

# KARABINER '85

The Journal of The Kootenay Mountaineering Club  
Vol. 28, Autumn 1985



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Jeff Ross

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# Karabiner '85

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# President's Report

by Fred Thiessen

The summer of 1985 has gone by far too quickly and already it's time for reflection. 1985 was a good year, the summer was warm and dry with the best ever attendance on camps and an ambitious trip schedule which was well subscribed to.

The club's success is due to a hard working group of volunteers from within the executive and the membership at large. To all of them my thanks, for without them we would not be a club.

I would like to thank Anne Dean for the continuing excellent job she has done on the newsletter, and for the day to day affairs of the club in my absence this fall. Also to Allan and Mary Baker who fold, stamp and mail the newsletter. Despite our fears of having to pay full reproduction costs for the newsletter, the generosity of a large Trail corporation continued, allowing for low printing costs. Although Rock School was attended by fewer students this year, it was a success. The usual compliment of instructors were on hand to teach as well as sharpen their own skills. Paul Allen's efforts were much appreciated by those who took the course.

This year's trip schedule was the most ambitious one ever offered with hiking, mountaineering, canoeing, and caving outings. For the most part trips were well attended and the more varied schedule appeared to work well. To those who lead trips and to Peter McIver and John Stewart who solicited leaders, the club is grateful.

For many members the camps are the summer's highlight, and this year they were phenomenally successful, with about 50 percent of the club's membership attending a camp. Due to the popularity of hiking camp in the Northern Purcells, it ran as two one week camps with a total of 45 people attending.

Climbing camp drew fewer members, with a total of fifteen attending. The '85 climbing camp was held in the Coast Range for the first time, so given the distance from home, the turnout was good.

Neville Jordison is presently in Calgary after many years service as Social Chairman. Thanks to Neville for his well organized and varied program. Welcome aboard to Dave Adams whom I recall has been in this position before.

Pat Ridge, custodian of the clubs treasury, reports a healthy financial situation with no major expenditures over the last year.

John Carter continues to keep us well informed on the cabins and trails in the area. Your continued involvement in the work parties he organizes is necessary to ensure the repair of the facilities we use in our outings.

John Stewart has represented the club well in its conservation efforts by attending The Valhalla Park Master Plan meetings, four other Mountain Parks meetings, as well as visiting South Moresby Island to add our voice to those seeking preservation of this area. In addition, his efforts in coordinating this year's hiking camp, despite a forest closure, were well appreciated by those attending hiking camp.

Jeff Ross, Karabiner Editor has produced the thickest issue in recent times, and our thanks to him. This is in contrast to the Alpine Club of Canada who will likely not publish this year due to a shortage of funds.

On our behalf the Federation of Mountain Clubs of B.C. (FMCBC) continues to represent our club as well as others as a lobby group for conservation matters as well as mountaineering politics.

In closing I would like to remind you we are a group of volunteers and your efforts make the club work, if you're not involved, and would like to be, please come forward. □

# Editor's Forward

by Jeff Ross

Oh, the vicissitudes of mountain life! Vicissitude was a term used often in the formative years of Canadian Mountaineering when European guides, and soon the world, discovered Banff, putting the Canadian Rockies and Canada as a mountaineering destination, "on the map."

Webster's, in definition 3A, states vicissitude, "an alteration or variation in fortune." As used in those halycon days, the word underscored the often sudden and sometimes fatal variations in fortune, (sometimes anticipated and sometimes not), which could befall those engaged in activities in the mountains. Vicissitudes.

It wasn't planned that way, but many of the articles in Karabiner '85 deal to varying degrees with

sudden changes in fortune encountered in the mountains, ranging the gamut from the sometimes amusing, (interfacing with Nepalese porters and guides in Tribulations in the Himalayas), to the dispairing, (Tragedy on Kanchenjunga).

Reflecting on the material as a whole, the unified message that emerges is, it would seem to be worthwhile if at more regular intervals we all reviewed our own levels of preparedness to deal with the vicissitudes we potentially might encounter, in settings we either voluntarily or involuntarily find ourselves in "out there". The message is one which holds true be we day hikers, downhill skiers, or climbers of peaks in the Himalayas.

L' Chayim, (to life),  
and oh, yes, may you enjoy this year's Karabiner. □

## Inside Story

by Jeff Ross

No new snow had fallen for at least a week and a half, and the main runs were like boilerplate with unskiable crust in the trees. However, by week's end, a major Pacific front nudged up against the Cascades, producing a snowfall of over two feet of light powder, and the prospect of some fine skiing. But consistent with the vicissitudes of coastal skiing, by Friday evening the weather report was forecasting rising temperatures in the passes, with continued heavy snowfall.

Well before dawn on Saturday morning, our dreams of fluffy bliss were abandoned when the orange strobe lights at the "chain up area" revealed a sky choked with wet snow that was far more wet than snow.

Although it was considered somewhat of a macho thing to say, "Oh ya, we ran the chain sign this morning," over a cup of coffee in the patrol building, it was clear we'd be tested just to fishtail the rig up Stevens Pass with the chains on.

Usually the most favoured ski-patrolling duty assignment was Main Chair, Seventh Heaven Chair, but with near white-out conditions at the ticket booth, and mashed potato snow obliterating the powder beneath, folks in senior positions opted for the now coveted lower lift assignments.

Outfitted in heavy raingear and carrying a two way radio, my partner and I broke trail towards the main chair and the long, cold ride to the top. At least the Seventh Heaven Lift, which ran to the top of the

mountain, was not operating due to the abominable conditions.

But about an hour later we learned the Seventh Heaven Lift had been opened briefly to check on conditions, and that it had promptly been closed after the obvious had been confirmed. Trouble was, while it was open, two customers had gone up, so the hill would have to be swept by the patrol.

When the call came out over the radio, my partner and I were the closest to the lift, so we volunteered to pull sweep duty. As we rode up the steep slope into the white, snow-choked void, we joked, figuring with a radar set and luck, we just might make it down off the top of the mountain in a half an hour. With our youth and relative inexperience, we had only a limited appreciation of the situation we were about to enter into as we slid down the off ramp, probing ahead with our ski poles to find the verge between snow and sky.

The top of Barrier Mountain was a large alpine bowl, and we had no intention of venturing out into it. Instead, for depth perception we would ski next to the treeline on the side of the bowl. Anxious to try and warm up a little after the chair ride, I pushed off first down the steep slope, coming to a stop after skiing about 30 metres. My partner was defogging his goggles and I expected him to come along shortly. Somewhat mindfull of the risk factors now, I stood in the down-slope lee of the treeline off the main slope and waited. It would not be wise to become separated in these conditions and perhaps 30 metres was already too much distance between us. In a couple more minutes I ventured about three or four metres beyond the trees out onto the very steep margin of the bowl for a "clear shot" to yell into the gloom for my partner, but I got no response. "Well, I'll try again in a couple more minutes," I thought. Standing in the white nothingness my mind wandered, thinking of any number of things more pleasant than my current space in time.

The next 60 seconds in "stream of consciousness form": CRACK! RUMBLE!, an explosion?, head facing down-slope, start to turn towards the noise, uphill?, head halfway around now, WHAM! In effect an unseen, (never seen), freight train with extra firm mattresses on front, had just hit me! Tumble, tumble wildly out of control, on and on down the steep slope, no time yet for the mind to comprehend what is happening to me. Abruptly, the tumbling stops. On chest?, yes. Noise?, noise like a waterfall or ocean surf?, no, its a sliding noise, its snow sliding, sliding overhead? Can't be. Silence, and the mind just begins to kick off auto pilot. You've taken a fall, your hands are out front, you're flat on your face, time to get up, to stand up, full comprehension of what has happened can wait, time to get up now, push up, push, push! Wait! Absolutely nothing happened! Nothing moved! No part of my body can move!! Silence, penetrating silence, heavy breathing, full realization, you're buried in an avalanche!! Panic! I yell "HELP!" several times. Silence, eerie beautiful blue light through the snowpack. Realization: shouting will do no good, a grim, "they'd better get me out." (End of the first 60 seconds).

The next ten to fifteen minutes:

calm now, breathing "normally," (good). I am here to contemplate these things because I happened to come to rest with my head facing downhill, and as the snow rushed by it left a tiny air pocket in front of my face. Snow set up like cement now, body in a vice, stay calm, my fate is out of my hands. But there is something? No, it's not the radio so near under my parka but perhaps an eternity away, no, it's my right wrist and hand, they can move! But so what? Well, there is more, my finger tips grasp something, it's the handle of my ski pole. My semicircular canals tell me from the angle of the grip, the pole is pointing straight up towards the surface. Interesting. My fingertips grasp the handle and I find I can rotate the shaft of the pole using my wrist, and with my hand and fingertips I can make it move up and down ever so slightly. Repeat, up and down, rotate, up and down, rotate, and on and on for at least six minutes after which the pole is moving easily within my hand's five inch range of motion. Anyway, the tip of the pole must be somewhere near the surface as it now moves freely up and down. A link to the surface! Maybe just enough air will travel down this narrow shaft, and through my bulky rain suit to keep me breathing? wishful thinking? I can do no more I realize. Very calm now, but once more I repeat to myself, "They better get me out!" Peacfulness, unconsciousness. A footnote, avalanche transceivers were not on the market as of then.

Forty-five minutes after the avalanche: Dim imagination?, funny, no identifiable senses are working, but I sense something is there, some signal is reaching the brain. Is it a sound?, distant, very faint, voices?, faint voices? Voices nearing me now, people all around shouting! A girl, a friend, crying, been crying I'd find out later since the yellow ski patrol cross on my parka became visible through the snow after they had dug five feet down. Five feet down at the spot where one fellow just happened to step, and feeling something under his ski boot, looked down to see the quarter inch tip of a ski pole, (the same one I'd placed my sole hopes on). Crying since my face had first been seen, purple from anoxia, crying since at first I was too far gone to breathe on my own through the respirator. But crying for happy now as we all were, all my friends, my fellow patrolmen, my rescuers, as I'd cheated the odds, I'd made it!

And so had my partner I'd learn later, who had been buried up to his waist. But the joy and even laughter now was tempered somewhat, as in a semi-delirious state my first words were, "I want to ski down! I want to ski down!" Brain damage they wondered? Well, though some might debate it even today, the answer was no.

I spent the afternoon alone at a friend's ski cabin trying to collect my thoughts. Only then did it fully hit home just exactly how close a call it had been. Avalanche training was one of the first objectives I had soon after the experience, not so much for self protection then, as to try in some measure to pay back the ultimate debt of gratitude I owed my fellow patrolmen, since one day I might be called upon to

give assistance in an avalanche rescue.

I've never regretted having that training, and many years since, I've used the knowledge to independently gauge the avalanche hazard, (if any), every day I ski. While not every member of the KMC will have either the time or need to become fully trained in avalanche hazard analysis and rescue, it is most worthwhile to acquire at least a rudimentary understanding of this awesome force in the mountains. By doing so, yours could be the informed advice deterring a young or inexperienced skier from skiing past a closure sign into an avalanche prone area. Such advice just might directly save a life without your ever being involved in an actual rescue. While there is absolutely no substitute for taking a formal avalanche training course, the following article offers a basic introduction to "Avalanche Danger Indicators." □

# Avalanche Danger Indicators

by Brad Geisler

Note: This article originally appeared in the November 1982 Chinook, published by the Calgary Section of the ACC. It is reprinted here as a refresher for the 'not-so-expert', as an eye-opener for those new to the sport of mountain touring, and as a reminder to us all to keep our avalanche warning sensors finely tuned. THIS IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR PROPER AVALANCHE TRAINING!

## A. PREVIOUS WEATHER CONDITIONS (ask local authorities or residents)

1. Six inches or more of continuous snowfall, accompanied by strongwinds, any time within the past three weeks.
2. Ten inches or more of continuous snowfall without wind, within the past week, even if there was very little wind. The faster the snow accumulates, the more dangerous it can be.
3. Continuous strong winds for two days or more, blowing much snow along the surface, even without any snowfall, within the past three weeks.
4. Cold weather (colder than -10C) for a few weeks while snow was thin (usually one to two feet);

causes depth hoar to undermine the snow cover. Common occurrence in late Fall and early Winter; also in midwinter where snow is thinned by high winds or by earlier avalanching. Danger may last more than a month.

5. Above freezing for the past 36 hours or longer. Wet snow avalanches may be ready to fall. This is common in Spring. The first occurrence of the season is the most dangerous.

6. Thaw and re-freeze of snow surface, followed by six to ten inches (15 to 25 cm) of snow. New snow is resting on ice crust.

7. Cold, clear nights, followed by a significant amount of new snow. On shaded and wind-sheltered slopes, the new snow rests on surface hoar, which has very low strength.

#### B. PRESENT OR VERY RECENT WEATHER CONDITIONS

1. Snowing hard for six to ten hours, or snowing and blowing for four to six hours.

2. Warming up during a good-sized snowstorm. Heavier, damp snow may be deposited on top of weaker cold snow, or rain (and thaw) may follow damp snow.

3. Prolonged heavy rain on old snow. Deep, settled snow cover tends to become unstable after an inch of rain; unsettled snow may require less.

4. Warming up after a snowstorm or windstorm.

a. Rapid warming is more dangerous.

b. Danger increases if the temperature goes above freezing.

#### C. SNOW CONDITIONS YOU CAN SEE AND TEST

Learn the Ski Pole Test, Shovel Test, Switchback Test and Skiing Test, from your Avalanche Instructors. Look for:

1. Weak layers, thick or thin, within the snow cover.

2. Potential sliding surfaces within the snow cover, such as buried crust or surface hoar.

3. Harder or 'tougher' snow layers above weaker layers. Experience is required here. Several different tests, and tests in different places, will help.

4. Slopes that were partially sheltered from the last strong wind. Wind slab, hard or soft, is often detectable by location and contour.

a. Like a broad, spread-out drift.

b. Filled-in hollows or built-up, rounded shoulders, where wind continued to blow across the surface.

c. Little drifts behind trees or rocks point to it. (Watch for these little drifts everywhere. Wind directions differ on different parts of each mountain.)

5. Areas of hard snow that are possible windslab sites. (Hard slab).

a. Smooth, gently-rounded contour.

b. Surface dull or chalky if exposed.

c. Usually in a windswept site.

d. Often too thick (meters) and too hard to test.

e. In spite of concrete-like feel, may be very brittle and near breaking point from its own weight.

f. May support many skiers, and afterwards avalanche suddenly with only one skier. Do not test-ski. Stay off.

g. May last for months before avalanching. Do not disturb, except with explosives.

6. A cornice is one type of hard slab formation. It is also like a frozen flag flying in the prevailing wind, showing you the wind direction across the ridge.

7. Snow softening as the day warms up, or else snow already wet to slushy.

a. Becoming heavier and/or softer to ski in.

b. First real warm-up after a good snowfall.

c. May not have frozen last night. Wet or almost slushy.

d. Changing from half-damp to damp, damp to set or wet to nearly slushy, in a few hours or less. The faster the change, the thicker the layer that changes, and the wetter the snow, the worse the danger.

8. Depth of unconsolidated snow, or depth to sliding surface in block test:

a. Ten inches (25 cm.) or more of loose snow or soft slab.

b. Six inches (15 cm.) or more of hard slab, or of loose snow where a wide area funnels into a gully.

9. New avalanches, recently fallen (not just small sluffs, which mean the snow is stabilizing); other slopes, especially those of similar direction and steepness, are probably very dangerous.

#### D. TERRAIN AND ROUTEFINDING

Before you have learned to make reliable interpretations of snow, you will want to rely on analyzing the terrain. When you visit a new area, you will probably look at the terrain first and then the snow.

1. Steep slopes avalanche. If it is steep enough for real skiing fun, it could avalanche if the snow is unstable.

2. Regular avalanche paths are often recognizable:

a. Fall-line clearings in timber.

b. Areas of small trees or bushes only, or with few large trees minus lower branches.

c. Treeless gullies.

d. Steep slopes above timberline, leading down to a, b, or c; also treeless slopes similar in steepness and direction to examples of a,b, or c.

e. Bowls, gullies and other areas that the wind loads with extra snow.

f. Slopes with open timber ("skiable" tree spacing) are the same as treeless slopes.

g. Old forest-fire burns are the same as treeless slopes, whether snags are standing or not.

3. Small avalanche slopes can be more dangerous to skiers than big ones (they are easily overlooked).

4. Trigger-point location on an avalanche slope:

a. Middle of steepest part, often halfway down the slope; too much snow hangs above you for safe ski-testing.

b. Secondary trigger point may be at bottom.

c. Seldom at top, although many skiers will ski-test the top and draw wrong conclusions.

d. Very unstable snow can be triggered from the top, bottom, or even way off to one side.

e. A wide slope may have several trigger points, and an avalanche or a test of part of it does not mean the rest is safe.

f. A long slope has different snow conditions at the top and bottom; be suspicious of both.

5. Progressive failure of incipient avalanches is quite common.

a. Each successive skier weakens the snow more, without visible evidence, until it finally avalanches.

b. Safe passage of a number of skiers does not prove a slope is safe.

6. Stability of a slope may change greatly in a few hours or days.

a. Due to present weather (warming, snowfall, wind).

b. Due to snow metamorphism (changes in crystals or either new snow or old snow).

c. Although safe this morning, or last week, it may not be safe now.

