

Karabiner '97

The Journal of the Kootenay Mountaineering Club

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40

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Cover

Hiking Camp 1997

Elaine Martin

Karabiner '97

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Editor's Forward

This year's Karabiner was a little more difficult than last year's. Last year I had all the articles by the beginning of the summer. This year, almost all the articles were in by the beginning of the summer. The rest came later, and everybody had valid reasons as to why they were late. I do know that with a full-time job and only having the weekends free for everything else in life, the time to write is very limited.

The first thing that is done when articles are received is the typing, if they are hand written. Typing and editing can be done while you wait for others to complete their promised work. You cannot start the layout until you know the number and the length of all articles, and everything is on hold until then. Pictures are another very important aspect of the layout. If those people who submit articles do not have pictures, one has to go to others and choose from their collection, they in turn have to look for the negatives, and then there is printing.

I would like to thank all those who contributed articles and pictures for this year's Karabiner.
Good Luck to those who take on the future magazines.

Joan Grodzki



Jenny Baillie photo

President's Report

by Dave Mitchell

This is my second attempt at writing this President's report. The dog ate my first one, but I really only have to make excuses to Joan, the Karabiner editor, not to the general membership. This made me think about, "who am I really writing this for, and why?"

To answer this question, it's because I don't often deal with the general membership over executive type issues (such as whether to eat cookies, cake, or both at executive meetings!). Although I meet many of you on trips, we don't often talk about what it is that you expect of the KMC. I assume that most people belong to the club because they like to hike or ski or climb or socialize. I don't know if the membership realizes how much administrative work the club does.

How many of you actually reflect on what it is that the club does, and what you want from it? I don't know everyone in the club. It is difficult to serve the needs of a group of diverse people who I don't know. We always welcome your comments, complaints and accolades, and we want to hear from you.

Some of the efforts of the executive are tangible (for example, the newsletter, the trip schedules, socials) other things, although important, are not (cabin maintenance, financial stuff, lobbying). Rather than review what the executive discussed in 1997, I would like to thank the rest of the executive on behalf of myself and on behalf of the membership.

I know that everyone I've spoken to enjoys receiving the newsletter. Some of us do more armchair mountaineering than we'd like to because we just can't seem to get out on enough trips. The Karabiner allows us to relive or travel vicariously on adventures farther afield or more extended than the day trips. I enjoy reading the Karabiner, and I hope you enjoy this year's Karabiner.



summit of Ymir, not a club trip

President's deep thought for the year, "when the weather craps out, mountaineering's a bitch!"

Hamish Martin

April 17, 1972—June 29, 1997

Hamish Martin died while climbing on the Mount MacBeth Icefields on June 29, 1997.

Hit is difficult to accept the loss on someone so young and full of life. Hamish was an experienced mountaineer. His parents Ian and Libby gave Hamish and his sister Fiona every opportunity to enjoy all outdoor activities.

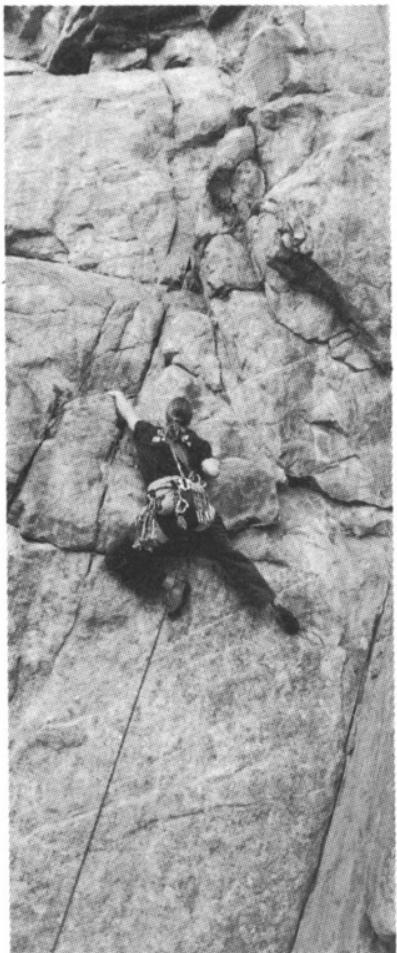
When he was old enough, Hamish joined the Boy Scouts. He loved the outdoor challenges that the Scouts provided and was a good leader and team member. Hamish achieved his Chief Scout's Award and traveled to Japan for an International Jamboree.

His background in the mountains was extensive. Starting in a pack on his Mum's back, Hamish soon progressed to expertly navigating his own turns on the steepest and most tightly treed terrain at Red Mountain, whooping and hollering with glee as he went.

The Martins often joined other families like the Homes, Brennans, Ports, Andersons, Ridges, and Hamiltons for camps at Duncan and Kootenay Lakes. Hamish loved making rafts, playing in the sand, swimming or playing war games against the girls. However, the times he enjoyed the most were when we were able to go hiking and scrambling up the mountains. He would practically run after the men, singing as he went.

His eagerness to explore came at a high price. At the ripe age of four he had already used several of his nine lives trying to swim the Kootenay River in the spring run-off at MacLeod Meadows and attempting flight from the garage roof. Neither of these worked very well. Several more lives were used during his teenage years while climbing at Kinnaird Bluffs. No doubt many cliffs and trees at Red Mountain have some stories to tell about this veteran of chance.





Hamish completed the Rock and Ice School with the KMC and joined Iain at the Climbing Camp. It was a wonderful opportunity for the two of them to enjoy the mountains together (without the girls!). Hamish soon became involved with instruction at the Rock and Ice School, taking pleasure in helping others enjoy the sport that he loved so much.

Following his graduation from Rossland Secondary in 1990, Hamish went to Europe with Ian Deane. Together they explored the Scottish Highlands and many of his Dad's old climbing haunts. Hamish worked for the winter as a ski technician in Chamonix, France (a job he was well qualified, having worked at Red Mountain for several years). Following his winter stint, Hamish continued to travel, seeing most of Europe, and getting to know his family in Britain.

Upon his return to Canada, Hamish completed two years at Selkirk College in Engineering transfer courses. He was accepted at the University of Waterloo's Civil Engineering Co-op Program. He completed work terms with H.A. Simons and Atomic Energy of Canada at Deep River.

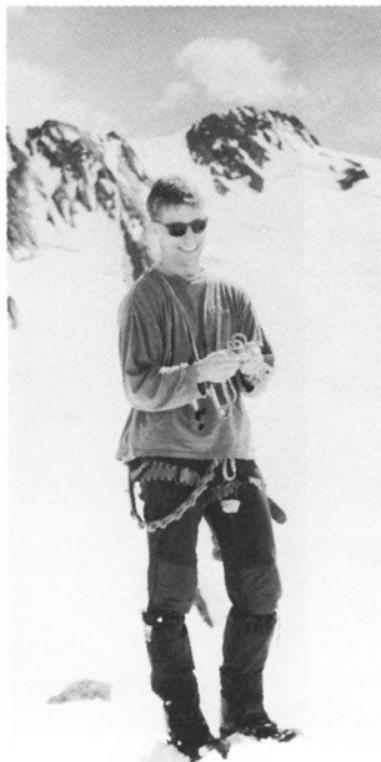
During the time he spent at Waterloo, Hamish made many friends and quite a name for himself. He and a team of classmates rocked the world of engineering when they entered the very prestigious annual Concrete Toboggan Race. Their entry "Snow Fear" won 1st place overall. Not only was he good at the academics, but stories filtered across the country about his active social life and his passion for pottery!

Upon his graduation, Hamish was employed by the H.A. Simons office in Trail. He moved back home to Rossland to live with his parents. His partner

Carolyn, girlfriend of two years, was to finish her Master's thesis and join him here where they would be making their home. His first month in Rossland was spent getting back into the lifestyle of the Kootenays, at home with the family, playing at the Kinnaird Bluffs and instructing at the KMC Rock School. Unfortunately the month ended all too soon.

The accident on June 29 was a shock not only to family and friends, but also to the entire community. Over 200 people joined Hamish's family at a Memorial service in the Martin's garden on July 5. Tears of sorrow and of joy were shared as people recounted tales of his sense of humour, his caring nature, his daring exploits, and of his "joie de vivre." His friends and family demonstrated on that day what a huge loss his passing means to us.

