skied very tentatively in tricky snow along a gentle ramp that curved around under the Grand Glacier. The poor

visibility discouraged us from ascending toward the ridge so we continued downward to the top of the ice fall. Those in front skied into it but returned roped up. After a bit of indecision some dug in to have a brew while others checked out a higher route spotted earlier by Eric. Although a bit thin it allowed us to pass the icefall, then descend to a flatter campsite



Time to rise and shine

at 9000 ft. near a prominent rock outcrop. While Delia and Eric sewed the fly, Jeff repaired the tent pole and others built snow walls and a

kitchen and cooked dinner. Although it had been a long cold day in poor weather we were satisfied with our ability to make reasonable decisions and move ahead safely.

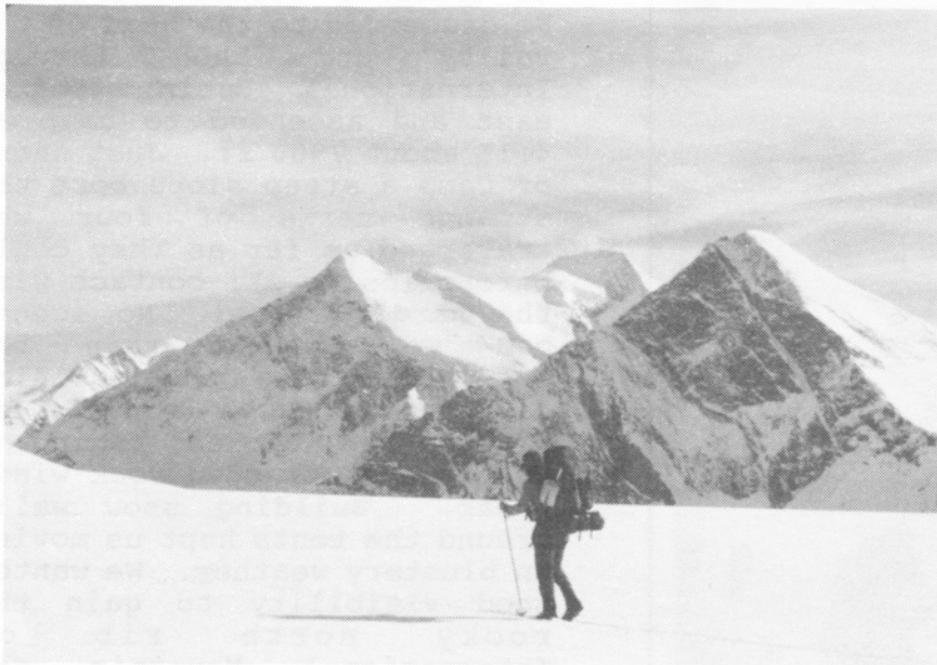
It was still cold the next morning. The direct route up the bowl and the exit ramp to the left near the summit ridge of Sugarloaf appeared uncertain so we skied down the gentle slope of the Grand Glacier until a clear ramp leading back toward Sugarloaf was gained. Even with ski crampons this was a tremendously long and consistent slope which took an infinite number of switch backs before we reached the top. Just short of the summit ridge we were hit with a whiteout which made the routefinding a little uncertain. Fortunately, Fred and Ken had been there in the summer and were eventually able to identify the correct sub-ridge at 9500 ft. leading into the Beaver Glacier. Fred led diagonally downward from a rock rib, across a shallow bowl to another rib two rope lengths away, where we all regrouped. Bert then descended a further two lengths but ran out of rope above the bergschrund. Mark came down and they dug out a platform as the others arrived. By this time everyone was tired, cold and aware that we didn't want to make any mistakes. A line was fixed across a very soft bridge which subsequently collapsed a couple of times providing some interest for Ken. So that Eric didn't feel left out he was hit by a minor slough while

retrieving the ropes. In failing light and deep snow it was a relief to ski away from the bottom of the slope to a flatter area where we set up camp.

A cold night, minus 11 when we got up, but the sun was shining all around highlighting the bulk of Mount Duncan and Beaver Mountain. To the west we could see as far as the Butters and Ahab group and to the east our route across the shoulder of Mt. Duncan and the location of Silent Pass. Further south was the Spillimacheen Glacier with

photos and exclamations about the slope we had descended from the "Loaf" of Sugarloaf yesterday.

Finally we had to shoulder packs and lay some turns down an ego slope. Then a long traverse took us high onto the north-east ridge of Duncan and the top of east-facing Duncan Glacier. In the valley we could see where the cache had been left in the fall. After a marvellous run and a kilometre or so through the trees we were at the cache in time for lunch. Paul's supplies were quickly high-graded when we decided to



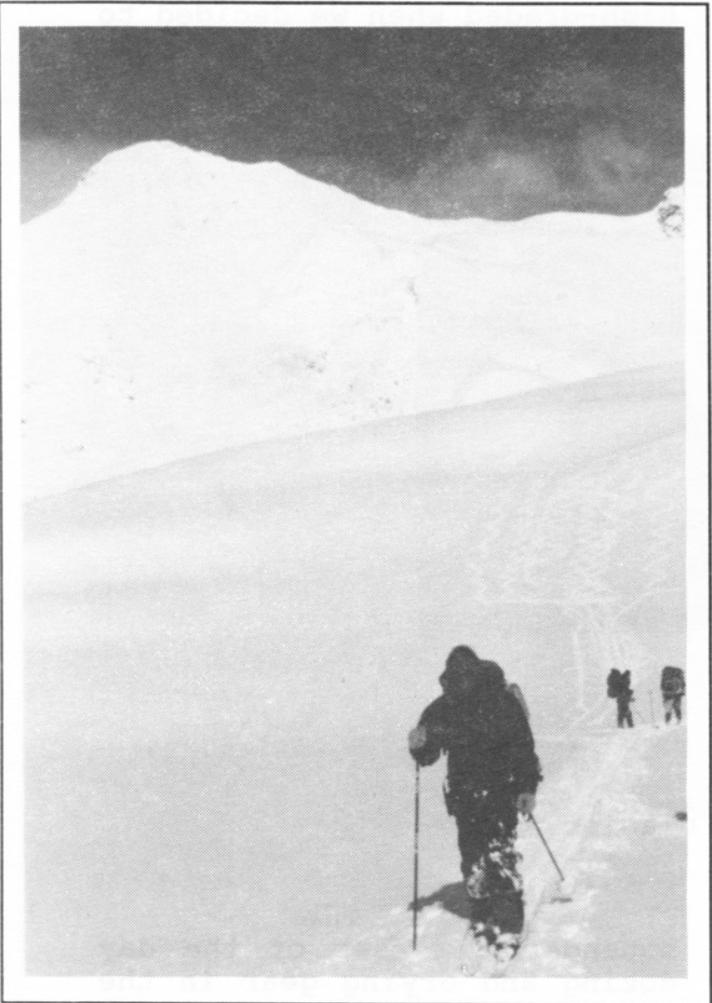
Just cruising along Illecillewaet Glacier