7. Ridges are the safest routes, hollows the worst.

a. Avalanches slide away from ridges, and toward gullies or hollows.

b. Avoid lee sides of ridges (wind-slab sites) unless you are sure of the snow.

c. A gully tends to concentrate any avalanche from above.

d. Beware of large avalanches spilling over gully sides, especially with zigzag gullies.

e. "Bowls" and "chutes" popular with skiers are often avalanche couloirs.

8. Natural barriers help support the snow, but are no protection if it avalanches from higher up. Ski close on their downhill sides to avoid undercutting the slope above.

a. Exposed rocks.

b. Big trees, or dense stands of trees.

c. Ridges or terraces across the slope (ski near the outside shoulder, but not on it; avoid the inside hollow carefully).

9. Dense timber is normally safe, unless avalanche hazard is extreme.

a. Helps to anchor the snow.

b. Breaks up wind pattern and reduces velocity.

c. However, if hazard is extreme, big avalanches from open slopes above can smash through the timber for a mile.

10. Know what the ground surface is like under the snow. Poorest snow support is:

a. Smooth rock surface.

b. Grass.

c. Loose shale.

d. Dense brush (when bent down and buried by snow)

11. Avoid slopes that may be dangerous. Go one at a time on slopes that are doubtful.

a. Rest of party watches from safe places.

b. Keeps weight on slope to a minimum.

c. Avoids loss of entire party without hope of rescue.

12. The golden rule of routefinding is: You can seldom be positive that a slope won't avalanche, but you can make a good guess at what will happen to you

if it does.

a. Avoid long slopes, where avalanches may have large volumes of snow.

b. Avoid slopes that might sweep you into trees, rocks, gullies, crevasses, or over a cliff.

In spite of all this, we know that many skiers will continue to ski bowls (avalanche couloirs) that have untracked snow. For them, the thrill of action cancels the possible risk. If you are such a skier, I hope you will learn to evaluate snow and weather thoroughly, and that you will always start by checking on avalanche conditions with the local authorities. □

# Avalanche Beacon Evaluation

submitted by Fred Thiessen

prepared by Clair Israelson, Dave Norcross,

Bruce Howatt

Parks Canada Warden Service

Temple Research, Lake Louise, Alberta

## INTRODUCTION

During February 1983, the wardens working at Temple Research, Lake Louise, conducted a series of tests on six different types of avalanche rescue beacons. The main reason for conducting these tests was to compare performance and use characteristics of the different beacons. The six types tested were: SKADI, PIEPS I, PIEPS II, ORTOVOX, RAMER ECHO II, and AUTOPHON. All units except Autophon operate on a frequency of 2275 hz. Autophon uses a frequency of 475 khz and Ortovox operates on both of these frequencies.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Test for receive and transmit distance
2. Evaluate durability and reliability
3. Evaluate ease and speed of use-searchability
4. Evaluate compatibility with other types of beacons

## TEST METHODS

Five units of each type were used in all the tests. The only exception being Autophon because only one unit was available for testing. New alkaline batteries tested to 1.5 volts were used in all the beacons.

For the receive distance tests a transmitter of each type was used. To eliminate the possibility of a variation in the strength of the transmitted signal, the mean transmitter of each type was determined and used in all the tests. Variation in the orientation of the transmitter made a significant difference in the transmit distance, therefore during all tests, antennas of transceiving and receiving units were parallel.

The five transmitters were laid out in a grid pattern far enough away from each other to eliminate any overlap in the transmitted signal. Four testers, each using a different type of receiver, then went through the grid at a searching pace and the maximum receive distances were recorded. This procedure was repeated until all four units of each of the five types had been tested against the five transmitters.

## MAXIMUM TRANSMIT TEST

To determine the maximum distances of each brand, one tester stood in the same spot with a beacon on receive. One at a time, each unit of the five brands tested were moved towards the receive tester until a signal was heard. The distances were recorded and a mean transmitter was determined.

## MAXIMUM RECEIVE TESTS

Using the procedure outlined, the beacons were tested for maximum receive distance under the following conditions:

- (a) Transmitter buried under one metre of snow-receive units warm
- (b) Transmitter buried under one metre of snow-receive units cold
- (c) Transmitter on surface of snow-receive units warm
- (d) Transmitter on surface of snow; transmitter taped to radio (frequency 166.83 hz)-receive units cold
- (e) Transmitter buried under one metre of snow-receive units warm-receive units tested less than 10 cm from radio (frequency 166.83 hz) and more than 10 cm from the radio.

## MINIMUM RECEIVE TEST

A minimum receive test was also done by walking towards the transmitters with each of the receivers volume control on the lowest setting. The distances at which a signal could first be picked up was recorded. The Ramer Echo II was not used in this test because it has no volume control. The receivers were warm for this test.

## SEARCHABILITY

Two tests were done to try and evaluate "searchability". Searchability is the ease of use and speed in locating a buried transmitter.

### Test A

A transmitter was placed on the surface of the snow: five testers, each with a different type of beacon

took turns locating the transmitter. Each man used all five types of beacons. In this test the testers were blindfolded during their search and the elapsed time to locate the transmitter was recorded. The blindfolded tester was assisted by a helper in his search pattern so that the transects were done at ninety degrees.

### Test B

Two transmitters (Pieps I) were buried eight metres apart and five cm below the surface. The testers were not blindfolded this time. When the first transmitter was located it was left on transmit. When both were located the elapsed time was recorded.

## COMPATABILITY WITH OTHER BRANDS

The results of the maximum receive tests demonstrated compatibility or the lack of it between different makes of beacons.

## DURABILITY AND RELIABILITY

From our field test we obtained a lot of numbers that told us about receive and transmit capabilities of the different brands of avalanche beacons. This information was relatively easy to obtain through a standardized test format. Equally important as absolute performance is durability and reliability. These aspects are harder to accurately and impartially evaluate. Through our field tests the testers found obvious strengths and weaknesses in different brands. The results regarding this aspect of the test are therefore based upon the comments and opinions of the testers.

## SUMMARIZED RESULTS

### SEARCHABILITY

These two tests showed that the Pieps II had the fastest search time and the Skadi the longest. Pieps I, Ortovox and Ramer were all about the same. On the first test using one buried transmitter, the Skadi was 16% slower than the Pieps II and on the second test with two buried transmitters, the Skadi was 34% slower.

Pieps II had the longest receive distances and in the search test, the tester's search pattern was initiated farther from the transmitter than for the other beacons being tested. Even with a larger search grid, the Pieps II performed the best in terms of elapsed time to finding the transmitter.

## COMPATIBILITY WITH OTHER BRANDS

Autophon is only compatible with itself and Ortovox because of the different frequency used only by these two brands. Ortovox (which uses both frequencies) is compatible with all known brands of avalanche beacons presently on the market. Of the beacons tested that utilize the same frequency, some differences in receive distances between the various brands was noted. Ortovox works very well with itself but its performance drops considerably when used with a different brand. All brands generally performed best with a Skadi transmitter (which had the best transmit performance). Skadi also "beeps" much faster than the other brands; approximately 200 beeps per minute for Skadi compared to approximately 50 per minute for the others. The faster beeps are easier for a searcher to hear as he first walks into the transmitted signal at a

searching pace.

#### DURABILITY AND RELIABILITY

**SKADI**-The Skadi is a solid, well made unit that has proven to be dependable over the years. The on/off switch lock is a good feature. For backcountry use, the re-chargeable batteries are a draw back; they only last about a week. Skadi is also the heaviest of all units tested.

**PIEPS I**-On the Pieps I, the switch from receive to transmit can easily be changed. The case does not seem to be as durable as some of the other brands tested. Its poor receive performance also reflects on the overall reliability of the unit. One unit failed to receive during the tests.

**PIEPS II**-The Pieps II is also a solid, well made unit with very few faults. Its long receive distance and fast search time make this a good unit. None of the units failed to work during the test, however, it has been the experience of the Warden Service in Lake Louise that they can and will break down from time to time.

**ORTOVOX**-Three earphones failed during our tests. The way the earphone is stored in the case might be a contributing factor to this high failure rate. The fine tuning dial is also poorly made; if turned too far left between stops, the volume increases to maximum. This causes problems while trying to search. Overall there seems to be too many loose parts with this unit, the on/off switch, the earphone and the unit itself. Therefore there is some doubt about the reliability and durability of this unit.

**RAMER**-A simple, reliable unit, however the battery set up is poor. The operating manual actually tells you to tape the batteries in place. One should expect a higher standard for such an important personal safety device. Reliability has been excellent over the past three years (source: R. Matthews, A.C.C.).

**AUTOPHON**-with only one unit for our tests, it is impossible to evaluate the reliability and durability of this avalanche beacon.

#### CONCLUSIONS

There is a significant variation in performance due to difference in transmit strength and receive sensitivity between the brands. There is little significant difference in search times. The two best all around performances were Pieps II and Skadi.

-Ortovox transmit distance drops by one third when buried one metre. The high frequency of 457 khz transmits well on the surface but when buried the lower frequency of 2275 hz is the signal received. (Source: B Weightman, Ortovox Canada).

-Wearing a radio close to the receiving unit will cut receive performance by more than 50%.

-The lack of volume control on the Ramer is not a serious detriment in locating beacons.

-Pieps II consistently showed the greatest sensitivity and was also the fastest to search with.

-Burial in one metre of hard, dense snow has no significant affect on transmit distances; the only exception being Ortovox.

-No significant difference was found between warm and cold receive units.

-In search tests, units with definite stops in volume control seem to work best.

-Three earphone failures out of six units tested make the Ortovox quality control suspect.

#### NOTE

This report was produced by Parks Canada's Warden Service. We are not endorsing nor criticizing any of the instruments, we are only reporting on our findings.

Since the time of testing, some of the products have undergone changes to alleviate some of the problems outlined, therefore an improvement in performance can be expected. □

## It's a Small World Out There

by Jim Kienholz

The 1985 summer fire season had been a hectic one and it wasn't over yet by a long shot. This time out, on a break from fire fighting, I found myself assisting on construction of a communications tower near Bella Coola, (coincidentally in the vicinity of Ape Lake, site of the 85 KMC Climbing Camp). Rounding a bend in the road, (which was officially closed due to fire danger), we came upon a lone climber who looked anxious for a ride. We stopped, asking him what the H. he was doing in there with the fire closure in effect? He explained he and another had entered the area, (apparently before the closure), and they planned to hitch a ride out on a logging truck. However, with the fire closure of course there had been no traffic on the road at all.

Relenting on the riot act, we agreed to give him and his buddy, (who we learned was waiting farther down the road), a ride out. When the young guy started uncoiling his climbing rope to lash his pack into the truck bed, I let him know what I thought of the idea as the road dust would work into the rope, damaging it. I grabbed it and threw it into the cab. After that he clammed up leaving me to speculate that

he and his buddy were a couple of relative greenhorns, and it was just as well we had happened along to get them out of the area.



"Fred," photo Jim Kienholz

Before long we came upon his partner, an older fellow who looked to be in good shape. Despite expecting the young guy to yield the front seat to his partner, it didn't happen, and in fact the older guy, (Fred was his name I overheard), seemed to prefer to go it alone, sharing the pickup bed with an air compressor. To help him out, once he was sitting down, I took a hold of his feet and firmly planted them against the side of the bed, telling him to brace himself for the ride in that fashion.

Some ten or fifteen minutes had passed by, moving on down the road, when all of a sudden, something clicked....."Fred?" (I ask the guy), "is that Fred Beckey?!!?" "yes it is", (he says). I tell the driver to hit the brakes, and out I jump to try and say something that makes sense as I confront every North American mountaineer's hero, Fred Beckey, The Fred Beckey, legendary Pacific Northwest climber with countless first ascents and many books to his credit. "Mr. Beckey Sir, you should be riding up front!", (I exclaim), "no" (he calmly replies), he was fine in the

back, thank you. Deciding if the mountain wouldn't come to me so to speak, that I'd go to it, I quickly jumped in back to join Fred.

I spent the rest of that long dusty ride shouting questions at Fred over the rumble of the truck noise, mostly about what his objectives had been in the area. His general answers ranged from vague to vaguer. Among the few things I learned was, yes, he knew Helen Butling, and he wanted to revisit Mulvey Basin in the Valhallas sometime.

Finally we arrived where his vehicle was parked, and I pulled out my camera to fire off a few shots for posterity. On the drive back to our base I tried to put into perspective what I'd just experienced. Anyway I looked at it, it had to qualify as one chance encounter I'll be remembering for some time.

(Editors note)...While it is impossible to say, Fred may have been working on yet another climber's guidebook to complement his three volume Cascade Alpine Guide series. The first volume began a northward progression from the Columbia River, with the third and last volume covering destinations north to the Fraser River. Perhaps Jim's encounter represents a scoop on the progress of Fred's field work for his next guidebook, Fraser River to ? □

## Ski Mountaineering in the Rockies

Sunwapta Pass to Bow Lake  
by Bert Port

**S**ure, ten days should do it", said Fred, "easily," as we checked the aerial photos and map over a few beers. "It" in this case was a ski traverse from Sunwapta Pass to Bow Lake. The attraction for several of us was that the route would connect our earlier trip from Mt. Clemenceau to Sunwapta Pass with our Peyto Lake to Wapta Lake trip. It would also take us near territory familiar from climbing and skiing trips to Little Yoho and the Mummery Glacier. In short, much of the high level route championed by Hans Gmoser in his 1961 CAJ article which, although infrequently done, certainly justifies his early enthusiasm.

A snow storm in early May jack-knifed trailers at Bow summit and dampened our enthusiasm for a quick start. But the momentum of getting seven of us here from around the province carried us past the bulldozer preparing the tourist ice-road on the Athabasca Glacier. Below the third ice-fall another squall encouraged us to call it a day. The usual confusion of the first camp was minimal despite the -15 c. temperature.

Next morning was clear as we skinned out of the shadows onto the Columbia Icefield. With Mt. Bryce before us like a beacon we skirted Mt. Castleguard before lunch, then had our first downhill run which took its toll in poles and bindings. Bushwacking high on the south bank of the Castleguard River avoided the canyons and led to a good campsite on the gravel flats below Watchman Peak. From here we could just see the high and remote tips of Mt. Lyell which we would have to cross in the days to come.

Monday began pleasantly on the sparsely-treed limestone ledges of the Castleguard River but we were soon forced back into thick trees where rotten snow collapsed and rhododendron tangled. Down on the dryas-covered outwash plain beside the frozen lake below the Alexandra Glacier the strong wind was cold and the summits were disappearing into slow-moving cloud. The glacier ramp we expected looked impassable from this angle. As we slowly moved upward the route became clear and the angle eased until we were at the 7,000 foot level in the upper basin where camp was made. Damp clouds now hung well down Oppy, Farbus and Lyell, allowing only glimpses of the narrow ramp that would be the key to tomorrow's upward exit. The overnight temperature was a damp zero while the morning clouds were unchanged from the night before. Beyond the ramp we passed the north-east rib of Farbus mindfull of the huge cornices above and the evidence that an earlier collapse had easily vaulted the yawning bergshrunf we were traversing above. A slightly nerve-wracking series of switchbacks brought us from the grey mists into blazing sun at the edge of a broad slope over which Ernest Peak loomed like some impregnable fortress. We could now see more clearly the relationship between the five peaks of Mt. Lyell which were only in 1972 named after the early guides: Rudolph Aemmer, Edward Feuz, Ernest Feuz, Walter Feuz, and Christian Hasler. At the Edward-Ernest col most of the party elected the easier walk up Edward in deference to the unstable snow on Ernest. At 11,520 feet we now stood at the highest point of the traverse. The near white-out conditions prevented us from enjoying the upper part of the Lyell icefield. But when we did get under the cloud our next campsite at Division Mountain was visible in the distance. The intervening long gentle descent made it worthwhile to again use our heavy-duty garbage bags to tow some gear. Although on each successive trip we have used lighter and lighter gear and less of it, without caches established before hand there is still plenty to carry on a ten day trip. Fifteen or twenty pounds towed on a ten foot line makes a tremendous difference.

After another windy night at -12 c. the long descending traverse across the shaded and rock-hard western flank of Division Mountain was very tiring. It

was here that we wished for our heavier alpine skis. Before long we were out of the shadows and ascending the wide expanses of the Mons Glacier under blue skies. At the 8500 foot col on the edge of the West Glacier we chose to wait for the evening freeze up before downclimbing the snow to the rappel point. So we ate our evening meal early, dozed, sunbathed, dried clothing, melted snow and savoured what turned out to be our only such pause in the trip.

Rattling down to timberline next morning was enlivened by a fall of ice from Cambria Mountain which upon reflection was more spectacular than dangerous. Again we were faced with forest too thick to ski and snow too soft to walk on so side-stepped a thousand feet down to the flat and open valley of Forbes Creek. Bush Pass, draped in cornices, blocked the end of the valley but before we reached it our route turned south again. Over 3000 feet above was the tiny notch that would take us to the Niverville Glacier. Looking back we could see the bulk of Mt. Forbes and wondered at those earlier adventurers who had penetrated the wilderness to climb it. After kicking steps up the cold snow on the north side to the ridge the wet and bottomless snow on the south side was a disappointment which turned to frustration as we wobbled and crashed downward. After a long hard day we were happy to check out the luxurious Lloyd Mackay Hut recently completed by the A.C.C.

