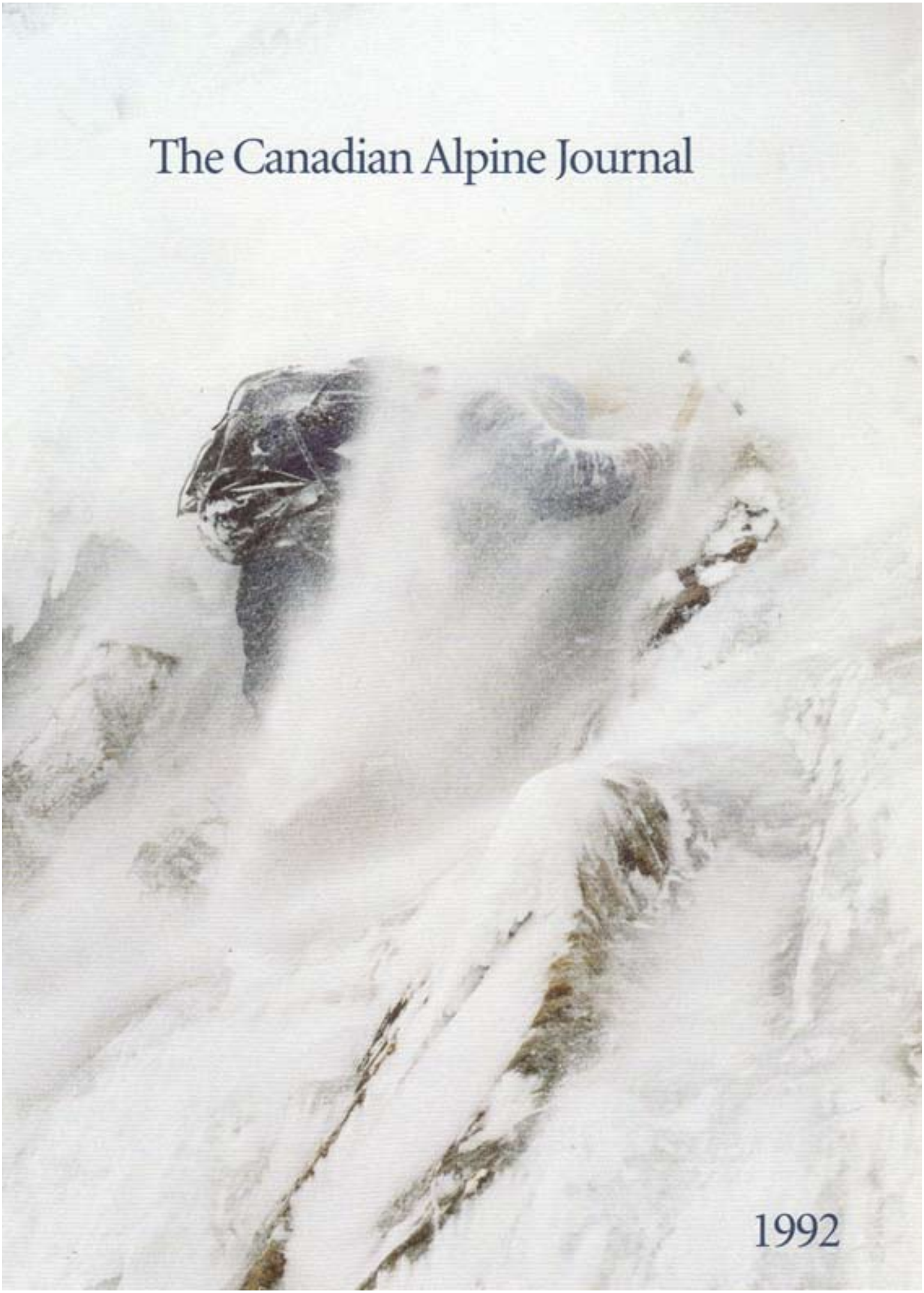
The Canadian Alpine Journal



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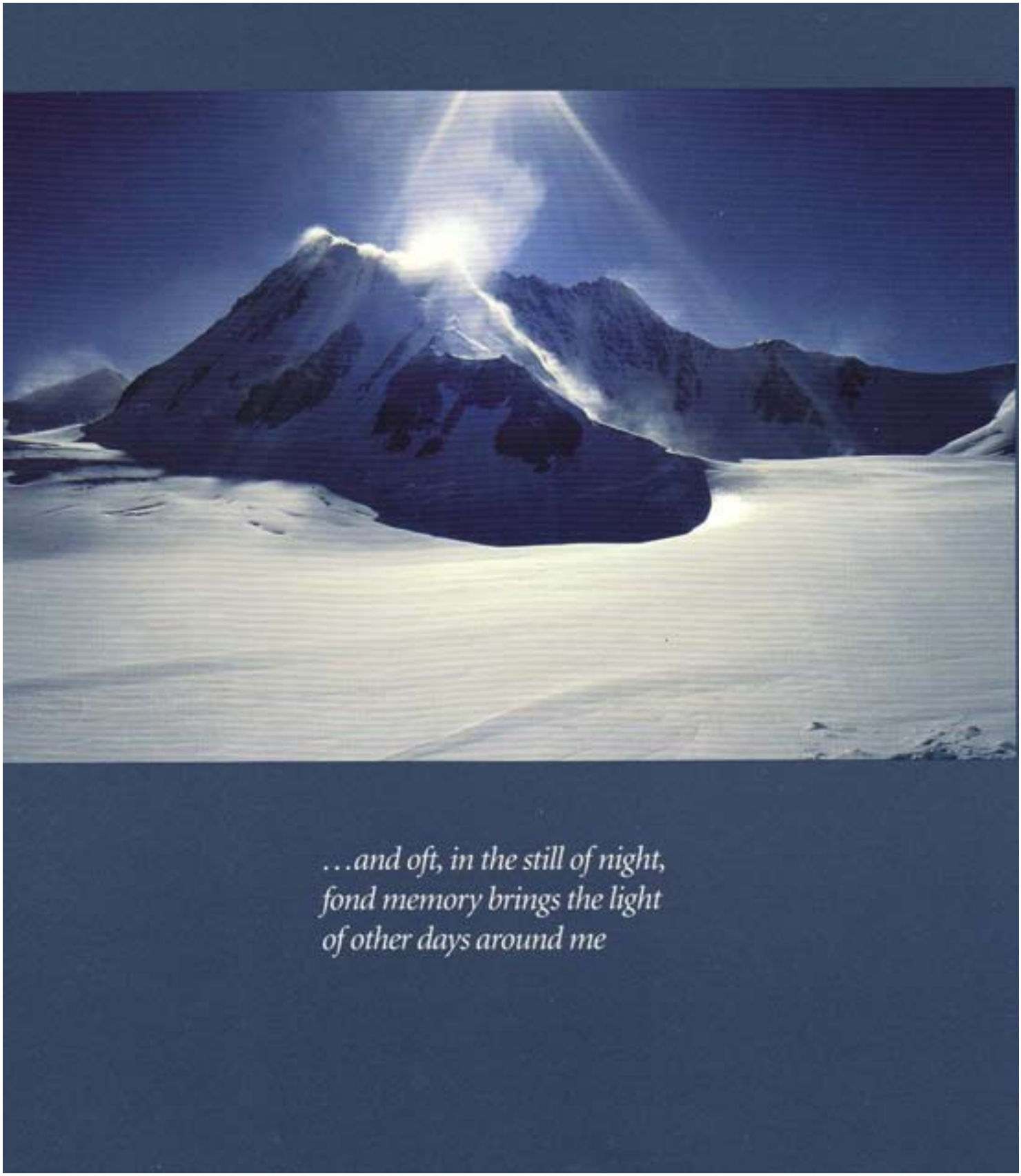

Cover: Moe Jzaing wishing he'd remembered to put up his hood and close his zippers. (Glen DePaoli)

Inside Front Cover: Looking southwest from the uppermost bowl of the South Arm of the Kaskawulsh Glacier toward Pt. 3590m, a typical unclimbed peak in the St. Elias Mountains. (Roger Wallis)

Back Cover: Sunrise from high on Mt. Judge Howay (Kobus Barnard)

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Instructions to contributors

Submissions to the Canadian Alpine Journal are welcome in either French or English. If you type or hand-write your submission, make sure it's double-spaced and legible; if you want to make things easy for us, put it on disk in any common Macintosh or dos format (and include a hard copy).

Photos should take the form of color transparencies or prints from negatives. If you send prints (either color or B&W) then please also include the neg¬atives.

Please do not send duplicate slides, or prints made from slides.

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Farewell and thanks...

Editing this Journal for the last six years has not been easy, but sustaining me through the times of frustration there has always been the reward of meeting, working, and climbing with some of the most wonderful people anywhere.

This is my last Journal, but before I take my leave I want to make sure you understand that in addition to what you've given to the Canadian Alpine Journal -you who have contributed your articles and photographs, your time and energy - you have also given something to me.

I have always felt that friendship is the only true wealth, and as I get up from this editor's chair for the last time I feel wealthy beyond measure.

Thank you all.

— David Harris

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1992 Keynote:

On getting off the mountain

A few thoughts following the first ascent of the west ridge of Mount McArthur (May 25-26,1991; Michael Down, Jim Haberl, and Don Serl)

I had what some of you might call an adventure last spring, and I've been puzzling over what (in fact, if) I should write about it pretty much ever since. This wasn't just an ordinary adventure -the new route, hard peak, first ascent kinda thing — no, this was a bit of a different tale. This was about getting killed. This was about getting sacked by the mountain so hard that you just never came down again. Not me, not Mikey, not Jim, nobody - never.

So, fair enough, but what do you write about something like that. Simple declamation of the goings on would likely be most tedious. You could spill your guts about the fear and the angst and the sorrow and all that, but that's way too... way too... meaningful, maybe? D'you know what I mean? It's just way too pop-psychology, way too selfish, y'know? The way we all concentrate on people's reactions to an event, rather than the event itself. Rather than trying to understand, we go for the titillation. Rather than good or bad, it's how you feel. And seeing that the event in question was my potential demise, I plainly would have been less than overjoyed about it, and that seemed about as far as one could usefully get with that line of thinking without becoming disgustingly maudlin and turning oneself into a spectacle.

Or the events could be used as a springboard, from which to spin off into imaginary endings, to lead the reader into a world of surprises, to startle, to puzzle. I imagined several endings, two or three of which could easily be worked into one piece, most including my death. 'Twould be fun to read, wouldn't it! But it's almost as much fun to imagine, and it'd be a hell of a lot of hard work to write (believe me — I chipped away at a couple of versions), and it'd miss the point anyway. Which is this:

Don't get smug. We got smug. We had big plans in our heads for climbs after this route, and we forgot to think clearly about exactly what it was that we were up against on the only route that really counted, the route in front of our faces.

And remember your lessons. Like, (this is primary school...) watch out about going too high, too fast. We'd all been to 20 thou a bunch of times, no sweat, and we just blew it big time on this 14 thousander. Doesn't take a genius: day one, fly in to 8; day two, climb to 11 and a half; day three, cross the top at 14 and get down to about 13. Too high, too fast! No problem if you cruise off the following day, but if the weather makes it easier to fly than to walk for the next 3 days, you could be in trouble. Especially if someone happens to develop pulmonary edema while you're pinned down. Which, as it happens, is just as it happened.

So, d'you know what I think? I think that if we'd have been just the teeeenyist bit less lucky, if the edema hadn't stabilized for God knows what reason for 48 hours, and if the storm hadn't broken on the fourth morning, then I think it's really likely there'd be bodies in snowbanks somewhere on that mountain right now. I mean, what are y'gonna do, just sit in the tent and watch your buddy die? Not likely, huh? But the chances of getting a debilitated person very far in that storm were infinitesimal, and the chances of surviving yourself, once you'd left the shelter of the tents, were not much better. "Something to think about," to quote James.

But luck was with us, and we did get off the mountain, and I did live to write this missive, and all I need to say now is that there was a final lesson from the hill: take the old, tired, overworked noun "love", and try to make it a verb every day. Enjoy the company of those around you. Get in deep with those you love. Smile while you work. Be nice to people. Think. Climb. Tell others. I'm not really so hot at it myself, but I'm getting by, and I pay sporadic attention to getting better. Work at it a bit yourself, 'cause one Spring or another, sooner or later, each and every one of us is gonna end up dead. And then it's just plain too late. The chance is gone. And it'd be a hell of a shame to depart this orb without enriching other's lives, and being enriched by them. Just a hell of a shame!

— Don Serl

The St. Elias Mountains

A Preliminary Survey of the Unclimbed Peaks over 3600m

Roger Wallis

Introduction

The accompanying table is an attempt to answer the question, "which are the highest unclimbed peaks in the St. Elias Mountains?". The beneficial results of researching this seemingly innocuous question were a review of the thirty 1:50,000 scale topographic maps that cover the St. Elias Mountains, and an enthralling meander through more than one hundred years of mountain epic and exploration. Nearing the conclusion I was almost more bewildered than at the outset, but the reward was the realization of the immensity of the remaining opportunities for both 'average' and 'leading-edge' mountaineers. There are innumerable possibilities for first ascents of peaks of 3000-4000m elevation (and potentially even to 4800m), and unclimbed ridges and faces are abundant on all but a very few mountains.

Who Climbed What and When?

The starting point for any study of the historical record of mountaineering in the St. Elias Mountains is Walter Wood's comprehensive 1967 document A History of Mountaineering in the St. Elias Mountains. This covers almost everything one needs to know, at least into 1966, especially for peaks over 4000m. But since Wood's account, no further compendia have been published.

The wide-ranging activities of the almost 300 members of the 1967 Yukon Alpine Centenary Expedition is lucidly presented in Expedition Yukon (M. Fisher, editor, 1972). A review of mountaineering history and philosophy in the overall Alaska/Yukon setting is given in a series of three articles by Terris Moore and Ken Andrasko in the Alpine Journal (AJ) 1976,1978 and 1979. A more prosaic but practical article, specifically on the St. Elias Mountains, is by Trevor Jones, Jon Jones and Chic Scott in Mountain, No. 65,1979. Walter Wood updated and abridged his classic 1967 history as a chapter in the comprehensive volume, Kluane, Pinnacle of the Yukon (J.B. Theberge, editor, 1980). This study of the St. Elias, which includes a chapter by Monty Alford describing "Climbing in the Kluane Ranges" also contains information on glaciology and glacial history, weather and climate, mountain aviation. These are the 1500-3000m peaks that form the frontal range so dominant whilst traveling along the Alaska Highway.

The most useful recent reference is the 1984 edition of The Organization of an Alaskan Expedition by Boyd N. Everett, Jr., published by Gorak Books. This is a superb source of information, though Everett fails to mention the existence of two major >4000m peaks, Mt. Macaulay and Avalanche Peak, and the concluding table of mountains and routes contains numerous errors.

Other than these volumes the prime data sources are the Canadian Alpine Journal (CAJ) and the American Alpine Journal (AAJ). Further relevant information lies in other mountaineering journals, not all of which I could locate, but it is clear from correspondence that much St. Elias mountaineering history is unrecorded even in these. The ultimate sources of information since the early 1970s are the climbing descriptions submitted by departing St. Elias mountaineers to Parks Canada; however, some of these can be politely classified as "eccentrically haphazard"!

How high is a St. Elias mountain?

The St. Elias Mountains are quite well covered by topographic maps. There is both Canadian and uses coverage, at a number of scales (1:250,000; 1:125,000; 1:63,360; and 1:50,000 - see Index Map 2), so establishing heights should not be a problem. However, even a quick perusal of the literature and of the various editions of the maps reveals a number of discrepancies. These are due to variations in methodology, to the history and sequence of the different surveys, and to the sheer difficulty of the terrain.

Surveying of the St. Elias mountains began in the 1890s (Wood, AAJ 1975, p.13-16) when work in 1892 by the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey established the height of Mt. St. Elias at 5489m. The mountaineering parties of Prof. I.C. Russell (1890-91) and the Duke of Abruzzi (1897) extended the coastal surveys inland during the initial exploration and the ascent of Mt. St. Elias, and the coincident discoveries of Mt. Logan and the other major peaks of the Icefield Ranges.

During 1912-1913 the surveyors of the International Boundary Commission explored their way through the entire St. Elias range and while doing so climbed Mt. Natazhat (4095m) and reached >4800m on the NW shoulder of Mt. St. Elias. However, as the Boundary Surveyors had entered the Icefield Ranges from the north, their surveys were never tied in to the sea-level datum established by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. This omission resulted in some height discrepancies that still remain.

A classic example of the physical difficulties of completing these topographic surveys is quietly understated in a Bradford Washburn article (AAJ 1966) describing a 1965 program involving three Governments, five Survey Agencies and University departments, three Air Forces, helicopters, planes and more than 20 people all working to tie the Yukon and Alaska triangulation grids together. They were blessed with four clear days in two and a half months!

Later refinements were the results of individual surveys, such as Bradford Washburn's 1935 Expedition, sponsored by the National Geographic Society. Washburn's group not only carried out detailed topographic surveys but also completed the first comprehensive aerial photographic coverage (Wood, 1967; AAJ, 1936).

Aerial photography became, and continues to be, the basis of the modern series of topographic maps. Comprehensive flying was begun by the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1951 (Theberge, 1980) and has been continued by numerous agencies. Stereographic vertical photographs are one of the most useful guides for mountaineering and ski touring in the St. Elias.

One should note that between the various editions of the 1:250,000 map interesting changes occur to major topographic features. For example, between 1967 and 1991 substantive glaciological evolution took place: the Lowell is now the Dusty, the South Lowell is the Lowell and the upper Dusty is no more. And be aware that McArthur Peak has moved 5km west. You can become lost in the literature as well as on the ground!

In conclusion, due to the variety of surveying methods, and periodic readjustment of both the datum and spheroid, most heights should be given at least a +20m error bar.

Some Possibilities

The accompanying table demonstrates the mountaineering potential remaining in the St. Elias Range. Unclimbed peaks abound; complex major peaks with numerous ridges and faces have only one or two routes; major mountains have not been traversed. These opportunities are not only for "expert" climbers but many are suitable for experienced mountaineers with more moderate aspirations.

In the following list of suggestions, the big five (Logan, St. Elias, Lucania, King and Steele) are not emphasized, as much of the pleasure of St. Elias mountaineering lies elsewhere. Furthermore there are many spectacular peaks <3600m still unclimbed - the front cover of CAJ 1989 shows one such ("Hubsew Peak", a mere 3569m!)

I At a fairly high level of commitment - Alaska Grade 3 and above, and frequently involving extreme objective danger (avalanche, hanging glaciers and séracs of Himalayan scale, cornice, poor rock, and seriously crevassed approaches) - are the following:

- Mts. Hubbard/Alverstone: there are still some unclimbed ridges,=1800m high, rising from the Alverstone Glacier (Photo: CAJ 1974, p. 16; AAJ 1968, plate 53; AAJ 1974, plate 22)
- Mt. King George: numerous unclimbed ridges, up to = 1600m high, on the W, (Theberge, 1980 p. 140), NW and NE (CAJ 1991, p.34, right hand ridge) by which to make a 3rd (?) ascent and first traverse.
- Mt. Cook: a second route, a second (?) ascent, a traverse?
- Mt. Vancouver/Good Neighbour Peak: a second ascent of any of the main ridges and the first complete traverse; the numerous unclimbed southern ridges are over 2000m high (AAJ 1978, plate 68).
- Mt. Walsh: a second route, a traverse, the W face is = 1400m high; the N ridge gains =2000m.
- Mts. Baird and Malaspina: first (?) ascents and a traverse to and over Mt. Bering.
- Mt. Augusta: first ascents of the E and W ridges or a traverse via both (Theberge 1980, p.153; AAJ 1988, plate 23. View down upper E ridge: AAJ 1991, plate 37).
- Centennial Range (NTS 115C):many technical ridges and faces and unclimbed summits (Theberge 1980, p.133).
- Mt. "Atlantic" (AAJ 1968, plate 52; AAJ 1978, plate 29; the prominent isolated peak on the left side) and "Mt. Cabot": first (?) ascents and traverses.
- Mts. Lucania- Steele-Wood-Craig: a =50km high level traverse (or at least from Steele to Macaulay).
- Mt. Lucania: W face from the Chitina Glacier, =3000m (CAJ 1984, p.44); E face central spur to central summit (AAJ 1968, plate 52; AAJ 1978, plate 29; AAJ 1986, plate 57). Mt. Craig: the E Ridge and a traverse.
- "Catenary Peak": the 1500m high N ridge (AAJ 1968,plates 49-50).
- Mt. Jeannette, "W Jeannette" and "NE Newton": N ridges from the Seward Glacier (Theberge, 1980 p.1).
- Mt. Foresta: A first ascent (?) of the northern (higher) summit. Mt. Steele: the N rib/face, the NW ridge (CAJ 1976, p.66; Theberge, 1980, plate 62).
- "E. McArthur Peak": a first (?) ascent via the E ridge or S face (CAJ 1989, p.27; Theberge, 1980, p.140).
- Mt. St. Elias: the complete SE ridge (AJ 1976, p.26-27), the 'central' NW spur between the Everett and Japanese routes, (AAJ 1966, plate 18, Everett is left skyline, Japanese is right skyline accessed by the subsidiary glacier, NW rib is buttress in center leading up to Everett route; Theberge 1980, plate 2, the lower right skyline; and CAJ 1982, p.75).
- King Peak: the W face, the direct southern approach spurs to the S ridge.
- Mt. Logan: complete the Earlybird, the ribs between the SSW and Schoening ridges (AAJ 1986, plate 56).