David Peak at the eastern end. Even further beyond was the Carbonate Range with elegant Malachite Spire at its eastern end. Breakfast was simple, tea and porridge, which took the last of our fuel. We broke camp in the sun with lots of

squander the rest of the day dozing and drying gear in the sun. By 4:00 Freddy was starting soup and dividing loads for tomorrow. Some garbage and gear was left to be picked up in the summer.

After a long traverse up

through the mature forest and an old burn the party regrouped. Lunch was in a damp and cold spot in the sub-alpine but more sidehilling and acrobatics in the small trees we were back in the alpine area. Pass we were surprised to see snowmobile tracks in McMurdo Creek valley below. After pushing a little further in light snow we camped on a gladed bench at 7400 ft leaving 400 feet for morning. After an excellent dinner we were well positioned to see Duncan and



Dave Glunz

Beaver but the hoped for sunset didn't happen.

It was always difficult to get up before Roland and he was up again at 5:00 making multi-grain porridge which we ate while watching the mist move slowly around Twin Towers and Coney to the south. By 8:00, after traversing snow so hard some took their skis off, we reached the edge of the Spillimacheen Glacier. During the crossing we had very poor visibility and even with map, compass and lots of discussion, we climbed too high at one point. After dropping a bit we rounded the end of the range and entered the Bobbie Burns drainage for lunch below the clouds. Across the valley the Carbonate Icefield which we had to traverse looked difficult. We descended to the head of the valley and then through International Basin, turned east and ascended to camp at 4:15 about 7500 ft. Just short of camp a steep slope bore the strange marks of four who traversed as far as they could before losing ski contact with the hard surface! No sooner had we stopped than the possibility of a decent evening disappeared in a squall, so dinner was cooked behind a hastily constructed rock wind-break. Building snow walls around the tents kept us moving in blustery weather. We wanted good visibility to gain the rocky north rib of International Mountain and cross the glacier so that we will be certain of our position to descend past Malachite Spire.

We sat out the whiteout until noon the next day when we left in improving visibility. As we crossed the rib, we discovered old ski tracks, which, without any real justification, we interpreted

to mean that we were still on the route. We were again stopped by poor visibility while travelling toward Horseman and Malachite but eventually hit Malachite Spire, a little too high, after singly crossing a short steep slope with no run out. We had heard that this descent into the Malachite drainage would be difficult so we were happy to walk onto the slope of Malachite and then straight down avalanche debris to where the angle was easy enough to ski. A straight-forward run brought us to a huge and isolated rock that provided the justification to camp at 5:00.

The day started off with a long high traverse into the pass below Azurite Mountain. When Eric and Bert arrived, the helicopter which Jeff and Delia had arranged to meet at our next cache, almost a day's ski away, was waiting and the others were drying gear on the exposed rocks and enjoying a noon-time beer. Because Eric was concerned about his ankle he opted to fly out too. As the noise faded we realized we still had days of work so continued to the west through gentle country, warm sun and drying wind to the shoulder of Syncline Mountain. During a quick lunch there we could see our objective. The south facing slopes had terrible collapsing snow on the way down to the lakes where we camped at 5:00. A pleasant spot, with evidence of heli-skiing, which we agreed would be worth tent camping for spring skiing. We were now a party of six in two tents with food for nine, so we ate even better than usual.

The next day's target was the cache at Snowman Lake

dropped there for us by CMH. Shortly after starting the party divided with Roland and Fred choosing the steep but short slope that was the most direct route. The others traversed west to the pass at the head of the valley, planning to contour to Snowman Pass. But the intervening terrain was too rough so they crossed to a nearer narrow pass which provided fine skiing and rejoined the route of those ahead. The last of the party arrived at the cache at 10:00, more than an hour after the others. We brewed tea, ate goodies then did it again as we sorted and packed excess food and fuel while the wind rose and the overcast increased. Refreshed, we left at 11:30 and had a tolerable ski down, arriving at Crystalline Creek in 35 minutes. Shortly after starting up the large and steepening slope to Hume Pass it began to snow. By 4:00 it hadn't cleared so we camped at 8000 ft. rather than continue over Climax Col as planned. Later, during a brief clearing we walked to the edge of the ridge out and saw the likely route for tomorrow. It looked steep but manageable. By 7:00 all were in bed.

We were up at 5:00 to find 3 inches of new snow and the weather marginally better. After climbing a little we traversed into the valley at the bottom of the steep headwall below Climax Col. The surface was very hard and despite great care there were a few slips. Roland won the prize by peeling off twice before we reached the 8500 ft. col. Here we procrastinated over descending what might be a loaded slope in a white out. After very minor sloughs we

began Fred's favourite activity, a long descending traverse across several wind cirques to avoid losing height. Rising cloud and some sun gave evidence of the route to a little pass below the east ridge of Tetragon and thence back toward Conrad Icefield. For those at the rear it seemed like a long haul up in broken sun and then a real blow as the endless barely visible track climbed into the equally white sky. We stopped in the white out about 4:00 at 8000 ft in the shelter of rocks where we dug another of our luxury kitchens. In the evening the sun came out and we were able to pick out our route for as far back as we could see while across the valley the bulk of Tetragon, Cuestaform and the Steeples stood out in sharp detail. Although cool we stood around airing sleeping bags and taking pictures. We were now beginning to anticipate that the worst was behind us as the Conrad Icefield is flatter, we had no major ridges or drainages to cross and we were getting closer to familiar territory.