Forcing ourselves away from the cabin early we started a seven kilometre ascent of the featureless Freshfield Icefield. The enormous panorama of peaks changed only slowly as we moved under the hot sun. We congratulated ourselves on our good luck since the point at which we needed to make an abrupt left turn, leave the glacier and ascend to the 9500 foot shoulder of Mt. Lambe would have been a major navigational problem in bad weather. After recovering from the effort required by the last few hundred feet of very soft snow we set off again and contoured around the upper end of the Conway Glacier, crossed another small saddle then began the long descent of the Lambe Glacier. Failing to find an easy or obvious way off either side we returned to the centre of the snout and rappelled off using a long ice screw brought for that purpose. Camp was again made late in the day but we were rewarded by the sunset across the valley on Howse and Aiguille Peaks. We now began to speculate on how much ahead of schedule we might finish our trip. Tomorrow we would quickly descend to the Blaeberry River, follow it to where Wildcat Creek joined it at 4200 feet, ascend the Wildcat to the Baker Glacier and then to the 9500 foot pass between Mt. Baker and Trapper peak. Here we would be on known territory and a quick dash would put us at the Post Hotel for a celebratory dinner.

A further three days were required before this event came to pass. The hot weather enjoyed on the glaciers had increased the runoff in the rivers, including Cairnes Creek which we had to bridge before reaching the very welcome logging bridge across the Blaeberry. Much time was taken up with fighting the slide alder in the lower reaches of Wildcat Creek before hacking a miserable campsite out of avalanche debris spanning the creek. Goat trails on the canyon

walls led to an upper basin and the ice-clad waterfall from which flowed another torrent that had to be bridged before we could escape these vertical and oppressive walls. Once on the Baker Glacier we moved slowly, spread out, each silently thinking whatever it was that kept him going. A short rest in the clear evening light at the pass and we were off for the Peter and Katherine Whyte Hut across the Wapta Icefield. We tumbled inside too tired to eat all of our last dinner or to care about the impression we made on those already there.

Our last morning dawned clear once more. After eating all the odds and ends we turned our skis uphill for the last time then passed by the crooked finger of St. Nicholas peak, Bow Hut and the last icefall. Joyfully following old ski tracks we soon came to an excellent path which ended almost immediately and left us to struggle through soft snow and mud. Simply walking on the summer trail for the rest of the day seemed almost as hard as any of the other days. Probably we were running down after having ascended in excess of 20,000 feet and descended the same distance while covering (allowing for an adjustment to the map distance), about 100 miles.

The members of the party were: Charlie Boyd, Jack Bryan, Dave Gluns, Ken Holmes, Bert Port, Fred Thiessen, Eric White. □

# Ski Mountaineering in the Valhallas

by John Carter

Our seven day ski tour in the beautiful Valhalla Range began April 9, 1985 with a helicopter from Nelson to Mulvey Basin. The day was clear and warm and snow was sliding off the slabs surrounding Mulvey Basin. After nearly two hours of shovelling the roof of the Mulvey Hut and digging out the door and toilet we were able to move in. A quick lunch then a tour around the basin, stopping to dig a snowpit below Midgard peak, followed by an attempt at skiing down beneath Asgard. The snow was heavy and we did not have good results. A leisurely ski back

to the cabin for dinner and a lovely sunset.

A note about our equipment. We were all using heavy cross-country skis and skins. Our group equipment included a McKinley tent, avalanche probes, pieps, 150 m. of rope, packs and the usual survival gear. We were four in number and carried 50-55 lb. packs for the first two or three days.

The next day dawned clear and warm, and after a hearty breakfast we were off. We started climbing near the large lake via the northwest side of the basin, reaching the col between Asgard and Gladheim peaks. Off with the skins for a cautious descent down the steep northwest slope until we reached a gentle plateau (or bench) below Asgard. We traversed northwest from here keeping the same elevation until we rounded the flank of Asgard for the glide down to Prestley lakes. It was a beautiful setting below the peaks of Midgard, Asgard and East and West Prestley. The snow was wet and soft and various climbing skin problems developed, ones which would plague us for the rest of the journey. We climbed the saddle to the west of the lakes and skied down the other side to Valhalla Lake. It was hard going up the col, and coming down, we encountered rotten, deep, spring snow 100 metres above the lake. I managed to disappear head first into a hole and luckily was able to pull myself upright to dig my way out down hill. The first of many terrific glundersplats!!

After a much deserved rest and lunch at Valhalla Lake we skied around the steep walls of Drinnon Peak. In poor snow, and changing weather conditions, we stopped and pitched our tent. Tea was soon brewing as rain drops began! We certainly did not need rain! At 5 p.m. it was +6.5 degrees centigrade.

On April 11, we packed up amid rain showers, in a whiteout. We turned the corner and began ascending to a col on Drinnon Ridge, still in a whiteout and terrible skiing conditions. Our route down was horrendous, on a very steep, wet, avalanche slope to near Drinnon Lake. Our hearts were in our mouths, but we all made it without starting a major avalanche. By now it was raining as we struggled along to Drinnon pass where we devoured our lunch.

In a while we set out again, to descend to the lake below Gregoride, followed by a climb up the little valley to the left, (or south) of the summer trail. Once again, conditions looked poor with ominous clouds forming and the odd sprinkle of rain or wet snow. On the Gwillim Lakes plateau, we chose a sheltered clump of trees between the two largest lakes where we set up the tent and got the tea brewing. For the rest of the day and evening it snowed, blew and hailed 'til nightfall when the sky partially cleared. At this point we were having serious misgivings about the conditions so far, and what we felt might be ahead of us. "Oh well, we'll see what tomorrow brings."

A mainly clear morning greeted us as we pulled ourselves from the icy tent, dug out the stove and began the daily task of packing, cooking and taking down the tent. Soon we were off across the lake, switchbacking up the hill to the Lucifer (or Black Prince) Col. It was hard snow but good touring conditions. We took off the skins and had a good ski down the

basin to Hird Lakes. The snow was good and we made excellent time. There was evidence of a lot of avalanche activity off the peaks to the west of Hird Lakes, but we escaped it. Next came a nasty little climb up rotten snow above Hird Lakes followed by an easy ascent to the col west of Urd Peak. A cool breeze greeted us as we caught a great view of the Devil's Range and of our route down Ice Creek.

We skied down some entertaining slopes which soon were littered with skis, poles, bathtubs and small avalanches! Then it was on into the trees for another memorable flogging! Finally we reached the valley bottom and were all present and accounted for. A gentle ski down the valley for approximately two miles through avalanche debris, large hemlocks and spruce trees, until we decided, regretfully that it was time to climb. What a frustrating, tiring ascent that was! For five and a half hours we fought our way uphill, usually sinking to the ground with each step, in the rotten snow. We skied on through thick clumps of cedar and of hemlock, all interspersed with willow and slide alder. At 6 p.m., exhausted and dejected, we stopped to attempt to dig a tent pad on a 40 degree hillside. Finally we were able to erect the tent, cook dinner and crawl into our bags; a truly tough, exhausting day.

April 13 did not appear much better, with high overcast skies and a warm breeze blowing up the mountain. Soon we had our gear packed and we began a slow climb, finally reaching the top of a 7,800 foot ridge, but in the process setting off several metre deep slab avalanches! Some trees had taken a beating, but fortunately we were okay. We did the last 100 metres of the ridge climb in our ski boots as it was mainly snow-free, exploding juniper and grass. We all enjoyed a pleasant run down to Avis Lakes; then a short climb up to the ridge north of the lakes where we had a glimpse of our route for the remainder of the day. We enjoyed a lovely ski along the ridge, one of the highlights of the trip, savouring it before our descent into the Snow Creek drainage.

An entertaining ski down off the ridge brought us onto broad timbered slopes through which several very large avalanches had run. Unpleasant scrambling on skies through and over the avalanche debris took considerable time. We travelled down the valley for approximately one km., then, in rotten snow conditions, we began a slow climb up the hillside. By 4 p.m. we reached an unmapped lake located due southwest over the ridge from Nemo Lakes. More avalanches thundered down the mountains in every direction, so we decided to camp here to dry out and wait until conditions hardened up in the morning before attempting the route up the ridge. We enjoyed the warm drying fire, though having to expend a lot of time to keep feeding it with wood.

The best course of action in the morning was to stay in one's bag and contemplate the trip. A total whiteout enveloped the area from daybreak until 9:30 a.m. when we finally decided to take a chance. We headed out up the slope, depending on the compass and good luck! We were fortunate and reached the ridge approximately where we had planned. Although the climb up was spectacular, the only thing that could

be seen was the other person 15 feet ahead. The trail breaker operated on commands from the rear: left, right, too far down, too far up, and stop falling over!

Conditions did not change at Nemo Lakes so we called it a day, making camp at the lowest lake. We built a fine snow wall around our tent to keep the now strong winds and drifting snow from causing problems, and we lit a small fire to dry out our soaked boots and clothing.

What excitement in our tent next morning at 4:15 a.m.! A clear sky and cooler temperatures gave us hope to make the summit of Meers and perhaps all the way out down Wee Sandy Creek. About a mile to the north of Nemo Lakes we were forced to ascend a very steep, dangerous slope. Fortunately we were on it before the temperature warmed up and we successfully made our way to the ridgetop for a view down into the valley of Caribou Creek. A nice ridge ski again before we started the slow, steep icy climb up the southslope of Mt. Meers. At 9:45 a.m. we congratulated each other and shook hands on safely reaching the highest point of our tour. Photos were taken all around and then we had a reasonable but not great ski down to Upper Wee Sandy Lake.

This was familiar country to Dave, Dennis and I, as we had been here the year before, enjoying some terrific skiing, during a tour from the New Denver Glacier to Wragge Creek. We enjoyed lunch at our old campsite beside fresh water, noting there was much less snow than last year. At 12:30 p.m. we began our journey across Wee Sandy Lake and started down the valley. We never anticipated it would take us seven and a half hours on skis to navigate the valley. But we found heavy, wet, soft snow, open creeks, avalanche debris, slide alder, devils club and in places, no snow! So, the journey would take a long time. About one and a quarter miles from Slocan Lake the snow gave out and we started walking, finally reaching Slocan Lake at 7:45 p.m. It was dark, but we had successfully completed the trip. We located the boat that had been left for us and made a careful crossing of the lake to New Denver. How nice it was to be met there by Craig Pettit who gave us cool beer and an excellent quiche before we headed home.

A few notes about the tour:

We probably experienced some of the worst conditions that one could encounter along this complicated route. We considered ourselves lucky that we were not hit by avalanches or did not have to turn back had the conditions been worse. It is imperative for anyone attempting this trip to be very familiar with map reading, compass orientation, avalanche safety procedures, excellent route finding skills, and good leadership capabilities. Skiers should have good equipment and be in good physical condition. Extra food should be carried as well as a repair kit capable of meeting any and all emergencies. This trip is a rewarding experience but not one to be attempted by those unprepared to "go the extra mile" fully prepared. □

# A Shot in the Dark

by Jeff Lakes

There! (Mike exclaims loudly), as we round another curve in the road. Well,...no, we then say simultaneously. For at least the past hour we have been seeing "something" as we wind up the snaking road towards Yosemite Valley. It's the first time here for both of us, and we don't know quite what to expect. Not wanting to miss something, we remark about the cliffs we see in the distance, wondering if maybe they are "it." Literally on the edge of our seats we drive on for what seems like hours until we round a sharp corner, and there, hidden from view the whole time is the unmistakable vista we have been waiting years to see.

Soon we are settled into what is to become home for the next two weeks, the climbers campground known simply as camp 4. At first, after driving all night we were content just to relax and look around, but in the early evening when the call of the rocks could no longer be ignored, we head for a nearby cliff and find ourselves on our first Yosemite climb. We would spend the next week in a similar fashion, climbing short hard routes for a couple of days, then a rest day spent foraging for liquid refreshments and feminine companionship.

During the first week we attempt the 1,000 foot south face of Washington Column, and nearly make it to the summit but for a forced descent in a storm. After the experience on the Column, we spend the following rest day talking about the largest single piece of granite in the world, El Capitan. I decide an attempt to climb the 3,000 foot southwest face sounds great for next year, and say so to Mike, but he mentions how good it sounds this year. I remind him neither of us had climbed a big wall before..., Mike's response? "so what?" After a discussion about gear, logistics, and the route, I'm convinced it's a reasonable "shot in the dark."

We spend the next day bouldering, eating, and resting. We purchase a healthy supply of bivy food, including \$14.00 worth of Skor bars. We pack 4½ gallons of water in the bottom of the haul bag, (an

estimated five days supply at two litres each per day). We add ensolite pads, sleeping bags, food, a jacket and hat each, and call it good.

Sometimes even a climber can find himself asking why?, when rising at 5:00 on a Sunday morning, but as we drive towards the base of El Cap and hike to the start of the Salathe Wall, considered one of the longest and finest rock climbs in the world, the magnitude of what we are about to attempt makes all the effort more than worthwhile. Looking up, I find a feeling of smallness overwhelming me while trying to block out thoughts about what it would be like in a storm, stranded and running out of water, half way up the 3,000 foot face.

Since we intend to free climb the first ten pitches on day one, we decide to leave the haul bag and climb to Heart Ledge first, setting fixed ropes on descent, then returning the next day to ascend the ropes, and haul the bag up to Heart Ledge where we would spend our first night out. Underway at last, we find the first ten pitch section known as Freeblast, to be just that offering the ultimate in quality climbing, a 5.10b class groove, a 5.10c double crack, a 5.10d friction, truly amazing, one and all. It is all free climbing except for a 5.11b roof traverse on the second pitch. We reach Mammoth Terraces, repel down to Heart Ledge, and begin fixing ropes as planned, descending them to the base of the wall.

Next morning we are back, but this time with the baggage, a huge blue pig of a haul bag, seemingly with a mind of its own which opposed suggestions of upward progression. After jumaring each pitch we have to haul up the pig, on a pulley system! Furthermore, we discover the bag loves to get caught on one inch overhangs, and anything else it can find. We find comfort in the knowledge it will get lighter day by day as we move upwards. Finally we reach Heart Ledge in mid-afternoon and set up anchors for ourselves and our gear. After dinner and sunset we climb into our bags for a restful night.

In the morning, after a moderate pitch above the ledge, we have to perform a long pendulum swing into the Hollow Flake, including a move in which the swinging pig slams into the flake, resulting in the sudden loss of 1½ gallons of our water! The obvious problem posed without our full water supply is compounded by the fact that this particular traverse commits us to the top, as retreat is now more difficult than continuing on with the ascent. Mike leads on the hair raising Hollow Flake pitch, an unprotectable one from which a fall would be L-O-N-G. A few more pitches fly by and we find ourselves in The Ear, also an unprotectable, bottomless, bom-bay chimney. I am happy to watch Mike lead the pitch, and I find it to be just as much fun to climb as it is to watch. Soon we find ourselves wondering if we will make El Cap Spire by dark, but when we reach the end of the pitch below it, we realize it is dark. We spend the night on a small but deep ledge called the Alcove, below the Spire.

Next morning just after first light, we reach last night's preferred destination, and wish we could have slept on this incredible pinnacle which is completely detached from the main wall. We are halfway up El Cap

and know that the last half will be tough. What's more, we are learning the higher you get on a multi day wall climb, the more burnt out you get. You wake up at 5:00 so you can be climbing by 5:30, and most of that half hour you spend trying to get your rock shoes on, using swollen, raw hands which refuse to work. Furthermore, our water supply is now very low.

Much slower today, it's mostly aid climbing and we are experiencing some of the complexities of navigating up a big wall. We finally reach The Block, and decide to call it a day. There's room for four to sleep on this outward sloping ledge, and since two climbers are already there, and Mike is bigger than I am, I get the bed with a view.

We are ready to climb just before first light, and hope we can top out today if all goes smoothly, but all does not. Two pitches above the ledge we do a scary pendulum to reach the crack system which will take us to The Roof. As I belay under the roof, Mike traverses across and starts out over the 20 foot overhang, and disappears over the lip. All seems well until the rope is violently yanked tight!, and I see Mike's feet dangling below the roof with 2,500 feet of air beneath them! He had taken a 25 foot fall from the overhung wall above when a fixed wire chock broke. Some entertainment! When I make it out to the ledge of the roof and get a better look, I am more than glad it has been him and not me!

Together again, we look up at the 250 foot overhanging wall in front of us, with a single crack bisecting the middle of the smooth wall. Leading on this wall is a little tense, what with jumaring five feet out from the 95 degree wall. At this point we both know we are running out of time and energy, and unless we can climb two more pitches before dark, we will spend the night hanging from the leaning wall in our harnesses. Climbing as fast as we possibly can, we arrive at Long Ledge, which is long but only 1½ feet wide.

Awakening from the most spectacular bivouac of my life, I recall we ran out of water sometime yesterday, but we still have four pitches left to do. After aid work on the two pitches above Long Ledge, almost as an anti-climax, moderate free climbing puts us on top, completing four nights and thirty-six pitches of adventure! Yes, we've just bagged our first wall!, our first, but we agree, not our last.

# Monashee Park Journal

by Craig Andrews

A helicopter hovered over the parking lot much like a bird of prey, blowing rain and stones at us. Finally it stopped raining and blue sky loosened our tongues like drink does. The sun seemed a huge surprise.