II The following areas offer climbs of a more moderate nature. They may still be technically demanding but the lower elevation reduces the overall commitment involved. Many of these climbs are on mountains of less than 3600m and so will not be included in the accompanying table.

- The Cathedral Glacier: the first ascent (?) of the triple-headed "S Kennedy" (front cover of CAJ 1977), second ascents of "Mt. Poland", the Weisshorn and their neighbors (NTS 115B/2) (AAJ 1975, plates 53/54; AAJ 1977, plate 62; CAJ 1977, p. 66).
- At the SE corner of the South Lowell and Lowell Glaciers (1158/1,2,7,8).
- At the ice-shed of the South Arm-Dusty-Disappointment Glaciers (115B/7,10).
- The granite peaks between the Easter and Disappointment Glaciers (115B/10).
- The upper part of Stairway Glacier (llSB/10,11).
- West and east of Cascade Glacier (115B/11).
- The upper part of Kluane Glacier (115B/14).
- East side of uppermost Donjek Glacier (115B/13).
- East side of the very uppermost Logan Glacier (115C/9)
- East and west of the uppermost Ogilvie Glacier (115C/10) (CAJ 1969, p.19).
- Uppermost Quintino Sella Glacier (115C/10).
- North side of the upper Chitina Glacier (115F/2) (CAJ 1984, p.47).
- The "Walden" massif between the Walsh and Dennis Glaciers. (115C/16)
- East side of mid-part of Spring Glacier (115G/4).
- North and south of the central part of east Anderson Glacier (115F/2) (photo CAJ 1984, p.46).
- The upper Brabazon Glacier (115F/2,7) (CAJ 1976, p.67). Entire upper part of Nesham Glacier (115F/7).
- The upper east arm of Barnard Glacier, the south Mt. Bear peaks.

Notes concerning the map and table:

Peaks

- "Peaks" are defined by having at least 1km separation and 200m cols on all sides.

Number

- All peaks wholly in the Yukon Territory or straddling the Alaska/Yukon border are numbered to correspond with the map on page 7 and are given the NTS Sheet Number as a cross-reference to the relevant 1:50,000 map.
- All un-named peaks have a NTS Sheet Number and a Grid

Reference for precise location on the relevant 1:50,000 map.

Symbols

- Peak names within quotes (eg. "NE Newton") are informal names that have not been approved by the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographic Names. These informal names are either 'traditional' and occur in the literature and are shown by +, or are used by the author for the table.
- Those peaks wholly in Alaska, are indicated by *. Their location is indicated by lower case alphabetical letters on the map and their location is from USGS 1:250,000 maps.

Elevation

- The metric elevation of each listed peak is followed by a number in parentheses to indicate the source of the data, as follows
  1. Triangulated height given on the 1961 and/or 1967 1:250,000 maps.
  2. Spot heights given on the 1987 1:50,000 maps.
  3. Interpolated height, by the author, from the 1987 1:50,000 maps.
  4. See specific notes below for Mt. Logan (4.1) and Mt. Vancouver (4.2)

  4.1 Mt. Logan

  The numerous sub-peaks on Mt. Logan's high plateau have not been listed separately, though many would meet the >1km/200m col criteria. They have all been climbed and in almost every possible direction and combination.

  The establishment of the height of Mt. Logan is a graphic illustration of the problems of surveying in the St. Elias Mountains. Walter Wood (AAJ 1975; p.13-16) summarizes the eighty-year saga to 1974 and then presents the remaining unresolved problems. Gerald Holdsworth leads the interested reader through the seven years of effort and science to reach the value, accepted since 1975, of 5951 +5m (19,524 +16ft) (CAJ 1975, p.16-20; 1976, p.16-20; 1976, p.68-69; 1977, p.56-58; Cdn. Geog. Jour. 1975).

  The final answer should be obtained during May-June 1992 when a multidisciplinary, multiagency expedition will take a Global Positioning System receiver to the summit of Mt. Logan. GPS is capable of providing a resolution of ± 1cm (Cdn. Geog. March-April 1992). Peaks One of the results of twenty five years of work on Mt. Logan by the Arctic Institute of North America (AINA) will soon be available in the form of a detailed 1:75,000 map (in press), and a comprehensive volume by Gerald Holdsworth (in prep.) which will cover all aspects of the mountain and the spectrum of AINA)'s wide ranging studies.

  4.2 Mt. Vancouver

  The height of Mt. Vancouver remains a quandary: Wood (1949) puts it at 15,860ft; Alford (CAJ 1968) at 15,833ft; and the 1:50,000 map (1987) gives a spot height of 4812m (15,787ft)

  5. From Wood (1967), Theberge (1980) and Everett (1984), with some corrections from recent literature.
  6. USGS 1:250,000 maps, revisions of 1981, 1982, 1983.

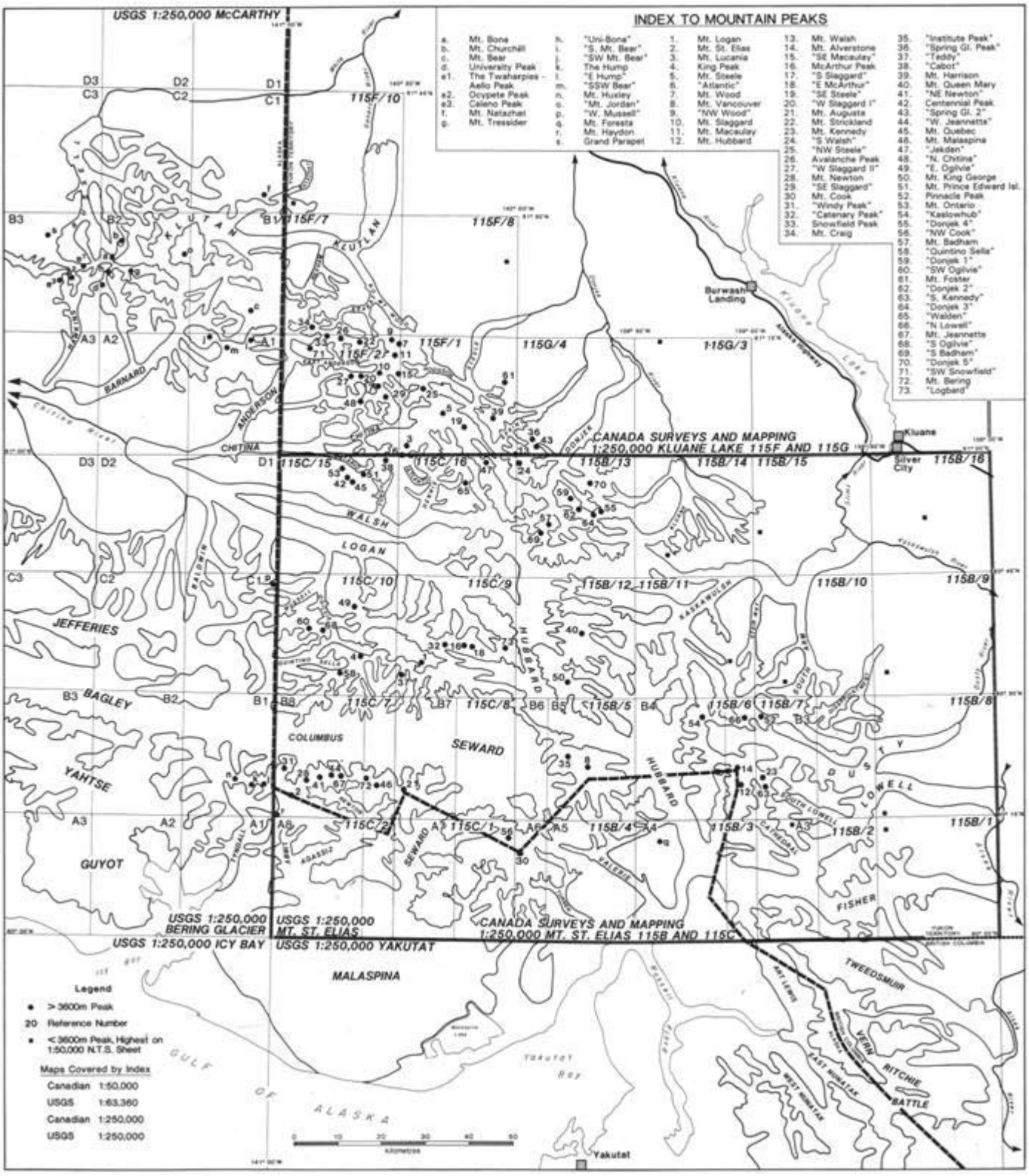
Number of routes

- This is somewhat arbitrary. For example there are at least four ways of reaching the Russell Col, below the N (Abruzzi) ridge of Mt. St. Elias, is each a separate route? The number provides some indication of the degree of development.

Number of ascents

- This is approximate, but it does give a feel for a mountain's popularity. For the first ten ascents or so the record is reason ably accessible and consistent but beyond ten modesty begins to prevail. Thus often those who state "the 15th ascent" are found to be optimistic by at least three or four when one researches a little harder!

Pinnacle Peak (3714m).
The E Ridge (left-hand skyline) and the N Ridge (center) have only had one ascent each, and the sunlit NE face is unclimbed. (Roger Wallis)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The Peaks of the St. Elias: 3600m and up

Mountain and NTS Grid Reference	Elevation In Meters	In Feet	Year of First Ascent	Number of Routes	Number of Ascents
1. Mt. Logan (115C/9)	5951 (4.1)	19,524	1925	17	>90
2. Mt. St. Elias(115C/7)	5489(1)	18,008	1897	10	>18
3. Mt. Lucania (115F/1)	5226(1)	17,147	1937	7	8
4. King Peak (115C /10)	5173(1)	16,971	1952	4	5
5. Mt Steele(115C /1)	5073(1)	16,644	1935	6	>26
a * Mt. Bona	5005(6)	16,421	1930	3	9
6. + “Atlantic” (115C/16-275626)	4879(2)	16,007	unclimbed?	-	-
7. Mt. Wood(115F/2)	4842(1)	15,885	1941	5	6
8. Mt. Vancouver (115B/5)	4812(4.2)	15,787	1949	7	6
9. “NW Wood” (115F/2-249895)	4798(2)	15,741	1969	2	1
b * Mt. Churchill	4766(6)	15,638	1951	1	3
10. Mt. Slaggard (115F/2)	4742(3)	15,557	1959	3	3
11. Mt. Macaulay (115F/2)	4690(3)	15,387	1959	4	4
12. Mt. Hubbard (115B/6)	4577(1)	15,015	1951	5	12
c * Mt. Bear	4520(6)	14,831	1951	1	1
13. Mt. Walsh (115F/1)	4507(2)	14,787	1941	1	9
14. Mt. Alverstone(115B/6)	4439(1)	14,565	1951	3	5
15. “SE Macaulay” (115F/2-268818)	4420(3)	14,501	unclimbed?	-	-
d * University Peak	4410(6)	14,470	1955	1	1
e1 * The Twaharpies/Aello Peak	4403(6)	14,445	1967	1	1
16. McArthurPeak(115C/9)	4389(5)	14,400	1961	4	5
17. +”S Slaggard” (115F/2-220786)	4370(3)	14,337	unclimbed?	-	-
18. +”EMcArthur” (115C/9-449186)	4308(2)	14,139	unclimbed?	-	-
19. +”SE Steele” (11 5F/ 1-420699)	4300(3)	14,108	1967	2	>10
20. “W Slaggard I” (115F/2-179810)	4290(3)	14,075	unclimbed?	-	-
21. Mt. Augusta (115C/8)	4288(1)	14,070	1952	3	3
22. Mt. Strickland (115F/2)	4260(3)	13,976	1959	2	2
23. Mt. Kennedy (115B/7)	4238(1)	13,905	1965	3	15
24. “S Walsh” (115B/13-544614)	4223(2)	13,855	unclimbed?	-	-
25. “NW Steele” (115F/1-323787)	4220(3)	13,845	unclimbed?	-	-
26. Avalanche Peak (H5F/2)	4212(1)	13,818	1969	1	1
27. “W Slaggard II” (115F/2-160809)	4210(3)	13,812	unclimbed?	-	-
28. Mt Newton (115C/7)	4209(1)	13,811	1964	3	4
29. “SE Slaggard” (115F/2-237765)	4207(2)	13,802	unclimbed?	-	-
30. Mt. Cook(115B/4)	4194(2)	13,760	1953	1	1
31. + “Windy Peak”/(“Toland”) (115C/7-023899)	4130(3)	13,550	1958	3	3
e2 * Ocypete Peak	4130(6)	13,550	unclimbed?	-	-
32. -(-”Catenary Peak” (115C/9-385195)	4097(2)	13,442	1967	2	4
f * Mt. Natazhat	4095(6)	13,435	1913	1	1
33. SnowfieldPeak(115F/2)	4060(3)	13,320	1957	2	2
g * Mt. Tressider	4058(6)	13,315	1969	2	1
e3 * Celeno Peak	4054(6)	13,300	unclimbed?	-	-
34. Mt. Craig (115/F)	4050(3)	13,287	1969	1	1
35. +”Institute Peak” (115B/5-662939)	3980(3)	13,058	1949	2	1
36. +”SpringGl. Peak” (115G/4-577676)	3976(2)	13,044	unclimbed?	-	-

37. +"Teddy"(115C/9-287H9)	3956(2)	12,979	unclimbed?	-	-
h * "Uni-Bona"	3956(6)	12,979	1955	1	1
38. +"Cabot" (115C/15-239611)	3933(2)	12,904	unclimbed?	-	-
39. Mt. Harrison (115F/1)	3930(3)	12,894	1972	2	1
40. Mt. Queen Mary (1158/12)	3928(2)	12,887	1961	2	4
i * "S Mt. Bear"	3917(6)	12,850	unclimbed?	-	-
41. +"NE Newton" (115C/7-107881)	3860(3)	12,664	1964	3	4
j *"SW Mt. Bear"	3858(6)	12,659	1986	1	1
42. Centennial Peak (115C/15)	3820(3)	12,532	1967	1	1
43. "Spring Gl. 2" (115G/4-585664)	3815(3)	12,516	unclimbed?	-	-
44. "W Jeannette" (115C/7-133885)	3782(3)	12,408	1968	2	2
45. Mt. Quebec (115C/15)	3780(3)	12,402	1967	1	1
46. Mt. Malaspina(115C/7)	3776(2)	12,388	unclimbed?	-	-
k * The Hump	3772(6)	12,375	1966	2	2
47. "Jekden" (115C/16-473612)	3756(2)	12,323	unclimbed?	-	-
48. "NChitina"(115F/2-237765)	3750(3)	12,303	unclimbed?	-	-
1 *"E Hump"	3749(6)	12,300	1966	1	1
49. "E Ogilvie" (115C/10-175274)	3740(3)	12,270	unclimbed?	-	-
50. Mt. King George (115B/12)	3734(2)	12,250	1965	2	2
m "SSWBear"	3734(6)	12,250	unclimbed?	-	-
n *Mt. Huxley	3723(6)	12,216	unclimbed?	-	-
51. Mt. Prince Edward Isl. (115C/15)	3715(3)	12,188	1967	1	1
52. Pinnacle Peak (115B/7)	3714(1)	12,184	1965	3	5
53. Mt. Ontario (115C/15)	3710(3)	12,172	1967	1	1
o *"Mt. Jordan"	3703(6)	12,150	1951	1	1
54. +"Kaslowhub" (115B/6-978038)	3700(3)	12,139	1961	2	3
55. "Donjek4" (115B/13-734507)	3700(3)	12,139	unclimbed?	-	-
56. "NWCook" (115C/8-539749)	3687(2)	12,096	unclimbed?	-	-
57. Mt. Badham (115B/13)	3670(2)	12,041	1972	1	2
58. "Quintino Sella" (115C/10-145122)	3664(2)	12,021	unclimbed?	-	-
59. "Donjekl"(115B/13-664534)	3660(3)	12,008	unclimbed?	-	-
60. "SWOgilvie"(115C/io-073223)	3660(3)	12,008	unclimbed?	-	-
61. Mt. Foster (115F/1)	3660(3)	12,008	1967	1	1
62. "Donjek2" (115B/13-682513)	3658(2)	12,001	unclimbed?	-	-
63. +"S Kennedy" (1158/7^128884)	3656(2)	11,995	unclimbed?	-	-
64. "DonjekS" (115B/16-719500)	3650(3)	11,975	unclimbed?	-	-
65. "Walden"(115C/i6-4H542)	3650(3)	11,975	unclimbed?	-	-
p * "W. Mussell"	3648(6)	11,970	unclimbed?	-	-
q * Mt. Foresta	3645(1)	11,960	1979	1	1
r * Haydon Peak	3640(1)	11,945	1946	1	>5
s * Grant Parapet	3636(6)	11,930	1967	1	1
66. "NLowell"(115B/6-078036)	3630(3)	11,909	unclimbed?	-	-
67 Mt. Jeannette (115C/7)	3630(3)	11,909	1968	3	3
68. "SOgilvie" (115C/10-102221)	3620(3)	11,877	unclimbed?	-	-
69. "S Badham" (115B/13-602454)	3610(3)	11,844	1972	1	1
70. "DonjekS" (115B/13-707567)	3610(3)	11,844	unclimbed?	-	-
71. "SW Snowfield" (H5F/2-063871)	3610(3)	11,844	unclimbed?	-	-
72. Mt. Bering (115C/7)	3610(3)	11,844	1976	2	1
73. "Logbard" (115C/9-522185)	3609(3)	11,841	unclimbed?	-	-

Getting there

Don Serl

Fly.

Yes, it is possible to drive, but it is almost 2500km from Vancouver to Whitehorse via the Stewart/Cassiar Highway (which is not all paved), or just over 2300km from Calgary via the Alaska Highway... that's 3 days and $150 gas each way, minimum, plus the inevitable speeding ticket, new tire and windshield. So, fly!

Start by taking one of the twice-daily Canadian Airlines International flights from Vancouver to Whitehorse. 1992 cost is $836 return full-fare economy, half that for a 14-day advance purchase; and no, there are no flights from Calgary or Edmonton.

Kluane Lake, the take-off point for flights into the St. Elias Mountains from the Canadian side, lies about 200km west of Whitehorse (60km beyond the Park headquarters in Haines Junction) and Northwest Stage Lines (403/668-6975) runs thrice-weekly bus service from Whitehorse to Kluane at just over $30 each one-way. (Charter service at non-scheduled times is easily arranged.)

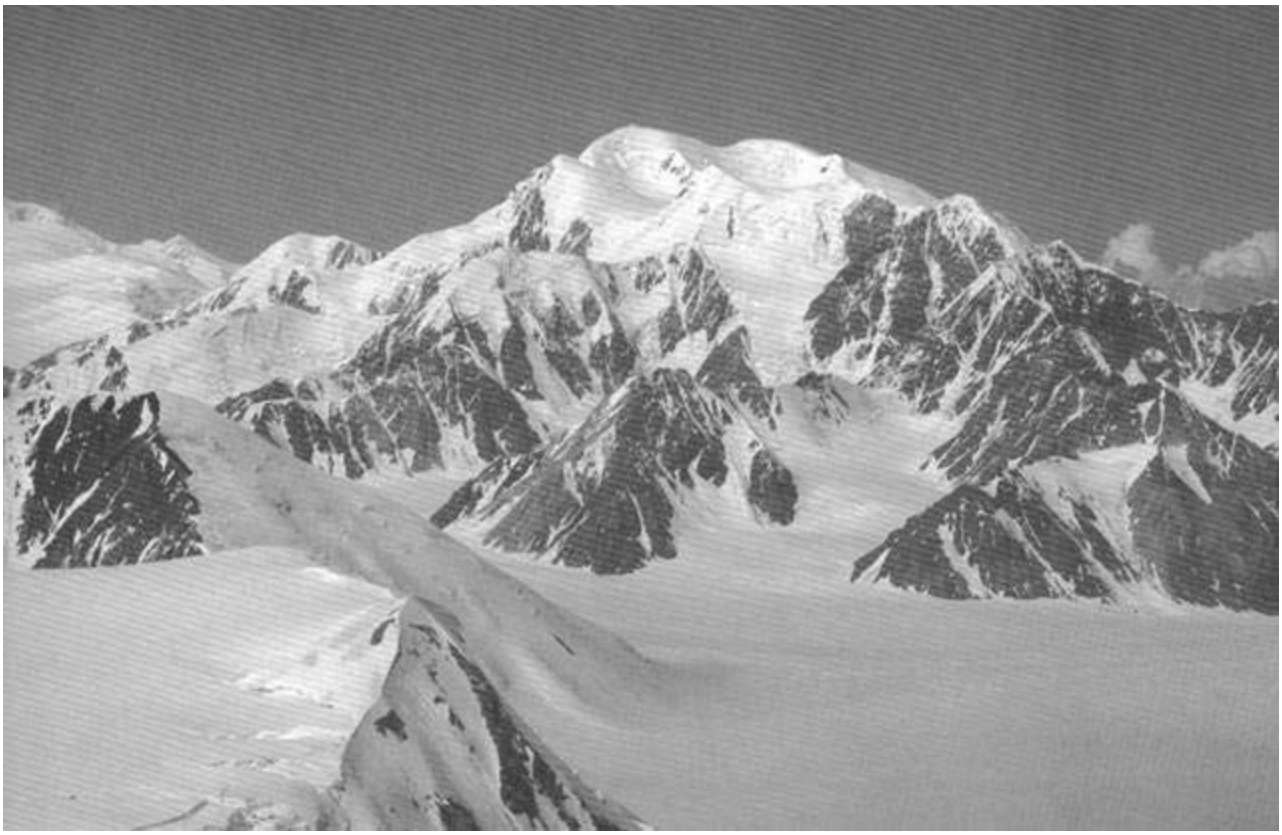
Accommodation is available in a bed-and-breakfast in Silver City (adjacent to Kluane Lake), in motels in Haines Junction and Destruction Bay (about 50km beyond Kluane Lake), or in "rustic" (non-serviced, but free) camping on the shores of Kluane Lake itself.