It remained clear during the night so the temperature was -7 when we got up. The sky was cloudless and everyone was in good spirits, happy to be done with side-hilling. As the sun hit camp we started the long gentle grade up to Thorington Pass at 8000 ft. Before that, at a heli-ski drop site, we stopped to eat and let Dave warm up frost bitten toes. Later we lunched just below the crest of a broad Mt. Malloy col in sun which once more vanished in a squall. We pushed on but had to stop after getting only a glimpse of our descent route which seemed to traverse

between several crevasses. After huddling for half an hour in blowing snow we decided to go. Bert walked down the edge of a wind cirque hoping to get some perspective. Much to the surprise of the others he vanished more quickly than expected. ...into a crevasse. Describing the experience later he said, "By the time I figured out that I was falling I had stopped very gently and was sitting on a spacious snow bridge which dropped away on either side to nasty looking ice. Looking up, expecting to see a little circular hole I was astonished to see a 10 by 30 foot piece of sky! I was absolutely unhurt but worried that the others might not realize how far the crevasse extended in both directions. Contact was established and soon relieved faces appeared 10 feet above me on the lower lip and pulled out my pack and skis and then me." The rescue was performed quickly in brilliant sunshine, no doubt to teach us patience in bad weather. A long ski down with the Malloy Igloo in the distance then a short traverse brought us to a marvellous open campsite at 8500 ft. with views of Malloy, Howser, Bugaboo Pigeon and the Vowells. Soup was served at 6:00 followed by a huge dinner as we were certain we would not need our emergency food. The evening was one of the few when we had clear weather and seemed to signal that the worst was over. We were slow to turn in and spent a lot of time admiring the sunset and alpenglow on the peaks surrounding us.

We were away early in the sunshine and after rattling down 1200 ft. into a remarkable hole we climbed onto the Vowell



Malachite Spire in the background

Glacier which was already getting soft. We reached the Bugaboo-Snowpatch col at 12:00 where we decided to bypass the Conrad Kain Hut if we could arrange a ride from Bugaboo lodge that day. The radio we had packed all the way allowed us to do this. After lunch Ken ski-cut the slope high and set off a slide that cleared the surface. We then descended the steepest part on foot and skied past the hut, heading for the old summer trail then enduring a little slide alder which is a necessary part of such a trip. Walking down the road at 5:00 we found the arranged vehicle waiting for us. We were quickly delivered to Radium where we bought bus tickets, pizza and rented a motel room for a shower. Shortly after 9:00 we ended the thirteenth day by sleeping our way down the highway toward home.

On the trip were: Fred

Thiessen, Eric White, Dave Glunz, Jeff and Delia Roberts, Bert Port, Mark Hamilton, Ken Holmes, Roland Perrin.



"I see you're taking a trip."

THE FAT SKI PHENOMENON

by Ken Holmes

The promotion of the use of "fat skis" for telemark or free-heel skiing has been pursued by the Mountain Equipment Co-Op of Vancouver in the last 2 years. Prior to this, people had experimented with the use of 3 pin or cable bindings on downhill skis in a variety of lengths.

The concept of "fat skis" is not new and probably one of the most remarkable ski mountaineering trips on "fat skis" was done by Orland Bartholomew in the winter of 1928/1929. This is described in the book "High Odyssey" which relates the adventures of Orland in skiing 300 miles from Mount Whitney to Yosemite in 1929 taking about 100 days and climbing some of the 14000 ft. peaks en-route including Mt. Whitney. This is probably one of the more remarkable ski mountaineering trips ever undertaken.

What makes it relevant to this article is that Bartholomew had skis especially made for him by the Northland Ski Company which were 2 feet shorter and 1 inch wider than the skis used at that time. His skis were 6 ft. long or about 182 cm. This is comparable with the concept of "fat skis" today with body height being the recommended length. Bartholomew had difficulty in handling the shorter length and greater width of his shorter fatter skis. The reason for this may be found in the difficulty in edging a wider ski with soft telemark type boots. This is described in Vic Beins book "Mountain Skiing" and Paul Parkers book "Freeheel Skiing".

Fat skis are generally ski mountaineering skis made by European ski companies for use with boots and bindings which allow the downhill skiing to be undertaken with heels locked down and with plastic boots similar to downhill ski boots. The short skis allow for ease of turning while the greater width still provides lots of flotation. When this type of ski is used "free-heel" and with softer leather telemark/touring boots, there is usually insufficient leverage to permit good edging on hard snow or icy slopes, as a result the skis are quite "skiddy".

When used in soft snow however, the wider skis provide a very stable platform for turning and are usually easier for short turns. It must be borne in mind however, that the skiing characteristics of mountaineering skis also varies greatly, as described in my article in last years Karabiner. Some are good in soft snow and lousy on ice and vice-versa. It follows therefore that their basic characteristics should still be considered and the same cautioning remarks I made last year are just as important, when selecting "fat skis" for free-heel skiing. Choose carefully to avoid expensive mistakes. Research the skis you have in mind. Find somebody who has a pair and try to borrow them. If successful, try in different snow conditions from crud, to ice, to powder and then make your decision.

MACBETH ICEFIELD TRAIL

by John Carter

This trail is one of three excellent hiking trails in the Glacier Creek valley that provides access to open meadows, alpine tarns, and large glaciers with alpine peaks over 3,000 m. Glacier Creek flows into Duncan Lake, a man made reservoir north of Lardeau on Kootenay Lake. Approximately 8 km. north of Lardeau, turn right onto the Duncan Lake Forest Service Road and proceed along this road for 11.7 km. Just after crossing Glacier Creek (narrow canyon) turn right up a rather steep hill and drive 10.4 km. to the turn-off to the Macbeth Icefield trailhead. Sometimes a trail sign is present! Drive carefully (sometimes rough) 1.5 km. to where you can park comfortably. This location may vary depending on conditions. Follow the rough access road and skid trail up the valley. If either road or skid trail has slid away, aim for the highest part of the clearcut on the right or east side of the creek.