It's night and an arc of shimmering pale green light stretches from horizon to horizon, the Aurora Borealis and stars, stars just out of reach, stars so bright that I squinted.

Morning, and the discovery that a patina of frost has coated the tent fabric and stung the air, waking us up. We eat breakfast in camp, dodging campfire smoke while sharing the joy of each others company. And, oh, the views!: of the lake in morning's stillness. Here's a lake I can walk on, polished ceramic. Only the rising trout define the verge between the water's surface, and air. And all around, mountains.

A walk to Margie Lake through miles of flowering meadows past water clearer than space. A slow walk, then a sleep in the sun lulled by voices and far off cries of fishermen. A sleep in the sun with the Sugar Lake 'topo' map over my eyes.

Later, we follow John, content to start when he starts, content to follow his tracks, content to rest when he rests, but sometimes, perhaps, he longs for us to find our own way so he can wander alone....

We choose a clear morning for the climb of Mt. Fostall. First, a scramble through Caribou Pass to the reclining back of the mountain which we will follow to the summit cairn. We sign the summit registry as thin clouds smear the sky and George forecasts rain.

Around the campfire once again, and draughts of seventy proof rum curtail my mobility after the walk, and the taste of a supper of something gone untasted.

Mr. Griz sniffed the air wafting from camp, but George growled, and the bear galloped up a talus slope, his fur coat bristling with light and shadow as he quickly vanished towards parts unknown.

Night, and we're snug in the tents again as the pit, pit, pit of rain finally puts us out.

Morning, and regrettably our time to leave is near. Time to leave Spectrum Lake with its beach of sedge and rock, time to leave the fisherman frozen in stealth at their baiting. Time to leave the soothing white noise of a waterfall falling near. Morning, and time to leave the snap and sigh of our fire. But our spirits have

mingled with the essence of this place. They rise, interwoven with the faint blue smoke from the last embers of the fire. □

# Notes on the Old Violet Mine

by Jeff Ross

Like so many of the trails in Kokanee Glacier Park, the one leading to Silver Spray basin in the Park's N/E corner, was originally constructed to service a high altitude, (8,000' plus), silver mining operation, known as The Violet Mine. Though the steep climb up to the basin offers many scenic rewards along it's entire length, Silver Spray Basin is also a repository for what is essentially a living, high altitude mining museum.

The first evidence of the Violet Mine operation, (circa 1921), is abruptly encountered after rounding the last bend in the trail, as the bunkhouse and stone-work-bound, water-supply-pond come into view. Less than a kilometer above, at around 8,000', is the old mineshaft building and blacksmith's shop. Seeing the old building with its collection of mining artifacts for the first time has quite an impact, especially if one is alone on their first visit as was the case for me. Visions of old hardrock miners wandering through the neighboring peaks abound, and I found myself wandering, loosing track of time, nearly oblivious to all else but the images in the viewfinder of my camera.

Among the long weathered treasures, a faded blue can caught my eye. On closer inspection I noticed a barely legible enamel label which read Orange Marmalade, Nelson Jam Factory.

Soon after my trip to the area, I wanted to learn more about the old silver mine, so I visited the Nelson Mining Museum, (the one next to the community aquatic centre), to peruse some old record books, specifically, several volumes of the Annual Report of the Minister of Mines (B.C.), spanning the period from 1921 to 1931.

I found the first reference to the mine, and the

most complete, in the 1921 volume. It detailed the original excavation of some 240 feet of tunneling, including a 60 foot vertical shaft, and "drifts" along the ore bearing body. As to results that first season,...."At the time of the writer's visit in September, four tons of high grade ore (lead-silver), had been extracted and was awaiting shipment". In addition, the report included references to the unusually high remote location of the mine. "Wood for fuel has to be brought up from over a mile away to the camp, but fortunately the ground in the workings requires scarcely any support." Also, "The ore is carefully sorted for shipment as packing charges to Kootenay Lake are \$35.00 a ton." This was a lot for transportation in those days, but the high grade ore made the mine a paying proposition. No doubt the packhorses doing the actual hauling along the arduous route would have demanded more payment in oats, granted the power of speech.

After a five year period during which time there was no mention of the mine in the annual reports, the 1926 volume noted a change of ownership from a Mr.J.M. Currie of Ainsworth, to Messers. J.Henry, W.G. McLanders, and Dan McLennan, also of Ainsworth. In addition, it contained the following, "The vein is a small fissure in granite carrying high silver values. The results of the season's work are said to have been highly satisfactory, and it is anticipated that shipments will be made next year." In the 1927 report, "At the Violet Mine on Woodbury Creek, the results obtained by further development of the vein are said to have proved highly satisfactory. New cabins have been erected, and everything is in readiness for next season's work."

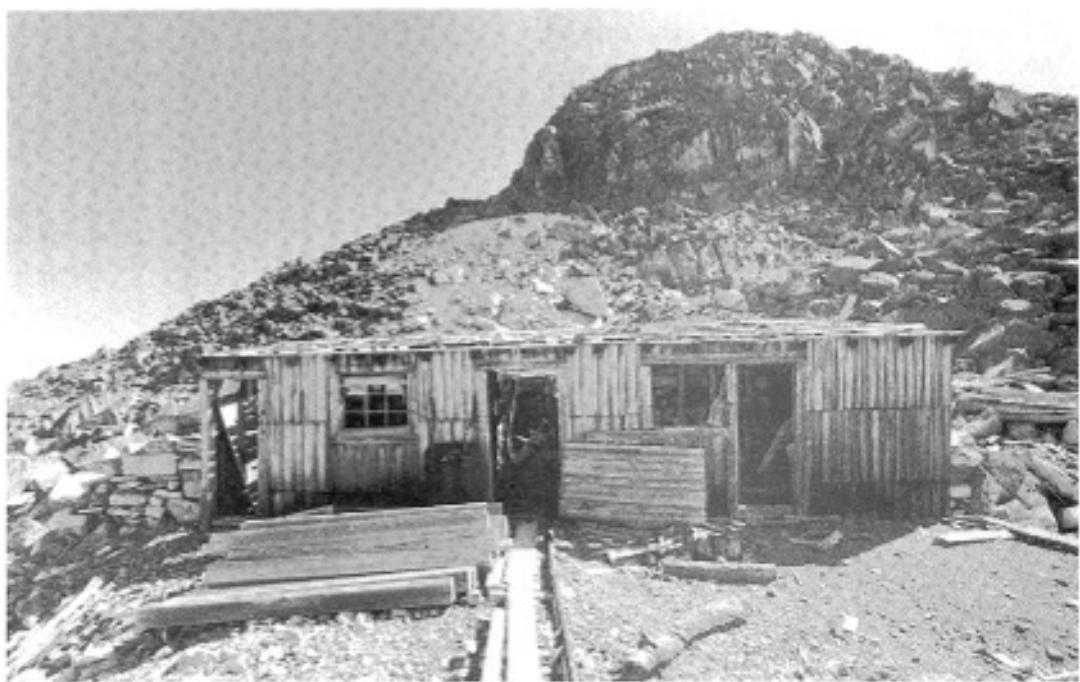
But the 1928 report began to chronicle diminishing activity at the site. "A small amount of work is reported to have been done on the Violet Mine on Woodbury Creek." The 1929 and 1930 reports were simply references to past activity. The 1931 report stated no doubt much too optimistically given the disastrous economic times, "Some work is expected at the Violet Mine in which J. Henry of Ainsworth is interested."

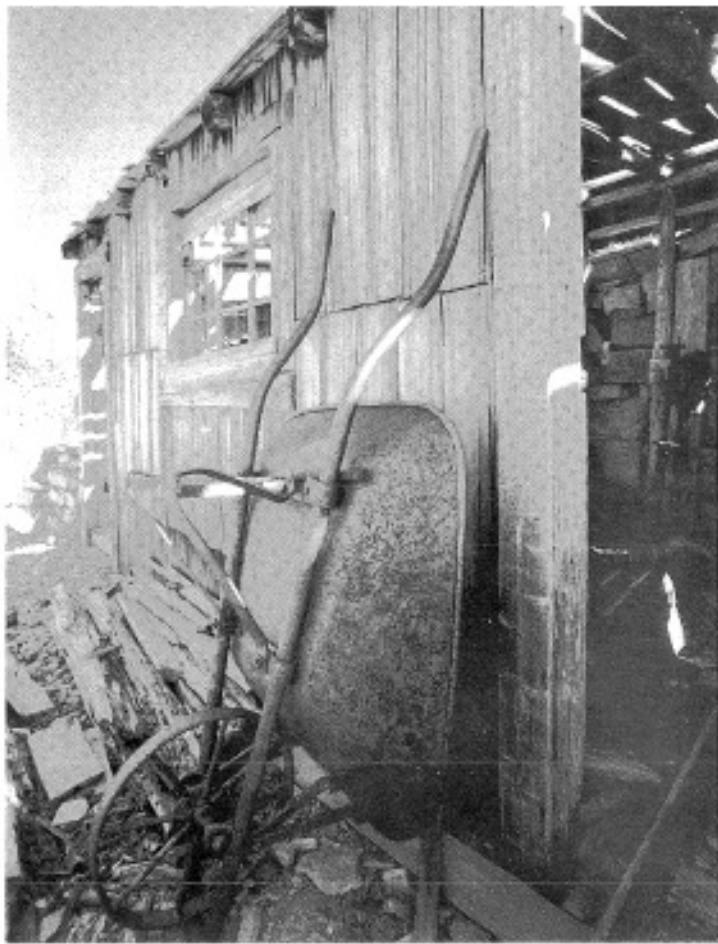
The rest is history as the saying goes, for the Great Depression, the remoteness of the site, and other factors conspired to leave the Violet Mine little more than a faded memory on the yellowing pages of a few old books. A faded memory for some, but an enduring historical footnote for present day visitors to this notable corner of Kokanee Glacier Park. □



Violet Mine Bunkhouse

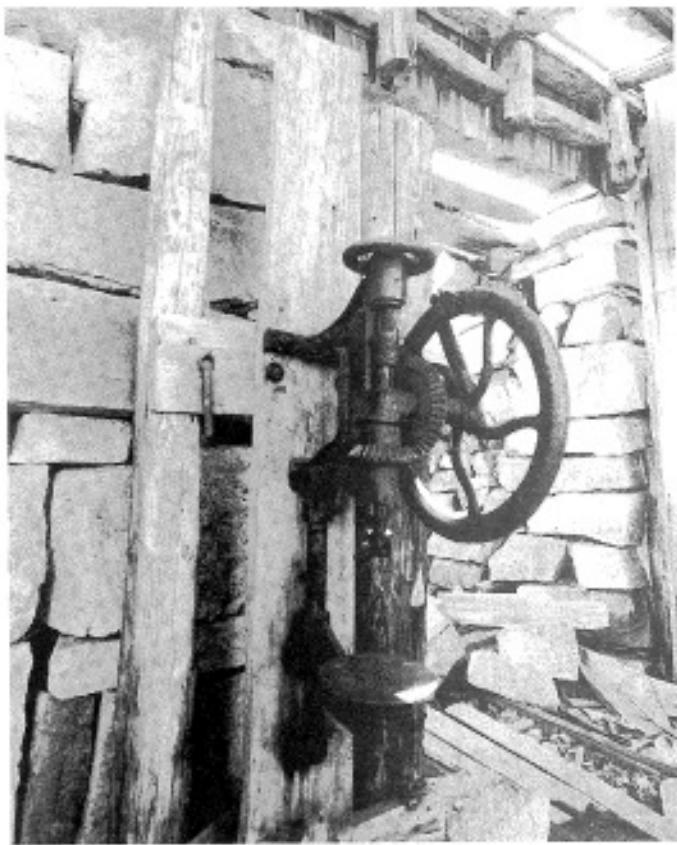
Mineshaft Building





Old Wheelbarrow, Mineshaft Building

Blacksmith's Shop



photos - Jeff Ross

# Tribulations in the Himalayas

by Steve Horvath

I think that at one time or another all of us have read some books of the "Himalayan Expedition" genre. How well I remember reading Maurice Herzog's "Annapurna." It was 1955 and I was growing up in Czechoslovakia, the country of "real socialism" with all borders sealed shut. Reading the books, the names alone Himalaya, Annapurna, Tilicho, conveyed a feeling of limitless adventure, much more than one can get from climbing in our mountains, (this was before small was beautiful). As time went by the Himalayas retained their magical place, somewhere between Middle Earth and Xanadu, even though by then the main barriers (after our move to Canada) were financial rather than political. Our friends kept returning with news of friendly people, beautiful mountains and low prices, so I finally caved in - after all, if I consider it acceptable to take a bank loan to buy a car, I should allow myself to take a loan for a trip that I would remember always.

So there I was on an Air India Boeing 747, eating my third dinner in 24 hours, somewhere above Iran, squished between two voluminous Hindu ladies chatting animatedly about their shopping in London (the volume of their carry-on luggage testifying to the success of their trip).

Up to this point things went reasonably well, except for a "few minor details." Our friend, and expedition leader, Kevin O'Connell was killed at Huascaran in the summer of '84. As a result some people dropped out and we lost a well-secured equipment sponsor. By then, however, things were set in motion, assuming a life of their own, and the Canadian Himalayan Winter Expedition, 1984 was definitely on. How good our logo looked on T-shirts, posters and hats, reluctantly bought by our friends and relatives.

The airport in New Delhi was manned entirely by Indian army personnel, (at that time Delhi was still under martial law). After being driven through deserted (except for what seemed like battalions of ar-

my troops) nighttime streets for about an hour, we realized that the address for the Indian Mountaineering Federation Hostel given to us in Vancouver was incomplete and that no one knew even remotely where it was. Eventually we ended up in "Hotel Bright," all eight of us in the only room that was still vacant at 3:00 A.M. local time. We woke up to the sounds and smells of a busy, incredibly smoggy and dusty New Delhi. We did not find the people there to be particularly friendly so we were glad to leave for Katmandu. At Katmandu the people were friendly, with great smiles, we found a reasonably good hotel and to the north, once morning smog had lifted, we could see the snowy summits of Lang Tang. We felt that the preparation, all the planning of the last year was worth while, we had arrived. Arrive we did, but right into the clutches of the Nepalese Civil Service, a peculiar amalgam of British Civil Service and oriental God knows what! Surviving this might be an interesting experience for a masochist but it wasn't something I would spend my five weeks of holiday and two years of savings on.

A few examples: the peak royalty that was doubled in early 1984 was raised again while we were there, retroactively, so we had to pay up. One of us was travelling on his Danish passport so the authorities refused to give him a permit to be part of the Canadian expedition, (even though he has been a landed immigrant for years) without a dispensation from the Danish government so we had to locate the Danish Consul in Katmandu, then telex the Danish Embassy in New Delhi, which telexed Denmark, then the same in reverse. The whole procedure, with a few Nepalese and Indian holidays thrown in, took a fair amount of time. With entertainment (?) like that and having to hire all sorts of Nepalese staff we soon were broke so we telexed Vancouver, and I started my daily treks to the Nepalese State Bank. The bank was a rather picturesque building, guarded by two policemen with W.W. I vintage rifles. It opened at 10:00 and closed at 3:00, three or four days a week. Inside, the dark corridors were lined with dusty, yellowing ledgers piled up to the ceiling, and rats and spitoons lurked in the corners. As for the dollars, they arrived when we returned from our climb.

Now to our staff. All climbing expeditions regardless of size have to hire, pay, equip and insure a minimum of four native staff: a sirdar, cook, cook's helper and mail runner, plus a liaison officer. After a few days in Katmandu, we finally met our staff, all of them Sherpas, courtesy of Mike Cheney's Sherpa Co-op. Unlike in Lord Hunt's time these people do not go above the base camp, that would cost extra pay and insurance and equipment and of course the liaison officer is there to ensure compliance with this and a host of other arcane regulations. As for equipment, according to regulations it was supposed to have been brought from Canada, which we did-(more money for excess baggage)-greenhorns that we were. Our liaison officer was rather put off with this as he would have much preferred to receive some dollars in lieu of equipment (which he already had from previous expeditions). After meeting "our Sherpas," and eager to

get going we sent the cook, Mingma, accompanied by Theresa to buy some food. A few hours later Theresa returned in a mild state of shock as Mingma apparently went on a shopping spree to the tune of over \$500 in pots and pans. Only then did we learn that the cook gets to keep all the utensils etc., after the expedition is over as part of his gratuity.

And so it went on and on! I developed a mild case of Giardiasis when, true vegetarian that I am, I succumbed to the lure of fresh green stuff and had a nice salad at a road side stand, my judgement possibly clouded by excellent Nepalese beer that we were drinking as a health precaution (it is pasteurized). Fortunately, an Indian medication, Tinaba, cured it within one miserable day. Excellent stuff and the medicine worked for me again.

Then, a big conference regarding our approach route. Our sirdar who had been a member of the all Sherpa expedition to Tilicho some two years ago and his defacto employer, Mike Cheney, both advised us to take a slightly longer approach via Manang rather than the usual one via Jomosom. This was supposed to be only some two days longer, that is seven or eight days to base camp and it had the added advantage of a more gradual acclimatization plus giving us the opportunity to complete the Annapurna circuit on our return. The sirdar and Cheney were particularly concerned that the Nepalese army had built an army base right on the main trail to Meso Kanto (the pass leading to Tilicho Lake, the usual site of base camp). Their arguments made sense coming as they did from people who sounded and looked like they knew what they were talking about, so we agreed. Seventeen days later when we finally reached base camp, we thought otherwise!!