Flights from Kluane Lake into the mountains can be booked with Andy Williams (Icefield Ranges Expeditions, 59 -13th Avenue, Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada Y1A 4K6; phone: 403/841-4561 (Kluane Lake) or 403/633-2018 (Whitehorse)). Andy flys a wheel/ski equipped Heliocourier which is specially designed for high altitude flight. Normal payload is 2 people and all gear for 2 to 4 weeks in the hills. 1992 costs are about CDN$380 return per person for a "close" location such as Pinnacle Peak, $490 for the East Ridge of Mt. Logan, and $580 for the King Trench.

The other air access route, less frequently used but very convenient for the seaward peaks, is from Yakutak, Alaska. Fly to Yakutak from Seattle via Anchorage or Juneau on any of several American airlines (check for special fares - this is the deregulated USA!) From Yakutak Mike Ivers of Gulf Air (Box 367, Yakutak, AK, USA 99689; phone: 907/784-3240, fax: 907/784-3380) flies a wheel/ski equipped Cessna 185 which has a capacity of 2 people plus 63kg of gear apiece. He has Canadian authority (i.e., he can land legally in Canada simply by pre-reporting to Canada Customs), and he has portable radios available. Fares are approximately US$265 each return for Dome Pass (East Ridge of Mt. St. Elias), $310 for Cathedral Glacier (Hubbard/Alverstone/ Kennedy), and $375 for Quintino Sella Glacier (King Trench route on Mt. Logan). Group Accommodation is available in cabins at the Yakutak Airport Lodge for about $50 per night per cabin.

Registration is mandatory for climbing in Kluane National Park. Information can be obtained from the Park headquarters (Haines Junction, Yukon, Canada YOB 1LO; phone: 403/634-2251). Basic biographical data and a physician's certificate must be provided. Current regulations call for a 4-person minimum party size, although this policy is under review and some flexibility may be shown.

A single side-band radio is also required (and not a bad idea either, if only to arrange pick-up in tight good-weather windows). The SBX-11 is the standard. Andy



The 2500m-high westerns side of Mt. Walsh (4507m) from the Donjek Gl.
Note the four separate sub-summits - all above 4000m and all unclimbed. (Roger Wallis)

Williams monitors 4520kHz, and has a limited number of rentals available at $8/day.

The photos

A cautionary note: These photos were taken several decades ago, and ice/snow features may have changed considerably.

Page 20 (Plate 5661)

Mt. Alverstone (4439m) and Mt. Hubbard (4577) seen from the WSW, across the Alverstone Glacier.

On the left is the 1800m-high unclimbed west face of Mt. Alverstone and on the right the 5km-wide, 2300m-high west face of Mt. Hubbard. The three main ridges on Hubbard have each had only one ascent: On the left, the NW Ridge (1976), the Central Ridge (via the lefthand basal spur in 1973), and on the far right, the SW Ridge (1973).

Page 21 (Plate 7632)

Good Neighbour Pk & Mt. Vancouver from the SW

Good Neighbour Peak (4785m), the southern summit of Mt. Vancouver (4812m)) seen from the SW above the upper tributaries of the Valerie Glacier.

The 2000m-high unclimbed rocky SW face of Good Neighbour Peak, with its characteristic central snowpatch, is bounded on the left by the SW Ridge (one ascent, 1968) and on its right by the unclimbed south spur (divides sunlight from shadow).

Immediately to the right the SE face lies in shadow and beyond is the main southern snowface with its three approach ridges. On the left is the unclimbed, narrow SSE rib (long, snaky one dividing sunlight from shadow in the center of the picture); in the center, with the rocky base, is the SE Ridge (one ascent, 1967), and on the right, the bounding ridge in shadow is the 3000m-high East (or ESE) Ridge (one ascent (incomplete: to top of ridge only) 1978).

The true summit of Mt. Vancouver is the tiny nipple just left of and behind Good Neighbour Peak. The NW ridge (one ascent, 1949) is the lefthand skyline; the 2700m-high West Face (one ascent, 1977) lies in the recess between the two summits.

Page 22 (Plate 7572)

Mt. Augusta (4288m) from the N

Mt. Augusta (4288m), seen from the north, rises 2400m from the Seward Glacier. The lefthand skyline is the North Ridge (one ascent, 1952). The North Rib, with sunlight catching its lower half, runs directly up the face on its righthand side (one ascent, 1987). The west ridge (on the right), and the prominent rib leading directly to the main summit are both unclimbed.

In the lower right foreground is the unclimbed Mt. Baird (3500m).

Mt. Cook is the large peak at the left edge of the photo, and to its right Mt. Fairweather is just visible in the far background.

Page 23 (Plate 5479)

Mt. Kennedy (4238m) from the north.

The 3km-wide north face rises over 1800m above the Kennedy Glacier, with the icefall leading to the Great Shelf on the right.

The lefthand skyline is the East Ridge (one ascent, 1983); there is only one route on the main north face, the North Ridge, which is in the center dividing sunshine from shade (two ascents, 1968 and 1977). The upper righthand skyline is the West Ridge, the voie normale.

The East Ridge of Mt. Hubbard (4577m) is in the background, on the righthand side.

Page 24 (Plate 5702)

"Atlantic Peak" (4879m) and Mt. Lucania (5226m) from the SW The 6km-wide southeast face of the " Atlantic/Lucania massif rises 2800m above the Dennis Glacier. The isolated peak on the left is "Atlantic", the highest unclimbed summit in the St. Elias Mountains. To the right are the three summits of Mt. Lucania. The ridge leading directly to the main summit is Harmony (one ascent, in 1977). The east ridge to the north (righthand) summit is Aurora (one ascent, in 1985). The ridges leading to the central summit are unclimbed, (Note that the big ridge just left of center is not part of Mt. Lucania.)

Page 25 (Plate 1296)

Mt. Lucania (5226m) and "Atlantic Peak" (4879m) from the NW

In the center left, the three summits of Mt. Lucania lie above the 10 km-wide, unclimbed north face, which rises almost 3000m from the Chitina Glacier. In the middle is the complex West Ridge, which has had only one ascent (1969). To the right, the isolated cone is "Atlantic", the highest unclimbed summit in the St. Elias Mountains.

Page 26 (Plate 7608)

Mt. Cook (4194m) looking southeast across the Seward Glacier.

The North Face of Mt. Cook rises 2300m above the southeast-most tributary of the Seward Glacier. The only ascent (1953) was a route lying behind the unclimbed north ridge (the sunlit knife edge in the center of the photograph). The numerous southern ridges, all more than 2700m high, are hidden by the bulk of the mountain.

"NW Cook" (3687m), is the lefthand summit of the three major sunlight/shadow ridges, all 2000m high, on the right side of the photograph.

Mt. Fairweather is the high peak in the far background on the left.

Page 27 (Plates 1283 & 1284) High-level traverse

An "ultimate project" -the high level skyline traverse.=50km long, with a low point of 3500m.

Looking north over the upper Anderson Glacier and northeast over the Chitina Glacier at the mountain arc travelling from Avalanche Peak on the far left, to the NE summit of Mt. Lucania on the far right.

The peaks from left to right: Avalanche Peak, Strickland, "NW Wood", Wood, Macaulay, Slaggard, "SW Slaggard", "NW Steele", Steele, Lucania.

See also Plate 1296 on page 20 for a fuller perspective on the Chitina Glacier face of Mt. Lucania, which lies at the extreme right end of this panorama.

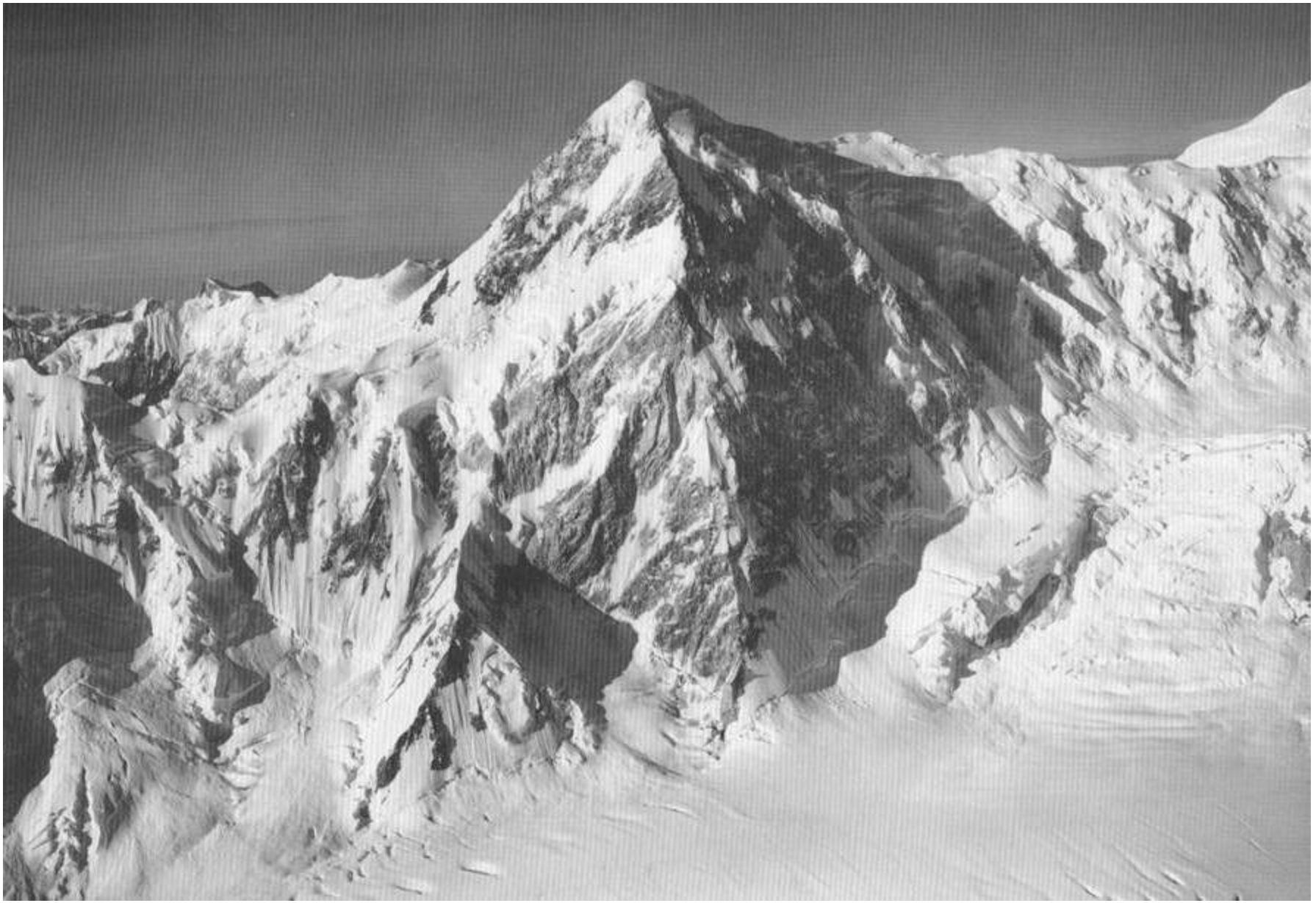
Acknowledgement:

The photos on pages 20-27 are from the Bradford Washburn Photograph Collection, in the Archives, Alaska and Polar Regions Dept, University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Their accession numbers are (in order of appearance): 5661, 7632, 7572, 5479, 5702, 1296, 7608, 1283, and 1284.

Mt. Alverstone (4439m) and Mt. Hubbard (4577rn) seen from the WSW, across the Alverstone Glacier.
See complete caption on page 19. Bradford Washburn Photograph Collection, Accession number 5661, in the Archives, Alaska and Polar Regions Dept., University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Good Neighbour Peak (4785m) and Mt. Vancouver (4812m) from the SW.
See complete caption on page 19. Bradford Washburn Photograph Collection, Accession number 7632, in the Archives, Alaska and Polar Regions Dept., University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Mt. Augusta (4288m) from the north.
See complete caption on page 19. Bradford Washburn Photograph Collection, Accession number 7572, in the Archives, Alaska and Polar Regions Dept., University of Alaska, Fairbanks.



Mt. Kennedy (4238m) from the north.
See complete caption on page 19. Bradford Washburn Photograph Collection, Accession number 5479, in the Archives, Alaska and Polar Regions Dept., University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

"Atlantic Peak" (4879m) and Mt. Lucania (5226m) from the SE.
See complete caption on page 19. Bradford Washburn Photograph Collection, Accession number 5702, in the Archives, Alaska and Polar Regions Dept, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

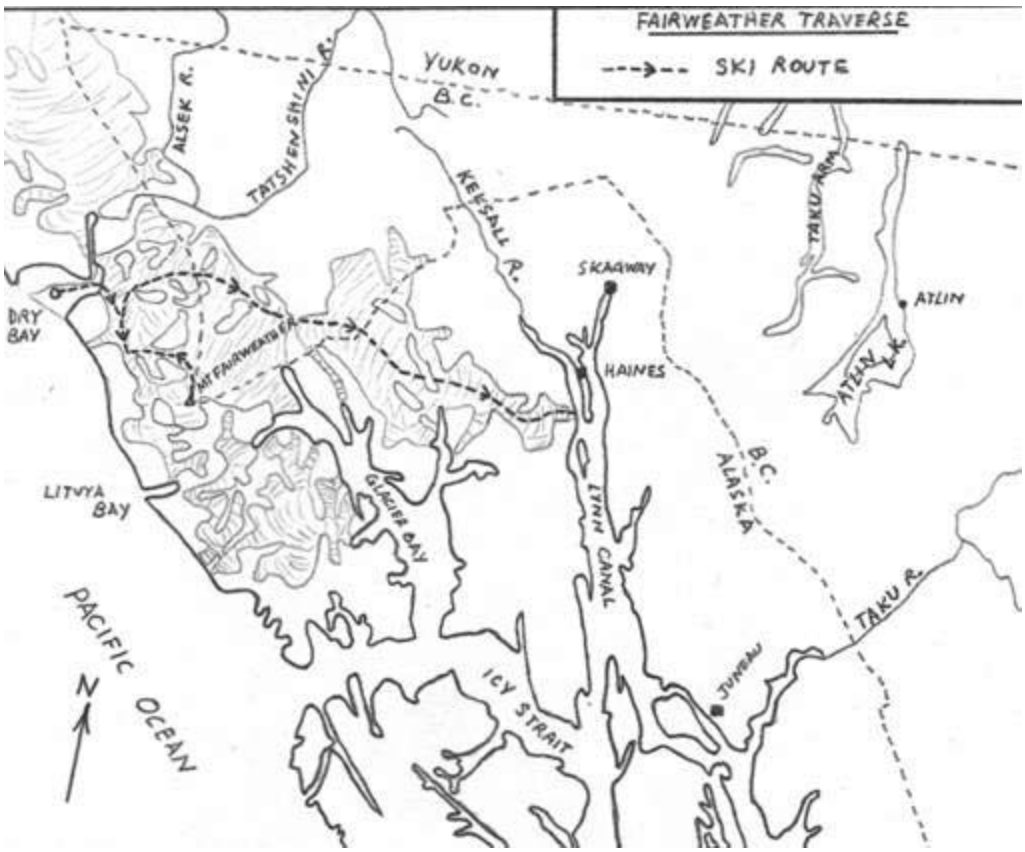
Mt Lucania (5226m) and “Atlantic Peak” (4879m) from the NW.
See complete caption on page 19. Bradford Washburn Photograph Collection, Accession number 1296, in the Archives, Alaska and Polar Regions Dept., University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Mt. Cook (4194m) from the SE.
See complete caption on page 19. Bradford Washburn Photograph Collection, Accession number 7608, in the Archives, Alaska and Polar Regions Dept, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

50km of St. Elias skyline entirely above 3500rn
The peaks (I to r) are Avalanche, Strickland, “NW Wood” , Wood, Macaulay, Slaggard, “SW Slaggard”, “NW Steele”, Steele, Lucania. See complete caption on page 19. Bradford Washburn Photograph Collection, Accession numbers 1283 (I) and 1284 (r), in the Archives, Alaska and Polar Regions Dept., University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Fairweather traverse

Craig Hollinger



Mount Fairweather. One has to wonder how it got its name, being a mere 20km from the Pacific Ocean. The beach. The Wet Coast of North America.

Five of us; Dave Williams (organizer), Markus Kellerhals, Peter Stone, Betsy Fletcher and I, arrived in Haines Alaska on May 4. We were planning to ski from the coast, climb Mt. Fairweather and continue east along a system of glaciers back to Haines. Dave had made arrangements from Vancouver by telephone with a local airline to fly in our food caches, but we soon discovered they had neither the equipment nor the experience to land on glaciers.

"I feel as if eight months of planning have vanished in an instant."

We were understandably depressed, as it didn't look as though the trip would go, but a visit with Haines Airways lifted our spirits. Although they couldn't land on a glacier either, they put us in touch with Gulf Air in Yakutat and saved the trip. Gulf Air flew us to Dry Bay and with Mike Ivers' expert flying Dave soon had the food in place. We arranged with Haines Airways to pick us up on June 8 at Glacier Point, ten minutes by air south of Haines.

One evening in Dry Bay, while waiting for weather to clear before the food was flown in, we hiked to the beach to mark the official start of the trip.

Pacific swell, the roar, the sea lions babbling, watching and playing-complimenting the backdrop of snow covered and cloud capped mountains - Mount Fairweather rising from shoreline to 4665m.

During our six day hike/ski from Dry Bay to Fairweather's summit, we had exceptionally good weather; except for the one day of light rain and big snow flakes that turned into a soaking rain squall. The squall blew up out of the south on 50kph winds. We were soon soaked through our Gore-Tex clothing as we scrambled around looking for shelter on the big, wide, flat Grand Plateau Glacier. A hastily dug-out crevasse(!) provided some relief from the horizontal rain. We spent the night in it. Any port in a storm.

The storm passed and in the morning we continued along the Grand Plateau. In the afternoon, we started up an icefall where the flow spilled over the edge of the coastal bench from the icefields around Mount Fairweather. By the next evening we reached the huge ice plateau on the north side of the mountain. The barometer rose and the temperature plummeted, but we kept warm by building a large snow fortress. As the sun set, on that first night at 3000m, the thermometer dropped so fast we could almost see it moving. When it reached -25°, we crawled into our bags. The mercury was still falling and our still-wet gear froze overnight.

In the morning we packed four days of food and skied up another 900m into the bowl below Mount Fairweather's west ridge (our intended route). Because of our lack of strength and acclimatization, we didn't try to reach the ridge that day. The wind whipped up swirling snow devils on the slope above us as we discussed the possibility of an avalanche hitting a camp cut out of the slope. But little snow was being deposited, in fact the slope was being scoured clean. We decided we would be safe if a storm didn't blow in and dump a lot of snow.