At the highest part of the clearcut the trail begins climbing fairly steeply for 350 m passing by a lovely waterfall. After passing through a forest of hemlock, the trail crosses Macbeth Creek. From here on, for approximately 2.5 km., the trail pretty well is flat and passes through meadows, stands of lodgepole pine, hemlock and spruce before reaching the big push! A very steep ascent of a rocky ridge begins here and you will know when you have completed the 365 m climb. Now the view of surrounding peaks and glaciers is spectacular and only gets better. The trail wanders up and down and around glacial moraine deposits before reaching the rock ridge overlooking the small tarn and the Macbeth headwall. From here ascents of Mt. Banque, Mt. Fleance and other peaks are possible. Alpine meadows and ridges are noteworthy as well.

Approximate hiking time: 3 hours

Elevation gain: 595 m

Best hiking time: July to October

Map Sheet: Duncan Lake 82 K/7

MONICA MEADOWS TRAIL

by John Carter

This trail is another one of three excellent hiking trails in the Glacier Creek valley that provides access to open meadows, alpine tarns, and large glaciers with alpine peaks over 3,000 m. Glacier Creek flows into Duncan Lake, a man made reservoir north of Lardeau on Kootenay Lake. Approximately 8 km. north of Lardeau, turn right onto the Duncan Lake Forest Service Road and proceed along this road for 11.7 km. Just after crossing Glacier Creek (narrow canyon) turn right up a rather steep hill and carefully drive 23 km. up the valley until you cross the south fork of Glacier Creek. Approximately 50 m from the crossing the road divides. The right fork to south Glacier Creek and Jumbo Pass Trail, the left fork or main road to Monica Meadows access. Drive along the left fork for approximately 1.75 km., turn right up a steepish haul road and continue up this for approximately 2 km. Just before the first creek of significance, you may have to park your vehicle, as the road is frequently blocked with slides of rock or mud.

Follow the road, again crossing the creek further up, for 0.75 km. until a landing is reached. From here, the new trail ascends starting to the left. Ascending through a forest of spruce and balsam, it switchbacks gradually up the forested slope. Huckleberries can cause a slow ascent! After approximately 1500 m., the trail reaches the alpine country with few trees and lots of open glades. The views in all directions are magnificent. Lofty peaks, heavily crevassed glaciers and numerous waterfalls. Ideally autumn is the most spectacular time to catch the real glory of the area.

On reaching the alpine meadowed area, the hiker may choose a number of routes for alpine peak ascents or meadow wandering which the Monica area is noted for. The trail may be extended to the alpine tarns further into the meadows this year. The trail would not climb much more but traverse the slope. A toilet may be installed at the end of the trail. It should be noted that there is no water between the trailhead and lakes, so plan accordingly.

Approximate hiking time to alpine area: 1 hour

Elevation gain: 475 m.

Best hiking time: July to October

Map Sheet: Duncan Lake 82 K/7

The Mt. Blanc Experience

by Peter Tchir

The image that stays most strongly in my mind is one of darkness, a circle of yellow light with silvery reflection off the snow, and my suffering body - the head aching and the stomach nauseous - being pulled by rope up a very large mountain at a rate I was struggling to maintain.

When we decided a family trip to Europe was in order last summer and I would have to miss climbing camp, I settled for the alternative of climbing Mt. Blanc. It would be easy, after all we would be staying with a friend in Megeve which is at the foot of the mountain and equipment rentals would be available in the area. The problem of a climbing partner would be a little more difficult and the solution I opted for was to go with a guide. Now a guide is someone who helps one find their way or provides abilities and knowledge that a person might be lacking to travel into an area. On Mt. Blanc the route is very easy to follow and anyone with even a little experience at climbing can handle the difficulties. But this does not diminish the need for a guide, because for a North American, the tricks and methods of getting through the mountain huts can be a mystery. So there I was at 3:00 am tied between a small French guide who was on his seventh climb of Blanc this summer and was off on an Everest expedition in two weeks and a very friendly partner from Marseilles whose rather unique French name I never mastered in two days of climbing with him. And we were climbing Mt. Blanc.

The mountain is big and it is beautiful and so intimidating from the valley. A few days earlier we had sat in a cafe in Chamonix and stared up at huge glaciers spilling off the mountain and felt the tightness in my stomach that such scenes instill in me. I guess that even after having been on many mountains, the fear has not gone. But on the mountain it was all very easy. The train to 11,000 feet, the easy hike and scramble to the cabin on the first day were much less taxing than many mountains I had been on at home. The fact that 200 people were crowded into a hut for 80 and that the crowd, heat and altitude made sleep impossible, made the next day completely different from anything I had ever done in the mountains of North America.

So that is how I got to the point where my ailing body was dragged up Blanc. We did have the most incredible moonlight and lightning storm over Italy and the summit view over the Matterhorn, Monta Rosa and further north the Bernese Oberland silhouetted in the predawn glow was a most satisfying reward. And on the climb down, the warm sunlight on a ragged and long glacier was soothing to an old glacier walker like me. The mountain and cultural experience of Mt. Blanc will stay in my memory for a long time, even though the details of whatever mountaineering it entailed are already quite hazy.

I am generally quite open minded and therefore for me not even the outrageous cost for the guide and hut and the lines of people

along the final summit ridge nor the altitude sickness and the fact that we stayed on the summit for only a few minutes due to the cold we found there before sunrise are things to complain about, but rather things to experience and learn from. I can return to our B.C. wilderness and my lonely tent and quite enjoy my memories.

But there are also some valuable more practical aspects to the whole experience as I learned when I read the October edition of the newsletter of the FMCBC. In it there is an editorial discussing the role of mountain huts in the wilderness which set me thinking. We as a club have often dealt with the cabin issue and I am sure the cross-section of opinions exist among us. But when one sees the number of people in the Alps, one can easily see that uncontrolled excess and use would destroy the fragile surroundings. When the role of a hut is to protect the alpine environment, it becomes an essential rather than a luxury. I am not sure I would have appreciated this without having seen so many people walking the trails around Megeve and the hundreds that each day travel through the high alpine to climb the famous peaks - Mt. Blanc, the Matterhorn and others. This then has lead me to think of another aspect of such a trip, an appreciation for the social and cultural surroundings of a mountain environment. It is such an important contributing factor to the differences in the experience if trekking in Nepal, climbing in the French Alps or backpacking in the Purcells. Each is so worthwhile in its own way, and thus the importance of preserving the world's small remaining wilderness for its uniqueness is complemented by the importance of saving the cultures of the Himalayas and the Andes and protecting the Alps from overdevelopment.