Anyway, things were getting underway so seven days after our arrival in Katmandu and more or less on schedule we started loading our supplies and porters and sherpas into a rented bus to transport us to our starting point in Dumre. When we had finished loading a policeman appeared. Seeing a busload of tourists he must have smelled a good deal and he proceeded to book us for a parking violation. Anyone who has seen the traffic in Katmandu can see the humour of it, but we did not at the time. After some high volume negotiations he jumped aboard and commanded us to the local police station. After a few hours he eventually succeeded in booking the driver of the bus for driving without a valid license—"I just forgot it at home" the driver said. A minor snafu but symptomatic of what lay ahead of us.

After an eight hour drive which, being used to B.C. logging roads, I enjoyed more than my friends from eastern Canada, we arrived in Dumre and started loading up, only to discover that we did not have enough porters. Another delay, to give our sirdar a chance to find the additional porters locally. In time, as with most things in Nepal, he succeeded but the porters did not want to go beyond Manang (and more than a few dropped out prior to reaching Manang). By then I had had enough of it so I put on my pack and took off. Unlike some us, I preferred to carry my big pack moderately full loaded as I felt it would help my acclimatization—which it did—and I felt a bit silly wat-

ching our porters, many of them slender young men half our size labouring under their loads. I was following cook's helper who was carrying all the pots and pans, figuring that so long as I'd stick close to this boy I wouldn't go hungry or get lost. A simple and effective strategy that always worked. After all the delays it felt great to be finally on the move.

Six days later we stood on top of a small pass overlooking the Manang valley, dry grass, widely scattered pines, some hoodoos, (just like in the Rockies) and there at the end of the valley almost within our reach was, "our ridge" of the Tilicho Peak. We were still more or less on schedule, the weather was perfect, all of us were in good health and spirits, getting along quite well with our hired staff who turned out to be really nice, friendly and helpful people. It felt good to be there.

In Manang about one half of our porters left so we tried to get some locals for a carry to base camp. "Manangis don't porter, they are traders" we were told and indeed many families have snapshots of their sons sent from Hong Kong, San Francisco, New York and Europe displayed prominently in their homes. After some bargaining "they will carry, but for 80 rupees" (double the usual rate). Next day some of us set off early, (I was following the cook's helper again), planning to meet the porters at tea time and then continue to base camp. In some 90 minutes we were at Khangsar, we had some tea and sat down to wait. At about noon the first local porters, mostly young women and a few teenage boys, started to straggle in—this was as far as they were going today they said. By then the weather was changing, the wind was picking up, driving dust up the valley so that we could no longer see the ice walls of the Grande Barriere. So I just put up our tent on the front porch of the house we were in (for a small fee of course), and spent the rest of the day playing crib and reading Saul Bellow's Herzog. Twenty years after it was written and being read in Nepal it was somehow difficult to see why it had been a best seller back then. Next day, with perfect weather again, we set off on our final push to base camp, or so we thought. Our sirdar quickly demonstrated his talent for getting lost (which eventually culminated in his leading us right into the much dreaded army camp) but we got reunited just before a nasty gully where he was cutting steps into half frozen gravel (with some ice underneath for good measure) to help the porters get across. The crossing, quite understandably, rather psyched out some porters and our trekking members, so, when a few hours later the sirdar lost the route again we were quite content to strike camp in a pleasant yak pasture near a partly frozen creek at about the 14,000 foot level. Now, the Nepalese regulations specify that porters and sherpas go only up to base camp, upon reaching which the liaison officer, whose job it is to ensure observance of regulations sends a letter to the Ministry of Tourism in Katmandu certifying the above. The letter is sent by the mail runner which is why the man was paid for and why we hired extra porters to carry his stuff and food up to this time. As we were obviously no where near Base Camp we couldn't even see the mountain, we talked to Ari, our

L.O. with whom we were now fast friends and he agreed to call this "reconnaissance camp". Next day the weather improved again so Ivar and I set out for a reconnaissance and a carry-up to the lake. Up through dry yak pastures and interminable scree slopes, some 3,000 to 4,000 vertical feet, some of it frozen, some loose - well I might as well have been in the rockies (sans wheezing). Next day, it was a rest day for us while everyone else did a carry. This was Christmas Eve so our cook did bake us a cake but the celebration, despite breaking open a 40 ounce of Canadian Club -you can indeed find it in the world's highest place! -was somewhat subdued. So on Christmas day we made a final carry to the base camp only to find that our ridge was on the other end of the still frozen lake. So after a discussion Ari called this the Rest Camp. The next day we made a carry around our side of the lake hoping to reach the ridge via the other side only to find out that the other side consisted of a badly broken up glacier, definitely not porter country. After a heated discussion over dinner in the cook tent, to the great amusement of the sherpas and porters, we decided to move around our side of the lake to the final and real base camp at the foot of the ridge right in Meso Kanto, two days up or one day down from Jomoson airport. This gave our sirdar another opportunity to show off his route finding ability. Instead of going around the band of bluffs bordering our side of the lake to gradually gain a pass leading to the other side of the lake, he chose to follow the shoreline. The going was not too bad until the bluffs barred the way and we had to climb up some 1,500 vertical feet of 35 to 40 degree loose scree up a nasty gully. The combination of altitude, the looseness of the scree and of heavy packs was a real character builder. By the time we reached the top of the gully, we were some two or three hours behind the sherpas (as in the morning we had to retrieve our premature carry from the day before) and I was desperately looking for some sort of directional sign. The only thing I found were a few Coke tins and empty cigarette packages. Eventually, we agreed on a logical direction to follow and were soon rewarded by sighting fresh footprints in the occasional snow patches. Crossing a high plateau we went down the valley between vast hillsides of finely weathered loose brown shale. At about 6:00 P.M. as night was falling I reached the lakeshore but there was no sight of camp, tents or food. I waited for a while but no one was coming so I backtracked, damned uphill again, until I met the rest of us tourists; my friends had decided, because of the darkness to bivouac under some large boulders. So we spent a long night under the boulders with occasional snow flurries and I discovered that my Goretex Bivi Bag was not as breathable as it should be - it was not letting enough air through but was certainly doing a great job of keeping the condensation in, forcing me to choose between nightmares of suffocation or sticking my head out into the snowfall. Next morning a mildly demoralized group back-tracked up hill again until we hit a side valley leading in the direction of Meso Kanto, the only other way the sherpas might have taken, or so we hoped. Up we went to the crest of the enormous lateral moraine where I could see small

distant figures moving toward us, our porters returning to Rest Camp for another carry. And so, after seventeen days on the trail we finally reached the real Base Camp and after an hour or so of appropriating my pick axe for use as a pick and shovel I had a reasonably level, (thank God for Thermarest) tent platform. Next morning I woke as usual at about 5:30 to the sound of Nepali disco emanating out of sirdar's tent which he was, as usual, sharing with his two young sherpans second or third cousins, (maybe nieces). Brings one back to reality rather quickly, these marvels of modern communication.

Eager to finally set foot on "our ridge" we made a carry to the site of Camp 1. The mountain was in perfect condition-hard snow, good cramponing, but at the start of the steeper sections of the ridge was the beginning of a long fixed line plus all sorts of hardware left by South Koreans in October. Oh well! Next day after our final packing we set off for the climb in high spirits. We were in good shape, the long approach had acclimatized us well, the mountain felt good and, weather permitting, we were full of hope to be on the summit in two or three days. As we were setting up camp that night it started to snow. The next morning we woke to an almost complete whiteout, three to four feet of new snow and strong winds. We were camped on a small level spot on the lee side of the ridge and our goal of the summit in three or four days did not seem feasible any more! So after discussing the situation and in view of my assessment of the avalanche hazards, our various timetables (vacation lengths) and other more experiential factors, Steve Adamson and I decided to high-tail it to base camp while we still could hope to find our cairns from the last day. Bill and Greg with their greater reserves of time and natural optimism decided to stay put, take their time and go for the summit if and when possible. So we left them there with all our food and set off, down avalanche prone slopes, up to our chests in snow. Crossing the flatter part of the fresh snow covered glacier in a whiteout was quite interesting but somehow we managed to find our cairn marking the start of the rather convoluted path through the maze of moraines leading to the base camp. Some six hours later we managed to run out of both energy and cairns and as we felt reasonably safe from avalanches we decided to stay put. Up went the tent, very slowly, and then the discovery that optimistically, or stupidly, we had left all the food behind. All of it, except my iron rations of nuts and one package of grape Tang. But we had our MSR stove and a reasonable supply of kerosene and my teacup and some candles. Next day it was snowing even harder, the whiteout was complete, the sleeping bags and tent were getting wet with condensation. So we played hangman, melted snow, kept fixing the MSR and wondering what the hell we were doing here in the first place. But next morning there was a brilliant cobalt blue sky and right across the valley from us there was the big bluff above the base camp -we were right on line. Across the glacier we could see the tiny figures of Bill and Greg moving slowly on the ridge but there was no sign of any tents. The mountain was completely plastered in snow and huge streamers

of spindrift were floating behind the summit ridge. In any event, some three or four hours later we were sitting in our Woods Canvas cook tent, soaking our feet in pails of warm water (only minor frost bite on some toes) drinking hot Tibetan tea, anxiously waiting for Bill and Greg. They limped to camp towards evening totally exhausted. Snow accumulation at the ridge was quite something and after it started to slough off all around their tent during the night they decided not to wait for an in depth experiential study of local avalanche conditions but retreated. So here we were, all safe and sound, happy and frustrated.

Only two more things remained to be done. Dispose of Kevin O'Connell's ashes (which we were planning to carry with us to the summit and leave there) and then return home. We sprinkled Kevin's ashes over the glacier on a cloudy, windy morning and there they are on the mountain that he dreamed of getting to.

As for returning home, our sirdar managed to get lost again only this time he admitted to it and so we ended up marching right through the dreaded army base, which was no problem. Trying to reach the shelter of Jomoson we just kept on going into the moonless night but we got separated in the darkness. Only sirdar and I reached Jomoson at about 10:00 P.M. after a mildly surreal night march through immense dry flood plains and dried up fields, trying to reach the first electric lights we had seen in some three weeks. The food in the inn was delicious but long in coming as the Thakali innkeeper's daughters were out at the neighbour's watching Michael Jackson on video. Global village indeed! As for the rest of the turn and the trip, other people have written better of it.

Summary, or what have I, or we, learned.

Nepal is, in my opinion a marvelous place for trekking but not so much for climbing, especially for me as from my front porch I can see some of the best climbing in Canada and the world - Valhalla is only a few hours away. Nepalese rules and regulations are so arcane and obviously self-serving as to frustrate all but the most determined or ignorant climbers. It is my opinion that unless they change the regulations, more and more climbers will move to countries where climbing is less regulated, India or Pakistan. This does not seem to bother the Nepalese much, as the bulk of their income is derived from trekkers, and Katmandu is living proof of that. This increasing flood of Western visitors certainly appears to be a mixed blessing. The people in Nepal are still wonderfully friendly and helpful but this too is changing. The country is becoming more westernized. I found it distressing seeing the flotsam and jetsam of western packaged civilizations, Coke bottles, candy and cigarette wrappers, in even the most remote places, not to mention having to listen to Nepali disco most of the time (the transistor radios are very popular with porters and sherpas). From the climbing point of view, it is my opinion that Nepal does not have that much to offer to someone who lives in Canada. I personally prefer the Yukon or Alaska anytime. Most of the rock is highly fractured sedimentary rock, and the objective hazard is fairly high. Personally, I feel that Canada can offer as much if not

more to climbers (not necessarily trekkers), as Nepal, both in terms of the quality of climbing, the remoteness of setting, the challenge and also the plain suffering for those inclined that way. (If I remember rightly, the partial pressure of oxygen at the summit of Mt. McKinley in the middle of winter is comparable to that of the summit of Everest.) For those people who would like to go and climb in Nepal I feel that they should consider either (a) joining an expedition or a trip organized by people with previous experience or (b) going to Nepal on a trekking permit only and climb one of the trekking peaks, many of which are quite worthwhile objectives. Certainly our experience with both Nepalese bureaucracy and Mike Cheney's Sherpa Co-op Trekking was a frustrating one. □

## Tragedy on Kangchenjunga

by Jeff Ross

t wasn't news by now, but never-the-less I read the clippings from the Seattle papers with close attention; (I'd requested them a week earlier since Seattle was Chris Chandler's home town). I never knew Chandler, except by reputation, never that is until one very special evening in 1977. The previous year Chris had been one of two team members on the '76 U.S. "Bicentennial" Everest Expedition to set foot on the summit. In between major climbs, Chandler was an Emergency Room Physician based in Seattle, who coincidentally worked with a long time friend and mountaineering companion of mine at the same hospital.

When Steve called with an invitation for dinner, and, oh yes, an evening with Chris Chandler for a private screening of the near finalized expedition slide show before it hit the road on the fund raising circuit, I had only to catch my breath before blurting out, YES! There would be about fifteen people at Steve's place, representing a mountaineering mosaic ranging from Chris and folks with winter ascents of McKinley, (now Denali), to we more plebeian, peak scrambling types. It was fair to say with the exception of Steve, Chandler's professional colleague, no one knew how to act in the presence of one whom we probably all felt

was a "God of the Crags." Chris soon dispelled any awkwardness anyone might have felt with a friendly open manner, and a reinforcement of our expectation that the evening would prove most memorable.

Appropriately, he began describing the logistics of the effort, illustrated with shots of a warehouse full of gear in Seattle, including miles of rope, case upon case of freeze dried food, mountains of equipment donated from various suppliers, and about a thousand and one other accoutrements which when added up, would supply if not THE certainly one of THE best equipped major expeditions ever to challenge Everest. The climb was to be a major event during the year long 1976 U.S. Bicentennial year celebration, and it was equipped accordingly.

Next the images turned to the many key players among the cast of thousands. Virtually everyone on the expedition would have a camera, besides the actual climbing contingent there would be a professional photographer who would independently capture 100% of the expedition on film to fulfill his mandate. So what we were seeing was the pick of the best stills from among the many hundreds shot by expedition members, and the best from the many more hundreds shot by the official photographer. Once again, our private screening would be a preliminary warmup before the show hit the road to pay bills.

The unfolding images carefully documented each important aspect of the expedition in chronological order. No germane facet was omitted, leaving us with as much of a total comprehension of the undertaking as could be communicated by the impeccable professional images. Through it all Chris guided us as we sat spellbound, with an easy going, highly informative narrative which made the loading of a Yak almost as interesting as the actual moves on the mountain would prove to be later in the show.

To many, a three hour slide show bereft of at least forty winks during, would qualify as aggravated assault, BUT NOT THIS ONE! One after another, the stunning images kept our attention riveted to the screen, and the quality of Chris's narrative never faltered. Sure, we felt fatigue, it was getting late, but it was the elated fatigue one feels upon reaching a particular summit or alpine oasis, fatigue cancelled by elation at what one beholds, and in this case elation over the significance of what the fifteen of us were sharing as Chris stood poised on the screen atop Everest, self effacing now in his narrative as he described the moment. The few remaining shots illustrated the return to civilization, and the welcome home at the Seattle International Airport which was captured in full joyfull detail.

I doubt the feeling of that special evening will ever leave any of us fortunate enough to have been in attendance. With profuse thanks to our host and a handshake and well wishes to Chris on the fund raising circuit, the evening, our first and last meeting ended.

Since the 1976 U.S. Everest Expedition, there has been a steady trend amoung mountaineerings elite, away from the monolithic approach towards Himalayan climbing which that expedition epitomized. Chandler was not immune to this trend, evidenced

by his successful bid to the Nepalese Government to gain permission for an "alpine style" climb in January, 1985 of 28,208' Kangchenjunga, his latest Himalayan climb, and an attempt to bag the first winter ascent of the world's third highest peak.

*With my long past remembrances from that evening coming back into remarkably sharp focus, I found considerable emotion generated within as I read the account of Chris's passing on Kangchenjunga, as related in his home town newspapers. While these early accounts would later prove to be only partially correct regarding the exact circumstances, at the time they gave a general picture of the events surrounding the tragedy. Only later, when all the facts were in did the full story become known.*

Chris and his wife Cherie Bremer-Kamp and their Nepalese guide, Mangal Singh Tamang felt confident of a successful conclusion to their summit bid as they settled into their tent on the evening of January 15, 1985 at just over 26,000', with only 2,000' of relatively moderate climbing left. But it was cold, bitterly cold, and they were doing the climb without oxygen. Still, they felt acclimatized and ready, and all the signs pointed to a fair weather day in the morning. Chris was no stranger to high altitude evidenced by his '76 Everest climb, and neither was Cherie Bremer-Kamp who had previously reached 25,000' on Dhaulagiri, after which they met on an expedition to K2.