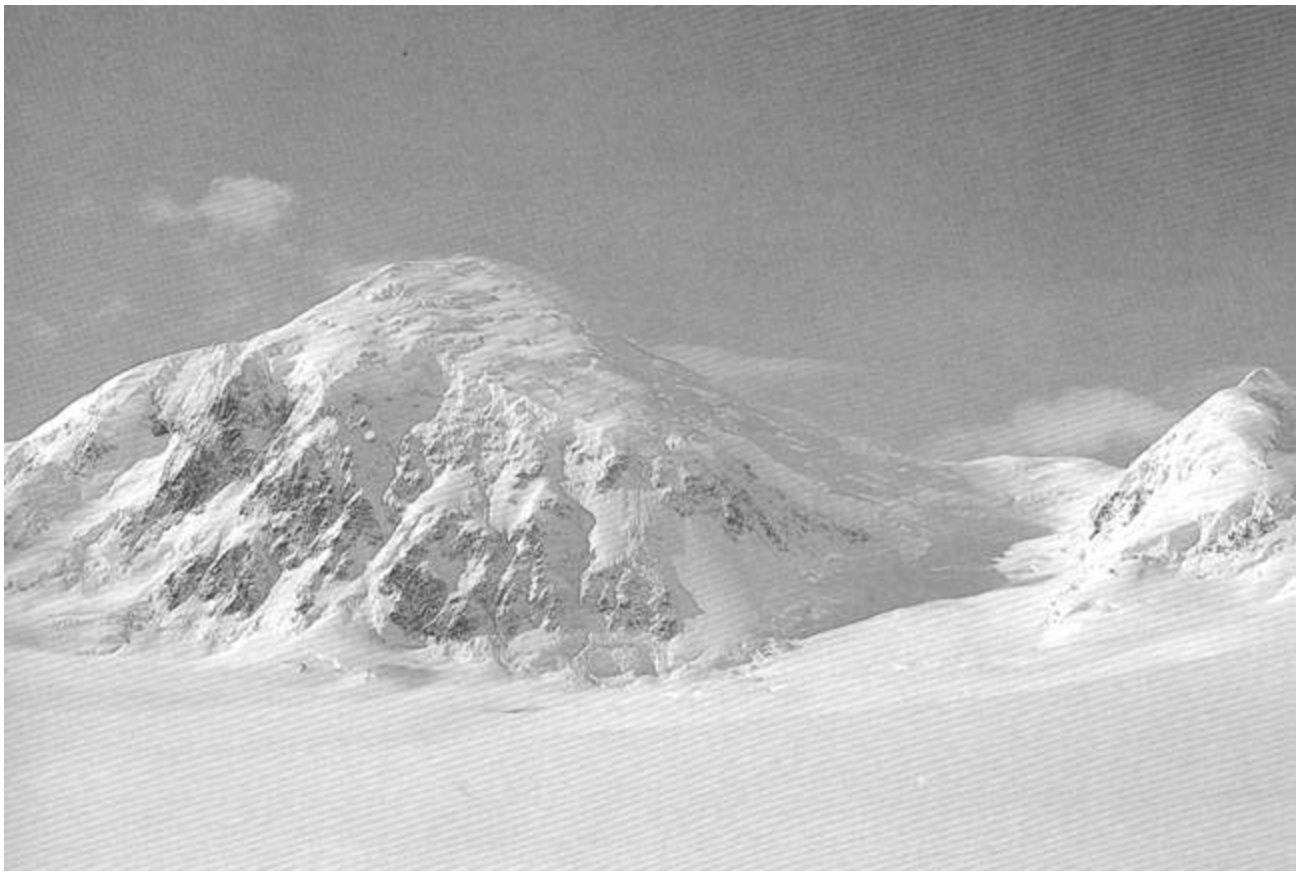
After a couple of hours of digging we had leveled a platform and set up the tents. A party of three Canadians from Whitehorse stopped by on their way down from the summit. We had been following their tracks for the last two days. An occasional snow devil twisted down from the ridge depositing a thin layer of dry snow onto our camp. Another would soon follow and take the snow away. Many devils visited us throughout the night, but they removed almost as much snow as they left.

The morning was cold. It was May the thirteenth, but was it Friday? By now, we'd lost track of the exact date. We waited in our bags until the morning sun warmed us in our tents. Below, heavy cloud was billowing across the Plateau. Above, the thin wisps of mares' tails were growing thicker. Snow devils danced on the ridge in the rising sun.

After breakfast, another hundred-plus meters of skiing and step-kicking put us on the ridge. We silently strapped on our crampons, minds turned inward. The altitude (about 4000m) was having its effect on us, slowing and dulling our thoughts.

The seemingly endless upward trudge soon started. The west ridge is not very technical or terribly exposed, but the mental deadening of the altitude added an element

Looking north down onto the ice plateau and Mt. Root from our high camp on Mt. Fairweather. (Craig Hollinger)



Mt. Fairweather from the north. (Craig Hollinger)

of danger. After passing a deep crevasse, we decided to rope up when one of the party put a foot into the abyss; altitude affecting the balance. I wrote in my diary:

I was in the lead and felt strong. I seemed to acclimatize quickly, and kept tugging at the rope, wanting to go faster. I must have seemed impatient to Peter, tied in behind me. He would signal me to stop by pulling on the rope. I stood there, leaning on it, pulling it tight between us. We summited at about 4:00 p.m. and stood against the icy wind. Unfortunately the blowing clouds obscured much of the spectacular view. To the south and almost directly below us, lay the Pacific Ocean. It felt as though one could reach out and wet one's hand in it. To some of us, reaching the summit was an emotional experience, with tears of joy freezing on the cheeks; others were just glad the hard work was over. Dave summed his emotions:

Down on one knee - altitude and emotions, plans realized - beholding the panorama - I didn't so much as cry as sob silently. Markus was silent - unusual. Peter's comment 'I've never given so much to a mountain' answered for his tears. With gestures and monosyllables we descended. Unifying, memorable and wonderful moments.

The descent seemed to take almost as long. We had to stop many times to wait for the blowing snow to settle. In some places our footprints had disappeared, but Dave had placed wands on the way up and we followed them. At about 6:00 p.m. we reached camp and collapsed into our bags.

Overnight the weather continued to deteriorate with more cloud and snow blowing in. We were expecting a storm, but so far nothing had brewed up. I was up at 7:00 a.m. to shovel snow off the tents. The snow devils weren't cleaning up after themselves any more. Visibility was nil so we spent the morning in the tents. Periodically we heard the roar of something (snow? ice?) falling off Fairweather nearby.

In the afternoon, the sun kept poking through the clouds and soon we could see down to the plateau below. The sound of avalanches coming off Fairweather was beginning to get on our nerves, so we packed up the camp and hurriedly skied down.

Stumbling through the fog, we followed our old ski tracks and eventually found the fortress. The wind-eroded walls were starting to collapse. After rebuilding, we moved in and breathed a sigh of relief.

We remained on the Fairweather Plateau for the next four days. We spent two days in the tents reading, resting and waiting for the weather to improve; and on the third day, after the clouds dissipated, we went on an exhausting exploratory ski trip around the plateau. Near Mount Root we looked down on a spectacular 700m icefall, crumbling its way to the Ferris Glacier below. We had once thought this would be a way to ski off the plateau to continue the traverse. We ended the day by passing under the spectacular north face of Mt. Quincy Adams.

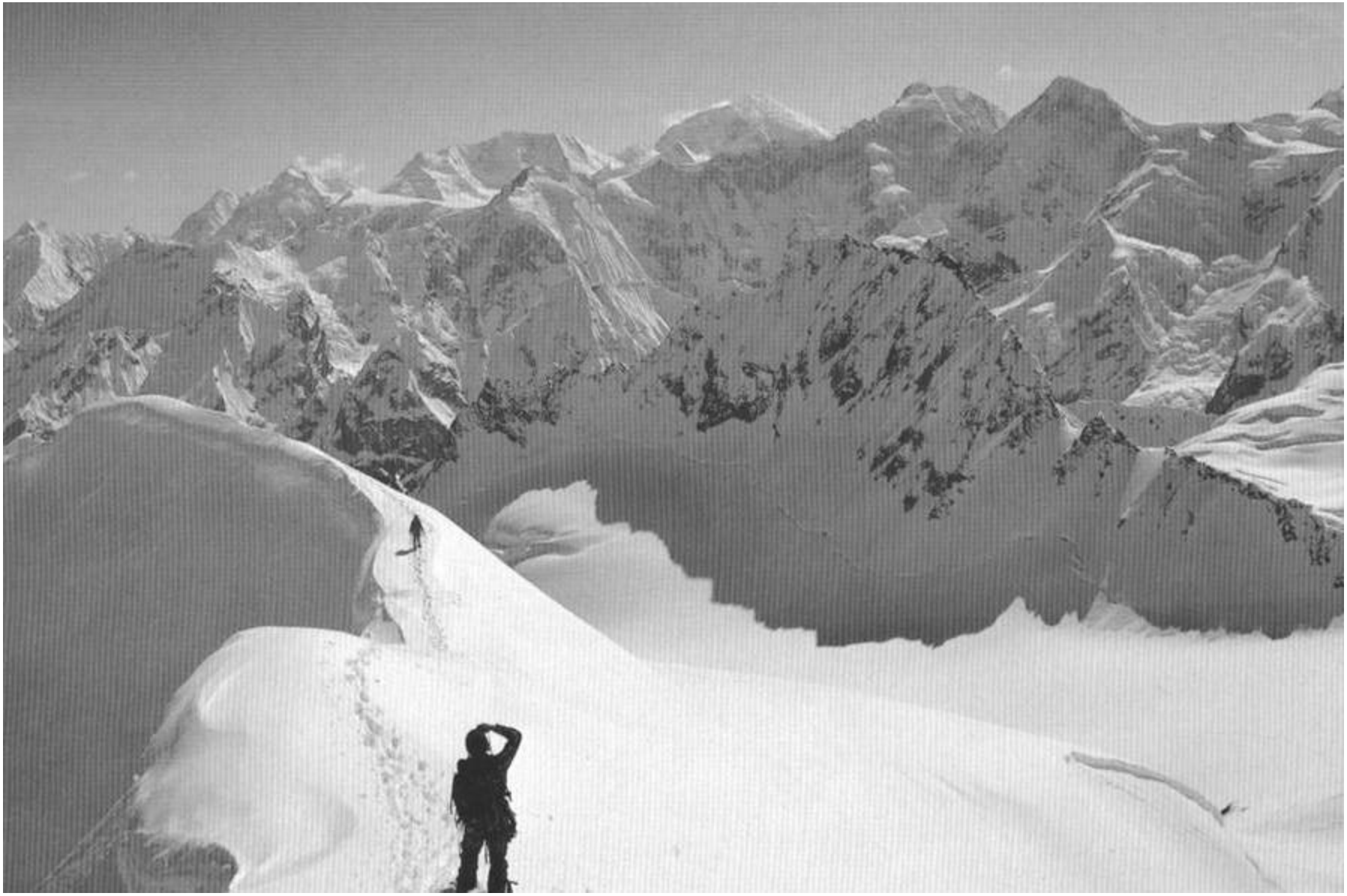
On our last day on the plateau, Dave Markus and I scrambled up the knife-edged ridge of an 3350m, unnamed peak 3km to the west of our camp. From its summit we could see our route on the west ridge of Fairweather. Below us to the southwest, flowed the Fairweather Glacier on its way out to the Pacific Ocean. On the way back to the camp, Markus and I paused for a moment, then carved two perfect lines of turns down a slope bathed in the rays of the setting sun. The weather looked good for our departure the next day.

It was May 19 when we packed up our camp and started to back-track down the Grand Plateau Glacier to where it meets the Grand Pacific Glacier. This junction marked the continuation of our ski traverse. Even though the weather on the Plateau was clear, our descent took us down into the sea fog. Early in the first afternoon the poor visibility forced us to stop at the top of the icefall on the edge of the coastal bench. We were reminded that the air temperature was still below freezing, as little hair-like wisps of frost formed on beards, arm hairs, and wool mitts.

Our descent continued in the morning with slightly better visibility. The snow changed from frozen groomed-run crust to ankle-wrenching slop as we dropped. When we reached the lower Grand Plateau Glacier we broke though the cloud layer. By the time we camped on the Grand Pacific Glacier in the evening, the sun was shining. A day later we were camped near Mount Eliza on a ridge overlooking the Eliza Glacier under clear skies and hot sun.

The next day, Markus, Dave, Peter and I worked our way through the crevasses on the Eliza Glacier past the northeast side of Mount Eliza. The route went easily, the bridges were thick with the winter's heavy snow. We started up Eliza's south ridge on skis but soon left them planted in the snow and donned crampons. On sun-softened snow we worked our way up the ridge crest, and scrambled over a rock step. On the lip of a steep notch we stopped, unable to continue. The route might have been possible if we had a few pieces of rock protection. Admitting defeat, we sat in the sun surrounded by the mountains of the Fairweather Range. The spring sunshine was awakening the glaciers from their winter's sleep and several times we witnessed showers of ice roaring off peaks nearby. South of us stood Fairweather. I silently traced, in my mind's eye, our route on the west ridge. After we left Eliza, we skied to the east to look down again onto the Ferris Glacier. Almost 1500m of vertical

A view of Mt. Fairweather from an unnamed 11,105ft peak 8km to the NE. (Craig Hollinger)



Looking down the south ridge of Mt. Eliza. Mt. Fairweather is visible in the far distance. (Craig Hollinger)

Looking east down onto a tributary of the Ferris Glacier. (Craig Hollinger)

relief to the jumble of ice below.

I was not feeling well the next morning, so I decided to stay in camp and read. Peter and Betsy went on an exploratory trip around Eliza. Dave and Markus, not content with our defeat on Eliza the day before, went back to try the north ridge. Here is their account of the ascent:

Best described as a thrilling knife-edged ridge, under almost perfect polystyrene snow conditions. A 'retired' cornice crack and annoying ice forced us out onto the rather steep and very exposed west face for a couple hundred feet. The view from the top surmounted any I've seen - absolutely surrounded by mountain wilderness - with vague Logan and Saint Elias forms dominating the view to the north. The descent - silence - concerted concentration -great hugs at the skis!!

The good weather of the last few days was coming to an end. Fog rolling in from Tarr Inlet was slowly creeping its way up the mountainsides. Our food supplies were depleted, we had to supplement the last of the porridge with macaroni. Today we hoped to pick up the next food cache near the junction of the Grand Pacific and Melbern glaciers.

On the way down, we stopped to have a look at a little rock spire (Cat's Ears, we called it) standing above the col across from our camp. Dave, Markus and I scrambled up its short rock face using an ice axe jammed into a crack for protection. Peter found an easier route on the other side. A brief diversion, then on to more important matters. Down on the Grand Pacific Glacier was the fog and, we hoped, our food.

On the glacier, visibility was zero. When Dave placed the food cache three weeks ago, he took bearings off nearby peaks and marked the location on his map. All we could see of the cache today were some pencil marks. It was out there... somewhere. Four kilometers of soup separated us from our food. We plotted a course off the map from our present (uncertain) location to the (approximate) location of the cache. Following a compass bearing, we leap-frogged each other around crevasses and over moraines in the fog. The gods were smiling at us, for we managed to find the cache, led to it by tracks left by the ski-plane. The numerous sources of error must have canceled each other out - we were only a few meters from the cache when we found the ski tracks!

The next day the fog was still with us. We set our compasses and again blindly followed the bearing until we reached the Melbern Glacier. The fog thinned out slightly by noon, and allowed us to cross the Melbern and start up the Tennas Tikke Glacier. The weather seemed promising when we camped that evening, but overnight the fog came back in and we managed to ski for only a couple of hours in the morning before we had to stop. The wind had picked up and blowing snow made visibility almost zero. A storm was approaching.

Our next objective was the Carroll Glacier. Once on it, we would be able to travel even under white-out conditions. An icefield, punctured by sharp ice-peaks and steep ridges, fed tributaries of the Carroll and the Tennas Tikke. Crossing the icefalls would be challenging and interesting under ideal conditions; impossible in fog. We spent the next four days in this area, managing to move only 10km. More than a meter of snow fell. My journal entry for May 31, the fourth day:

Up at 4:30 this morning to shovel off the tents. Not much change in weather although wind has died somewhat. Between 50 and 100cm of snow has drifted in around the tents. Takes me almost two hours to clear the tents. Back to bed at 6:00, sleep until 9:30. Sun is strong enough (though not visible) to warm the tent. Still snowing lightly, barometric pressure has risen slightly. Half rations again for dinner tonight. Hopefully this storm (pathetic disturbance, can't really call it a storm) will end soon so we can move. Visibility had improved slightly, so Dave and Peter went exploring. They came back in about two hours having found a way down to the Carroll. The visibility deteriorated as we hurriedly packed, but we were able to follow Dave and Peter's ski tracks. With some luck and the occasional clearing we made our way down to a tributary of the Carroll. After more compass navigation through crevasses in the whiteout, we finally reached the Carroll. At a small lake in a depression in the ice, we topped up our water bottles. We crossed the Carroll by following our compasses and reached another melt pond where we camped for the night. The fog began to lift.

In the morning we could look out along the glacier under the clouds. Directly above us were patches of blue sky. We decided that since we had run out of food the day before, we would push hard today until we reached the food cache on the Puggs Glacier, almost 30km away.

...breakfast: 3 tablespoons of granola... lunch: four crackers, no condiments... As we continued north on the Carroll, the sky cleared. Our route took us east onto the Tsirku Glacier then south east onto the Muir Glacier until we finally reached the last obstacle before the Riggs Glacier and our food. After ascending an icefall, the snow softened by the afternoon sun, we reached the top of the Riggs.

The weather was perfect, but it still took us an hour to locate the cache. All that was visible were the tops of three wands sticking up, the cache was buried under almost two meters of snow. We celebrated by gorging ourselves on the treats in the cache before crawling into our bags at midnight.

In the morning, Peter complained of sunburned eyes. We didn't notice that he was almost blind as we packed up the camp. Skiing was fast on the morning crust, and we covered about 10 km before lunch, but Peter was suffering incredible pain and unable to continue. We decided to camp and put Peter and his bandaged eyes to bed.

The hot June sun beat down on us. A slope above us cleared itself of wet snow. The avalanche roared over some rock slabs and poured onto the glacier not far from the camp. We had anticipated this, and put the camp a safe distance away. Still, the spectacle froze us like statues and raised our heart rates a beat or two.

The rest of us crossed the Riggs to an unnamed, 1600m peak. We reached the summit easily on skis, and were rewarded with views of Glacier Bay to the south, and our last distant views of the Fairweather Range.

Peter was unable to continue for the next two days. We spent the time reading and relaxing. The weather deteriorated again to light rain and poor visibility. We had to be at Glacier Point by noon on June 8 to meet our plane. That was only two days away and we had over 50km and several glaciers to go.

On June 6 we skied up off the Riggs and onto a western tributary of the McBride Glacier. Our original plan had been to go north on the McBride into the Takhinsha Mountains, then turn southeast to the Casement Glacier, but too many days had been lost to bad weather. We intended to take a short cut, but the glacier became too broken up. We backtracked and turned east up an ice valley passing just north of Sitth-gha-ee Peak. The map showed a steep icefall in the pass; we weren't sure if this

would go. With no other choice we tried the route. The icefall was still intact and not too steep, so we were able to make it through. The weather cleared slightly and we were treated to misty views of the McBride and Casement Glaciers. We skied down to the Casement as dusk arrived.

More fog greeted us in the morning and the visibility was again zero on the glacier. We followed our compasses all morning and eventually reached the Davidson Glacier. Now the rest of the trip would be downhill (literally!); the terminus of the Davidson was at Glacier Point. The visibility improved as we descended and soon we could see Chilkat Inlet. We skied across patches of bare ice, as the snow thinned out. At the edge of the icefall, we camped and marveled at the green hillsides above us. This was the first vegetation we had seen for weeks.

On a trip this long, passing through areas this remote, one tends to get absorbed in one's own little world. Our world had been just the five of us and the stuff we carried on our backs. We had had no contact with the outside world, and had seen no-one else (except the three climbers on Fairweather) for the last five weeks.

The isolation was both relaxing and exciting. But, had the outside world forgotten about us? Time was running out and we were going to be late. I attempted to contact one of the many planes flying by over the inlet, but something was wrong with the radio. No-one heard. We wondered if Haines Airways had forgotten about us, five weeks had passed since we last talked to them.

Little snow remained on the glacier, and we spent much time weaving back and forth among the seracs working our way through the crevasses. The scenery was spectacular; blue-gray ice all around us, red-brown mud along the edge of the glacier, and always above us, the green of the hillsides. When we finally reached the toe of the Davidson it was early evening. After bushwhacking along the river for about 3km we finally reached the beach. We were late, about seven hours late, and no plane. We spent the night camped on the airstrip. A hastily lit signal fire caught the attention of a passing prawn boat. We asked them to take a message to Haines Airways. Their message wasn't necessary, at nine the next morning, a plane landed. We hadn't been forgotten!

Later, back in Haines in the rain, we lunched on potato chips, Oreo cookies, pop, Twinkies... junk food at last!

Life in the mountains is governed by weather, a fact hard to avoid. We were lucky to have had good weather for the ascent of Mount Fairweather, but there were many areas we passed through and never saw because visibility was so poor. The Takhinsha Mountains, just west of Haines, are spectacular, cut every few kilometers by glaciers (the Davidson is one) flowing to the sea. We saw them only in the distance from Haines. The Alsek Range, through which the Tennas Tikke Glacier flows, remains, for us, veiled in cloud. What we did see though, on the good and not-so-good days, shall remain imprinted in our minds.

Summary:

We left Vancouver in two small trucks with all our food and gear, and drove to Haines Alaska via the Alaska Highway. The 2750km trip took three and a half days. In Haines we contacted Gulf Air (907-784-3240) in Yakutat who flew us and our equipment to Dry Bay, 180km west of Haines. After waiting for the weather to clear, our three food caches were flown in along our route by Gulf Air's ski plane. We arranged with Haines Airways (907-766-2646) to pick us up in five weeks at an airstrip on Glacier Point about 20km south of Haines. Both airlines were very helpful to us but only Gulf Air has the aircraft and experience to land on glaciers.

The ski traverse took us from Dry Bay to Haines, a distance of 300km, by following a system of interconnecting glaciers. On the way we made ascents of Mt. Fairweather, Mt. Eliza and three unnamed peaks. Distances and elevations are a mixture of standard and metric units because we used both American and Canadian maps.

After the traverse we drove back to Vancouver over the Stewart-Cassiar Highway in about 3 1/2 days.

Mt. McArthur, West Ridge

Don Serl

Michael Down, Jim Haberl and Don Serl made the first ascent of the west ridge of Mt. McArthur on May 25 - 26,1991. Don Serl's moving account of the near-tragedy following the climb appears in the 1992 keynote on page 3.

Mt. Upton

Douglas Smith

In 1968, Philip P. Upton made the first landing at Mount Logan's high camp (5,300m). Five hundred more trips followed without incident to that most inhospitable site, and the remarkable career of the former chief pilot of the Arctic Institute of North America included many other flights throughout the St. Elias Mountain Range.