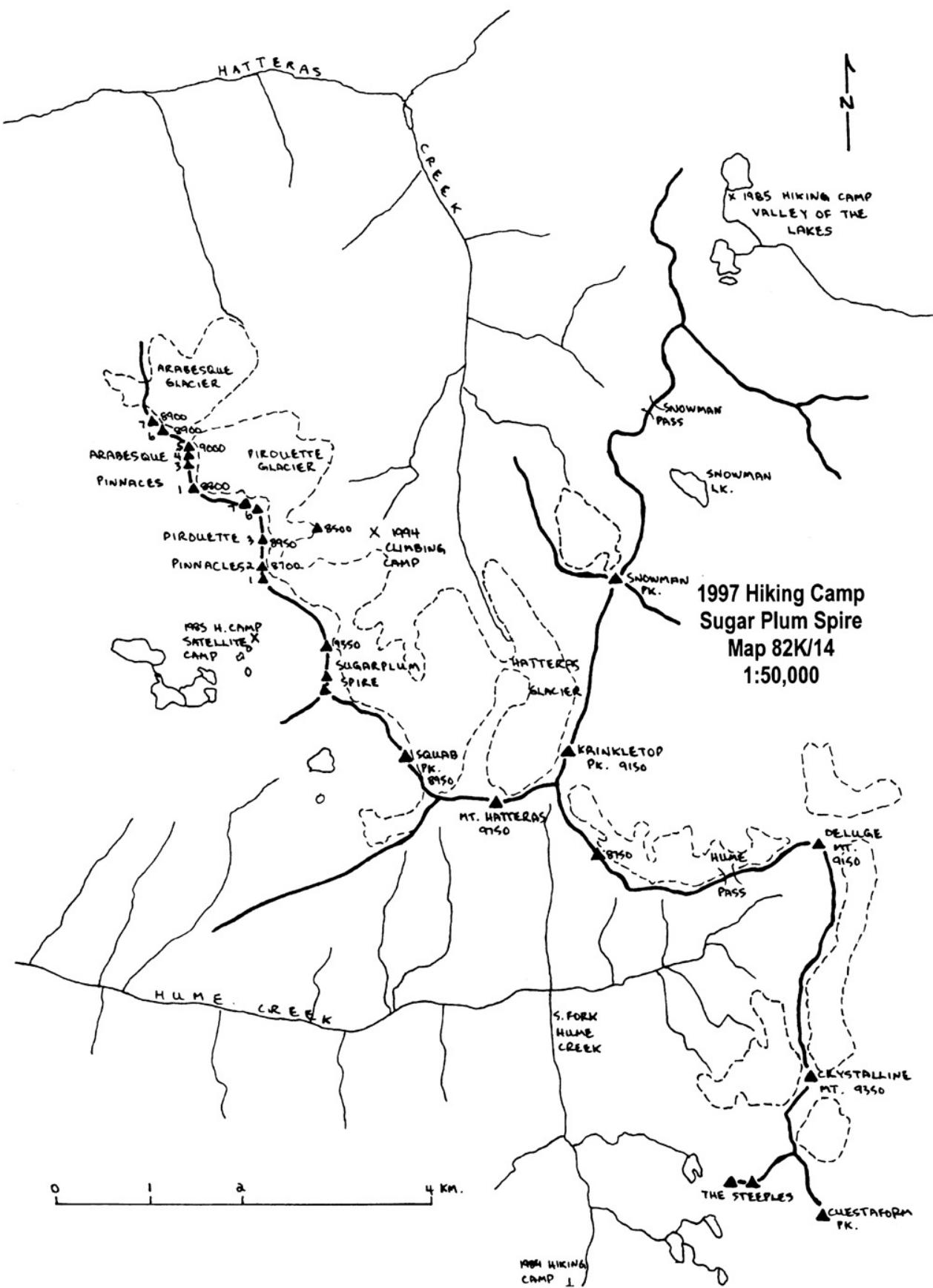
Grizzly bear activity prevented the placing of Hamish's relics on both the Woodbury and Gwillim Lakes areas, two of his favorite places. On Labour Day weekend, with the appropriate group of friends present, he was laid to rest under a small cairn in the neck of land between the Sapphire Lakes in Kokanee Park. He is sorely missed by everyone whose lives were touched by him.





Hiking Camps 1997 Sugar Plum Spire

Laurie Charlton Photo



Camp 1

by Gayle McGee

We met at the Duncan forest-ry road turn-off, slathered on the bug juice, and shook hands. There were new and old faces. We tried to get under way to the helicopter pick-up destination quickly (not being sure where that would be). Our cavalcade of cars wound their way up along the Duncan Lake and River—a totally beautiful area. The road was in fairly good condition as we bumped along, hopeful it would not rain. There were a couple of spots that I thought would be good enough for the helicopter to land, but we ended up in a fairly open area about 84 kilometres up the road and hoped the heli could find us. All the vehicles were unloaded, and the supplies and tents were piled and ready to load. Then we worked madly on the vehicles. Some people brought chicken coops to put the cars in, others trusted mothballs (?), and others trusted fate. Everyone was excited. By the time the helicopter manned by Dave landed for pick up, we were organized and ready to go. "Thanks" to Laurie's excellent planning, and the three men in the suits (Ron, Leon and ?). Everyone who listened, followed directions well. We were a mixed group of 20 new and seasoned hiking camp users. We were in for a great week and a great deal of laughter, but none of us knew that yet.

After we learned helicopter safety and how to board in groups of four, off we went, group by group into the waiting unknown. At last it was my turn—and for the first time—I loved it. It was just great, and definitely the easiest way I've ever got to the alpine with all of my gear. We were quickly set down on a huge area with snow, small little creeks, and boulders. Each person or party scanned the area for dry tent spots. But first the group jobs—erecting the cook and supply tent, digging the biffy and setting up that tent. Actually it was not too rocky, and the digging is much better than the fill job at the end??? All went smoothly, and the weather coop-

erated, but it was very dark by the time the group finished. Tents went up all over the place and it began to look and feel like home (for the week anyway). The food was nestled in the safety of the coolers and rocks, and our bedrolls were unfurled in their tents.

Many of us first-time keeners got suited up, went to the steeper snow sections with ice axes and learned how to do a self-arrest. Well we laughed and screamed, and slid.

As one looked about it was obvious that we were in a large bowl, a very open and exposed hiking camp. It was great and as the week went by, things changed dramatically with the warmer weather and the melting snow. Although, it was actually easier hiking the first few days with all the snow on the boulders and scree.

It was apparent at the first dinner that we all loved to eat, and that we lucked out—the food that came prepared was great, and our cook, Bev Gordon, did a superb job.

The first day we woke to a beautiful morning. In various groups we explored the area, and of course, reported back at the end of our hike. People were always off early, and in different groups. Renatta (the blue goat, as she came to be named because of her hiking prowess) led the gung-ho bunch—Ron, Leon, Jan, Donella, and Karl—up to the spires and the saddle to overlook the whole scene. Gayle, Bev, Jill, Norm, Marilyn, and Alan hiked up the rim to another overlook. We saw the glacier area on a frozen lake and river. It was a great day. We met up with Frits. It was getting late in the afternoon, so we sent Bev back to cook because we would surely have an appetite. A couple of names came to mind for members of the Sugarplum fairy group. Ask Jim. Insect in metamorphosis—Jan really knows how to layer.

The next day much the same group went to the saddle. The walk is a long one, on snow, and in the sun. The faces

will look redder after today. We all sat on the top, some stayed longer than others, eh Jill? I stayed with Margaret and we moseyed down later. We had conversation, good views, food, and even a quick dip that was chilly, but refreshing. The little wild flowers are beginning to show, some Moss Campion and such. It is neat to look through Norm's little magnifier and then in his book to discover what you were looking at.

Things get busy in camp as hikers return and dinner gets under way. The draw for the chores seem to be all worked out now, although switching still goes on as the days go by. I took to my day in camp wed to chores, which were mostly meals.

Renata has returned to a backwash. Marilyn and Alan laugh as they go to the "British Estates" (not sure how that was started). I sit overlooking the camp from a rock perch and ponder it all while listening to happy hour. Do I hear beef stew and coleslaw? Even the salmon loaf disappeared and there were doubts. Lots of talk and laughter before bed.

Tuesday is a leisurely day for some, while others are off early and hard. Karl and Donella have joined the slower group today. Felix heads off to the glacier. When we dine at noon, Marg assumes her mother hen (with binocs) position, and has everyone spotted and accounted for. So be careful, you might be next.... We yell to the ascending group and what do we get in return? Profanity! Imagine.

While Jill and I meandered home we found pica apartments. There were piles of grass and lots of things to eat. It looked dry and cozy. Speaking of dry and cozy, the clouds look like rain. Some moved their tents to drier ground, they could now that the snow has receded.

Boy does it ever get raunchy after dinner—what was in that stew anyway. We sure have the giggles. Do you know what an "awful rectomy" is? To

sever the eye from the rectum to rid one of a shitty view. How did we ever get on the topic of the biffy? Belay down the biffy? Is this biffy duty? Jim teaches the group Tai Chi. Gayle and Bev continue the chi gong. Do I hear one party will be leaving for Squabb at 5:30 a.m.?—have a nice time. We, Marilyn and I, find out that indeed the binocs got turned on us as we bathed. Thanks for that info Ron.

We stayed up late last night making popcorn, watching the stars and laughing. We woke up on Wednesday and the weather had come in. I had a small lake in one corner of my tent. Some early morning hikes were canceled and we all went to the cook tent to play cards and such. Watch out for those tempers. It is time to regroup. There are some serious bridge players. We are somehow back to biffy etiquette and ritual. Do we leave the digging of the new latrine to the second camp, since it seems to be their only duty??? Renata shall lead the way with the new flag. (Hope all the campers enjoyed it.) And perhaps a ten bare bum salute?? Karl was that your idea? Lunch is at an all time premium for trades. People are getting desperate.

The hikers that didn't leave early

will go just as far. There were people that went to the spires and some way over to the next ridge. It turns out that we all got somewhere. The goats are in the area and some see them. We end up having a grueling day but all is well, even the last few feet when I wished I had my ice axe. The group that went to Squabb never got to the top, but it sounded like they too had a good day. There were a few scary moments. We packed it in early because we were tired. Tomorrow may be less strenuous?