But late at night Chris remarked he didn't feel well. He had a gurgling sound in his chest and he began coughing. He thought he had pneumonia, but as morning neared his wife, a nurse, began to recognize the signs of acute mountain sickness. It was a clear but still bitterly cold morning as they lit the stove. The fumes bothered Chris and his wife assisted him in going outside to breathe fresh air, but it was just too cold and he wanted to go back into the tent. The signs of A.M.S. were evident now and Bremer-Kamp knew she would have to work against the clock if she had any hope of saving her husband. By that time he was unable to put on his crampons, telling her he could not see, suffering probably from both cerebral and pulmonary edema. She removed one set of gloves to assist him and her hands quickly felt literally frozen.

Somehow, eventually they all got underway down the 35 degree slope, with Mangal steadyng Chandler. Their crampons just barely bit into the rock hard ice, and at one point they took a fall of several hundred feet. As daylight waned, they had descended little more than 1,000', estimated to be a short effort under normal circumstances on the pitch. As the Sherpa and Chandler's wife made an effort under normal circumstances on the pitch. As the Sherpa and Chandler's wife made an effort to dig a shelter for the night, Chris collapsed, and just short of 24 hours after declaring he didn't feel well, he died.

Bremer-Kamp and Mangal spent the night with Chandler's body, enveloped in an atmosphere of despair until morning forced them to begin to deal with what was now exclusively their own predicament, one which would involve a four day climb down the steep slopes and rock bands on the lower part of the mountain. Returning to base camp, they dispatched a

runner to go for help. But they still had a nine day wait until he reached a radio operator who could summon a helicopter to take them to Katmandu. They both suffered severe frostbite with extensive damage to their hands and feet.

The early newspaper clippings stated the pair had brought Chandler's body down off the mountain, but this was false. He was left in a sitting position at around 25,000' facing the mountains he had known so intimately. Much like Sir Edmund Hillary's efforts in the Himalayan region, it was Chris's wish to construct a hospital, school, and adult learning center for the villagers living in the remote region beneath Kanchenjunga. Donations for that purpose can be mailed to *The Chris Chandler Memorial Fund, at 13718 34th Avenue South, Seattle, Washington 98164.*

# On Location: South Moresby

A report by Conservation Chairman  
John Stewart  
Based on a two week trip, May 1985

The Queen Charlotte Islands have everything for a world class total wilderness experience. Naikoon Provincial Park on Graham Island had beaches that are far longer, wider, and more deserted than Vancouver Island's Long Beach. Hike an 18 mile triangle in one day: by dense forest trail from Tow Hill to Cape Fife, then by hard sand beach to Rose Spit, and around to Tow Hill. Or take three days camping Tlell to Masset. Walk with a pair of grey whales 500 ft. to your side, blowing every half minute, slowly passing you on their northward migration. Stop for a cold plunge, and walk briskly afterwards to dry. Detour back into the dunes to find the orchids and sandhill cranes, and not see another person or building, except Rose Spit lighthouse, several fishboats half a mile out, and a few Japan-bound jet trails 35,000 ft. up.

Almost everything except the beaches is at its best in South Moresby - the 70 mile long stretch of the south half of Moresby Island and 138 smaller islands, with over 1,000 miles of coastal shoreline and 42 freshwater lakes - that is being proposed and actively supported as a park. South Moresby is a long and narrow spine of 1,000 metre mountains - the San Cristoral Range - with great areas of alpine meadow, heath, and bare rock sometimes reaching down almost to sea level; a sharply indented coastline of dozens of long fjords and hundreds of tiny coves which is among the world's highest energy and highest nutrient coastlines, producing a teeming intertidal marine and bird life; extreme contrasts between the rain and storm battered, fog hidden rocks and cliffs of Moresby's west coast, and the gentle mists and showers and sunny spells of the mirror-calm fjords overhung by moss and branches of the east coast; and coastal rain forests with some of the world's largest cedars and sitka spruce.

At Burnaby narrows, walk across the most productive protein growing acre in the whole world. Find seven varieties of starfish in a whole rainbow of colours. Pry enough barnacles off a single rock for hors d'oeuvres for 12 people, and dig two pails of clams for lunch from one square foot of the bottom. A few hours later, sail over the same spot in eleven feet of water, with everyone - you, the oystercatchers, and the bald eagles - resting from their feeding.

Sail back and forth in Hecate Strait through a school of small fish which have attracted 10,000 shearwaters and two humpback whales. Play Vivaldi tapes below deck to reverberate through the hull so that the whales interrupt their feeding just long enough to dive under your keel and turn an inquisitive eye upward (in hope of a moment's contact with some kindred spirit, perhaps?).

Visit the abandoned Haida villages of Ninstints, Skedans, and Tanu. Read a few pages of the gentle wisdom of Emily Carr or Bill Reid when you land on the beach, with the totem poles standing (or leaning or reclining) watching you. Then walk slowly and quietly among the houses that the forests have almost reclaimed. Every house corner post is a nurse log for a large tree whose roofs have now almost totally enclosed it. A hundred years ago the Haida left these 30 houses forever - and 30 other villages like it - to live, in their sickness-decimated numbers, in just two of their villages (Skidegate and Haida). But in these villages they had created an art; crafts, technology, and culture beautifully balanced with its environment. The Northwest Coast Indians had one of the world's great cultures, and the Haida were at the summit of coast Indian culture. We can still see their work: totems, house ruins, few dugout canoes, masks, bent boxes, and everywhere in their art their strongly compressed sense of universal forms, particularly the ovoid. For almost all their everyday needs, they used the cedar.

Stand among these huge cedars near the shores. Feel the special magic of these mossy cathedral groves early in the morning and late in the afternoon. Look at the Haida test bore-holes on many of the largest trees.

Climb one of the mountains. Enjoy the changes from bog to arid in the space of a few feet on the same mountain. Climb to the top, and discover that the

Pacific Ocean and Hecate Strait both look just a stone's throw away from you - but you will be many miles and hours threading and twisting your way through forest and fjord to open water.

Enjoy the sunset as you soak in each of the five hot pools of Hot Springs Island.

Sleep on the deck of your boat, hidden away up one of the narrow fjords in mirror calm water reflecting the stars, far from the ocean swell and surf.

And after doing all these things, join in the fight for Moresby! The logging companies are rushing to push into South Moresby, bringing with them from the rest of the Charlottes the worst logging practices in the world into some of the most sensitive environments in the world - steep slopes, very heavy rainfall, and high earthquake activity. Moresby is scarred by quite a few landslides in natural conditions; clearcutting multiplies the slides six times, and a lot of the slides go into salmon streams.

British Columbia should save at least one percent of its coastal rain forest from logging and building - in places such as Cape Scott (already) and South Moresby, Meares Island, and a few other prime spots on Vancouver Island's west coast and the central mainland.

South Moresby will be a very special kind of park to preserve its wilderness values. Most visitors will travel and sleep on small cruise boats accommodating fewer than 40 people, with sails and small engines. Others will stay at modest lodges-cum-youth hostels, hidden away up a fjord. A few will camp in the mountain remoteness, even with the high rainfall. Many will kayak, canoe, and sail, but larger powerboats will be very restricted.

It will be one of the world's great spots to be enjoyed by thousands of visitors every year!

#### Suggested reading:

"Islands at the Edge"-Island Protection Society

"Cedar"-Hilary Stewart

#### Suggested travel:

Economy: your own kayak!

Deluxe: the 70 foot sailboat, "Darwin Sound II", sleeps 14, gourmet meals, excellent resource people

Pacific Synergies Ltd.

Box 86773

North Vancouver, B.C., V7L 4L3

(604) 988-1613

#### Suggested support to:

Islands Protection Society

Box 317

Port Clements, B.C.

V0T 1R0

Western Canada Wilderness Committee

1200 Hornby St.

Vancouver, B.C.

V6Z 2E2

# Adieu, Dragon Lady

W herein we exercise our collective political influence, assisting Prime Minister Mulroney with his decision to remove Minister of the Environment, Suzanne Blais-Grenier.

## KOOTENAY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

June 27, 1985

Jeff Ross  
Member of the Executive  
Box 393  
Nelson, B.C. V1L 5R2

U.Hon. Suzanne Blais-Grenier  
The Minister of The Environment  
531 C.B.  
House of Commons  
Ottawa  
K1A 0A6

Dear Ms. Blais-Grenier:

As a member of the executive board of the Kootenay Mountaineering Club, and on behalf of the club's membership which totals in excess of 150 users in B.C.'s West Kootenay region, I am writing to register our strong opposition to your opening our National Parks to commercial exploitation by allowing logging and mining activities therein.

Although this Nation's inherent capital asset is its natural resources, and mining and logging are key factors in our wealth creation in the economy, it was recognized long ago by thoughtful citizens and Government officials alike that the Canadian landscape was not to be valued from mere dollars and cents. It was the standpoints of what it could yield once stripped of its resources, in terms of members on a balance sheet.

Thanks to our predecessors, boundaries were established to restrain those who would plunder the most sublime corners of this country, boundaries within which past, present, and future generations might recreate in a natural environment undisturbed by the exploitative activities of man. These boundaries were drawn to delineate our National Parks.

While Canada is among the fortunate few Nations recognized as possessing a treasurehouse of natural resources, as our Federal Minister of The Environment, we feel you should know Canada is also viewed worldwide as a country possessing a priceless repository of unique natural wild beauty, some of the best of which is found within our National Parks. To suggest tampering with one of the Nation's most valued heritages, i.e. National Parks as they exist in their natural state, simply for short term economic gain, is to express a lack of touch with conservation values held not only by members of this club and informed citizens throughout Canada, but by people throughout the world today.

In this information age in an ever shrinking world community, it was not surprising the world soon learned of the senseless slaughter of the Flap Seal leading to a worldwide revulsion over this dark business, coupled with an economic boycott of Canadian goods. With the burgeoning importance of international tourism to this Nation, much of which is attributed to Canada through photographs of our National Parks, we would suggest if your proposals were ever to reach fruition, Canada would once again become the laughing stock of the western world from a conservation standpoint, most likely resulting in an economic boycott on tourism that would mitigate the seal hunt fiasco into a mere tempest in a teapot by comparison.

To address another issue where we differ strongly from your official views, besides standing ready to defend the integrity of our National Parks, we favor a measured expansion to the National Park System.

Today's environmentalists recognize not every tree and rock outcrop can be preserved, much as, because for reasons, Government officials should realize not every tree and rock outcrop can be declared fair game for resource exploitation... least of all in our National Parks. But if one were to choose a model to use to identify the qualities a given wilderness area should possess to be eligible for preservation within the National Park System, it would be difficult to find one more fitting than the South Moresby National Park proposal in B.C.'s Queen Charlotte Islands. Yet despite much of well documented evidence supporting the establishment of a National Park there, we understand it is your intention to side step the issue, rendering the proposal by default through withholding funding for Park creation as a so called "consensus measure". We find this totally unacceptable, leaving the door open to cut and run commercial interests who are now looking forward with renewed anticipation towards dismantling this invaluable ecosystem.

To anyone familiar with the merits of the Park proposal, it remains an assault on logic how, when within the same archipelago where a spot recently received the remarkable and rare status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, (Anthony Island), that rather than reserve a complimentarily tract of land in the region for a National Park, the Canadian Government, through inaction by your Ministry, favors instead creation of a claimed new wasteland as a living monument to the short-sightedness of inaction, ill-informed officiation, or opposition to many of your policy proposals. Be assured our response here, and no doubt that of thousands of others concerned by your focus to the integrity of our Parks, is only in keeping return atro. Should you not consider your mandate which is put to protect and where warrant expand our National Park System, expect much more public protest against your office, ultimately at the political party of not only yourself, but the whole Thy Government. A Government the validity of which you have added into question owing to your profound lack of touch with issues central to the effective discharge of the duties of your office.

cc'd to: Prime Minister Mulroney  
The Leader of The Opposition  
John Turner  
Ed Broadbent  
Kootenay West MP Bob Briscoe

Sincerely,  
*Jeff Ross*  
Jeff Ross  
Editor, The Kootenay  
The Journal of The Kootenay Mountaineering Club



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT  
HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CANADA

BRIAN BROADBENT  
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT

AUG 2 1985

Mr. Jeff Ross  
Box 385  
Nelson, B.C.  
V1L 5A2

Dear Mr. Ross:

On behalf of Mr. Broadbent, I thank you for your recent letter with which you enclosed copy of a letter to the Minister of the Environment with regard to conservation and protection of our National Parks.

Mr. Broadbent appreciates and shares your concern.

Yours sincerely,

*Mary Hartley*  
Mary Hartley  
Special Assistant

## THE RESPONSES

Mr. Turner's letter, one from Mr. Broadbent's office, one from Bob Brisco, and most eloquent in terms of actions speaking louder than words, the Prime Minister's actual removal of Blais-Grenier from the Ministry of the Environment Portfolio in his August 1985 cabinet shuffle.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN N. TURNER  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR VANCOUVER QUADRANT  
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

House of Commons  
Ottawa, Canada  
K1A 0G6  
(613) 944-5884

8841 Cedar Seven  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
V5Z 1R2  
(604) 524-3801

July 19, 1985

Dear Mr. Ross:

Thank you for sending me a copy of your recent letter to the Honourable Simone Blais-Grenier, Minister of the Environment. I appreciate this courtesy.

I share your concern over recent comments of the Minister. It is wrong to even speculate about mining or logging our National Parks. The Parks system is a national treasure which must be preserved for our children and our children's children.

As a Member of Parliament from British Columbia and the Leader of the Opposition, I am concerned about the health of the mining and forestry industries. But I find the Minister of the Environment's comments strange in light of the recent federal budget. In seven pounds of budget documents, there is not one sentence of help for existing mining and logging operations, nor of the important issues of reforestation.

I can assure you that the Liberal Caucus will vigorously oppose any action which endangers our National Parks. This government was made to back down from its recent attempt to dilute old age pensions by a combination of strong parliamentary and public opposition. By working together, we can do no again.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,  
*John Turner*

Mr. Jeff S. Ross  
Post Office Box 385  
Nelson, British Columbia  
V1L 5A2



CONSTITUENCY OFFICE  
10655 LINDEN AVENUE  
VANCOUVER, B.C.  
V6P 5L9  
(604) 524-3776

July 31, 1985

Mr. Jeff Ross  
Editor  
The Journal Of The  
Kootenay Mountaineering Club  
Box 385, Nelson  
British Columbia  
V1L 5A2

Dear Mr. Ross:

A copy of your letter to the Minister of the Environment regarding the alleged opening of National Parks for logging and mining activities contains many very valid points.

I have asked the Minister to forward a copy of her response to me. When you are in receipt of the Minister's comments I would be pleased to hear from you if you are not satisfied with the contents of her reply.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you should require any further assistance.

Yours sincerely,

*Bob Brisco*  
Bob Brisco, B.C., M.P.  
Kootenay West

BB/m

## EDITOR'S NOTE

In fairness it should be noted we received a mimeographed form letter from the Prime Minister's Office, (mailed a month after the date printed on the letter), detailing Blais-Grenier's accomplishments while in office. However, as the "everyman's form letter" failed to address even one of the points specifically raised in our letter it is not reproduced here.

# Huascaran '85

by Jeff Lakes

**S**taring out the window of an overloaded bus, I finally spot 22,205 foot Huascaran, the highest peak in Peru, in the incredible Cordillera Blanca range. Its appearance is familiar as two days before with friends I had ascended both the North (21,835') and South (22,205') Summits.

The bus is so full you can hardly breathe, as everyone standing is pushed toward the back so "just one more" person can ride. The seats are about a foot closer together than ours, appropriate for the stature of the locals, but producing sore knees in "lanky" Canadians. I am able to endure it only because I know the ride to Yungay is short, about three hours from Huaray.

During our climbs on the mountain, I had decided to return to attempt a solo up the South Summit, a one day effort from base camp (13,800'). I'd put much thought into it and although it seemed a little risky I had the confidence building experience of having just been on the mountain for eight days, including three nights at 19,000 feet and I was well acclimatized. I viewed it as a reasonable challenge, my biggest ever.

After some bargaining with local taxi drivers, I hired a truck to get from Yungay to Musho, the starting point for expeditions to Huascaran. Once there, I registered with local officials and began the hike to basecamp. Three hours later, I was watching an impressive sunset from my bivi sac while eating half of a large pizza I'd brought along. The following day I spent reading, resting and eating. Roused from a nap, I heard a great crashing noise from above, on an icefall.

11:15 p.m. seems too early to get up for any climb, but I eat breakfast and pack the few items I will take; bivioac sac, headlamp, one water bottle and a little food. I leave basecamp at midnight and start up the rock section to get on the ridge which leads to "Moraine Camp" (15,100'). After frictioning up a long section of broken rock slabs I reach the beginning of the icefall (16,000') and climb a steep short step to get on top. After weaving through crevasses and seracs for a few minutes I realize I've started in the wrong place because I have no recollection of any being this treacherous. Retreating back down to the rock and

re-orientating myself in the dark, I eventually find it, the beginning of what would be a very long route on a very long day.

I traversed south across the glacier for at least half a mile until I am directly below Glacier Camp (17,200'). Reaching the deserted campsite at 5:30 a.m. it starts to get light and I turn my headlamp off. I continue cramponing up perfect ice until I reach the bottom of a long gully which leads towards the Garganta Col at 19,000 feet, the high camp for most summit attempts.