Twenty-three years after that first landing, being the approximate length of Mr. Upton's service in the Yukon, the mountain to be named in his honor was ascended for the first time. Mount Upton is located at the heart of a triangular massif bounded by the Logan, Hubbard and Walsh Glaciers. The 3,520m summit is 22km due north of the McArthur Peak of Mount Logan.

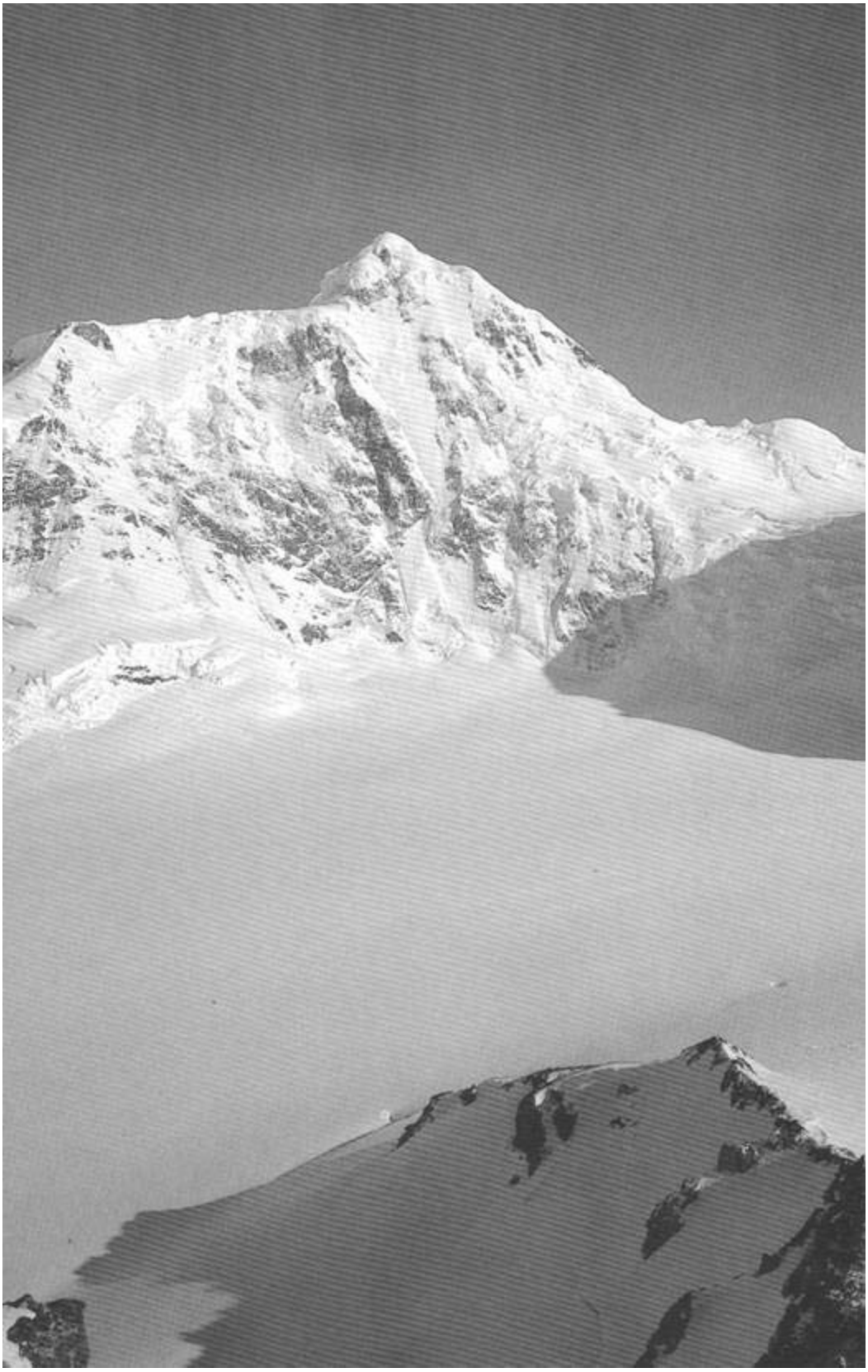
After an overnight stay on the east shore of Kluane Lake, a breathtaking 110km flight delivered our five-member expedition onto virgin glacial snow. Doug Smith, Ron Van Leeuwen and Dale Cote led by Troy Kirwan and Barry Blanchard, established base camp (2,560m) in a sheltered basin at the southerly foot of Mount Upton.

While the first of eight days on the glacier was overcast with light snow falling, this was the only bad weather we experienced in an uncharacteristic week of clear skies. On June 11 we made a 2km traverse of part of the easterly arm of the cirque, encountering varied terrain including thigh-deep snow, many pitches of steep ice and several rocky pinnacles. Upon reaching the first summit (3068m) on this ridge we had a spectacular view of Mounts Queen Mary and King George across the crumpled expanse of the Hubbard Glacier. We carried on to another summit (2840m) and completed the first day of climbing by a descent from the col, (2600m).

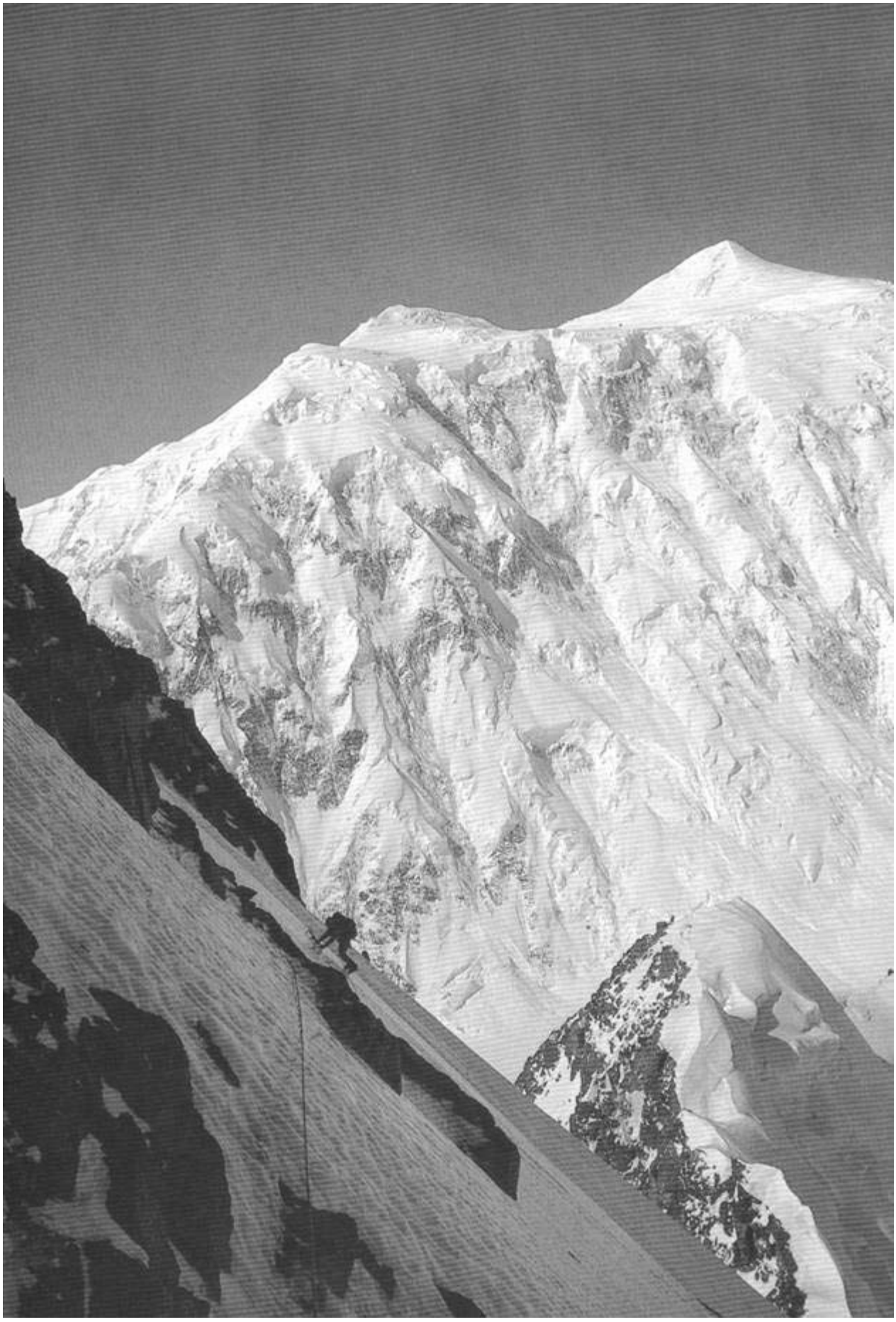
The attempt on Mount Upton began with an inspiring view of the sunlight hitting Mount Logan at 4:30 a.m. By 9:00 a.m. we had reached a crest permitting the first look across the Walsh Glacier at the Centennial Range. When we finally reached the windswept summit of Mount Upton we placed a small Canadian flag in honor of a great aviator. My elation on this untouched peak exceeded that on attaining mountains of twice the elevation.

After a day of reflection, we completed our 6km trek of the eastern ridge by adding peaks of 2760m, 2840m, and 2680m along the way.

Many thanks to all those who made



The NW face of Mt. McArthur. (Don Serl)



On the west ridge of Mt. McArthur. Mt. Logan E Peak behind. (Don Serl)

Camp 1 on the west ridge of Mt. McArthur, looking north across the Logan Glacier toward Lucania (c) and Mt Steele (r). (Don Serl)

On the west ridge of Mt. McArthur, Mt. Logan E Peak behind, Catenary ridge at right. (Don Serl)

this expedition so successful. Jim Elzinga, for taking the author's idea from an Argentine airport to a truly great adventure; Andy Williams, for his expert flying, so appropriate on this occasion; Canadian Airlines, for easing an earlier-than-planned departure; Alan Rayburn for his research in recorded ascents and place names; and to you, Phil, (1919-1984).

Kluane update

Rhonda Markel

During the 1991 climbing season 16 groups climbed or skied in the Icefield Ranges of Kluane National Park Reserve. These groups were made up of 83 people who spent a total of 1497 person-days in the mountains.

Andrew Lawrence, Rosemary Buck, Debbie MacLean and Wade Angevine did a circuski of Mt. King George and Mt. Queen Mary. They were successful in their climb of Mt. Queen Mary.

Al Bjorn, Ray Breneman, Bruce Sundbo and Rick Mossman were weathered off Mt. Hubbard.

Jeff Marshall, Dave Chase, Jeffrey Everett and Glen Reisenhofer were successful in climbing the Shoening Ridge to King Col, but were weathered off King Peak.

Al Dennis, Jack Bennetto, Tony Moore, Linda Zurkirchen, Garry Nixon and Rob Whelan were successful on their climb of Mt. Logan via the King Trench.

Doug Rossillon, Renoud Rossillon, Rudolf Homberger and Hansvelt Brunner were successful on their climb of Mt. Logan via the King Trench.

Walter Goetz, Reto Ruesch, Thomas Speck, Uwe Nootbaar, Matthias Berndt and Hermann Konrad were successful on their climb of Mt. Logan via the King Trench.

Jim Gilpin, Brian Rose, Arno Springer and Cindy Breitkrentz spent some time skiing in the Pinnacle Peak area.

Chic Scott, Don Vockeroth, Don Forest, Brad Robinson, Terry Duncan, Neil Jolly, William Louie, Tom Swaddle, Bill Hawryschuk and Robert Bellis were successful on the west summit of Mt. Logan.

Mike Marolt, Steve Marolt, Robert Perlmutler, Pat Callahan, Penn Newhard and Jim Gile were not successful on their climb of Mt. Logan via the King Trench.

Michael Down, Jim Haberl and Don Serl were successful on the West Ridge of Mt. McArthur.

Basecamp with Mt. Upton behind. (Barry Blanchard)

Martyn Williams, Francois Tremblay, Jacques Grenier, John Bond, Patrick McCool, Clifford Holtz, Ruth Holtz, Pat Morrow and Baiba Morrow were successful on their climb of Mt. Logan via the King Trench.

Dean James, Tom Stimson, Rick Wentz and Alex McNab were successful on their climb of Mt. Logan via the King Trench.

Don McLeod, Mike McLeod and Lane Moore were not successful on their climb of Mt. Logan via the King Trench.

Barry Blanchard, Troy Kirwan, Ron Van Leeuwen, Dale Cote and Doug Smith were successful in the first ascents of Mt. Upton and Peak 3200.

Hugh Culver, Dan Culver, Brian Finnie and Alan Fletcher were successful on their climb of Mt. Logan via the East Ridge.

Ken Delbos-Corfield, Michel Alexandre, Pierre Bay, Fernando Pintada, Daniel Vargas, Daniel Dupuis, Jean-Louis Bonnentien and Xavier Taupin were successful on their climb of Mt. Logan via the East Ridge.

An attempt was deemed successful if one or more members reached the summit.

The Kitlope traverse

Pierre Friele

I

Rolling down 16th to Dundarave to do our last minute shopping, the van's engine was revving high, I pumped the brakes, "Hey Ken they work pretty good". He'd had them apart that morning; after sitting for months the brake drums had seized. "No problem, they're simple to work on" he said, with an air of experience.

This shopping was for our most important articles: an inexpensive light pruning saw, which had to fit along the inside stays of the pack, and the last copy of Tom Sawyer, an abridged version, purchased from a musty second-hand shop. We ripped the covers off to save weight. This was the only reading material between us, well, except for some scientific articles by Geist on ungulate social behavior.

Once onto the Chilcotin plateau we felt home free, in familiar territory. On past Hanceville, our usual turn-off to Chilko Lake, and to the mandatory stop at the Tatla Lake bakery. The last time I'd been there was on a hobo circuit when I was eighteen. From Tatla, I had walked in towards Bluff Lake and from the road I took a compass bearing on Razorback Peak and bushwhacked in to climb it. That was also the last time I had been to Bella Coola. One of my memorable experiences of Bella Coola was the trip down from the crest of the plateau, at 1500m, to sea level in one dizzying drop. In one spot, a stack of three switchbacks are visible if you have the stomach to peer 900m over the edge.

Rolling down that big hill, Ken suddenly moved to the back of the van and perched with his hand on the door handle as if ready to jump. The engine revs were increasing, but steady pumping was checking the speed. "Hey Ken, if you don't like my driving, you can drive." "It's not that" he said, "it's just that I've never done a brake job before."

II

In 1990 an early draft of the Coastal Watersheds Report came out. In the report, the Kitlope watershed (275,000 hectares; comprised of the Gamsby, Tezwa, Kitlope and Tsaytis Rivers) was identified as the only undeveloped, coastal temperate watershed greater than 100,000ha remaining on the British Columbia coast. And it was suggested that it might be the largest undeveloped temperate rainforest watershed left on earth. If we wanted wilderness, surely this was the place to go.

The Kitlope occupies a section of the Kitimat Ranges part way between Bella Coola and Kitimat. Our plan was to get dropped off by boat at Carlson Inlet, on Dean Channel, and to head north along the ridge lines to Kitlope Lake, the heart of the Kitlope wilderness. From the lake we'd build a raft, from logs sawn with our little saw and lashed with our climbing rope and prussiks, and float down to Gardner Canal and the sea - a sea to sea adventure.

From there we'd get picked up by float plane and taken back to Bella Coola. We had contingencies. If we failed to complete the traverse we would return to Carlson Inlet, or if the raft idea proved impractical we'd wait at Kitlope Lake, and on the prearranged day of our pick-up the float plane was to fly over our drop point and the mouth of Kitlope Lake to check for signal flares. Also, if there was a life threatening accident, we carried a small EPIRB, about the size of a walkie-talkie.

III

The mountains looming over Bella Coola looked wild, and rugged. Good for alpine routes... but a ski traverse? A knot hit the pits of our stomachs. All we knew of the terrain in the Kitlope was what we could glean from the topographic maps, and from descriptions and provincial photos in Holland's A Physiographic Outline of BC. There were missing contours all over the map sheets, but over beers in the pub one night (after a Greg Child slide show) we had managed to find a line with no missing contours. We had also determined the crux of the trip, a 20km section at about the midpoint, where the ridge was narrow and sinuous, and the relief such that you could not drop down, at least willingly.

The Kitimat Ranges are described as mountains of"...bold, impressive, monolithic granite, almost devoid of small scale jointing. In places, sheeting is developed on a grand scale, so that the dome-like mountains have huge plates peeling from their sides and tops. Many of the erosional forms in these ranges rival those of the Yosemite in design and grandeur." The round-topped, dome-like mountains, mostly between 2000 and 2300m in elevation, have been heavily glaciated, but only small ridge-cap and north to northeastern cirque glaciers remain. Evidence of the great Cordilleran ice sheet are the giant cirques and sweeping U-valleys that reach sea-level on the west side of the range. With summit elevations of almost 2750m, these glacial troughs give rise to local relief of 1500 to 2500m.

Had we bitten off more than we could chew? By now the prop-wash from Cliff Nygaard's hand-logging boat was returning to the calm of the inlet and his blue and white boat was rounding the corner into Dean Channel, out of sight. Kitlope Lake seemed a long way off, like we were still dreaming it; we had to get going, to feel it, to start the work, or we could sit on these seaweed-covered rocks for 21 days and wait for the plane.

That afternoon we carried our heavy packs to treeline and made our first camp by a small lake ringed by an amphitheater of 300-meter slabs. We coined it Cliff Lake, in honor of our boat driver. The ridge atop the cliffs looked gentle and rolling, good ski cruising, but getting there looked steep. That view from the lake provided an excellent example of the terrain that lay ahead. It looked do-able.

Camp 2: We made 12km along the ridge, but it wasn't a cruise. Our bodies began to ache as the day progressed and the packs got heavier to lift. We are camped on a ridge that divides the Nascall and Skowquiltz drainages. High to medium level cirrus have arrived and were quite thick by mid afternoon. Some cumulus are evident rising above the Bella Coola area.

Morning. Fog and rain. Settle in and wait.

Afternoon. Wind, cloud, and frozen rain. The storm deepens.

Morning. Snow and wind.

Afternoon. Wind begins to loiter.

Evening. Cloud breaking, upper sky clears. Local topography is visible.

Morning. Wind strong, patchy fog, but we've got to move. Our bodies ache from too long lying down. Our tracks are covered and the wind has resculptured the surface. A link with the inlet is severed. Our packs are lighter now after this long stint in the tent.

Camp 3: We moved 9km through the fog

along a snaky route threading a line along the arête. It snowed yesterday evening, in the morning the visibility was too poor to move. Fog and snow flurries all day. We finished reading Tom Sawyer.

Camp 4: Just below the divide between the Nascall and the Kitlope, on the Kitlope side. A 13km day-lots of elevation loss and gain and loss. The ceiling stayed low, about 1000m, and the sun came only in breaks. Because of the low ceiling, we dropped off the ridge from camp 3 and down into the valley via a gully.

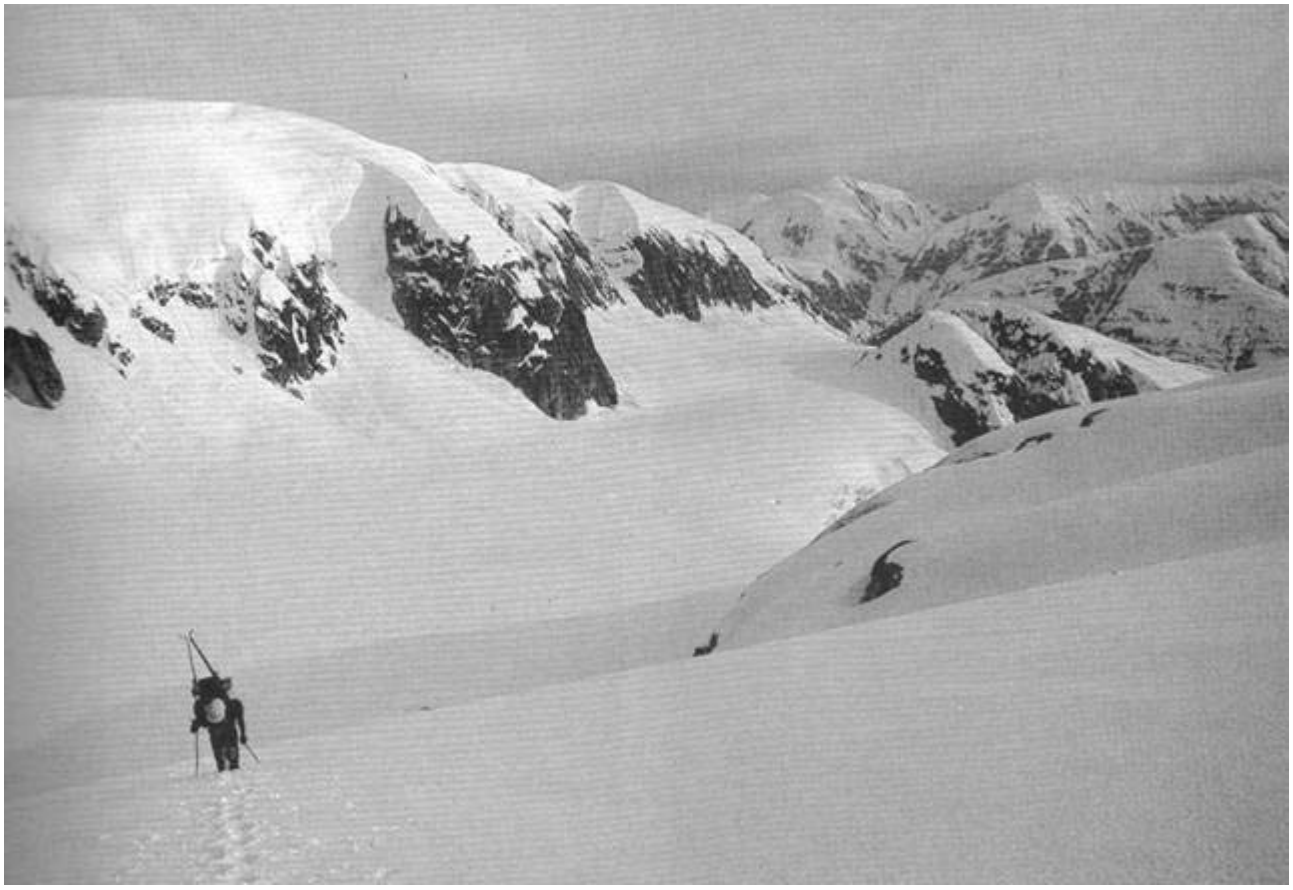
At the bottom — mountain hemlocks — robust, deep green needles and reddish bark contrasting against the stark black, white and gray. The repetitive hoot of the Blue grouse reverberated off the granite walls. Each canyon we passed through today had its own echoing call of resident grouse. In the valley at timberline, in the subalpine hemlocks, we found deeply melted tracks. They meandered down to a scrub-alder patch at the braided beginnings of a river. They were a few days old and filled with the winter litter of needles and cones. By their stride they seemed to be wolverine; but, who knows, maybe goat. This is goat country, steep granite with vegetation growing lushly on the ledges and ramps.