CASTLE MOUNTAIN

by Steve Horvath and Paul Allen

I wanted something easy, my back had kept me out of action for a year and a half, and so I wished to start out on easier terrain. So in early June, Steve and I set out to climb the standard route on Castle Mt. and then maybe Brewers Buttress if I felt up to it. Murray Tofts guide book "Banff Area Rock Climbs" described them as 5.2 and 5.4 respectfully and short day trips as well, so off we went and hiked up to the Bivouac Hut on the Goat Plateau.

We arrived in the early evening after enjoyable route finding in the gulley below the hut, settled in to enjoy the incredible view from the front porch of the Cabin and in starts my irascible partner, who proceeds to talk me in to the aesthetic, cleaner, less loose rock, closer and definitely easy Brewers Buttress route, or so he says anyways. A check of the guidebook confirms my partners wisdom, with only the comments of overhangs and difficult when wet exit cracks leaving nagging doubts in my mind.

Up in the morning to a blue sky, a beautiful view of the east ridge on Mt. Temple, a good climb that one but another story altogether or so I think. Walking across the scree slopes underneath the towering upper cliff in the early morning warmth from the sun, I

am very suitably impressed by the 1500 vertical feet above me. Half heartedly I try and change my partners mind back to the original easier route up the front tower. But success, as I knew it would be is illusive, as it would be easier to move this mountain than change the Steve Horvath mind after he smells a good hard rock route.

Steve leads the first pitch, looks easy, up I go thinking this is not bad, a little steep (vertical) but definitely a nice 5.4. Half way up the second pitch Steve tells me that if this is 5.4 then he's the king of Turkey, so I call him Constantine and tell him to lead on, no sense of humour this boy as he mutters back at me. The second pitch is off balance and not fun to follow and at the top looking straight down I tell Steve,

"we should have brought two ropes"

"what for" he asks

"so we can rappel down easier" I reply in a squeaky voice thinking now only of escape from this vertical world,

"we aren't going down, were going up" he states emphatically.

I know now I'm doomed to climb this, Oh well I think, I did bring him all this way, I can't back out now, it wouldn't be fair. So I decide to let him lead the whole thing, which is what he wants anyways and up the third pitch we scramble together. A short reprieve as pitch four according to the "guide book" is supposed to be a left trending traverse and as we look into the abyss below we know the route can't go and so we traverse right as has everyone else.

This is obviously the route judging by the pitons plastered like sign posts all over the rock all the way to the belay stations, which are a sanctuary to me as everyone has at least three strongly anchored pitons. Here I can relax between scary seconding and hang on for dear life while I compose the add in the Karabiner to sell my climbing gear and take up something sensible like tennis.

Pitches five, six, and seven all bring curses from Steve about being one hell of a lot harder than 5.4 and we start to devise tortures for Mister Murray Toft. So we stop for lunch at 1 pm. Barely half way up, on a big exposed block after five hours of climbing. Above me jut the overhangs, series upon series of them some sticking out fifteen or more feet above our heads. I no longer look down as the hut is now so small its hard to spot on the plateau.

We consult the guidebook about the route and it makes absolutely no sense as we would have to be Icarus to follow the description given. But the route is easy to see as we can follow the pitons snaking up the rock with our eyes and so off we go up pitch 8 to the crux move according to the guide and its not 5.4 but more like 5.7 plus according to the fearless leader. Consulting the book says go left, but a huge overhang bars our way and so we follow the line of pitons on a ledge system out on to the face itself. I now don't want to look anywhere at all and refuse to follow Steve's laughing finger pointing out Assiniboine in the setting sun, but really I sneak a peek or two or three.

Pitch 9 is the crux, 50 feet above me Steve is battling away in a right facing corner that bulges out, overhung and after 3 attempts Steve hangs his pack from a crucial bolt placed in the middle of the overhang and leaves me to deal with it. This is hard exposed face climbing 1300 ft. in the air directly above our initial first pitch belay. This is starting to be a lot of fun especially as I listen to the King of Turkey moan and bitch as he hauls his pack up and I follow second.

Pitch 10 is hard but eases off from the previous 5.9 and I could keep climbing forever as we inch our way back up to easier ground. Pitch 11 brings us back to the obvious buttress crest and on to the original described route, we sit, rest and plan more gruesome things for Murray Toft while we look up at the last four pitches. Evening is coming and now the race is to get up and off before the light is gone, so we hurry up through three enjoyable rope lengths and then in front of us sits the exit crack. Damp? wet? no! a vertical 100 ft. six inch wide crack pouring down a large creek, yes sir!. It would be waterfall climbing and so we opt for a short easy pitch on the left and then 40 ft. of thin vertical crack on to the summit. Half way up the crack it becomes severely overhanging and Steve is gripped, he doesn't even swear in German or Czech, just makes little whimpering sounds and I laugh at him as he gets as close to falling as I've ever seen.

Gone are my early morning fears and I follow in eager anticipation, enjoying the view, the exposure, and the hard climbing. I find a hold deep in the crack at full reach of my arm and the crux of the whole climb seems to go so easy I don't want it to end. We gobble food and water as we change to our big boots, its already after 7 pm and we're a long way from our rappel route. We post hole our way across waist deep soft snow for an hour and then start the descent down the scree gulley. The last rappels we complete in the twilight zone and then we hike back along the Goat Plateau to the hut.

Its not goats though, but Mountain Sheep that greet us at the hut, so we cook dinner at midnight while they stick their heads in the door and we can scratch their noses. Rest day we plan for tomorrow, so we figure to sleep in, but don't, as to our surprise the Canadian Military Mountain Training Crew have arrived during the night unbeknown to us. They arrived in the dark, set up tents, got up in the morning, cooked breakfast, all 21 of them and we never heard a word.