I made good time working my way up through the 800 foot gully as the snow was very hard and easy to crampon. There was some ice to 45 degrees and the snow bridges were nice and solid. It had started to get

light at 17,000 feet and now the sun was about to shoot down the gully at me as I topped out and started up the final slope leading to the col. Halfway to the col I glanced up at the west face and was impressed by the 4,000 foot triangle of ice called the "Shield". The left hand edge forms a sharp straight ridge which almost reaches the summit and is known as the "West Rib". It looked great! I suddenly found my plans changing to a solo of the West Rib. But in a day from base? It would be difficult to spend the night on the ridge as it lacks even one flat spot large enough to stand on, on the entire route. Everything I had included my bivioac sac, one litre of water and my ice axe. My next decision was critical as it would be difficult to descend the route solo with one ice tool. Soloing is drastically more committing than climbing with a partner and a rope. It is a totally different game and you have to be careful how you play it.

After climbing about 300 feet of 75 degree ice, the angle eased off to 60 degrees until finally I was on the ridge. Continuing upward I found the ice to be 55 degrees and expected it to be much softer than it was. I was impressed with the consistent quality of the climbing. After 1,000 feet of climbing perfect ice on a symmetrical ridge, I looked down. The exposure has increased tremendously, a fall would be the end and my sense of commitment increases roughly threefold, this was soloing! An exciting feeling grew inside as I cruised up this amazing route.

Gaining 1,000 feet more, I find myself slowing down. All of my determination is required to keep my normal climbing rhythm at over 21,000 feet. It is past noon and I have been climbing non-stop since midnight from 13,800 feet. I realize I don't have as much water as I would like and I probably won't make it back to base camp tonight.

It appears when I reach the large rock sticking out of the "Shield" that the angle will ease and I will be able to "fly" up it and get off the ridge. Not so lucky. I run into another bulge obscuring the ridge and because I'm soloing the easiest way seems to be straight over it on 70 degree hard ice. The ice continues until I reach more seracs and crevasses. As I traverse out onto the Shield the ice becomes a thin layer covering snow. I now feel insecure cramponing on the ice and resort to breaking through, kicking deep steps into the snow. This continues for 300 feet and is totally ex-

hausting. I find myself looking 3,000 feet straight down the Shield as one of my steps falls apart. My axe offers little psychological or actual support as I heave it into the unstable medium.

Finally I've finished the traverse and start directly up the ridge again. The section above the rock where I had hoped it would ease off actually steepened! The ridge curved up to the left to meet the summit ridge. I plug on almost beyond my will, with the exposure now extreme. The effort required to produce secure holds was draining me. Abruptly the ridge ended and in another hour, easy by comparison, I was standing on the summit. Two minutes later I turned to start descending the standard route on the north face. It was past 6:00 p.m. and the sun was already going down. The sunset from over 22,000 feet is so remarkable that neither words nor photographs could do it justice. Descending to 22,000 feet I decided to bivouac. Twelve hours of darkness with little gear will make for a miserable night. It was very hard to keep warm and impossible to keep my last gulp of water from freezing, while my bivi sac grew a half inch of ice inside it.

I downclimbed the standard route in a whiteout, finally reaching the col and better weather from there onto the gully. This would be the last technical section I would have to deal with. The ice in the gully was easy to crampon down and soon I was on the lower glacier and "easy going" the rest of the way. Still I reminded myself that it wasn't over yet as I jumped enormous crevasses, and traversed north to descend through the icefall. The icefall was a wicked place to be in the afternoon and I worked through it as quickly as possible.

I was relieved to get onto the rock below the icefall and I felt a significant sense of accomplishment coming on. Slowly I stumbled down the rock back into basecamp where I ate, drank and slept for the first time in 36 hours.

The celebrations came later when I met friends in Huaraz for pizza and beer! After eight hours on the bus to Lima, we finally board a DC-10. Along the way I'd heard my first news report in a month, including the story of the Air India crash and other recent airline bombings. Not to be left out, airport officials order everyone off the plane and unpack all the baggage. Amid flashing lights, they remove two unclaimed packages and one passenger and finally we are given the OK for take off. Nice! Arriving in Vancouver we claim our bags and work our way through customs convincing officials that we don't have any cocaine. It was back to the land of ease and convenience, even drinkable tap water! My adventure was over, but plans for my next trip to Peru are already stirring in the back of my mind. □

# Hiking Camp, The Valley of the Lakes

story by Jeff Ross

## Introductory Verse

by Helen Butling

Everywhere amazing rocks,  
Billiard tables with iron pyrites  
Shining like gold.  
Fractured rocks in symmetrical pieces  
In all shapes and sizes.  
Flower gardens beyond belief  
Brilliant colours and variety  
Hot hot sun each day,  
Sometimes a cool breeze  
To take the bugs away.  
Two young women  
Full of energy  
Joyfully cooking our meals.  
A full moon between the peaks  
Nights when we hear the ptarmigan  
Nights too fine for sleeping.

Two mothers and daughters  
Sisters two and three.  
From Australia, Scotland,  
Southern California and New Brunswick  
They have come to this place  
Each day the camp is deserted  
By Fraggle Rock to Cold Shiver Lake,  
The Naked lakes and Cold Shiver Col.  
To Snowman Lake by the West Col  
And the fabulous view.  
Down the valley by the waterfalls,  
Jim and Joe to Ape's Head  
A first ascent?  
Up the valleys to the right or left  
All great places to go.  
From 3pm on they return  
Happy, hungry and glad to be home.

Images that remain;  
Joe chasing Jim's tent  
As the wind bowls it down the slope.  
Roger smoking his pipe.

The solitary figures  
Crossing the No-Man's land to the Biffy.  
The young people playing crib  
In the cook tent  
Jim's snow school,  
Six women sliding, feet first,  
Head first down the slope.  
Naked bodies  
Spread out on the warm rocks.  
Finding Kate's camera  
And Jeff retrieving his mechanical pencil  
From nine thousand feet.

Today we leave  
But always in our minds  
We will see and remember  
This beautiful place.

| t's Thursday already and the cloud cover suggests rain though Helen's trusty altimeter shows no barometric change. Except for two afternoon showers, including one in the form of a stinging hail storm, we've baked like a colony of happy seals in the hot sun at our 7,400 foot tundra campsite hard under the east side of the crest of the Purcell Range, in the Valley of the Lakes.

It's Thursday already. The passage of time at summer camp is difficult to measure, not in the sense of the hour, for factoring one's arrival at the chow line after the day's effort requires some time sense. But time in terms of the passage of days is altogether different. At the beginning of camp you experience a period of adjustment, finding yourself asking "What day is it?". Usually by mid-week you no longer much care to ask, but come late Thursday or Friday, you realize all to soon your sojourn in the environment of choice has neared its end. It's Thursday already.

Our "mountain time" began Saturday afternoon July 27 with liftoff from Hans Gmoser's Bobbie Burn's Lodge, some forty "crow" miles north west of Radium Hot Springs. The Lodge is Nirvana in winter for heli-skiers from throughout the world, and in summer, one of three bases for Gmoser's relatively new heli-hiking program.

Our on time flight was over in less than eight minutes, apparently setting a best ever record for helicopter service in the annals of the hiking camps. Furthermore, although the big fourteen passenger bird cost \$1,500 per hour to operate, owing to the economies of scale, seventeen people, (two more flew in later on a private flight), and all the gear was on site in two trips, rather than several with a small chopper. Most satisfactory.

Owing to the cost of "joy riding" in the big bird, the campsite locale was essentially pre-determined. Some folks missed having trees and shade, though during our fair weather week the site proved an ideal high base from which to continue upwards and onwards towards other destinations. One popular goal was a walk up a 9,000 foot "knob" north of camp. The knob offered a breathtaking view in all directions, including south to the Bugaboo Range and the ten mile

long Conrad Icefield, west towards Sugarplum Spire, the location of week two's Satellite Camp, (see Satellite Camp article), north to Horseman and Malachite Spires and the head of the Syncline Glacier, and below to the south was the beautiful, broad Valley of the Lakes and camp.

The lakes, though attractive, were only the more noticeable attributes of the valley, while its others, though perhaps less obvious at first, were of equal or greater magnificence in their own right. For instance, though the outlet stream of the lake near camp was a delight, with notable slab rock pools and a waterfall along its course, it was the inconspicuous, snow fed watercourse on the south side of the valley that easily took area wide honours in the best floral display category. This was not an easy title to win, for from camp the broad meadowed Valley of the Lakes, was a virtual flower garden, gently sloping downhill for over a mile. Yet it seemed to be the particular mix of water, and the rocky, well drained soil near the creek, that yielded the most extravagant display of multi-hued paintbrush we would see all week.

### Camp of the Blue Moon

by Marie Earthy

Ye glorious mountains, peaks of yesteryear  
Tops shrouded in mist, faces glistening with a  
thousand dewdrops  
Like gigantic molten candles, studded with  
iron pyrites  
Oh, but to have wings of gossamer!

Your sides painted with streams of flowers  
Laughing rivulets, rainbows of Indian paintbrush  
Veronica the colour of lapis lazuli, silky phacelia  
mountain fire-weed  
Saffron potentilla, ivory grass of parnassus,  
shimmering magenta and golden mimulus

The air is deliciously fresh and sweet  
The mind is clear and new  
Ptarmigan abound, fluttering to and fro  
Pika squeak, marmots whistle

The moon is blue this month  
Jupiter by her side watches her wander at will  
Capricious, luminous, yet so faithful  
The month, the night, the hour is hers

There's a mysterious stranger watching camp  
Massive body, portly tail, no matter that he  
comes and goes  
Perhaps he knows, when and where our souls began  
And for whom they will sing!

Spectacular though the Valley of the Lakes was, a day hike was required to visit the finest spot in the area, Snowman Pass and Lake. On day two we sat in flower meadows above Snowman Lake, eating lunch, periodically glancing downward, mesmerized by the

aquamarine hue of the lake. Above and beyond, the steep flanks of Snowman Peak rose from the far shore of the lake. With eyes left, we took in the ice polished rock slabs with their heather and sedge grass alcoves beckoning, extending a level kilometre like an island somehow improbably suspended above the deep valley which dropped away from this extension of the pass on all sides. To top it all off, in the distance was a series of rugged peaks adorned with hanging glaciers, the final ingredient in the whole incomparable scene spread out before us.

Other popular day hikes included a visit to the alpine pocket southeast of camp. This small alpland basin was delineated by two ridge spurs forming a southeast facing "Y". Here was one of the favourite swimming tarns, deep enough to dive into off rock slabs. Also, its outlet framed the same glaciated peaks visible from Snowman Pass, making for fine picture taking.

Helen dubbed another popular swimming area the "Naked Lakes", a series of small ponds in slab rock east of the large silt laden upper lake in the Valley of the Lakes. □

## There's Youth in the Camp

by Marie Earthy

There's youth in the camp  
Do they know the hour  
Nay, they have not the time

There's youth in the camp  
Do they know the sun and moon  
must live apart  
Nay, they have not been watching

There's youth in the camp  
Do they know how to laugh  
Oh yes, with their bright eyes and  
crimson lips

There's youth in the camp  
Do they know who stole the sun  
Oh yes, for they made it run

There's youth in the camp  
Do they know who they are  
Oh yes, they are us, long, long ago  
(Marie spent two weeks at main camp-Ed.)

Folks with both the desire and powerful bug juice, visited the long, broad glacial silt plain 1,000 feet below camp. Besides being an entomologist's dream, (or nightmare?), the rich silty soil favoured the growth of dwarf alpine fireweed, paintbrush, willow catkins at prime, cotton sedge grass, and many, many other botanical varieties. Two parties made the trek from the valley bottom to the toe of the glacier, originating from the northwest flank of Syncline Mountain, the dominant peak seen to the north from camp.

Wildlife sightings for the week included elk, deer, goats, a very few caribou tracks, bear sign, the ubiquitous marmot, pika and ground squirrels, and

many varieties of birds, including a flock of ten or more adult ptarmigan which we herded like a flock of chickens in camp one evening. Disproportionate in number, but significant in terms of accomplishment, was the camp's climbing team, made up of Jim Kienholz and his trusty sidekick Joe Arcovio. They recorded a number of apparent first ascents in the region, including one marathon day across "siltation valley" and up the adjacent ridgeline of peaks, bagging "Ape's Head", well named by Jim for the summit block's resemblance to the head of King Kong gazing skyward towards his mountain retreat.

We were a diverse, and in fact international group with camp participants from New Brunswick to Scotland, (Helen's sisters Anne and Katherine), Reno and San Francisco, (sisters Naomi and Carole with past and still present ties to Nelson), and Shawn Sommerset from the "land down under", on a leg of his North American tour, who by coincidence found himself on relative Marie Earthy's doorstep just in time to squeeze onto the camp roster at the last possible moment.

For those of us who have been living in the Kootenays for a while, or longer, who may get a little jaded from time to time, forgetting how fortunate we are to live in these mountains, an anecdote regarding Shawn might be inspiring. He'd obviously been on a fulfilling but hectic round of sightseeing before shoehorning himself into readiness for our trip. Guiding him for the first part of the week, my impression was of a traveller with a checklist, ticking off one destination after another, having seen 'em all, but with seldom the time to become deeply imbued with the essence of any one place. On our first day out we visited Snowman Pass with its incomparable vistas, yet he seemed almost hurried, anxious to move on to check off the next item on some list. It was not until later in the week, when Shawn had been out on his own one afternoon, beyond the col west of camp there to have his second view of the Battle Range, that he related on returning to camp, "You know, I feel like I've just seen those mountains for the first time!", and it was obvious from then on that the mountains had indeed worked their magic on him.

"Go ye to the mountains and get their glad tidings," John Muir said, and so we did. □

# Satellite Camp

story by Jeff Ross

**H**ey, can we talk?...I mean like forget that "it's Thursday already" stuff, I'm here solo in Satellite Camp and it's ONLY Thursday already! Pause to factor into your wilderness experience wind, rain, hail, thunder and snowstorms, with a dash of spice in the form of Grizzly digs near the tent, a not so old lone track, (also Ursus Horribilis), on the beach of the tarn out the front door, a slop pit left three days ago with appetizers to the main course, (me) by folks I thought were my friends, and stir with my third solo day here, which likely with the weather will extend into five, and somehow the rhapsodic prose tends to flow less freely from one's pen! My God, it's only Thursday?

Weeks before, I'd signed up to do an extra week's tour of duty at Satellite Camp west of the Valley of the Lakes, during the second week of hiking camp. (Due to demand, like last year, two consecutive camps were held back to back.) The week began on a positive note for us, Earl and Carl Jorgenson, Dave Adams, Mike Brewster and Joan Harvey, and the three of us, Jim Kienholz, Joe Arcovio and myself, who were staying on for a second week, with a turnaround flight from the Bobbie Burns Lodge, back through the Valley of the Lakes high above base camp, and on west to the western slope of Sugarplum Spire above the Duncan River.

Though fused onto the crest of the Purcell Range near Hume Pass, the Hatteras group, including Sugarplum, was of granitic construction and actually an outlying component of the Battle Range and the Selkirk Range across the Duncan River. Consequently, though we were only several "crow" miles away from the Valley of the Lakes, we entered into an entirely different world of granite on our short flight beyond the metamorphosed sediments of the Purcell Crest.

Like a richly embroidered pocket on a pair of designer jeans, a forgotten, tarn bejewelled pocket of granite, heather, sedge grass, and wildflower graced wilderness, literally hangs under the west slope of massive Sugarplum Spire, in a pristine setting where we would locate satellite camp for the week.

On Tuesday, my companions would trek back to

base camp, while I would remain for the week. Then on Thursday, another group of seven would leave the Valley of the Lakes, climbing over to Satellite Camp to stay 'til the end of camp on Saturday. To reiterate, the first segment of the week went off on a positive note as scheduled. Despite being caught out of camp in thunderstorms on Sunday and Monday afternoon(s), the climbing contingent achieved most of its goals, including an ascent of Mt. Hatteras, (Mike Brewster made the summit during a thunderstorm on Sunday), and on Monday, with a visit to the unnamed peaks at the northwest end of the Hatteras Group.

On Tuesday the on and off thunder and rainstorms abated affording the seven a fine day for their early A.M. departure from the frost coated camp, and on eastward across the intervening Valley of the Lakes. But from Tuesday afternoon on, all bets on the probabilities for good weather were called in. The wind blew hard out of the south west all Tuesday night, and daylight Wednesday revealed the precursors of a consolidated low pressure front approaching out of the southwest.

Off and on showers and thunderstorms became the rule by Wednesday afternoon with rain most of that evening, changing into a tent drumming hailstorm sometime after midnight, changing yet again into a snowstorm in the pre-dawn hours Thursday morning. It's only Thursday and my dishpan rain gauge shows nearly three inches of precipitation in a little over twenty four hours! Now more is on the way with rain drumming on the tent since my 10:00 A.M. "breakfast expedition" to the supply tent.

My thoughts leap the void over to base camp, and I wonder how they will cope with seven extra mouths to feed?, (the seven who were to have hiked over today, but who can't owing to the weather). Having had a magnificent first week of camp in the Valley of the Lakes, I also feel sorry that few if any of the folks there will know the full joys of the place as we did last week. Although I am perked by the "good vibes" crossing the void my way, I still wonder how things are going over there.