These great granite walls and smooth aprons make me think of Muir, in the early days when he was piecing together his hypothesis for the role of glacial erosion in the formation of the great walls and domes in his granitic arena, the high Sierra. I can easily find myself in his mind, for these valleys and this rack have not likely seen the passage of European feet, unless transported in by air and whisked quickly away again-the only sign remaining, a corner post and line of flags.

The weather was holding us back. We couldn't move unless we could see, for fear of dropping off some edge. Only inching forward, sometimes only a kilometer or two per day, we knew we had to get set up

"Ski touring" in the Coast Mountains. (P. Friele)

Ken Legg breaking trail. (Alejandro Frid)



Kitlope country. (Pierre Friele)

for the crux, to be positioned for it so that if the break came we could move. By now we had read Tom Sawyer twice, reading three chapters in succession, out loud to one another. We had our favorite parts, and our favorite expressions —by hokey.

At one point it seemed that only prayer would suffice. We emptied the matches from our waterproof containers and tied our neckerchiefs to the empty cylinder so that one end of the neckerchief swung free. Inside the cylinder went the bristle end of a toothbrush, and a makeshift prayer wheel was created. Spinning the neckerchief on the toothbrush handle, drinking tea, and reciting many om-mani-padme-om's might have done the trick: although we weren't aware of it at the time.

Camp 7: Zero visibility all day. But we moved anyway hoping that a break would occur. We skied to the summit of Peak 6500+, a snow dome, in a complete white-out. When our skis could no longer find a direction to go up we assumed we were at the top the altimeter assured us that we had summited. We are camped about 100m down from the summit, not more than a quarter mile from our last camp, dug into a wind cirque and waiting. We reviewed our situation and came up with a list:

Half-way make or break list:

1. We are less than half way but can't turn back (technical difficulty).
2. Our pot is developing a hole and we have no spare.
3. Zero visibility.
4. No hope of improvement.
5. Time is running out. (We've taken 10 days to come less than half way and we have less than 8 days to do the rest).
6. Everyone is farting (the grains, buckwheat to be exact).
7. We have excess grain (buckwheat), but we have no more spices.
8. Alex's bindings are suffering stress failure.
9. We've read Tom Sawyer twice.

We woke at 6:15 a.m. and readied quickly -it seemed our break had come. It was cold with gentle flurries and signs of blue. We descended to a col down from the glaciated flank of the snow dome as the weather broke to reveal the long, narrow ridge, the crux of the route. It was the magic hour and the views and moods were stunning. We saw the ridge crest we would travel; along the top of a vertical granite wall.

The early part of the ridge was broad and level and we strode in the early lifting mist and sun shafts. Then the ridge became bumpy and narrow and we had to carry our skis and kick-step up steep bits and side-step down. Big cornices, bergschrunds, and relief- we roped-up a few times to check the feasibility of proceeding. By 2 p.m. we were past the first difficulty, "Now this is feeling more like a ski traverse," said Alex. But as soon as we were able to move quickly again the mist rolled in, the wind picked up, and the horizon darkened: it seemed that somebody was watching, granting us visibility only when needed. This feeling was emphasized when we approached the flank of Peak 7100+. We wanted to bypass the peak in case the visibility worsened on the morrow. The peak was a crux because it rose 600m in front of us and descended 1000m to the col on the other side. The only way was up and over or across a steep snow face perched above tall vertical cliffs.

The ceiling shrouded the peak, so the snow face provided the route at ceiling level. We were tired, it was late, and the dark horizon and moving clouds imparted an ominous mood. When we passed beneath the summit, with dusk nearing, Ken wanted us to drop our packs and climb to the summit. It took some convincing, but we went. On the top the mist blew around us, and only the shadowed outline of the cornice gave perspective. But as we plunge-stepped down, the occasional sunbursts on the distant granite faces and the braided river bottom shimmering in the light gave us our euphoria.

Soon we were at camp, cooking in the darkness. We could look back in the dusk at the 15km of ridge, the huge deglaciated valley of the upper Tezwa and the pocket cirques cascading off the ridge onto the giant avalanche cones below. In the distance was our Snow Dome, the previous camp. We had passed the crux.

To get to the Kitlope Range, we had to descend to a forested pass on the Tezwa/ Kitlope divide. It was a day of transition. We camped by a giant spruce, with the sounds of thrush, its trilling whistle repeated at different pitches, and the rush of a nearby river. The end of our journey was foreseeable, and it elicited a mood of softness and reminiscence among us. We thought of the trip's different moments and stages, and the smells and sounds upon entering the forest. The Devils Club was in bud, buds were bursting on the Ribes and Vacciniums, and the Arum was in bloom giving a touch of color to the forest.

In the morning it rained, but by 10 a.m. only drips from the spruce were ringing on our tent. In the heart of the Kitlope wilderness, the forest was cleansed. We clambered up to the Kitlope range and flew across it, in the spirit of a soaring hawk exploiting canyon thermals above Kitlope Lake, and with the grizzly who left his great tracks rambling on the snowy ridge. We descended through a steep mossy draw,

Above the upper Tezwa. (Alejandro Frid)

Pierre Friele descending toward the lower Kitlope. (Ken Legg)

where sun-spiders reached in through the dense canopy. Bud-burst was recent here too and the leaves were a soft green, not yet hardened by photosynthetic work.

IV

It was time to build our raft. Our camp sat perched on the last sandbar of the Tezwa/ Kitlope divide. We could watch the length of the divide grow and shrink as each diurnal pulse of meltwater issued from the watershed's headwaters. The highest water did not occur until about 3 am, providing an interesting measure of the size of this great, untouched river system.

On the right bank was the Kitlope River, two to three times larger than the Squamish, it rushed constantly like the sound of a strong wind through tall riparian cottonwoods. We tried not to think too much about it: we knew from the maps that it had an exceptionally low drop, with no rapids, but that was all we knew.

On the left bank was the mouth of Kitlope Lake. It was clear, calm, and sandy along its shore. Tracks of moose, bear and wolf were plentiful. There were high claw marks on the alders, and beaver stumps and drag trenches, the place was full of life. But best of all there was a log jam high and dry on the shore, put there by high water level during fall rains.

We spent two days working on the raft selecting and cutting dry logs from the logjam. The little saw worked excellently. Four pieces of red cedar cut from a couple of logs gave us the most buoyancy. The climbing rope, quartered, was the lashing for the main structure which consisted of the two most buoyant logs notched at the corners and lashed to three cross-pieces. About fifteen more logs were used to fill the frame and were secured with sling tape and prussiks. The raft was about 4.25 by 5m and we could all stand on one corner with only a few inches of tilt. This stability gave us some confidence and allowed us to control the butterflies that welled in our stomachs when we were at camp by the river.

In the afternoon of the second day of building we pushed out into the shallows of the lake and poled around, bare-footed and bare-assed, trying to assume the roles of the true piratical pirates: Huck, Tom and Joe, although we couldn't decide who was who. To be prepared rivermen we had to look the part too, with piratical hats and bare calves, and ensolite tubes tied to our waists in case we fell in or hit a log jam. It was to be a 12km conveyer ride to the sea, so we planned the departure to coincide with the rising tide downstream, to slow the latter part of the journey.

V

On May 20th we launched the Kitlope Queen, directly into the current, with a few strong prys on the alder poles. Our gear was tied to the raft in a big pile and our flag was hoisted high. On the first outside bend we passed some cascading falls, debris torrents, and lush green sloughs. Into the next bend, we flung past a log jam and a few bobbing deadheads. We used our shovels as paddles to orient ourselves in the current for the swiftest passage and to avoid obstacles. Tom Sawyer's gang was on the mighty Mississippi; wooded islands and sandy bars slid quickly by- expectations of the would-be pirates rose high.

A few kilometers after the second bend we spied a faded flag waving from the tip of an island. A piratical raid was in order. We paddled furiously for center current, but not hard enough, and too late. We saw the cabin on the shore across a lazy channel about 30m wide. The raft hit the tip of the island, on a large jam of logs, and began to spin away into the main current. Alex and I jumped onto the logjam with the painter to try to pull the raft to the other channel, but in the force of the current the jam began to separate. We sank between the logs and were dragged across them. After some desperate maneuvers we had the raft lashed to a grounded log. Then, stripped of clothes, we swam the icy waters of the bank channel to the cabin. It was a treasure house of hookables —we dove into a bag of Christie's "Pirate" cookies, a package of Fig Newtons, as well as peanut butter and apricot jam on crackers. The cabin site had a sunny yard and we feasted in pure piratical pleasure.

After hooking enough for our last two days and leaving a gracious note) we swam back to the raft. Soon we were in tidal influence about 4km from the sea. The floodplain was lushly meadowed with Fritillaria, lupine, and mint, and slumps of willow and occasional spruce. We saw a black bear on the bank, grubbing for greens in an avalanche path. The current was now visibly lost from the surface, the river was much wider, and we drifted lazily munching our last Pirate cookies and dreaming up future piratical adventures.

Good times on the Kitlope Queen. (Ken Legg)

Details

New ski route in the Coast Mountains, May 1991. Alejandro Frid, Pierre Friele, Ken Legg.

Boat drop at Carlson Inlet and float plane pick- up at head of Gardner Canal, no food drops. Traverse follows Tezwa/ Kitlope divide. =100 km skiing taking 16 days, including layups, and =12km on the Kitlope River on hand-built raft, 2.5 days building, 2.5days Huck Finning—-by hokey.

First ascents: Peak 6500+ (93G/13; 942487); Peak 7100+ (93D/13; 949603).

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Ski remote

Peter Wallbridge & Pete Parrotta

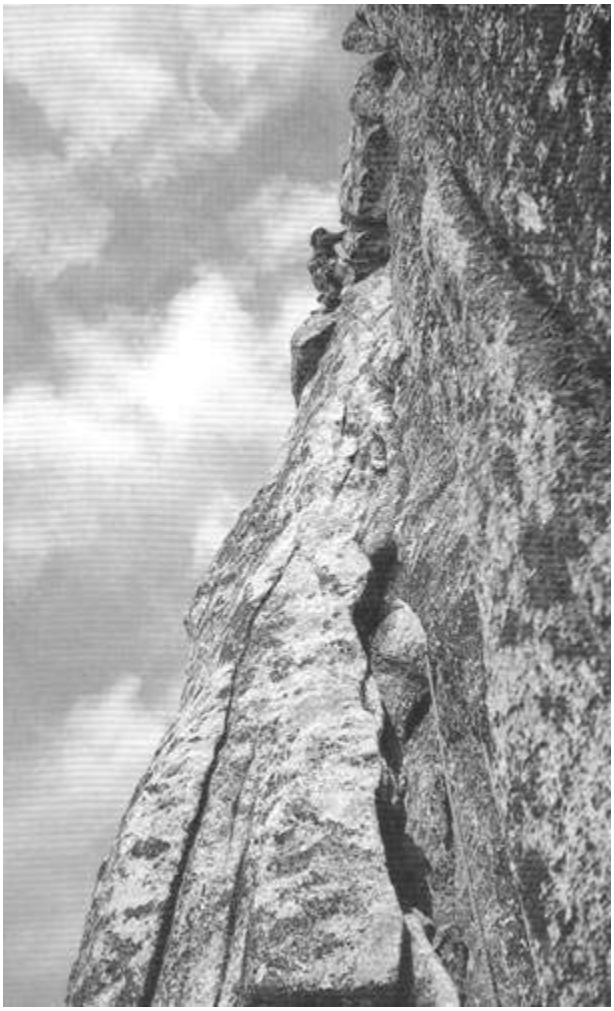
Basecamp with the unnamed first ascent/descent peaks in the background (Parrotta/Wallbridge)

Our original plan was to ski and explore the Foresight Mountain ridge on the south side of the Kimsquit River, but as I peered out of the chopper window I saw more rock than snow. Our nervous (substitute) pilot, who had never been this far north of Bella Coola before, was even more apprehensive when I told him to cross the valley to a more remote glaciation —the Chatsquot/Smaby icefields. This location turned out to be as good a ski mountaineering area as one could ask for.

We established a base camp on a scenic ridge 110km NNW of Bella Coola beside a beautiful snow/ice dome called Mt. Crawford. This mountain provided us with a glorious and challenging, part 40°, 600m vertical (900 in winter) above-the-treeline run, down a ridge into a large bowl and ending in a couloir.

All this you could do before lunch at basecamp. Mt. Crawford was our initial first ascent-descent. The spectacular views from Mt. Crawford offered a contrast between the ugly clearcuts in the Kimsquit Valley to the south and the untouched Gamsby-Kitlope watershed to the northwest. This watershed has been recently identified as the largest unlogged temperate watershed in the world; and is presently being proposed as a future wilderness park.

Michael Spagnut leading on the Minute Hand. (Kobus Barnard)



Kobus Barnard on Ski Boots from Hell. (Emily Butler)

Doman Industries eventually plans to log close to the Gamsby via Chatsquot Creek.

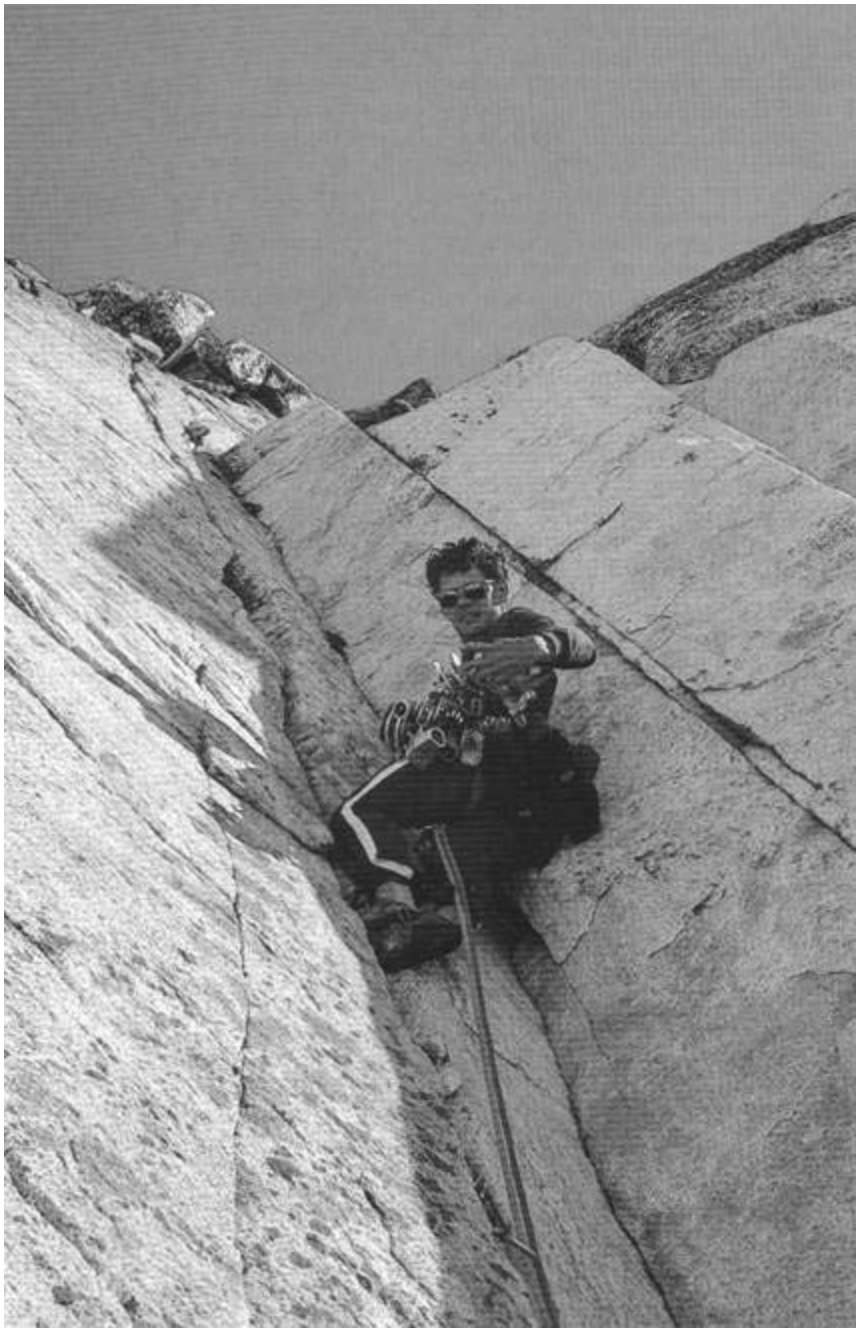
The mountains in this general area range from about 2000 to 2300m but because of the low glaciation and treeline they compare to much bigger and higher mountains on the south coast. You can easily do 1200m vertical without trees on the higher peaks.

Our most productive day was a grueling, hot fourteen hours of climbing and skiing three unnamed peaks up to 2225m. All were first ascent-descents located five to six linear kilometers (ten to twelve on skis) NE of Mt. Crawford. The highest offered 1200m vertical above the treeline.

Weather was about half sunshine, plus two tent-bound days and three partly usable days, some rain, fog and even fresh snow - typical Coast Mountain May weather. Snow conditions ranged from excellent "spring" to crust, slush and even powder. Crampons and ice axes were essential equipment on some mornings when the snow was hard.

The thrill of seeing only our own tracks on these vast expanses of virgin snow was interrupted one day when we observed a line along a steep avalanche slope about 2 l/2 kilometers away. Through the binoculars it turned out to be a large mama grizzly lumbering along with two cubs. Our eyes followed the tracks back to a nearby pass where she had transferred from the Smaby Valley to the Chatsquot drainage. When we crossed that pass the next day we saw some more grizzly tracks. From then on 4725 benchmark was referred to as Grizzly Pass.

North Central Coast British Columbia
May 11-23, 1991



Michael Spagnut on the first pitch of Vertex. (Muriel Pacheco)

Garibaldi granite

Muriel Pacheco

Andy Pacheco and I visited central Garibaldi Park in early July 1989 with Peter Stone. It seems that although several people had seen the solid granodiorite of Crosscut Ridge no one had been masochistic enough to carry the necessary climbing gear 20km to the base. By using skis we were able to make it to Gray Pass in a long day. We approached the area via Brohm Ridge, but unfortunately the road was impassable without a 4x4 so we were forced to hike up the road, carrying our skis, for several hours.

Peter, who is not a technical climber, went peak-bagging while Andy and I climbed the teeth of Crosscut Ridge. We climbed the highest peak on the south end, and named it "Honeymoon Spire" (to honor some friends whose wedding we were missing that weekend). The next day we climbed the broad peak on the north end of the ridge, naming it the "Caboose", and started trying to traverse the ridge. We climbed one or two more peaklets but came to an impasse (we needed pins) and decided to call it a day. Peter joined us to do the scramble up Hour Peak and we had a look at the Minute Hand, a small but locally-famous unclimbed spire. We decided twelve meters of climbing wasn't worth the effort, at least on this trip.

We had allowed ourselves only four days for the trip but we couldn't help noticing that the same solid rock also formed the impressive west face of Isosceles. We were going to be back!

Two years later we were back. This time we were joined by Kobus Barnard, Emily Butler, and Michael Spagnut.