Conversations with them and a guide, plus a look in the new "revised" guidebook and we find the route actually is a 5.8 and goes on the left side of the buttress. So much for my "easy" start to the season I think, as we wander down to the parking lot having enjoyed a fun climb on good clean hard rock. Who says the Rockies are all crumbly anyways.

BEWARE YOUR MURRAY TOFT GUIDEBOOK

STEPHENS PASS TO LAKE LOUISE

Via Opabin and Wenkchemna Pass's

April 14 & 15 1990

What to do, what to do, ... for the Easter Long Weekend? How about the Lake O'Hara - Moraine Lake traverse, its never been on the schedule before. So it came to pass, that this year Fred would be the leader of the Rockies Easter Outing, but Ken would come along if the weather was OK,... and he did. So onto the trip schedule it went.

To make the car connections work Mark parked his Van at the Lake Louise / Moraine Lake junction then we all convened at the west Louise Lodge at Wapta Lake, but no Ken? At about noon we set off to Lake O'Hara on the well packed busy trail. Four hours later we were at the winter campground at Lake O'Hara. What luxury, a picnic shelter with a wood heater. About 15 minutes later, Mr. Holmes, complete with blue eyes and an impish smile arrived with the comment, "the weather looked good in Rossland this morning so I decided to come".

I don't know about this boy. A serious look at the maps at this point indicated that the next day involved two passes with a vertical gain of 3200 feet and a distance of about 33 km. After absorbing this and figuring out it would take about 10 hours Angie said "tell you what, I'll buy some beer tomorrow and have it in Diane's fridge, for when you get back".

So the next morning in grey weather we set off, Angie for Banff, the rest of us for a 10 hour aerobics class. The route to Opabin Pass was straight forward and easily found and we reached it with the overcast a few feet overhead. A short run

to the Eagle's Eyrie, then a skin up for windy Wenkchemna Pass. The next bit was steep and we had to remove our skis for the last hundred feet or so into Alberta.

Now for the run to Moraine Lake, no joke here folks, this was late spring and the breakable crust and the collapsing slush made for judicious Zorro turns, except for Mark. I couldn't believe this guy, executing turns while the rest of us were too terrified to turn. Below the wind and clouds we had a deserved lunch then continued to Moraine Lake, staying on the tree and rock glacier interface. Once at the lake, we only had the road (12km) to go, except we were getting tired and cranky.

While we plodded up the incline before the road dropped, Mark and Derek blasted off with Ken in hot pursuit skating after them. We reached the cars at 1400 hrs, 9 hours after starting, then tore off to Banff for showers, Big Rock, and the Rose & Crown.

We were Tom Whitton, Angie Hawe, Jeff and Delia Roberts, Mark Hamilton, Fred Thiessen, Andrew Port, Derek Marcoux, and of course Ken Holmes.

Technical details. A two day traverse covering 43 Km and gaining 4600 feet. Best in spring (safer avalanche wise) with an overnight stop.

URSUS MAJOR - ROGER'S PASS

by Earle R. Whipple

One usually considers that Ursus Major is greater than Ursus Minor, and this is true for the grizzly and brown bears at Glacier, but it is not true for the two mountains because Ursus Minor is the higher. Ursus Major is superior in another respect. Ursus Major has presented a puzzle during the course of the guidebook work in the Columbia Mountains. Arthur O. Wheeler, who did the first ascent with his Topographic Survey crew in 1902, thought his route so obvious that no one has since been able to ascertain the way. Conjecture by guidebook authors has Wheeler climbing over Balu Peak (the lower eastern summit of Ursus Major) by its southeast ridge, and up the east ridge, but the east ridge is blocked by a very difficult quartzite wall which Wheeler could not have ascended during his "simple rock climb". The author and his companion of the time learned this during reconnaissance of the mountain in 1989, after which the companion ran off and left the author alone on



Ursus Major from the East-Northeast

Balu Peak, but that is another story.

The vertical south face of Ursus Major rises above Cougar Valley, and may be of high quality quartzite worthy of future cragsmen, but the approach is more direct in the valley of Connaught Creek and the Balu Pass trail. The south side of the peak seems easily accessible over Balu Pass, and may have been the approach used by Wheeler. The southwest ridge of the mountain was probably the route used, because the southeast

ridge of Balu Peak seemed to me too difficult to be climbed by a heavily laden survey crew, and because of the wall on the east ridge of Ursus Major. The southeast ridge of Ursus Major is unfortunately made of the inferior quality schist prevalent in the central part of the Hermit Group, whereas the summit is of quartzite.

A new route on Ursus Major was desirable, and so Leon Blumer and I met for this purpose near Glacier on the morning of July 18, 1990. The day was well advanced after breakfast, and we decided to use the remainder by backpacking up the Balu Pass trail and camping just below the pass. "Balu" (Rudyard Kipling's bear) failed to show up, and all was peaceful.

The next morning, we climbed heather and then snow to gain Bruins Pass, which lies just to the right, and northeast, of Balu Peak. I anticipated some trouble with a bergschrund on the other side of the pass, but to my surprise we merely strolled out onto the glacier. We traversed under Balu Peak and Ursus Major, and a single large crevasse caused only a minor detour. The north face started as an easy snowslope and gradually steepened during the 250 meter ascent until the last few rope lengths were very steep and enjoyable snow. Instead of topping out on rotten rock, we encountered good quartzite and scrambled along the ridge, over the summit, to the cairn on the western end, but Wheeler had failed to leave a message. I later learned that Bruce Haggerstone and David P. Jones had climbed the east ridge on June 6, 1970, when the wall was buried deep in snow.

Leon and I might have traversed, but a vital item had been dropped on the north face, so down the face we went and ended the descent with a 500 meter sitz glissade below Bruins Pass. It had been a fine day, in which we had avoided almost all the jumbled blocks and loose schists of the area on a pleasant route that we hoped other people would also enjoy.