I have succumbed. I leave in the morning with the gung-ho group and head for the lake's waterfall area to go up to the saddle. For some reason I decide to go back to the lakes to sit and just be. Then the drops fall and the weather begins. I hold-up by a large leaning rock and watch many people quickly go by, heading to camp and shelter. The gung-ho group turned back shortly after I did to get out of the coming storm—more food and cards. I went on a late stroll with Leon and Bev to find the right rock for a photo. Hopefully some of the pics turned out. Hey, what about the one with the shadow that went down the long fissure? Bev was getting quite artsy with it all, and her sketches too.

Tonight is a late night since it is the last one.

Popcorn has finally been taken to the state of real perfection. That was thanks to Ron and crew. It was yummy.

We started writing the limericks. Marge and friends produced the most hilarious skit. I have to say we had a great week of laughter and hiking and eating....

Saturday dawns too early. We are not really ready to leave. We all hang out. There is much less snow now. We laugh under the various colourful umbrellas. We are still creating limericks. We have taken off the boots to learn foot massage.

"Well done everyone, a fair time was had by all from camp number 1."

Sincerely Gayle

Donella Anderson, Leon Arishenoff, Alan Baker, Felix & Renate Belczyk, Laurie Charlton (leader), Mireille & Philippe Delesalle, Marilyn Gauthier, Marg Gmoser, Bev Gordon (cook), Jim Mattice, Gayle McGee, Karl McKusick, Jan Micklethwaite, Ron Perrier, Ted Steacy, Frits Swinkles, Norman Thyer, Jill Watson



Laurie Charlton photo

Camp 2

by Graham Kenyon

Reading the various accounts of camps past and present could lead the unsuspecting to the conclusion that the experience so closely approaches perfection that heaven itself would be a backward step. The vision of Julie Andrews skipping through alpine meadows strewn with flowers, tra-la-la-ing to the sound of music from who knows where is seductive—but where the hell are the mosquitoes? There is a darker side to this camp thing. It is time the truth was told.

Thus I muse at the conclusion of Camp 2, beneath the ramparts of Sugarplum Spire, seated in relative comfort in what must be the most scenic biffy in the country. A few feet in front the ground drops away to a turquoise tarn surrounded by alpine fir and green, green meadow. Beyond, the ridge slopes steeply up to the grey-black crags that contrast darkly against the distant grey-blue peaks which range west beyond the Duncan River. And beneath lies the digested residue of 400 meals, the mecca of as many flies, many of which are peculiarly adapted to prey upon naked pink skin in artful ways. “Why,” I muse, “are we so concerned about the mixing of human body fluids when the creature presently probing the subcutaneous of my left cheek may have last supped on a rabid bat?” Mashing the little devil into a black smear may satisfy my aggression, but might this also make things worse?

Let us leave this place of contemplation and the weighty problems that prey upon the mind while so engaged, and consider other experiences that might influence future innocents in their decision whether to join such an endeavour. But first the flag: never, never, never leave the flag when up departing the john, particularly in the morning rush hour. Picture half a dozen campers hopping about as if in some ritualistic dance before the flag as it stands proudly erect beside a vacant john, while the previous user is happily slurping up her (and it usually is a her) breakfast porridge. You can understand why the best of friends are now barely civil.

Breakfast: the time to contemplate the day ahead and line up a date for the day’s exertions. Check them out. There are the meadow wanderers, the folks who think

camp is supposed to be fun and a time for relaxation. There are the flower people whose competitive spirit would rival Donovan Bailey in a US track meet. There are those understaters, they say they “might scramble up that thing over the there,” pointing at some distant peak barely above the horizon and faintly resembling Annapurna. The young Turks with their glowing muscles and gleaming eyes are obviously out of the question. Which leaves the train: the long string of steady plodders that pull out of camp an hour or so after breakfast with their ski poles and the strangest assortment of hats you ever saw. The train is usually the noisiest party, so don’t expect to sneak up on unsuspecting wildlife. This may be an advantage if you happen to be nervous about bears. There were no bears in our valley this year, they are nervous about trains.

Some people are like me and can’t make up their minds until everyone has left, then we spend the day trying to catch up, or even find somebody. Don’t hike alone they say. There must be somebody out here somewhere! This approach does lead to self-reliance and a sense of resignation that you are who you are so you might as well learn to accept yourself, for better, for worse, etc, etc. Of course if you are not that easily satisfied, then trudging around on your own will be less than inspiring. But you do stand a better chance to see wildlife, and I suppose of being eaten by a bear.

There’s no point in going on about the hiking part. The Karabiner is always full of that stuff, and with three hiking camps all talking about the same place, doing the same things, with the only variable being the weather, it does get a bit repetitious. Wonderful place to be though, except for the sun blazing through the ozone hole, frying exposed skin with melanic UV radiation, and desiccating sweating bodies until the kidneys shrivel from disuse.

There are the bugs of course: the heavy duty B-52s that excavate a millimetere square hole to extract their pound of flesh; the black flies who rely on numbers to get through your defenses; the no-see-ums who sneak invisibly past the radar; the wasp looking things that may or may not be armed, but make threatening noises; and

the Night Fighters, the mosquitoes whining in at sundown. Boy, this is fun! Retire to the tent? The entire roof is a radiant heater; it’s like sitting in an oven, slowly broiling. At last, we have a use for a survival blanket—to keep the tent cool.

There is a cool place though. Only a kilometre or so from the camp there are these delightful alpine pools. “So refreshing,” gush the Sirens as they lure the unsuspecting explorers to their fate. My toes cramped up at first contact, which should have been warning enough, but anything they can do.... Have you ever tried sucking in all the air you expect to need for the next ten minutes in one gasping breath as liquid fire creeps up your thighs to engulf the naughty bits and beyond in searing pain followed by even more worrying total numbness? Enough! I would sooner be broiled than end up as permafrost.

In the evening we all sit around to talk about our little adventures, a cluster of people huddled around a log of “wood” recycled from the sawdust of ancient trees saturated in the even more ancient light crude that flickers romantically amid the pungent aroma of polyaromatic hydrocarbons. It is sobering to muse upon the temporal nature of this scene. This little collection of humanity, together for such a short while and sharing this moment. So totally insignificant in a world of 6 billion other souls, in a valley that has barely changed in several thousand years, beneath a sky that has spread the same infinity of stars across the black of night for millions of years. Yet each of us are so different, with our own personal baggage of triumphs and tragedies, our own dreams, and our own fears. In the grand scheme of things, this moment too will be insignificant, but for now it feels good and that should be enough.

Craig & Trudy Andrews, Debbie & Wally Babakaiff, Jenny Baillie, Brian Bissell, Suzanne Butler, Joan & David Cunningham, Rudy Goerzen, Graham Kenyon, Hazel Kirkwood, Iain (co-leader) and Libby Martin, Joyce McEwen, Holly Ridenour (co-cook), Carlton Scott (co-cook) John (co-leader) & Muriel Walton

Camp 3

by Reid Henderson

Bear! Bear! We heard Suzanne holler at the top of her lungs. Every one in the area was very aware of "Blondies" presence.

Camp 3, affectionately dubbed MASH UNIT was, as fate would have it, true to its nickname.

After rendezvousing at the Kaslo Mohawk station at 7:15 a.m., the seven-vehicle cavalcade met Kal near the Meadow Creek junction and Jane at the Johnson's Landing turnoff. Despite a flat tire, we were at the helicopter location with 45 minutes to spare. Everyone pitched in to help secure vehicles, seal boxes and move supplies in readiness for the airlift.

The transition was smooth and uneventful. I convinced Jenny, who was returning from Camp 2, to get back on the helicopter and join us at Camp 3. Now we had 19 people to share a workload geared for 20. Little did anyone know that 19 would soon be reduced to 17!

Personal tents were scattered about: some near the cook tent, some near the tarn at the top of the hill facing Sugarplum Spire, others looking northwest across the Duncan River toward Nautilus Mountain and the Nemo Glacier.

We met at the cook tent just before supper to conduct the "sweepstake" and to see which jobs each of us would select. After a frenzy of trading tasks, names were officially recorded on the roster, and the camp rules were discussed. Emphasis was placed on "do not hike alone," "record your route and estimated time of return," and "if a person failed to return before nightfall a search party would not leave camp before daybreak." Fortunately, everyone heeded the words.

Sunday saw people going in all different directions. Eric, Susan T and Susan W headed south-east toward Squab Peak. Reid, Don, Polly, Frank, and Sonja went west to the lake below camp and then roamed the south ridge. Varying groups consisting of Jenny, Suzanne, Ted, Hans, Kal, Gerry, Elaine, Ray, and Mary W scrambled to the saddle and/or the peak northwest of Sugarplum Spire to peer into Hatteras Glacier and Snowman

Peak. Jane and Mary B enjoyed the day catching up on their reading, chatting, and generally looking after camp, which includes having tea and cookies ready for the hungry returning wanderers.

While returning to camp, accident Number One happened. Mary W fell onto the rocks and hurt her wrist. Despite the immediate snow pack, when viewed at camp, the wrist was ugly—black and blue, at an angle, and swollen.

Mary's wrist didn't look any better Monday. Using Don's global positioning instrument and the (new and improved) emergency radio, the air ambulance crew who was dispatched from Kamloops had Mary on her way to the Revelstoke hospital by noon.