In BC, the summer of '91 will not be remembered for its good weather, but miraculously this trip hit the five-day stretch of sunshine in July. I unfortunately had got the worst cold I've ever had just before we were to set out. I decided I needed an extra day to recover. Andy, Kobus and Emily left together and Michael and I left the following day. Andy and I had split the climbing gear and I had given him enough food for a day

and a half. I must not have been thinking too clearly as I ended up carrying the four days worth of food for both of us! Michael and I met the others at Gray Pass just as the light was dimming. My nose was stuffed, my head was pounding, and I could barely hear. I had more than one second thought of the sanity of doing this trip. Andy and the others had arrived the same day as they had decided to take a leisurely two days to ski in. The views from the bivi site were great; we even got to see the northern lights that evening as we peeked out of our sleeping bags.

The following day greeted us with ultramarine blue skies. We waited long enough for the snow to soften somewhat for the traverse to the base of Isosceles. I left my skis near the beginning as I was not confident enough in my skiing ability to cross the hard snow. It didn't take us long to get to the base of our proposed route, the obvious buttress in the middle of the west face of Isosceles. Kobus and Emily chose a line from the toe, starting in a left-facing corner. Michael, Andy and I chose to start up a clean right-facing crack several meters to the right of them. We could not believe the quality of the rock. It was certainly some of the best we had climbed in the mountains. In the blazing sunlight the rock looked like the bleached bones of a dinosaur, pushing out of the snow.

Both of our climbs continued straight to the summit. Emily named their route Ski Boots From Hell due to the unusually large mass and volume of Kobus's footwear, which she dragged to the top. We called our route Vertex, due to the directness of the line.

We all met at the summit for lunch. Kobus pointed out two peaks which he had climbed a few years back, as a side trip from a ski traverse of the McBride Range. Incredibly, these remote peaks, located between Pitt and the Forger group, received a second ascent a few months later by John Clarke and Paul Adam. These peaks will probably be named after corrupt Socred ex-cabinet ministers, but Kobus prefers the unofficial names of "Me First", and "John Second". Kobus and John, of course, don't care who climbs things first, as long as it's them.

Which brings us to the Minute Hand. After two years it was still only twelve meters high, but it did have the additional incentive that other people wanted to climb it. It was now mid-afternoon, and the natural thing to do would be to return to camp. Without discussion, we trudged towards the Minute Hand.

Emily decided she had done enough for the day before we got there, and headed back to camp. When we came within sight of the pillar, overhanging on all sides, I became concerned about doing the usual "middle of the night thing" and ran away as well. The MEN pressed on.

Andy and Kobus wisely let Michael lead the menacing looking pillar. Kobus handed Michael the pins and the hammer, but Michael refused them, saying "I've never placed a pin on a free-climb. I will climb it clean or not at all." Still unprotected, on a ledge four meters up, with 5.10 climbing below him, the crux immediately ahead, and only a thin seam available, Michael said "Would it be possible to tie those pins and hammer to the rope?". Thus another man's purity was lost forever. Only one person could stand on the summit at a time. Two people were lowered and then they anchored the rope so that the last person could descend by rappelling off the opposite side of the pillar. Thus, the Minute Hand was left without a trace of their passing, except for a barely noticeable pin scar. They arrived back at camp at dusk.

The following day Kobus and Emily went to climb the three isolated spires on the south end of Crosscut Ridge, and do some early July skiing. (Kobus left some great looking tracks on Luxor). Michael, Andy, and I, did a climb on the unnamed peak immediately north of the "Caboose". Looking at the face from afar, Andy assumed we would be climbing the obvious easy-looking chimney system; Michael however had different ideas. From the base he pointed out what he claimed to be a plausible route connecting indistinct seams to the right of the chimney. It looked feasible to me, as long as I didn't have to lead it, and in the end Andy agreed to give it a try.

The warm days had been melting the snow at a fast rate, and the first pitch of our route required crossing a moat to get onto vertical rock. Since it was Michael's idea we generously let him lead this pitch, which turned out to involve about fifty meters of awesome face climbing, with moves to 5.11. No longer pure, Michael placed two more pins mid-pitch much to the belayer's relief. The rest of the route was thankfully easier, and very enjoyable, despite some rubble higher up. We returned to the camp after a short day, and skied out the following morning.

As we trudged down the final miles of logging road the familiar mixture of smells of damp soil, moss, and diesel returned. Wait a minute... my sense of smell was back. My cold was gone. I had discovered the cure for the common cold: A trip to the mountains.

Route descriptions:

"Honeymoon Spire": The highest point on the south end of Crosscut Ridge. The route follows cracks on the south-east face. 5.9.

"The Caboose": The broad, northernmost summit of crosscut ridge. A short crack system on the east face leads to easy scrambling. 5.10-.

Isosceles Peak, Ski Boots from Hell: Begin in a left facing corner near toe of central buttress, and head straight up, keeping just left of the crest. 5 pitches, up to 5.8;

Isosceles Peak, Vertex: 5 pitches to 5.10b.

The Minute Hand: Climb the easiest line on the E side, 5.10+.

The Good, The Bad and the Ugly: This route is on the NW side of the minor summit immediately north of Crosscut ridge. Climb the face to the right of the obvious chimney, then connect ledge systems up to a prominent corner high on the face. 5 pitches, with climbing to 5.11a/R.

South to North skyline traverse of the three isolated southern pinnacles of Crosscut Ridge: Climbing is mid fifth class. If done independently, only the first, phallic-like, spire requires 5th class climbing.

Skis to Cerberus

John Baldwin

It's one of those big peaks on the outside edge of the Coast Mountains where the ice slops off the large icefields into the deep coastal valleys. We had skied past it several times. Once we had even skied around to within three hundred meters of the summit. But we had always been on a long traverse and the rare combination of time and weather had never come along. So nowhere we were (Steve Ludwig, Helen Sovdat and I) trying to load one week of food into our packs and another onto our toboggans. The idea of the toboggans had seemed natural enough, but crazy carpets are next to impossible to find in Vancouver in May and we ended up with clear versions from the hardware store that were probably meant for outhouse windows. We customized them so that we could tie the

plastic neatly around our food and after staggering along the Nusatsum River road until we reached snow, we began to drag our creations behind us. They worked well on the flat but we quickly discovered that there were no freebies in getting two weeks worth of food up a hill. The real test came when we left the road and skied into the woods. After a few hours of wrestling the things through tree wells we felt like we had spent the day lifting weights. At one point Helen was wrestled to the ground by her "boggy" which had swung sideways and was hanging off a deep snowbank over a creek. Steve and I watched helplessly as a large bag of oatmeal dropped into the water. Luckily, we were able to rescue everything and continued on our way.

The next day we left the trees behind as we started the long traverse around to Ape Lake. This began with a steep sidehill overlooking the deep valley of the Noieck River and then followed a scenic bench into the large alpine area just west of Ape Lake. On the third day we continued onto the Noieck Glacier and cached five days of food on a rock island north of Mt. Fyles. We kept the toboggans and climbed through a pass at the head of the Fyles Glacier. To the north the skyline was littered with the jagged outlines of the wild peaks around Arjuna —it looked like a sketch from a fairytale. The pass itself marks a sort of gateway onto the Monarch Icefield and one is greeted with views of tremendous icefalls and the huge expanse of the Jacobsen Glacier. The following three days brought a weak storm during which we managed to move our camp up to 2450m, underneath Chili Tower. And on May 14 we headed off towards Cerberus!

Approached from the north Cerberus does not look hopeful as a ski ascent. The spectacular north face is loaded with flutings and bulges of ice, and previous ascents generally ended up on the long, class-four southeast ridge. Avoiding all of this we skied around to the south side of the mountain to where we had previously found a snow route that spirals clockwise all the way to the summit. We left our skis below the first bergschrund and kicked steps up the last 150m. The summit was enveloped in its own cloud cap and as the wind periodically tore holes in this we were treated to spectacular views of the Ha-iltzuk Icefield to the south and occasional glimpses of the lower reaches of a glacier far below. The clouds continued to develop in the afternoon but we returned to camp rather elated in the flat light.

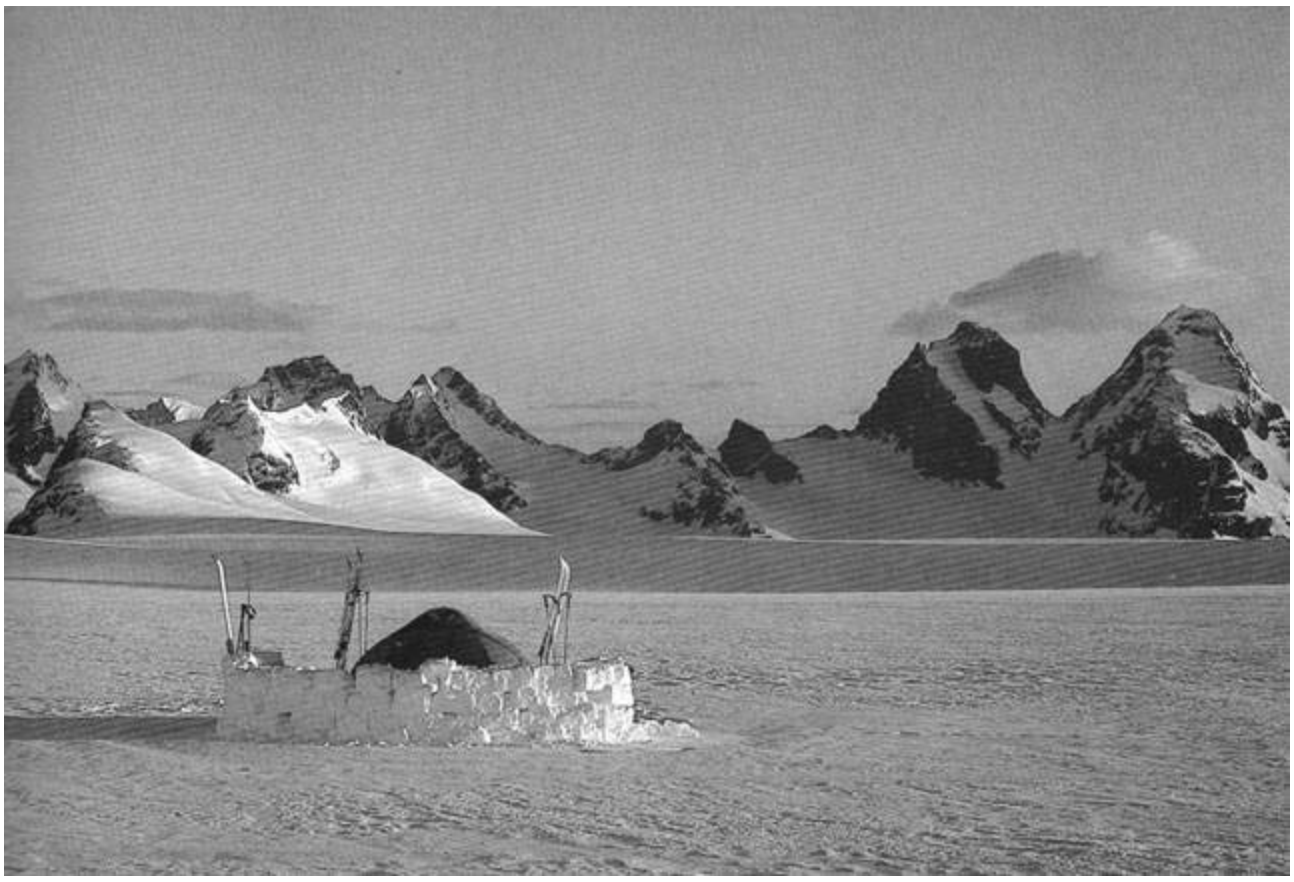
Looking down the Taleomy Glacier to Cerberus and Sciron. (John Baldwin)

A dusting of snow overnight dampened our prospects for the next day but we set off anyway, climbing through the shoulder immediately west of Chili Tower. The previous day had been spectacular enough, but as we dropped to the snow basin below it was clear that it would not rival today: fragments of cloud and mist were burning off to frame the north side of Cerberus against a clear blue sky. We skirted across this small basin and skied most of the way up the south face of Geryon to leave our skis at the rock below the west ridge.

Coupled with the view of Cerberus was now a view of the entire basin of the Taleomy Glacier and there didn't seem to be any question that none of us had ever been in a more spectacular spot. After an easy scramble to the summit we jump-turned down the south face and, in the afternoon, skied over to Dagon (or Daygone as Steve called it!). In complete contrast to the ruggedness of Geryon, Dagon lay in the midst of the flat expanse of the Monarch Icefield, rimmed on one side by Monarch and on the other by the twin peaks of Jacobsen.

The following day saw us moving back down the Jacobsen Glacier as thin wisps of morning cloud dissipated. Dropping our packs we headed up the 2835m peak

Geryon and Cerberus from the north. (John Baldwin)



Camp below Chili Tower, twin peaks of Mt. Jacobsen on the right. (John Baldwin)

adjacent to Mongol. From its summit ice seemed to pour from every direction deep into surrounding trenches that curved out of sight to join the deep coastal valleys. The most spectacular of these was the entire basin of the Taleomy Glacier which lay spread out to the south of us, walled on the far side by the ramparts of Cerberus and Geryon. We left the peak before the sun softened the slopes below and the ease with which we skied back to our packs was in complete contrast to the ruggedness of the scenery. Snowside remained as the last big peak along the edge of the Icefield and while the weather held we decided to try for it. We returned to our food cache on the Noieck Glacier and rather than move camp out onto the War Drum Glacier we spent the afternoon lounging on the only bare rocks for miles around. The day was hot and, enjoying the much-needed rest, we bouldered in our inner boots and found several pools large enough to bathe in. Overnight the snow froze up hard and we set off early for Snowside, schussing out onto the wide-open War Drum Glacier. We climbed through a pass north of Snowside (whose east side is an impressive rock face!) and contoured around to its northeast side to where a steep glacier led several thousand feet to the summit. This was badly crevassed and we had no choice but to leave the skis and kick steps up the snow ridge adjacent to the glacier. Higher up we crossed this and continued through ice feathers and rime to the peak. The summit itself was a narrow snow arête that rose out of the wild flutings on the west face, and the feeling of height that it gave was very reminiscent of the summit of Mt. Waddington which could be seen far to the southeast. East of us lay the flat expanse of the Monarch Icefield and the row of peaks that tower along its western slope. Rugged inlet country lay to the west, and far to the north the snowy mass of the Kitimat ranges stretched as far as the eye could see. We downclimbed our steps and returned to camp somewhat unhurriedly. Dinner on the rocks brought a pleasant end to one of our best days in the mountains.

We were down to our last few day's supply of food and with a change in the weather the next day we decided to quit while we were ahead. Our return to the car was much easier without the toboggans, and with intermittent rain squalls and fog we eagerly moved back into the trees. We were greeted at the car by little stubs of yellow skunk cabbage that had grown up in the woods and we drank freely of the wonderful clear running water that is so much appreciated after a couple weeks of melted snow.

Judge Howay revisited... ted... ted...

Kobus Barnard

"That's correct, sir. I was really, truly, honestly, going to be reasonable this summer. I had it all planned. I was going to go to the Bugaboos with my friend Richard - we might even have used the hut. It's not my fault I keep doing this! It's John's fault. That's right, John Clarke. He showed me a picture of Judge Howay's north face. He said wicked things like 'this face has your name on it.' He said 'Paul and I are going into the north side to do this lovely granite horn -perhaps you know of it?' The gall! He said 'we can all do the horn, and then you can do the face with Richard.'"

"I hear that Richard refused to get involved."

"I can't help it if he doesn't really love me. But one of my friends heard of these developments and practically begged me to take her. So if it is not John's fault, it's Muriel's fault."

"Do go on."

"So John, Paul, Muriel, and I met at the head of Stave Lake, scammed a ride up the road, and hiked up the bush. On the second day we climbed the 1770m peak directly north of the Judge. We think it should be called 'The Witness.'"

"You're not serious! You mean you bush-crashed up a measly 1770m wooded bump and think it should be treated as a first ascent? Sounds more like a Boy Scout project to me."

"Well 1770 meters may not sound like a lot, but then we climbed the 1890m one beside it. We think that one should be called 'The Defendant.'"

"Hrrmph, climbing and naming peaks under 2000m as if you were a bunch of real pioneers. Well then, what did you do next?"

"Muriel and I went to try this line on the north face of the Judge, while John and Paul went exploring. The weather wasn't too good, so we went up 300m just to take a look. The next day the weather was a little better."

Muriel Pacheco near the end of the gendarme section of Weenies on Trial. (Kobus Barnard)

"So you and Muriel agreed to give it a serious try?"

"I tried to point out that in spite of the clouds, the weather was sure to get better. I tried to convince her that not knowing how we were going to get down was a minor inconvenience. Surely you see my point?"

"So you went home. I assume that this trip was enough idiocy for one season?"

"When Muriel's husband, Andy, saw the close-up photographs of the face, he insisted we go again with him. Can't you see, I had to go again?"

"So what was the strategy going to be this time?"

"We would canoe the lake, hike the logging road, ford the Stave River, bushwhack directly up to the base, climb the route with all our gear, descend to the col between the two peaks, climb this other route that goes from the col directly up to the summit of the north peak, descend again, and drop into the valley on the south-east side, via the route pioneered by Howie Rode's party in the 1950s. It would probably be the first traverse of the peak!"

"I see. I think you may have to be with us for some time. But tell me, how did it all work out?"

"Pretty well. The first route required a bivi, but we had a great spot for it. There was lots of easy climbing, which was a good thing, since it was perhaps 35 rope lengths, excluding scrambling. We went up the obvious, sweeping buttress, which became a ridge of multiple gendarmes. This led to a large snowpatch. We kept to the right of the snow, going pretty much straight up. It never got harder than 5.7/5.8 and the rock was great. See, you don't have to go to the Bugs for good climbing."

"So the approach caused no difficulties?"

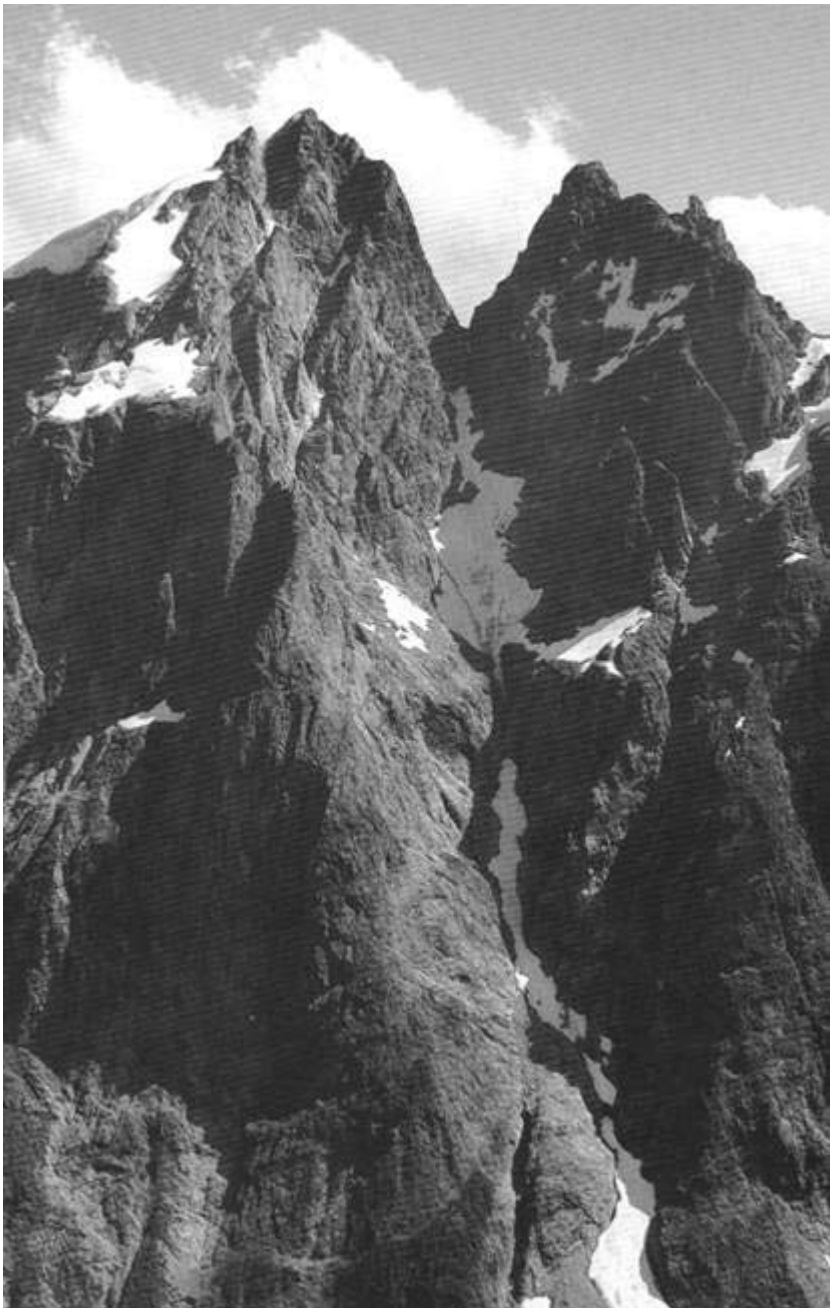
"Well Muriel did get hit by a rock, and we used the rope for some technical mud. But hey, when we got to the base, there was no lineup. We call the route Weenies on Trial."

"So the route ends on the summit?"

"It ends up at the base of the false peak to the east of the main north peak. We scrambled up this, and found a cairn - at least it looked like one - rather small, but I fixed that."

"Hmmm. You seem to be rather abnormally interested in the presence or absence of certain structures on the summits of mountains. How did the second route go?"