Mt. Thor (Gold Range) 9673 ft.

by Kim Kratky

One of the best views from base camp at this year's climbing camp was of the long east-west ridge that stretches from Kelly Pk. in the west to Mt. Thor in the east. A week of contemplation persuaded me to return again to the legendary bushwhacking of Thor Creek for a second attempt on Thor itself. Back in July of 1986, Howie Ridge, Pete Wood, Janice Isaac and I had made a one-day attempt on the peak, only to get snowed-off before we got to the base of the mountain. That tantalizing glimpse of the bulk of Thor shrouded in fog and mist remained to tempt me over the next few years -- that desire always tempered by remembrances of the painfully steep approach, and bushwhacking in slide alder, devil's club and rhododendron.

However, this year Howie had been saying, "I really want to climb Thor again on the twentieth anniversary of the first year I climbed it." Despite good intentions, it wasn't until the weekend of September 7th and 8th that our schedules matched and we could mount an expedition. The first goal was to get close enough to the mountain to climb it in a day, previous visits having soured us on the idea of dragging a heavy pack up to the alpine for a high camp. After one false start, we followed the route to Odin Cabins south of Coursier Lake (the same car approach as for this year's

climbing camp). Immediately after crossing Pingston Creek, we turned right or west onto Killeen Road and drove 3.5 km. to the effective end of the road. Since there was no water at this site, we returned to Pingston Creek for a car camp.

Saturday morning we were up about 4:30 to cook breakfast under a full moon. By the time we reached the end of Killeen Road and inspected two other vehicles parked there, it was 6:10, time to start. We followed a skid road up and to the east until we reached a big, new clearcut that Earle Whipple had mentioned to me. We crossed the cutblock to its upper right hand corner and traversed up and right into the bush. Fortunately (or maybe it was by skill; not mine anyway), we soon reached the large sickle-shaped rock slide we had seen by moonlight the night before. For over an hour we ascended this slide of enormous boulders until we reached the lower edge of the alpine. "Amazing," I thought, "we've made it without the bushwhacking that defines climbing in the Gold Range." We next climbed over a prominent north-south ridge to the west and descended into the basin below the normal ascent route.

Writing this, I'm constantly reminded of how complex a mountain Thor is and how complicated it is just to describe the route to get back

to the base of the mountain itself. Our next task was to reach the headwall south of our basin. By this time of year much of the glacier was bare, so we roped up, put on crampons and crunched up to the eastern of two cols separated by rock. Now my mind brought back memories of our previous attempt as we descended some snow, traversed, ascended to another col, and picked our way down a rock face and ridge to reach a snowy col below the base of Thor.

It was at this time that Howie noted some gear stowed on the rocks hundreds of yards away. Soon we heard voices and realized another party was on the mountain, probably the owners of those trucks we had seen on the road. Hm-m-m, we didn't think we would have to stand in line to climb Thor. Nevertheless, we donned crampons again for a trudge up some hard snow to the base of the rock and started climbing. What followed was a very pleasant class four climb which we did comfortably in plastic boots without the use of rope for climbing or rappel.

We found that the climb of Thor is made up of three steps, none of which present any great difficulties. We began by scrambling up the ridge for 20-30', then moved right or north for a short wall that I thought was the hardest part of the climb. Regaining the ridge, we travelled through a band of lighter coloured rock, continuing until the ridge steepened and we made a detour to the left. At the second step we traversed to the right

and walked along ledges until we regained the ridge and descended about 40'. Here we met the other party which was from the ACC's Calgary section who had hiked into Thor Creek for a week-long camp. From this point we traversed left again, ascended the face (there are many possible routes), and regained the ridge.

Now, it was an easy scramble to the summit, which we reached at 2:30, 8 1/4 hours after starting. A look at the summit record showed that four or five parties had climbed Thor since the beginning of August; so much for the forbidding, inaccessible Gold Range. We also went through summit formalities by introducing ourselves to Chick Scott and his relatively inexperienced climbers and by taking group summit photos for them.

By this time I was beginning to feel the pain. The lack of water, my chocky bar resting like a slab of chalk in my throat, and a long descent spiced by the thought of getting benighted in the bush all gave me an anxious twinge. Well, better get moving.

The five-hour descent was straight forward and uneventful as we retraced our steps. Below the alpine section, we kept to the bush east of the rockslide, thinking that in our fatigued state a missed step on the giant boulders would be disastrous. We reached the top of the skid road just as darkness fell and got back to the truck shortly after 8:00.

Although I was as tired as I have been for the last few years, I decided to drive back to Nelson. After all, it's part of going on a trip with Howie to drive home after a strenuous day rather than camp. One disadvantage of this approach was that there was no place to get a meal after 9:00 between Nakusp and Nelson. The advantage was that, like a teenager, I learned to appreciate the virtues of Nelson's 7-11 store at 1:30 am.

In summary, Thor was a 14-hour day for us. We travelled at a steady pace without too many breaks, and roped up only for glacier travel. My feeling is that the mountain is better to climb in July or August when there is more snow on the glacier and the days are longer. Whenever you go, it's worth it. As a final note, I would recommend reading Bob Dean's account in the fall 1970 Karabiner of his climb of Thor with Howie. In those days just getting across Thor Creek could be an epic.



"Nature is a great compensator. You're probably a super mountain climber."



"We forgot the food!"

BUGABOO SPIRE The Kane Route

by Robin Laytham

The Bugaboos have always been a favourite area of ours, and we had talked of climbing Pigeon and Bugaboo Spire for years. This summer with the weather apparently settled, we headed off to have a look see at these two mountains.

Fortunately or unfortunately, whichever way you look at it, it is not a well kept secret just how good the climbing is in this area. In the three days we were there, approximately 40 people came into the hut area alone,



Paul climbing the gendarme on Bugaboo Spire

The Bugaboos are tucked away from any main highway and you earn the view by eating dust for 45 km up a very cut up gravel road. The bad thing is you want the road to be dusty so you know the weather is good

with more at the campsites at Mt. Appleby. Of these roughly one third were planning to stay for the next month! One party of 3 came from New Hampshire and this was their eighth consecutive trip.