Tuesday hikers went in opposite directions to those of Monday. Ray, Ted, Susan W, Jenny, and Hans crossed the saddle into Squab Peak valley. They went up the toe of Hatteras Glacier seeking a way to the top. Around 11 a.m., accident Number Two happened. Jenny was about 20 minutes from the top of Hatteras. She moved off the snowfield to start scrambling over rock. When she grabbed hold of a rock, it dislodged, knocking her onto her stomach. As that rock tumbled past her it ripped open her left calf just back of the knee. Hikers in attendance tied clothing around the wound. They dispatched Ted to go back to camp for medical supplies, and to advise Mary B of their location. Upon returning to camp at 4 p.m. we developed a plan, at the same time Jenny appeared on the ridge using ice axes as crutches.

Wednesday morning, Jenny's calf looked like an uncooked chunk of meat. Having experience with GPS co-ordinates and the use of the emergency radio, the helicopter crew from Nelson was able to follow our directions. Jenny was on her way to the Nelson hospital by 11 a.m.

Later that afternoon, upon returning from hiking, Eric, Gerry, Elaine, Kal, Ted, Jane, Susan, and Ray enjoyed swimming in the small tarn above camp. Although our numbers were reduced to 17, those who remained continued to enjoy the camara-derie of camp. Jane led us in

evening campfire singsongs. Ted supplied us with steamy hot chocolate.

Thursday was a glorious, warm, sunny day. Without any need to summons a helicopter, we all got out hiking. And, without previous arrangement, 13 people ended up on the same ridge south of camp, to take in the view of the Hatteras Glacier.

That night we were treated to an incredible lightning show. Loud thunder reverberated in the basin below Sugarplum Spire. The storm lasted about an hour and a half and it swirled around the mountain tops from basin to basin. In the morning there was snow on the surrounding peaks, but that melted by noon.

Most hikers returned to their most favourite haunts. Eric, Susan, Suzanne T, Elaine, Polly, Don, Gerry, and Reid went into Squab Peak basin to play in the snow. Ted, Hans, Ray, Kal, Frank, Sonja, and Susan W headed off north of Sugarplum Spire.

Saturday's weather was super. Camp was dismantled and ready for shipment long before the helicopter arrived from Golden.

A flat tire greeted us at the vehicles. But, we were at the Meadow Creek pub (for the second consecutive year) by 3 p.m. Much to our pleasure, both Mary W, in a cast, and Jenny, on crutches, were at the pub to greet us and partake in the traditional Camp 3—MASH UNIT—party.

Oh yeah, about the bear. No, we didn't see any wildlife at Camp 3. People at Camp 1 and 2 scared them away. Old "Blondie" attended our pre-camp meeting near the Nelson campus of Selkirk College. The bear strolled onto the boulevard as though it was an invited guest and left only after Suzanne hollered, "bear, bear!"

Eric Ackerman, Jenny Baillie, Mary Baker, Suzanne Blewett (cook), Don Hagen, Reid Henderson (co-leader), Ted Ibrahim, Hans Korn, Gerry Larouche, Elaine Martin, Ray Newmar (co-leader), Polly Samoyloff, Kal Singh, Jane Steed, Susan Tosh, Frank & Sonya Ward, Susan Ward, Mary Woodward



Jill Watson photos



Ochre Peak

by Kim Kratky

Ochre (10,150' 3095m), one of the Horseshoe Peaks on the south side of Glacier Creek located some six kilometres south, southeast of Lady Macbeth, seems to hold a fascination for local climbers.

It was first climbed in 1971 by a party of Americans led by Jim Petroske, who made many first ascents in the West Kootenays. In those days the Glacier Creek road went up only some ten kilometres and was on the north side of the creek. The group would have crossed the Glacier Creek on a log (a sobering thought), bushwhacked up the drainage west of Ochre, ascended the West Truce Glacier, crossed a col somewhere between Squabble and Ochre, and climbed the peak via its south ridge.

I first had a look at Ochre in July 1978 when Fred Thiessen and I viewed it from Tranquility, another Horseshoe Peak, and guessed it might be unclimbed. Time passed and by the early 90s when the Glacier Creek road began to re-open, Ochre again became of interest to me.

Several parties attempted it from the west, as that side is easily visible and seemingly accessible from the main road. Andrew Port and Chad Johnson ascended the rubbly-looking west face to about 2740 metres just below the big step on Ochre's north ridge. There they were benighted, and because of fresh snow and low cloud, retreated to the east across from Horseshoe and Truce Glaciers to link up with the KMC climbing school for a ride back. Tim Rippel and Myke Hryniuk also attempted the peak. They travelled up the West Truce Glacier to ascend the rotten ridge southeast of Ochre, somewhere near Squabble Mountain, where they were turned back by wane of daylight. Then there were rumours of ascents. Someone told me Fred Thiessen and Peter Wood had done Ochre on skis. Not so. Another informed me that Armin

Hasenkox and party had done it by the Rippel/ Hryniuk approach. Not true, either. Armin's group retreated because of unstable snow on the steep upper West Truce Glacier.

For several years I pored over maps and discussed approaches with friends, but never attempted the peak. At one time I thought about approaching Ochre from the bottom of the Horseshoe Glacier, but examination from viewpoints farther north convinced me this would be, well, imprudent. Finally I decided to "just do it" from the south fork of Glacier Creek using the normal approach to Truce and Cauldron. Maybe this wouldn't be as exciting or as aesthetic as the other routes, but it seemed to stand a good chance of success.

At 4:50 a.m. on July 21, 1997, Peter Tchir and I depart from our car camp on the Glacier's south fork just below where the trail begins.

Clad in shorts and plastic boots, we carried a nine millimetre rope, and some rock gear since Petroske's account spoke of several leads of roped climbing on the south ridge. (*Canadian Alpine Journal* vol. 55, pp. 82) Following the usual west moraine route, we reached the edge of the Truce Glacier (9,250' 2820m) after 3 hours and 15 minutes, and roped up. We see a track leading off toward Cauldron which we surmise was Peter Bullock's path made a week or so before. Off we plod in a westerly direction toward the Quibble-Tranquility col (10,000' 3050m) which we reached at 9:15. After a snack, we descend a steep snow couloir for 100 metres, gingerly cross a snowed-in 'schrund and reach the Horseshoe Glacier itself. Ambling along in a north-westerly direction, we pass under the impressive rocky block of Squabble (10,000' 3050m) which we mark down for attention at a later date.

Nearing Ochre, we ascend some very steep snow with an even steeper and uglier run-out, we flop down in a

boulder pile 15 metres below the south ridge and just below the summit tower at 11:10 a.m. (6 hours 20 minutes up). We inspect the ochre-toned rock and decide the final bit will be an easy scramble on shattered rock with a snow patch in the middle. We also examine what we can see on Ochre's west face; the upper portion is a desert of crumbling red pinnacles set amid steep, loose aggregate—a truly ugly route. Below that the West Truce Glacier is a sea of broken ice for more than a kilometre. Dumping the rope, we complete the climb in an effortless 20 minutes, reaching the top at 11:50.

There is a cairn but no record, so we add our own with a note about Petroske's first ascent. We lounge for an hour in fine weather, speculating that ours might be only the second ascent.

On return, we cross the Horseshoe Glacier, enjoy fine views of the Egyptian Peaks, and meander up to the Toad-Quibble col (9,800' 2985m), passing over as easy filled-in bergschrund. This is recommended over the Quibble-Tranquility col, which later in the year and in low snow years might not give access to the Horseshoe Glacier. Descending onto the Truce Glacier, we pick up our tracks from the morning, enjoy a building thunderstorm on our way down the moraine, and return to the truck by 5:30. The mystique of Ochre has been dissolved in one physically hard but technically easy outing

Map references:

Duncan Lake 82K/7 1:50,000.
Ochre Peak south ridge (III, 4, s/g)
Ascent 6 hours, descent 5 1/2.

Kim Kratky, Peter Tchir

The Last Egyptian Peak

by Kim Kratky

Since 1991 Hamish Mutch and I have made a number of trips to peaks along the ridge separating the two terminal forks of Glacier Creek from Jumbo Creek, which runs from Mount Monica in the north to Bastille Mountain in the south. Most first ascents in these Egyptian Peaks were made in 1973 by Curt Wagner and John Jeglum (*Canadian Alpine Journal*, 1974), but new routes and especially traverses remained to be done. I should point out that none of these peaks are particularly difficult, they are fun and in a very scenic area.

After traversing Amen-Ra (1992) and Storus and Isis (1994), we put off the last and farthest south, Thoth, because it seemed less imposing. Then, about a year ago, I received a phone call from Hamie. He was a little miffed after reading an article in the 1994 *Canadian Alpine Journal* written by Peter Green who, in 1991, made the first ascent of Thoth with two friends and renamed it Horus.