Dem Bones

by Marie Earthy

My tent is snowy wet  
I have not risen yet  
The breakfast whistle goes  
Oh my, how wet my toes

Late as late I am  
There's no more black currant jam  
The porridge cold, the sausage done  
Oh, to be dry and gone

But wait, is that the sun  
Quick, hurry eat the lot  
Take a hike, have some fun  
Catch the sun, make the storm stop

It's night, the tent is moist

I am stiff and need a hoist  
But I have paid the fee  
And must suffer with glee

*John Stewart's footnotes:* "We enjoyed a nice sunny morning on our first day with a late morning thunderstorm heralding the end of two months of glorious hot weather. Second, third and fourth days, mainly clear patches with good visibility and good hiking provided you were ready to put on rain gear three or four times a day for 15 or 20 minutes each time. Fifth and sixth days, heavy snow squalls with a few interludes for short hikes, but no sign of real improvement in skies or barometer."

"As in the past three years, new members were introduced to the KMC hiking camps this year including some completely new to mountain hiking. Sometimes the "baptism" is a little abrupt. This year, one camper, on her first ascent of a mountain, (9,000 foot knob north of camp), was treated to a nice sunny cool scramble to the top, followed by a sudden mountain storm: everyone's hair tingling and standing on end, a quick descent off the summit, a howling gale, drenching rain and hail, slippery wet rocks, thunder and lightning, and a flooded tent on return to camp! On the sixth day seven members hiked out to call in the helicopter a day early."

Meanwhile, back at Satellite camp, Friday, day six (my fourth one solo). Have read the entire two week library now, and continual foul weather has me holed up in the tent once again for most of the day. Managed to pack up all the loose gear over at the supply tent this morning, will gamble wildly that there will be a big hole in the gloom tomorrow before copter time, when I'll dismantle the tents. Ho-hum, four P.M. have to don full rain gear for dinner in a while, but now, settle back into the warm down bag.

Whap-whap-whap-WHAT?, Whap, Whap, WHAP!WHAP!WHAP!, (head out the tent door), yes, yes it is! Big Bird to the rescue! Somehow the surrealistic moment reminds me of a helicopter scene from the movie *Apocalypse Now*. I can almost hear Wagner blaring on loudspeakers under the rotor noise. OOPS, the supply tent is square on the landing site, but not to worry, (thought the pilot), "there's a make do square for my fourteen seater 30 feet in front of that guys tent". Soon I am most thankful for my bombproof tent which I know will withstand a typhoon. Others have come on the "rescue mission" too. We dismantle the camp in a driving hailstorm. The copter pilot feels his way home by way of Snowman Pass.

Soon, with goodbyes said at the heli pad, I steel myself for the drastic culture shock of rubbing elbows with Texas millionaires at the fireside in Bobbie Burns Lodge. In the morning I shoot some "promos" in exchange for room and board, and after posing several lovely young bikinied staff ladies in the Jacuzzi, it's on the road again, for a day of reflecting on two more weeks in the environment of choice.

# Climbing Camp 1985 Ape Lake

K.M.C. Climbing Camp, July 28 - Aug. 9



Float Plane, Ape Lk.

photo by Fred Thiessen

Ape Lake's Dramatic Recent History  
by Don Mousseau / Charlie Boyd

"I see no ships, only hardships." K. Holmes  
he group met at the Bull Canyon campsite near Alexis Creek for a car camp and the next day drove the remaining 150 km. to Nimpo Lake. Dean River Air Services started ferrying us into Ape Lake in their ancient 'Beaver' (1958 vintage) around noon. The pilot was astounded by the amount of gear we had. Trips of one hour duration were required to put the camp on the north shore of Ape Lake. After sighting the camp location, as the first group set up the cook tent, they heard an ominous 'riipp', of rotted stitching! So the first day in camp was spent using 4 awls and 8 people in shifts to resew all the seams. To our surprise the repair job held for the duration of camp. Perhaps the venerable old tent has reached the end of its life, some 12 years old now, used since the 1973 Gold Range Camp.

Encouraged by excellent weather and vicious blackflies, mosquitoes and horseflies near camp, we set about the arduous task of bagging the peaks in the immediate vicinity of Ape Lake. The weather broke in the second week, the cook tent providing a welcome refuge for book reading and enlightening conversations on such topics as, 'Hay Growing in Myers Creek' by Jack Bryan and, 'Life in the British Army' by Ken Holmes.

Two high camps of two nights duration were put up, one on the Mongol Glacier and one near Deer Lake.

Many thanks are extended to Peter Macek of Bella Coola for the use of his canoe; it proved invaluable for crossing the lake and saving time. Rita Holmes, our cook, did a marvelous job, providing the best, fresh cornish scones in the coast range.

Anyone planning a trip to this beautiful area should consider camping on the south shore of Ape Lake. There is a suitable location directly below Ape Glacier. The usual campsite is across the lake from a majority of the climbing and is inconvenient without a canoe. □

## Ape Lake's Dramatic Recent History by Bert Port

In the 19th century the Ativist, Fyles, Ape and Noeick glaciers met on the northwestern edge of the Monarch Icefield in the Coast Mountains. As these glaciers thinned and receded Ape Lake (a.k.a. Symphony Lake) emerged and drained eastward over a bedrock barrier first down Ape Creek then north down the Talchako River. At 1,395 metres, Ape Lake is some 1,500 metres below the surrounding peaks whose glaciers replenish its waters. As recently as 1947 the Fyles Glacier extended eastward into the lake a kilometre further than its present terminus.

But in October 20, 1984, in a dramatic chain of events, Ape Lake's outflow changed from east to west via the forty kilometre long Noeick River drainage to tidewater on South Bentink Arm. In 24 hours the lake level dropped 22 metres and spilled 46 million cubic metres of water down the Noeick. A further 39 million cubic metres of water remained in the deeper eastern portion of the lake which when full is 70 metres deep. The cause of this sudden event was the inability of the Fyles Glacier to continue damming the lake at its western end. Thinning and calving of the ice at the snout allowed it to bend upward and float, creating a space which was enlarged by friction-warmed water into a tunnel nearly two kilometres long, thus connecting Ape Lake with the Noeick drainage. This unusual phenomenon is known as a "jokulhlaup".

The Noeick valley experienced destruction of forestry roads and bridges, reforested areas, salmon spawning beds, and damage to the airstrip at tidewater. At the narrow parts of the valley water levels were 15 metres above normal.

With the lower water levels, old glacial features around Ape Lake were exposed, including a moraine which bisected the lake until it was breached during the sudden drainage. As the westward flow diminished, the Fyles Glacier settled to something like its original position. But the question of whether or not the lake would empty again when refilled remained a serious concern for those in the Noeick valley.

During the spring and summer of 1985 the lake began to refill with melted snow and glacial ice carried in streams which cut new gradients and unstable banks.

The rate at which the lake level rose was influenced by the air temperature and the increasing surface area of the lake. July was unusually hot thus the inflow was high. A rise of 44 cm was recorded on July 29 and likely represents the maximum daily increase. The level continued to rise even after Ape Creek began flowing on July 31. The highest level was reached on August 2, 1.46 metres higher than when we arrived. Thereafter the lake began to drop about 2 cm per day as cooler weather and clouds reduced meltwater inflow. During the KMC camp the Fyles Glacier continued to calve, particularly near the terminal moraine, leaving a few hundred metres of the narrowest part of the ice dam exposed to further melting by lake water. To reiterate, the factors which contribute to such an event are not well understood but seem to involve thinning and flexing of the glacier snout, the height of the water table within the glacier, and the lake water temperature. Experts studying Ape Lake suggest that the most likely time for a recurrence is in September or October within the next five years. Should the Fyles Glacier continue to recede the ice will again be breached, thus repeating a process which will continue until the westward drainage is "permanently" established. □

## A Trip to Jacobsen Glacier and Belial N. by Peter McIver

In an encouraging morning, following a period of inclement weather, Peter W. and I decided to explore the Jacobsen glacier, south of camp. We took the ferry across the lake (services kindly provided by Jack) and wandered (or staggered) up the beautiful little moraine valley across the lake and south of camp. We crossed the east shoulder of Jacobsen, over a moraine to the snow free glacier where we proceeded along the north edge until we came to grassy, heather covered meadows, with little streams and lakes, a truly beautiful spot on the south east shoulder of Jacobsen. The open meadows led down almost uninterrupted to the lake 1,200' below, a large chunk of enchanting country. After setting up camp we spent the rest of the idyllic afternoon exploring the clefts and ledges of the large cliffs to the south west.

The next morning we decided to head off for north Belial and Azazel, a splended rock island in the glacier. The day wasn't promising, with threatening clouds around as we proceeded south east directly across the Jacobsen glacier. The far edge proved really broken and a splended example of glacial forces as ice flowing from the Monarch Icefield and several subsidiary glaciers is compressed into a 1.5 km. channel. Broken curving glacial waves rose from the relatively flat surface. Travel was slow, but eventually, with the patter of rain presaging the day's weather, we climbed over some "grot" to meadows and snow slopes. After lunch on a rock, more steep soft snow, lead in wind, rain and falling snow to the main rock summit, two km north of Mt. Belial. In keeping with the surrounding peaks (Belial, Azazel, and Satan) I propose

"Lucifer" as the name of this peak. The name was as a tribute to Ian Hamilton who perished on a peak of the same name two years ago, and would otherwise have been with us.

The peak was first ascended 20 years ago in late July by BCMC and there was no record of any subsequent ascent.

The ridge to Belial would have been fun to traverse, but rock was now very wet and treacherous, so we proceeded south only far enough (two gullies from the summit) to find a route down to the glacier. A bit tricky this, given the conditions. I dislodged a large flat rock which hit Peter in the shoulder - fortunately a tough part of his body. A sitting traverse of a greasy flat slab took us to the snow for the plod across to Azazel. The weather improved, but it was late, and the rock wet, so we continued wandering through the treacherous glacier three km to the south ridge of Jacobsen. From the ridge we descended into an enormous boulder filled rock-ice chasm before emerging to the glacier and proceeding north east to camp arriving at 8:30, for the end of a long day. ("Lucifer" is visible from the Ape Lake campsite, immediately east of Jacobsen East.)

Next morning was pretty in the campsite, but the peaks were weathered in, so we explored the meadows before returning to the camp, (ferry courtesy of Fred) and Rita's cooking in the afternoon. □

### High Camp, plus Ascent of 8,230' by Charlie Boyd

**O**n the last week of camp we took off for three days with hopes of sun and fun in the Mongol Jacobsen area. After paddling to the south side of the lake, Bert and Sue Port, Ken Holmes and Charlie Boyd sweated up the north lateral moraine of Ape Glacier with heavy packs. From here we threaded our way through several crevassed areas to the flat southern end of the Fyles Glacier. After setting up camp at 7,500 feet the three fellows set off to have a look at East Mongol, while Sue headed for South Mongol, an apparent straight forward snow ascent an hour away. At the col the guys decided against East Mongol, it being late and chilly, so they headed for South Mongol to meet Sue. After a pleasant, even elegant easy snow approach, they enjoyed a sunny hour at the top overlooking the Monarch Icefield. Arriving back at camp an hour later they were very pleasantly surprised with a fine supper prepared by Sue who had decided to return after encountering a double bergschrund on the gentle face of South Mongol. Sunset and views were spectacular that evening. Bert was overheard mumbling "those poor city folk."

The next morning was windy, cloudy and cold. After a short hike to the col between S. Mongol and W. Jacobsen we descended about 700 feet around the south buttress of W. Jacobsen and then up a lightly crevassed tongue of the Monarch Icefield, 900 feet to the east-west Jacobsen col. The weather continued to deteriorate and after an hour buggering around on the

rock of E. Jacobsen the Ports decided to go for the summit on less inclement snow slopes via the south ridge. Ken and Charlie carried on up the west ridge, and, after a combination of crud scramble and very secure grade 3 rock climbing, reached the top (9,332') at noon, five hours after leaving camp. Here they were happily joined by a half hour of sunshine and Fred, Pam and Gordon who had made it from Ape Lake in only 5½ hours! The descent was made in snow and rain on slippery rock. Ken and Charlie joined the Ports at the col for a soggy trip home.

At camp a heavy mist continued which, despite rain gear, had us soaked through, visibly diluting our hastily prepared stew, as we ate it. Conditions were so miserable, Bert was even heard singing! Having found a puddle in his bivvy bag, Charlie decided to forgo the pleasure of another night under the stars and moved into Ken's three man tent where head to shoulder all four of us were snugly accommodated.

Hopes of an E. Mongol attempt were abandoned with next morning's whiteout. Behind the intrepid leadership of Ken we wound our way down the glacier to camp, where we spent the rest of the day drying out and regaling the others with lies of the tremendous conditions encountered. □

Icarus

by Kirsten Apel

**F**rom our camp at Ape Lake we walked along the moraine to the Borealis Glacier. The trip took a very relaxed four hours to the summit. The solid granite at the summit was a pleasant change from what we had encountered on some of the other peaks in the area.

The experienced Iain Martin made sure that "Kirsten the novice", was aware of safe glacier travel as there were only two of us.

"Do ye ken why ye're going firrst?"  
"Yes"  
"Do ye have yell prruissiks on?"  
"Yes"  
"Okay, away ye go"

On the descent of the glacier, the fearless leader discovered he had lost his prussiks and had to borrow one from the beginner! □

The Mongols

by Jack Bryan

**L**ast mongol, Lesser Mongol, Mongol-schmongol take your pick. Five hearties start from Ape Lake at 0700 hours, four hours to the Mongol-Jacobsen via three holes in the glacier. A slag heap disappears into the mist, we follow. Slipping, sliding on wet rock the summit (apparently) appears. Lunch, then down. A rock in the head "let's get to hell off this ridge", crampons on. Kick steps down steep snow to 'schrund. Back to ridge to col. Can see each other again. Can see really well, now. Can see sun, nice. Down to camp by six. Fellow mist watchers were Pam Olson, Gord Frank, Fred Thiessen and Don Mousseau. □

## The Gendarme on Atavist

by Peter McIver

**D**uring our south east traverse of Throwback from Atavist, Ken, Peter W. and I came to a notable gendarme. It was vertical for 40 to 50 feet, and no less an authority than Karl Ricker estimated it to be somewhat higher than the north west and south east summits. The climb was exposed but easy and the roped traversing descent interesting. There were five previous recorded ascents. □

## East Jacobsen

by Peter McIver

**T**he impressive Jacobsen Peaks dominated the view from camp and were obvious objectives for everyone. The higher East peak (9,932') was the goal for Don, Peter W. and I as we left camp by canoe on the second day (July 30). In perfect weather at 5:30 we crossed the lake by canoe, proceeded up the south moraine until we could drop to some meadows and ascend to a pass north east of our objective. We climbed the steep north cliffs on rock, snow and then ice requiring crampons and belays, to the flatter glacier north of the east-west Jacobsen Col. We moved from the col on broken easy ledges via the west ridge to the summit. Climbing was free, mostly scrambling with some free climbing near the summit, which we reached about 1:30. (A subsequent party with a better route to the glacier and firm snow took only 5½ hours to the summit.)

On the descent we proceeded south west on snow (a rappel was used in one spot on ice) to south of the east-west Col. Bypassing the schrund needed a rock traverse. In returning from the north glacier we travelled further east and descended via a wet gully to snow - reaching camp about 7:45. □

## Pearl Peak

by Bert Port

**A**t 5:15 Jack, Ken, and Bert left camp for the daily stumble along the edge of the Ape Lake. We hoped to maintain our height on the dry ice of the Fyles Glacier onto the Noeick Glacier by crossing the unstable moraine trailing off the old nunatak separating these two glaciers. But it was not to be as we had to descend nearly to the outwash plain then back up beside the torrent until it could be crossed on the Noeick Glacier. Continuing westward we ascended steep snow until poor visibility and a wind ripping tatters of cloud over the heathery ridge brought us to a halt at around 9:30 A.M. After various guesses as to where we were, the prominent moraine below the north west peak of Pearl was located and followed upward into the sun. With good views of the Jacobsens and Fyles we reached the col and the broad snow ridge leading toward the summit. Our way was nearly blocked by a bergschrund but a thin bridge allowed access to the upper wall and an exit to the slope above. Two more pitches on very soft snow then extremely loose rock on the ridge slowed us but the summit was reach-

ed nine and one half hours from camp. Anticipating a very late dinner we had a last look at Iroquois Ridge and left the summit at 3:00 P.M. Two and a half rappels took us over bad rock and soft snow to the lower lip of the bergschrund. Better visibility allowed us to choose a quicker all-snow route to the snout of the Noeick but did nothing to reduce the drudgery of retracing our steps on the moraine. Reaching camp at 8:00 we were delighted to find the others just beginning dessert and our dinners still hot. □

## Poet and Musician

by Pam Olson

**F**rom our camp on the north side of Ape Lake several parties rambled up an obvious creek gully, through heather and flower graced but bug infested meadows to scramble up third class rock to Poet or east to Musician. Another party bypassed the great thrash by paddling 10 minutes along the north shore of the lake to a talus slope which eventually lead to the east ridge of Musician. All parties agreed that the person(s) who named these peaks Poet and Musician were neither poetic nor musical or else held an animosity for such artists. Should I remind one of our group that he has the distinction of having climbed Musician twice in three days, firstly to drop his shorts and secondly to fruitlessly search for them. □

## Credits

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