In our party of two, my husband Paul and myself, we walked into the Kane Hut in the late afternoon, noting the changes to the track since last we had been in together. There is now a ladder anchored to the rocks in one area. An ominous reminder to the toll an area such as this takes, for being so heavily used. Deciding to climb Bugaboo on the second day, we spent the first day scrambling Pigeon and generally wandering around, just enjoying being back in the area. Bugaboo Spire dominates the bowl behind the hut and to climb the standard Kane Route, one approaches via the Bugaboo Snowpatch Col. With this being mid July the bergschrund was virtually full of snow still.

The going was easy scrambling for three quarters of the way up the ridge. A couple of large chimneys were past and the going became increasingly more technical. We roped up, not far above this area, and had two or three nice pitches of rock before reaching the gendarme. Paul was leading so it gave me time to look around and enjoy the view.

The pitch over the gendarme is the climax to this climb, and as if nature had orchestrated this to be so, there is a sudden change in the rock - it becomes very solid granite, that looks quite smooth, but has incredible friction. We had been following an American couple to this point and had a 30 minute wait while they climbed around the gendarme. Long enough to wonder if it was really necessary to proceed.

But continue we did, thank goodness, as it was great stuff. Climbing onto the gendarme up a short vertical 15 foot wall and then "frictioning" over, around and across to an obvious crack that runs up to the belay point. This pitch is classed 5.6 and is very clean, breathtaking and once we had reached the summit, very enjoyable!

The way down was slowed with rappelling the overhanging backside of the gendarme and then across some tricky sand covered inclined ledges. We piggybacked rappels with the American couple and this sped up the last rappels before the long down scramble back to the col.

We were back at the hut by late afternoon in time to pack up and walk out to the carpark well before dark, and then a leisurely drive down that dusty road. A great climb, on a cloudless day and to think that Conrad first climbed this route in slippery old hobnailed boots. And us with our sticky shoes and rock gear can still consider this a climb, humbles one to Kane's mountaineering skills.



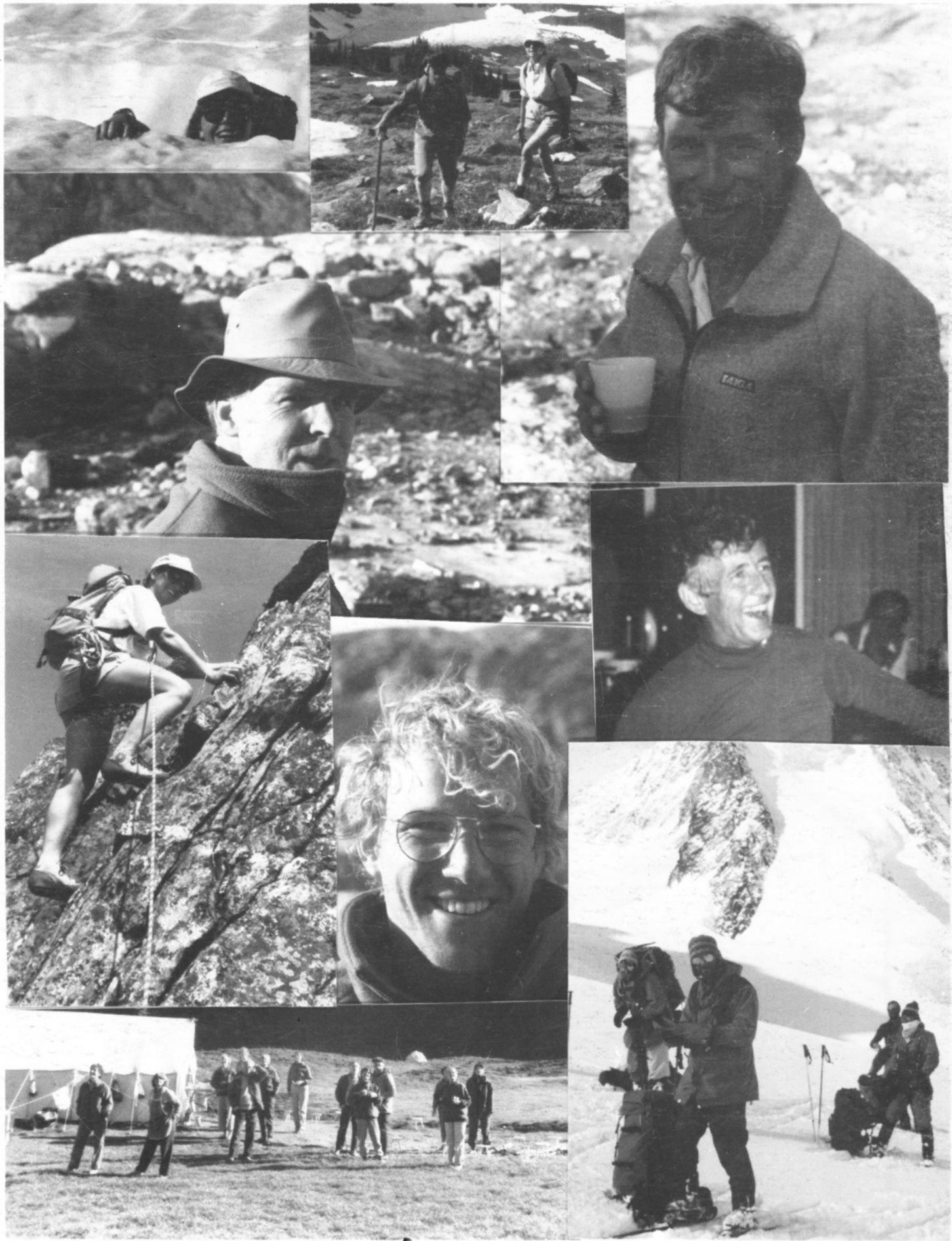
Christmas Party 1990

Editor's Note:

Thanks to one and all for the photographs and articles. A special thanks to Paul Allen for his invaluable aid in collecting the articles and starting the Karabiner for this year. We have taken the liberty to correct spelling, rework sentences and drop unnecessary words. I hope this does not cause any consternation and the journal is enjoyable to read.

Please start sending in your photos and articles for the 1991 Karabiner.

Susan and Lee



Hall Printing, Trail, B.C.