Stung, and yet this is a minor peak of only 2720 metres, we decided to visit Horus with the goal of at least being the first to have traversed all the major bumps on the ridge. And so the week before Labour Day 1997, we decided against going to Mount Tyrell and turned our sights to the Egyptian Peaks. On Friday evening, August 29, we drove up Glacier Creek, past the ever-expanding Rainbow's End Ranch, and pitched our tent at the junction of the North and South Fork roads. The next morning we drove down to the Jumbo Pass Trail parking area and began hiking at 7 a.m. with the intention of traversing Horus from south to north. This was to be lightweight trip: nine millimetre rope, handful of Friends, leather boots, rock shoes, no ice axes. Following the thoroughly grubbed out trail that had been well-worn by save-Jumbo enthusiasts a few weeks before, we reached the Jumbo Pass cabin in two

hours and ten minutes. This was the weekend before the old shelter was razed, and we found it to be indeed fragile and rickety.

After a 30-minute photography break, we followed a trail north over a couple of hummocks to Mount Anubis by 10:30. This 2720 metre protuberant is little more than a bump, but it does have quite an extensive summit record going back to 1975. Beyond Anubis the trail gradually petered out, and a series of formidable-looking eruptions along the ridge ahead guarded the approach to the south side of Horus. Somewhat daunted we pressed onward, keeping to the west side and negotiating steep, grassy ledges and crumbly, slippery rock. The crux, if it can be called that, was 30 metres of eastward tilting slab with a heart-stopping run out down to Jumbo Creek. A quick inspection revealed a nice grassy crack that we sprinted up to reach more moderate terrain. Easy ledges then took us to the base of Horus's south ridge/face, and we began to see that success was likely. From this point to the summit, we scrambled over four or five rock towers on surprisingly good rock with maybe a few class 4 moves. Reaching the summit block at 12:45 (five hours and 45 minutes up), we found a cairn with no record. We added a note recognizing the first ascent party, checked the altimeter that read 362 metres, and lounged for 1 hour and 45 minutes in balmy weather. We decided that this was absolutely the best viewpoint in Glacier Creek. The map confirmed that we were at the apex of the whole area.

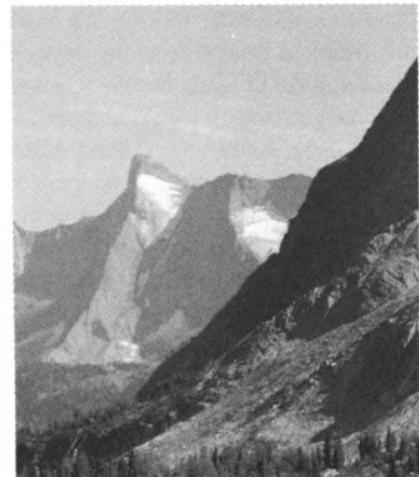
Finally at 2 p.m., we decided to head down the north ridge, which was the route of the first ascent party. This was composed of big solid blocks that reminded us of the north ridges of Amin-Ra, Storus, and Isis. Eventually we reached a big step we couldn't climb. We found some old blue rap sling bearing witness to another party's

decision. After an 18-metre rap, we continued down, boulder hopping to the 1493 metre col at the base of the north ridge. From there we swung southwest and traversed beneath Horus's west face across steep grass and unconsolidated scree until we reached a burn we had seen in the morning. This turned out to be the best of a bad lot as we thrashed our way down over deadfalls and through slide alder. Still, after 30 minutes of the bad stuff, we popped out onto the South Fork road only 100 metres north of our truck. By 5 p.m. we were back at Hamie's Bronco for a cold drink and a chat with a Dutch couple whose VW Combi parked nearby was blasting out Classical music. On the drive out, we ran into Peter Tchir's Blockhead Mountain party and stopped for pictures of our Egyptian Peaks glowing in the fading light.

Map references:

(265-796; all map references are to 82K/7 Duncan Lake 1:50,000)
Mount Hours (8950' 2720m)
S to N traverse (III S ridge is class 4;
N ridge is 5)
Coordinates 260-807
10 hours return

Kim Kratky, Hamish Mutch



Joan Grodzki photo

Mount Athabasca

(11,452' 3491m) by Kim Kratky

It is one of those mountains everyone wants to climb; it's big, and you can see it from the highway. Not just any highway, but the Icefields Parkway. Still, I have had such bad luck with weather in the Rockies that I have shied away from trips there. In fact, the subtitle for this article is "Kim Goes to the Rockies and Doesn't Get Rained or Snowed On." Truly, my success rate for Rockies' peaks over the last 20 years has hovered around 50 percent, and I can assure you that this is not because of the desperately-hard routes I've been attempting.

In August 1995, Paul Allen, Peter Tchir, and I made the long drive to attempt Athabasca, but as we sat in the Wilcox Creek Campground in the rain and watched the snow level descend alarmingly low, we knew failure was almost assured. The next day, we walked up the moraine to the base of the glacier in threatening weather. There we met a couple descending who had been turned back by incipient hypothermia, low cloud, and mushy snow. During our conversation, the rain began to fall, so we had no trouble making a decision.

Now it's the evening of August 23, 1997, and I'm sitting in the restaurant of the Alpine Club of Canada's (ACC) Lake Louise lodge with my family and the Perchie/LePage family. We have just returned from five sunny days of grace at Lake O'Hara, but the weather has changed to gray clouds and persistent drizzle. As arranged, Paul Allen arrives. He and I drive north on the Icefields Parkway in a steady rain to the aforementioned Wilcox Creek where we met the third member of our party, Peter Tchir, who has got us a campsite. To fortify our spirits, we take refuge in the cooking shelter and drink brandy. Once again, chances of success look slim.

Saturday morning we are up at 5:20 to be greeted by clear skies and chilly temperatures. Maybe we'll be lucky this

time. After a cold brekky, we drive to Sunwapta Pass and up the snow coach road before it is gated at 7 a.m. Starting at just seven, we head up the moraine trail on the edge of the Little Athabasca Glacier and reach the rope-up site in a heart thumping 53 minutes. Paul inquires, "what is this? KMC track team?" However, I do remember how fast he was on Mount Bonney two years before. Peter is in fine form, just two days ago he soloed the east ridge of Edith Cavell in ten hours. Observing that we have gained 2025 metres (from 550 to 2575), we strap on our crampons and head southeast across bare ice to reach the cattle track of the approach routes. We have decided on the Silverhorn, of which Dean Daughtery writes: "Somewhat steeper than the Normal Route and hence a little more challenging. An aesthetic route which is deservedly popular." (*Selected Alpine Climbs in the Canadian Rockies*, pp. 185) The snow is frozen so hard that we don't even rope until the base of the route. Before reaching that spot, we meet two guys from Boston coming down, whom we had seen earlier higher up on the tourist route. One says they turned back because of sloughing snow, but his partner says that altitude sickness defeated them. The first one tells us the Silverhorn would be safer "if you're up to it." We note their completely new gear and conclude that they are an inexperienced party.

We continue and reach a snow plateau at the base of the Silverhorn (3100m) two hours from the car. Here we snack, rope up, and admire two climbers on the north face. Our kit today is the bare minimum of nine-millimetre rope, ice axes, and no ice screws. Leading out with Paul keeping me on a short rope, I kind of swim across a bergschrund filled with soft snow; the ice axe goes right through like butter. Relieved to have negotiated that, I see the others across and head onto fairly steep bare ice and front-point up for about

45 metres, sometimes dislodging dinner-plate sized chunks of ice as I whack in the axe. From the bergschrund on, we continue roped, but without belays. Soon the slope eases and the material becomes more like very hard snow. Really perfect conditions. Making some zigzags to avoid 'schrunds, we continue up the face and top out on the Silverhorn at 3400 metres at 11 a.m. Here we change leads and Peter takes us the rest of the way to the narrow, long, flat ridge. On the summit by 11:45 (4 hours 40 minutes up), we linger for only 5 minutes, as fog or mist seems to be sweeping in from the southwest.

We retreat to the sub-peak of the Silverhorn for a 40 minute lunch and congratulations all around. I feel a tremendous sense of relief. To the south, the weather is now gloomier, but quite satisfactory above us. The view is majestic. Below us and to the south is the bare ice of the Saskatchewan Glacier; the north shows us Mount Alberta and Mount Kitchener. Right below us is the Columbia Icefields Chalet, from which people have probably studied our ascent with binoculars (disconcerting, but not unlikely); and to the southwest, not far away looms Mount Bryce. We contemplate making it more of an outing. We discuss going over to the A/A col and tackling Adromeda, but fresh snow on the rock and the thought of an extremely long day discourage us.

About 12:20 we head down the "tourist route" of broken rock, ice, and snow of the northeast ridge. At places, there is even a trail. From the col (3170m), Peter leads us wide left to avoid a bergschrund below, and then we diagonal down and east in soft, new snow under seracs to the junction of the "tourist" and harder route.

Here we meet two young guys, one from Edmonton and the other from Toronto who seem to have lost their will-power. We give them a pep talk, and as

...continued on p. 26

Chilkoot Adventure

story & photos by Pamela Jenkins

Part of the Chilkoot adventure is getting there—and back later. I traveled from Vernon with five other hikers. Interesting stops en route included watching the Indians gaff salmon jumping the falls at Moricetown on the Balkley River, visiting the reconstructed Indian village at 'Ksan, and looking at old totem poles at Kitwanga and Kitwancool.

We finally reached Skagway, scene of a massive stampede 100 years ago when evidence of gold strikes near Dawson City reached America. Steamships had left San Francisco, Seattle, and Vancouver for Skagway. Gold seekers still had over 800 kilometres to travel north to the Klondike gold fields near Dawson City. The first obstacle was the Coast Mountains. Some gold seek-

trail joined an old wagon road. Our first camp spot was Finnegan's Point, which is still in the rain forest and has lovely views of the Irene Glacier.

The next day we lugged our packs across a footbridge to explore Canyon City. A sign warns hikers not to leave their packs unattended because of bears and other predators. We saw remains of an old rusted stove, pots,



Travelling the Stewart Cassiar highway north of Hazelton, we were able to take time out to see the Bear Glacier which is near the road to Stewart, hike in the Stikine Canyon, and visit Telegraph Creek.

At Watson Lake we added our hastily painted sign to the Signpost Forest and enjoyed the renovated historic town of Carcross (short for Caribou crossing). Many tourists dressed in elegant clothes were on tour bus day trips from the cruise ships at Skagway. They seemed most out of place in the middle of nowhere.

ers used an old Indian trading route over the Chilkoot Pass, others used a longer lower route over White Pass where a railway was built to bring in more of the prosperous gold seekers. The road follows their route.

From Skagway we took a minibus to the trail head at Dyea, which is about 24 kilometres further along the inlet. We first had to check with Skagway customs before setting out mid-afternoon. In a few places the Chilkoot Trail is an easy hike. We were surprised to find a steep uphill climb over the tangled roots of the wet coastal rain forest before the

and a boiler engine. Pleasant camp, further along the trail, is closed to camping, but it did make a pleasant spot to have lunch. Another few hours of hiking the trail took us to Sheep camp. Here both the Alaskan and the BC National Park wardens advised us of how necessary it would be to get a very early start. We had breakfast, packed out tents and were on the trail by 6 a.m. The terrain changes rapidly from the boreal forest and low underbrush to moraine flats and steep boulder fields. During the gold rush years, at the Scales before the last ascent,



gold miners were required to have approximately "two tons" of provisions before being allowed into Canada. There had been many cases of starvation reported en route to the gold fields. The rocks are littered with historic debris such as cables, pulleys, wheels, and other assorted items.

From the Scales, the route ascends the Three Golden Stairs and if they were covered by snow this would have been a tough monotonous slog. The route through the boulders was marked by red poles. I stumbled from one pole to the next wondering how the others were faring. An American border monument sits near the summit and the skeletal remains of a few boats are not far away. There is still some more rock scrambling before reaching the Canadian Warden Station and the shelter just beyond the summit. We were greeted by spectacular views of a clear blue Crater Lake nested in a bowl of orange with glaciers above. Tea was made for each person as they arrived. The artifacts and remnants from the gold rush days that are scattered throughout the 50 kilometre route makes it a very long museum. Piles of old lumber indicate places where there had been a cable system to haul supplies.

It was late afternoon before we descended the "monorocks" to Crater Lake and on to Happy camp, which is another level below Crater Lake. Happy camp is a bleak spot on a bench above a creek bed where the wind

howls. Fortunately we got our tents set up just before dark and were able to use the cooking shelter to prepare our evening meal.

The trail continued through a variety of alpine terrain before descending to the next attractive campsite at Deep Lake, which was just about tree line. We saw two caribou above the lake, and while eating lunch we spotted Dall sheep in the surrounding hills. Most of the glaciers are now hidden from view.

Our last night of camping was at Bare Loon Lake which was appropriately named. On the hike out we passed Lindemann City where Parks Canada have reconstructed a tent city to show what it would have been like. There were old photos of feverish boat building activities during the winter months. Gold seekers left as soon as the ice was off the lake for their 800 kilometre journey north by waterways to the Klondike gold fields.

The trail climbs to another summit above the lake and finally crosses a mini desert, a final obstacle before reaching Bennett, which was another site of boat building activities. The ladies skinny dipped in Bennett Lake before joining tourist crowds from the cruise ship's excursion train to look at the old church (which had been used for only one season and has remained empty ever since), and other displays at the train station. An old steam engine number "73" had been activated for this last trip of the season. Professional photogra-

phers were aboard. The train stopped and started then backed up for the photographs. Hikers put their packs on a flat deck and had the first carriage next to the engine which was reserved for them, otherwise all would have had to walk several miles along the tracks back to Log Cabin where the railway crosses the highway. There is a branch trail to Log Cabin which leaves the main route soon after Lindermann City. The train's brakes overheated on the long descent causing much concern for cruise ship passengers and those who had helicopter, plane, or bus connections. Our group spent an unscheduled night at a hostel in Skagway.

The five day return trip included a night in Whitehorse and a visit to "The Follies" complete with comedy and can-can girls. We drove the Alaskan highway with stops to see the northern lights in Watson Lake, a soak to ease achy bones at Liard Hot Springs—some of which had been closed off because of a recent bear attack. In Stone Mountain Park, sheep of the same name stood by the highway waiting to be photographed, although, they did not allow us to get too close. We crossed the Peace River, admired wood carvings at Chetwynd and spent a last night in Quesnel.

Horst Bielfeld (leader), Rita Haaheim, Margaret Hubble, Pamela Jenkins, Laverne Kinney, Sharon Reid, Merv Watson

September and Coppermine Mountains

story & photo by Fred Thiessen

Although not really mountains in the sense of what we call mountains, we were travelling in Nunavut and since none of us had hiked in the western Arctic, we felt obliged to get some lower body exercise and get above the river for a view of the landscape.

These mountains were not easy to get to. We had already been canoeing on the Coppermine River for two weeks, which was preceded by a one-hour plane flight north of Yellowknife, and before that, a two-day drive from Nelson.

How was it we came to climb in these mountains? Well, in going for a hike south of Rocky Defile, a major rapid on the Coppermine River, we were high enough on the plateau to spot some higher hills to the north. We speculated that they would be worthy of exploration, and maybe we could find some native copper as well. It was a cool, rainy day as we canoeed north on the river from Rocky Defile. Right where the river turned eastward, we

were between the Coppermine Mountains to the south and the September Mountains to the north. We camped on the south side of the river opposite Stony Creek. We still felt that hills would have been a better description for these mountains. Although they were the highest points in this part of the world, mountains make them sound more impressive than they really were, but they were 450 metres higher than the river at 200 metres which was where we camped.

The next day, after a leisurely breakfast, we set off through the spruce forest and reached the alpine in a few minutes (a novel experience). From there it was a gentle two and a half an hour walk in the alpine to the northern summit of the September Mountains. The weather on top was similar to most mountains in cloudy conditions—cool, drizzly, and windy—we were grateful for our rainwear. The clouds were above us, so we had good views of the river. A confused caribou was also visiting the Coppermine Mountains. The

descent was uneventful and we reached camp before dinner.

The next morning was clear and cool, we ferried (north) across the river and ascended Stony Creek for about two kilometres, then followed caribou trails to a summit at the south end of the Coppermine Mountains. We wanted to continue north, but it was muskeg and we wanted to keep our feet dry. We descended the mountain on a series of lava flows, had a nap, enjoyed the views up and down the river, collected mushrooms, then headed back to the canoes.

Two very pleasant days in the hills (mountains) of the western Arctic and an excuse to work our lower body instead of our upper body. It was a pleasant break from canoeing, and the mushrooms made for good eating. The only native copper we saw was in the museum in Yellowknife.

George Apel, Dave Kennedy, Peter Macek, Bert Port, Fred Thiessen, George White



Mount Whitney

story & photo by Dave Adams

To our surprise, upon sweeping the horizon with my level, there appeared four peaks: two that were equal in height with us, and two even higher. That which looked the highest was a cleanly cut helmet of granite and it was on the same ridge as Mount Tyndall. It lay about ten kilometres south. Fronting the desert with a bold square bluff, it rises to the crest of the peak where a white fold of snow trims it gracefully.

"Mount Whitney, as we called it in honour of our chief, is probably the highest land within the United States. Its summit looked glorious, but inaccessible." Clarence King (of the US Geological Survey) wrote those words in July 1864 after reaching the summit of Mount Tyndall. Now hundreds of people reach the summit of Mount Whitney each year by routes varying from a rugged trail to hard rock climbing.

Early in 1997 I applied for a permit to climb the mountain and was given four days in September. So, on September 5, Carol Potasnyk and I left Trail to begin the long 1850-kilometre drive to Lone Pine in Owen's Valley, California. The trailhead is near the Portal Camp Ground (about 2438m), so we set up camp there for the night and organized our gear for the climb. The next morning we slowly climbed the trail past Lone Pine Lake and Mirror Lake, to the trail camp at 3679 metres. It took us about five hours. The

scenery is spectacular with great views into the semi-desert down the Owen's Valley. We set up our bivy camp and prepared for a summit bid.

The next morning was very cloudy and thunder was forecast for the afternoon. We got away at 8:10 and made our way up to the ridge (about 4115m). We felt the full force of the southwest wind as we got to the ridge crest; there we put on our jackets and wind pants. The ridge is quite sharp and has lots of gendarmes. The route drops down about 153 metres on the west side—we didn't look forward to this on the way back!

We found a sheltered spot and had some lunch. We each took a couple of aspirins as a prophylactic against altitude sickness. The route continues on the west side of the ridge for about a third of a kilometre then zigzags up to the summit. There are great views through the "windows" (gaps in the ridge). We arrived at noon and the views were great all around, despite the ominous clouds at times.

We spent about an hour on the summit, had lunch, and chatted with the people. All in all we didn't feel too bad—just a slight headache.

Shortly after setting off down we had a shower of hailstones, but it was not too serious. We were both going well until we climbed back to the ridge crest. At that point I developed quite a headache. We continued down at a good rate and

reached our camp three hours after leaving the summit. The wind was roaring through. My headache was quite severe now, so I took two more aspirins and lay down while Carol made some soup. We both went to bed early as the wind was blowing really hard across our campsite. Sleep was difficult. We figured the wind must have been gusting to about 95 kilometers per hour. We spent the night waiting for dawn and wishing we had carried a tent. At 5 a.m. we decided to pack up and head down to find a more sheltered place for breakfast.

I was feeling well again. We used headlamps until dawn came with its incredible colours lighting the pinnacles on the ridge. The wind was blowing really hard—glad we got to the summit yesterday. Mirror Lake had whitecaps rolling across the surface. At 'Meadows' we found a sufficiently sheltered place to get the stove going to make breakfast. After eating we continued on down, although we made a short detour to check out Lone Pine Lake. It's a pretty place and would make a wonderful campsite. By now we were out of the wind so we removed a couple of layers of clothing. The last mile to the truck was warm and sunny.

That evening we found a campsite at Dias Lake where we got cleaned up and had a swim.

Dave Adams, Carol Potasnyk



Unofficial KMC 1997 Ski Trip or “Les Clients d’Enfer”

Every year, around August or September a mysterious entity, known only as “the committee,” sends a notice around that appears on the e-mail, or gets slipped under one’s door. Despite its ominous appearance, it is not to be feared. The note usually tells you that you have been selected to participate in the annual ski trip, and it gives a date, destination, and a price. Although most people invited are members of the KMC, the most important attribute one needs to have to keep in good with “the committee” is paying the stated price on time.

Arranged in the summer of 1996, the 1997 ski trip was to Selkirk Lodge. This lodge is at the Albert Icefields in the Selkirk Mountains, east of Revelstoke. It sits at an elevation of 2200 metres. Because I bestowed upon him, the appropriate amount of praise, a famous guide who worked there in the winter of 1997, agreed to tell you about our week at Selkirk Lodge.

Allo mes amis,

Those who have met me will know how wonderful I am. I am an ACMG certified guide.¹ I know more about the mountains and skiing than any KMC member could ever hope to know. Sometimes people just do not appreciate how wonderful I really am. I want

to tell you about such people. This was a group that visited our lodge March of 1997. I refer to them as les clients d’enfer.

None of the members of this group were a particular threat to my great ego, with the possible exception of one. I

bestowed upon him the privilege of carrying the rescue rope, hoping that it would be sufficiently heavy to slow him down. When he had proven himself worthy of carrying my rope, I even permitted him to break trail for a short period. However, not wanting to be



Peter Jordon photo



Peter Jordon photo

seen as weak by the other members of the party, I made a point of sprinting past him when the rest of the group came into view.

This group had the nerve to expect some input as to the destination for the day. What was in their minds to make them think that they could possibly have any idea of where they would enjoy skiing? I would pay them the courtesy of shutting off their music before making my pronouncement of the departure time and destination so that it would be perfectly clear what I planned for them. In exchange for this courtesy they provided me with budgie seed bars for my lunches! What nerve! Nothing less than the finest Swiss chocolate would be suitable for my exquisite palate. Perhaps people from the West Kootenays are boors.

I was beginning to think that perhaps it was me that this group did not like. They seemed to enjoy the company of my underling, the assistant guide.

However, I heard grumbling about the hut custodian too. Imagine being offended by a custodian who chased the clients around with a broom, brushing the snow off them. She ran a scrupulously clean kitchen. How could anyone be offended by her chasing the clients around with a bottle of bleach and jumping for every kitchen crumb before it hit the floor? They even referred to her as the Kitchen Nazi! What did these people find so offensive by her taking such pleasure in igniting the propane toilet? (The final solution to the turd problem?)

Out on the mountain, this group was certainly recalcitrant. They certainly had no idea of how serious the avalanche hazard was. I chose the best lines on open slopes, and the impudent Albertan² asked why they could not return to ski in the glades. Such audacity! After one member, who was skiing much too fast, almost flew over a ten metre cliff, he had the nerve to take is-

sue with me that I should warn him of such obstacles. Is it my problem that he does not understand the meaning of my Gaullic shrugs and sneers?

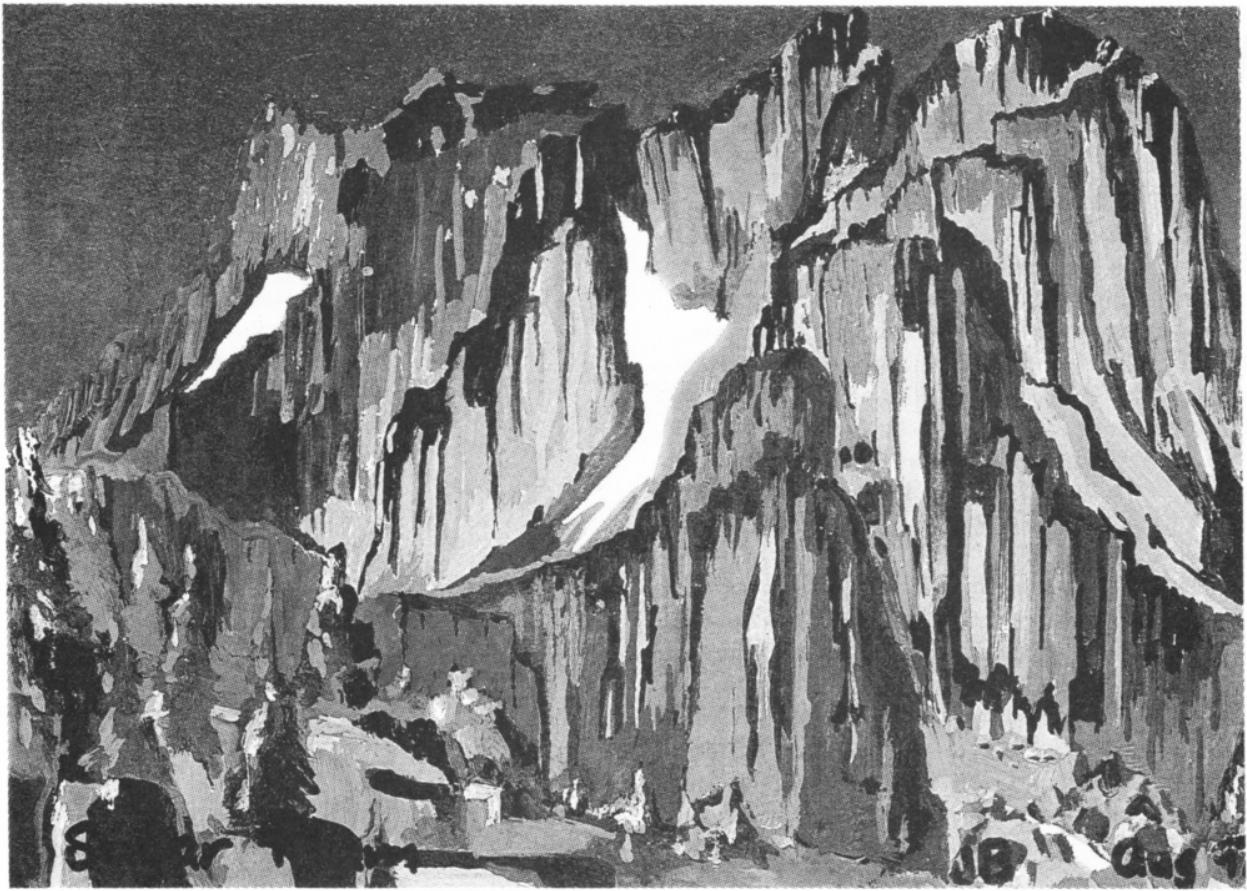
Others in the party carried packs that were too big. It is the duty of their guide to take care of them. It was offensive to see that these skiers were prepared to take care of any contingencies themselves. When one skis with a guide, especially one as wonderful as I, one must submit to my superiority.

I hope I never have the displeasure of guiding these malcontents again. I paid them a great favour by writing them a letter to tell them so.

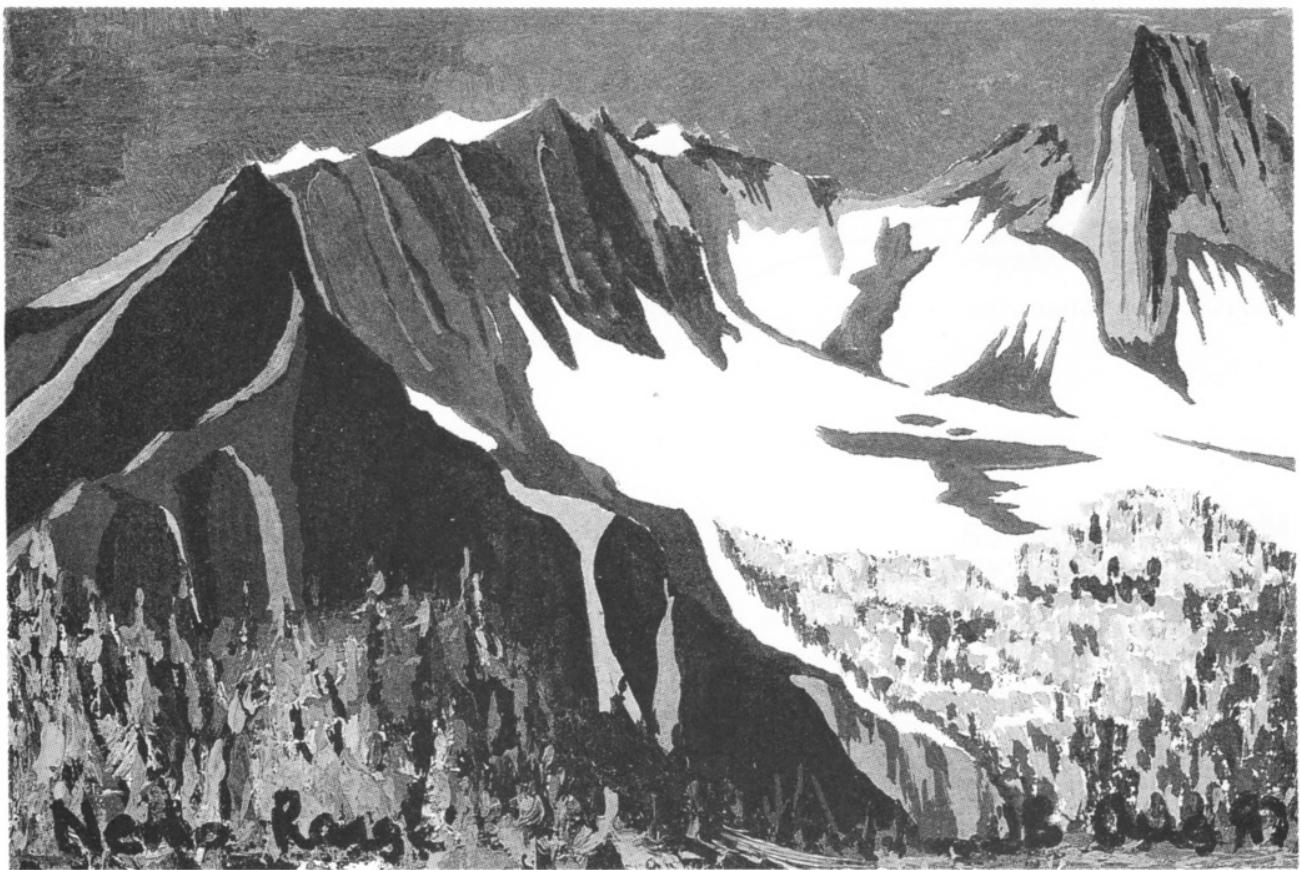
A bien tot,
Monsieur Manifique AMCG

1 Any resemblance to persons living or dead is purely intentional.

2 Ex-Albertan at present.



'97 Hiking Camp Black and White reproduction of Water Colors by Jenny Baillie



Mistmaidens

by Muriel Walton

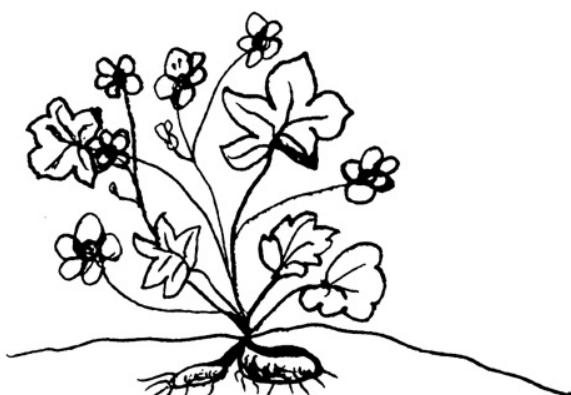
Mistmaiden is one of our most beautiful tiny alpine rock plants. Climbing a high mountain summit, you may reach for a handhold on a damp shaded rock ledge and feel a tiny low perennial with a compact tuft of long-stalked basil-like leaves. Drops of spray from melting snow often cling to the bright green kidney-shaped blades with lobed edges. Delicate white blossoms with vivid yellow throats will catch your eye and invite a second look. It seems incredible that such perfect five-petal flowers can appear in such dark, wet, wind-swept rock crevices far above timberline.

Although you may have to search several books to find a good description, and some of our wildflower guides omit them altogether, this little maiden can be found in mist niches on mountain ranges throughout British Columbia.

Sitka Mistmaidens have as their Latin name *Romanzoffia Sitchensis* and are sometimes called Cliff Romanzoffia. A second species of *Romanzoffia* Mistmaiden



White Sitka Mistmaiden



Soft Pink Tracy's Mistmaiden

with wooly brown tubers and soft pink flowers known as Tracy's is found in the Kootenay Mountains. A Russian patron of botany, Count Nikolai Romazoff (1745-1826), is honoured by this genus of four beautiful species, as well as by an orchid.

Although we see Tracy's Mistmaiden clothed in pink only at dizzying heights here in the Kootenays. If you're hiking the West Coast Trail, you may find a shaded cave with sea foam pounding in. There in the mist, the foliage tufts and bright white faces of Tracy's Mistmaidens may appear to surprise you. Yes, they do grow at sea level all along the coast, and yes there are white there.

Mount Athabasca ...continued from p.18

we descend are pleased to see them head up the Silverhorn route making good time. Farther down, we encounter many solo and duo climbers heading up. All of who were seemingly intent on the north ridge. It feels odd to be in such a populated mountain envi-

ronment. By 2:40 we have reached the car park, finishing what has been less than an eight-hour day. It has been a new experience for me: an outing in the Rockies in very good weather with the route in perfect conditions. In a fit of optimism, we thumb through the guide-

book looking for another "highway" peak and decide we'll do Mount Chephren the next year.

Paul Allen, Kim Kratky, Peter Tchir

A Snowmelt Paradox

by Norman Thyer

We usually associate the spring thaw and the rapid disappearance of the winter's snow with warm, sunny weather. However, the greatest melting on high snow-fields and glaciers in summer occurs in cloudy weather. Why is this?

It is mainly a matter of radiation. As Fred Thiessen mentioned in his article on "Firnspiegel" (*KMC Newsletter*, February 1988), all objects emit electromagnetic radiation. However, both the quality and the quantity of radiation depend on the temperature of the object and the nature of its surface.

We can show this by switching on an electric hotplate in a dark room. Soon after, we can feel the warmth being radiated even though we can't see anything. As the plate becomes hotter, we feel more heat and we also begin to see it glow—first a dull red, then a brighter red, then orange. The same process happens in an incandescent light bulb where the filament becomes so hot that it glows yellow or white.

From this we see (or feel) that a hot object emits more radiation than a cool one. When the hotplate was first switched on, it emitted invisible long-wave radiation (infrared), but as it heated up, the radiation began to include visible light of a shorter wavelength. As its temperature increased, the predominate wavelength gets even shorter, resulting in the perceived colour change from red to orange to yellow. However, infrared continues to be emitted.

If you stand in front of an open refrigerator, it feels as if "cold" is being emitted rather than "heat." Nevertheless the refrigerator is emitting heat. You feel cold because you emit more heat than the fridge. You emit more than you receive.

The amount of heat radiated from an object depends on the characteristics of its surface. There is an upper limit to the energy that can be radiated at a given temperature. Also a surface that is a good emitter at a given wavelength



Jill Watson photo

is also a good absorber at that wavelength. If a surface is a perfect emitter at the wavelengths of visible light, it will also be a perfect absorber and will appear black. Consequently an object that is a perfect emitter and absorber of radiation of a given wavelength is said to be a "black body" for that wavelength regardless of whether it falls within the visible spectrum.

Having had our physics lesson, let us now consider snow.

Consider clear, cloudless weather over a glacier in the summer during the day. The sun is hot, surface temperatures are around 6000°C, and so much of its emitted radiation is visible light, very little of which is absorbed as it passes through the atmosphere. Snow is white, which means that the incoming light is reflected, not absorbed. Therefore clean snow is not heated significantly by the sun. And even though the snow is cold, it still emits radiation in the infrared region. However, it has an interesting property. While it is a very bad absorber and emitter for visible light, it is practically a "black body" for infrared radiation of wavelengths greater than one micron. It emits its small amount of infrared very efficiently, and in the absence of cloud or sig-

nificant amounts of greenhouse gases—water vapour or carbon dioxide—this infrared radiation escapes into outer space. Hence, the snow is not warmed or melted greatly by radiation, except to a small extent by solar infrared.

At night, even the incoming solar infrared is absent, the snow can radiate into space just as it does in the day. So unless the adjacent air is noticeably warm, an icy crust forms on the snow at sunset.

Now we consider cloudy weather. During the day, a layer of cloud reflects much of the incoming sunlight, although some still gets through. The snow still emits long-wave radiation, but now the cloud intercepts and absorbs it. Also, the cloud itself emits long-wave radiation, which the snow absorbs more efficiently than the sun's visible radiation. If the cloud is warmer than the snow surface, which could well be so in summer if the cloud is low, then the snow could receive more radiation from the cloud than it emits, and so melting proceeds. Moreover, this process continues at night apart from the solar radiation. Hence one can get a continuous thaw, without the nighttime freeze.