"We started on it, but then I dropped a rock on Muriel."



Mt. Judge Howay from the north.
Weenies on Trial is the prominent buttress to the left-hand summit, Forgive Us Our Trespasses is the left-hand skyline ridge of the right-hand (lower) summit. (Kobus Barnard)

"That was not very nice!"

"Well, it wasn't me, it was the rope! But since I was climbing, I guess it was my fault. My friends don't really blame me though - pretty nice, huh?"

"So two rocks fell on this trip, and they both hit Muriel?"

"Yeah, we now call her 'rock magnet.' It's great climbing with her, since you know in advance where the rockfall is going to end up, heh, heh."

"Hmmm. A morbid sense of humor, a very bad sign. Well how was the poor woman after this incident?"

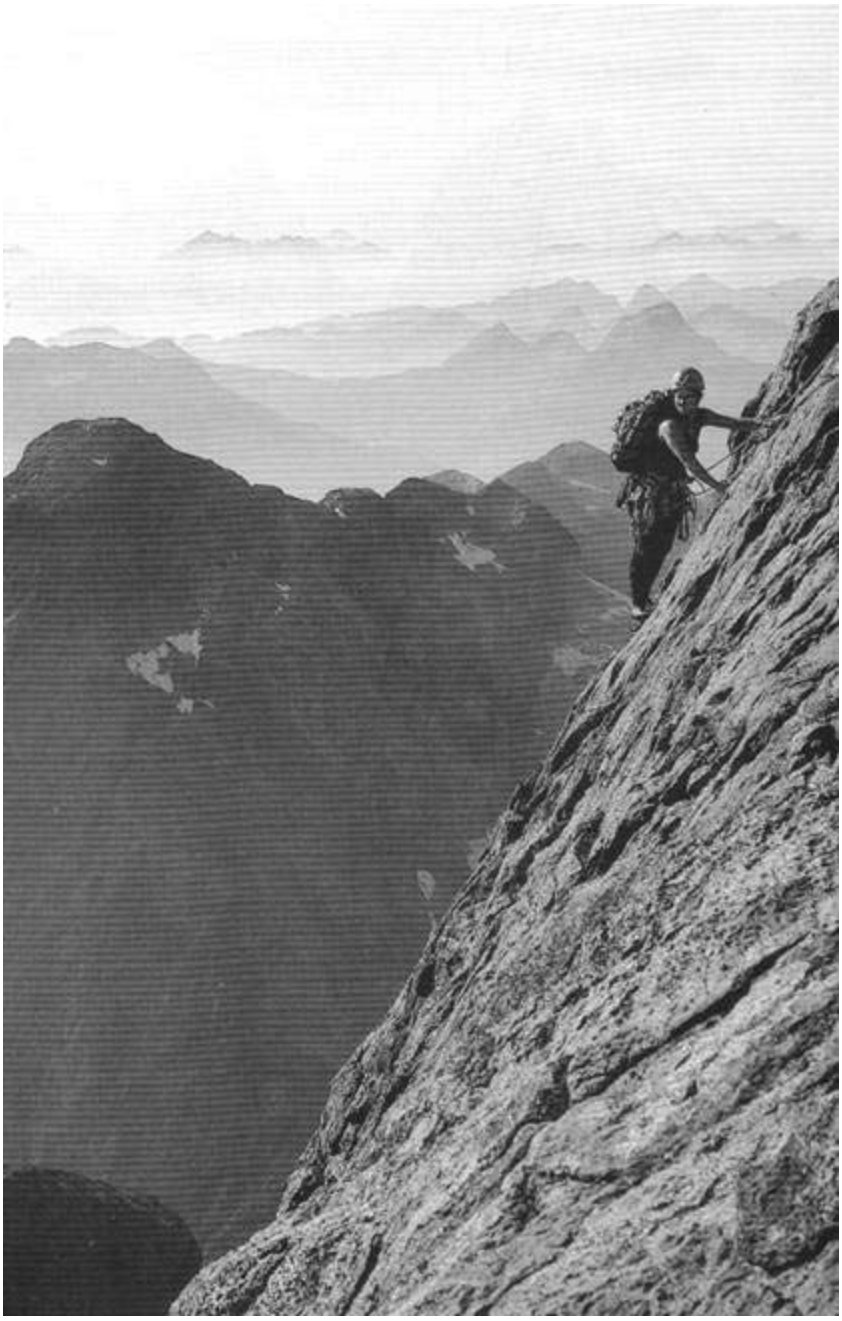
"She got a pretty nasty bruise on her arm. She really couldn't climb, so we went down. Her arm took a few weeks to heal up."

"Since you did the Kindl Buttress on the south side of the south peak in 1988, and have now done Weenies on Trial on the north side of the north peak in 1991, I assume that this was it for the Judge. You didn't go back, DID YOU?"

"It's not my fault, it's my girlfriend Emily's fault. I was tired from the previous trip, but I had agreed to do a trip with her. Can't you see? I couldn't back out."

"You went back."

"She allowed me four days off. Then we went back for the route out of the col. This time we approached via the route pioneered



Emily Butler high on Forgive us our Trespasses. (Kobus Barnard)

Muriel Pacheco on pitch 24 of Weenies on Trial. (Kobus Barnard)

Emily Butler descending the Judge. (Kobus Barnard)

by Paul Binkert's party in 1971, the normal route. We camped high on the north peak. It was great because we were above the clouds, and there was a full moon, and we could take pictures of the sunset and sunrise and..."

"Yeah, yeah. Did you try the route?" "It was great! We got beautiful rock, good protection, interesting climbing for 8 to 10 pitches, and it was never too hard, perhaps stiff 5.7. The wall was incredibly sculptured — you could go anywhere, and….?

"Will you save that stuff for the Alpine Journal! I really don't know what you climbers are on about half the time. I assume that, given your egos, you have named this route?" "We like Forgive Us Our Trespasses." "Is this because no rocks fell, or perhaps because you couldn't wait until Andy and Muriel could go with you?"

"You can make what you like of it. Did you know that 1991 was the first year that two separate parties made it to the top of the Judge? A trio from Vancouver Island made the top in mid-summer. Things are getting crowded!"

"Good grief! I cannot imagine a more insignificant class of information than who climbed which peak by what route on which day. I am afraid that you will have to remain here until you are cured. But don't despair, we ease our patients back into a normal state of being, gently."

"So I get to climb, huh?"

"At the Rock House on Sundays, and on special occasions we let our patients top-rope clean granite within 100 feet of the parking lot."

"But it's not my faaaaaaaaaaaault!"

Mt. Judge Howay: some helpful hints

John Pratt

Mt. Judge Howay holds a special place in the lore of Coastal mountaineering and rightly so, for its notoriously difficult approach, rugged topography, bad weather and horrendous bush ensure it receives

far fewer ascents than would be expected for such a prominent peak so close to a major population center. Following a reconnaissance expedition last year, Dave Tansley and I returned with Kris Holm and climbed the peak 26-29 July and I here offer some hints which may be helpful to "Judge" aspirants; the descriptions given in the Fairley/ Culbert guides are sketchy to say the least and a few "do's and don'ts" can make the difference between a successful and enjoyable trip (I am not saying 'successful = enjoyable', but nor will I indulge in the hypocritical pretense that the two are unconnected!), and the sort of disaster reported by one group who apparently lost enough gear in the Stave River to start up a small outdoor business!

The fun begins at the Cypress Point launch area on Stave Lake (92G8:529684). Canoe from here to a small beach near a disused dock at the head of Stave Lake (92G8:561785), about two hour's paddling. If the lake is low, navigation amid the snags near the end could be tricky, in which case make for the extreme south end of the road at 92G8:551754. Note that it is not profitable to attempt to canoe any distance up the Stave River itself: all approaches should go through the logging camp at 92G8:562791.

From here, follow the logging road over Winslow Cr. and up the east side of the Stave River to the point 92G9:525854; a walk of about 2h. This anonymous spot is marked by two red ribbons (unless they have been removed) and is about 400m beyond a series of rapids in the middle of which is a longish (about 100m) island covered with mature trees. There is a good view of the infamous "class 4" gully which drains the east side of the mountain. From the above reference point, bushwhack about 50m through the woods to the river which runs relatively smoothly. The crossing point is a gravel (stone) beach a little upstream from a similar one on the opposite bank of the river (the latter is where we made our base camp). Culbert states that the river can be crossed "possibly by fording - chest deep". This is true only if you are King Kong. All others must swim. To do this and to have an efficient system for getting our gear across the river we took 125m of polypropylene rope which we doubled up and attached the midpoint to our swimmer (K.H.) who started a distance upriver and struck out furiously in such a manner as to land on the far bank at a point directly opposite his belayers. The double-rope was then anchored with slings and carabiners at both ends and the gear ferried across —by simply pulling on one half of the rope — in seven or eight loads inside knotted, heavy-duty plastic bags, the trapped air inside of which made the loads float well. It would be inadvisable to attempt to hurry this process by ferrying such loads as would tend to lie low in the water, since the pull on them by the fast-flowing river would make the hauling extremely difficult.

By evening, we had a fully-stocked base camp set up on the far gravel-bar and at 6:30 the next morning set off up the mountain for a bivouac-style ascent. The first half-hour or so consisted of a mildly unpleasant bushwhack to the big rockslide at the base of the gully-system. A leftward ascending traverse from the base camp and a blind man couldn't miss it in his sleep!

The actual technical crux of Judge Howay (apart from crossing the Stave!) lies in surmounting this gully. This is done not directly, but via a side gully to the left. This latter is blocked by three huge chockstones which are encountered in descending order of difficulty. The first was wet, partially overhanging and I should say about 8m high. Kris did a brilliant barefoot lead of this and we hauled up the packs before Dave and I followed. I led the second chockstone, and although much higher, it was much easier (easy class 5). The third, near the top, was more of a difficult squeeze than a difficult climb! We exited in the spray of a fair-sized waterfall and quickly crossed the rushing creek (easy) to a rest stop on the other side. It is not possible (or at any rate straightforward) to move up from here into the main gully —i.e., the one out of which this waterfall flows — and so a detour to the right is necessary. A side gully joins the main gully from the right and we ascended the right side of this in mature timber until able to cross back above a large waterfall to the main gully. The actual traverse involved an ugly bushwhack and as far as we could see there is no practical way of avoiding it. Our spirits were not elated by the thought that, at 700m and with a disproportionate amount of our daylight gone, the bulk of the vertical elevation gain still lay ahead.

Matters, actually, were rather better than this implied, for once in the upper part of the main gully, progress is very much swifter. The strategy now is to angle upwards and leftwards, avoiding anything looking worse than what one has already climbed, until one enters the broad, reasonably user-friendly boulders and snowfields, which lead, in a natural and obvious way, toward the upper part of the mountain. By sunset, we were at about 1800m and settled down for a cool bivouac on a rocky outcrop. I had brought a stove and cooked solidly for three hours, but at least got something warm inside us!

We got moving at first light the next day. The snowfields became quite steep for the next 300m or so and passed through a narrow gully. Late in the season, melting would form discontinuities at one or two places in this gully and (as was the case with us) it would be necessary to bypass these on the rock. There is a good deal of loose rubble on these ledges so a degree of caution is required.

The snowfield terminates abruptly at a col between the summit block at left and a minor side-summit at right. The last 60m or so is a class 3-4 rock climb. For us, it was interrupted by a mini-snowfield for which ice axes were necessary, so don't be too eager to cache the rope and ice axes at the aforementioned col! We reached the summit, with visibility less than perfect, at about 8:30 a.m. We read the first (1921) ascent entry of Fyles et al., written on the back of an old Stave Lake Railway ticket, as well as records of the second (1949), third (1965) and subsequent ascents.

Well, that's about it. Just three more helpful pointers before you get going:

Take a roll of marker tape — three would be better — to aid you in your descent through the horrific bush, the forest and the numerous minor gullies. These markers should, of course, be removed during your resulting trouble-free descent.

Try and canoe Stave Lake early in the morning or during the late evening. It can become very rough in the late morning and through the afternoon. Indeed we were holed up at the lumber camp for 6h, waiting for the lake to calm down sufficiently to allow us to return to Cypress Point.

Consult aerial photographs and generally plan out the approach and climbing route in as much detail as you can. A lot of nonsense is talked about planning ruining the "spontaneity" of a trip, but careful fore thought did not lessen our wonderful feeling of accomplishment, and I think it may well have enabled us to avoid that which we all wish to avoid.

Good luck.

Plundering the Pantheon

Mark Landreville

On July 19,1991, Carl Diedrich and I flew with Mike King to Nirvana Pass, ready to spend three weeks of exploration in the Pantheon Range, east of Mt Waddington in the EC's Coast Mountains.

We set up camp in the shelter of trees on the north side of the pass, which offered us tantalizing glimpses of Mts. Vishnu and Byamee through the gray mists. We managed to get our supplies put away and under cover before being pelted with the driving rain which can make the Coast Range so memorable.

After a day and a half of rain and fog, July 21 dawned clear and we hiked through heather and moraines in the early morning to the glacier at the base of Mt. Astarte. We climbed a dirt and snow gully to gain the crest of the Northeast Ridge and enjoyed a delightful ascent to the summit on easy fifth-class rock.

Our next objective was Mt. Vishnu, a labyrinth of gullies and buttresses which loomed to the east of our camp at Nirvana Pass. Our early explorations on the South side of the mountain revealed only rotten, unpleasant-looking buttresses and gullies above the Byamee Glacier, but after hiking around to the Siva Glacier we found what we were looking for- a complex north face of rock, ice sheets and bergschrunds. We returned to the base of the mountain with climbing gear and food for four days. After sitting out weather for five days (and hiking back to base camp for more supplies), we decided to either make the climb or move on.

The next day dawned threatening, but as we pushed further and further up the face, the weather improved. We had some nervous moments on the steep ice which was covered with knee-deep unconsolidated snow. It was a relief to finally find a solid rock anchor near the top of the ice.

The summit ridge was covered with gigantic growths of soggy lichen which looked and felt more like seaweed than any high alpine flora. We moved cautiously along the slimy, shattered rock to a summit from where we could see the real summit cairn, which appeared slightly higher than us and was separated from our summit by a deep, ugly-looking notch. Given the lateness of the hour and the uncertainty of the descent, we decided to be content with the summit that we were on.

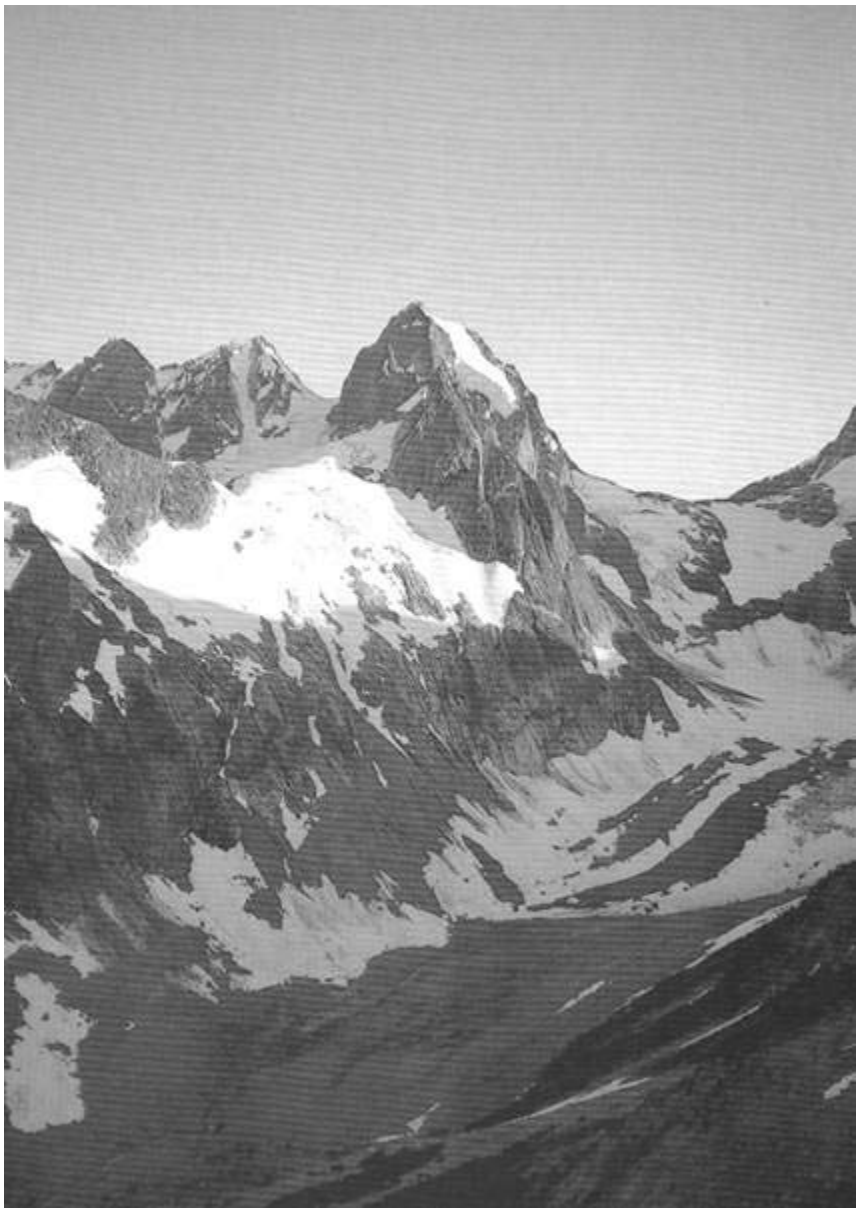
We descended the North Ridge, which was solid in places and horrifyingly rotten everywhere else. Three or four long rappels got us to a deep notch above a northeast-facing ice sheet just as it was getting dark.

After spending a freezing night in the notch (a fine freeze that we could have used on the previous day), we rappelled the ice sheet back down to the Siva Glacier, with the solid ice providing excellent bollard material.

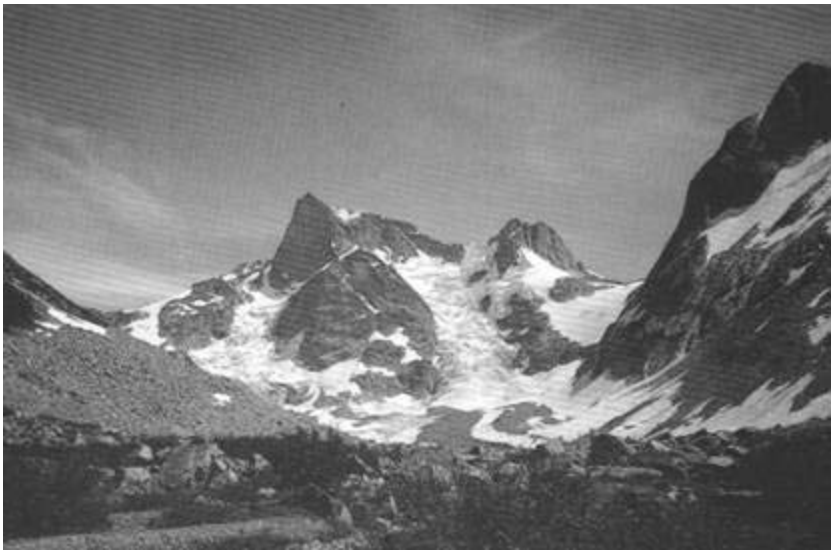
On our way back to Nirvana Pass we met Fred Beckey, who had flown in while we were on Vishnu. The following day the three of us hiked down the upper Twist Creek Basin into the valley below the Septentrion Spires, a delightful basin filled with heather, boulders and a roaring brook.

The next morning, we hiked up to the highest Septentrion Spire, our objective being the unclimbed Southeast Buttress. We kicked steps up the steep, soft snow gully that led up to the notch where the buttress began. After changing into rock shoes, we encountered four pitches of delightful climbing on solid sun-baked rock. We felt like we had plundered a real gem of a climb and we subsequently named it Pirates of the Pantheon. We downclimbed and rappelled the Northeast Ridge back to glacier that we had started from.

After a well-earned rest day, Carl and I hiked over a divide and down to the terminus of the Zeus Glacier. We awoke early the next morning (2:00 a.m.) after a sleepless night of fighting off ravenous mosquitoes and climbed out of the valley to the glacier under the East Ridge of Mt. Manitou. We ascended a short ice face topped by a cornice (which Carl master-



Mr. Manitou. Gitche Gommee Buttress is on the left-hand skyline. (Carl Diedrich)



Mt. Zeus. The Zeus Chute is the prominent right-slanting couloir. (Carl Diedrich)

The northeast face of Mt. Vishnu.
The route traverses from the right onto the center ice sheet and finishes via the skyline ridge. The descent was via the skyline ridge and down to ice sheet on the extreme right. (Mark Landreville)

The Septentrion Spires. Pirates of the Pantheon follows the left-hand skyline on the highest tower. (Carl Diedrich)

fully surmounted with a "gut hook") to the col beneath the ridge. We bypassed the blank-looking start of the ridge via a rotten gully and climbed the remainder of the ridge to the summit, encountering 5 or 6 ropelengths of solid mid-fifth-class climbing. We dubbed the route Gitchee Goomee Buttress, after the great lake where the god Manitou resides.

We arrived at the summit at 10:00 a.m., which gave us a chance to catch up on lost sleep before the long, tedious descent in deteriorating weather to the Manitou/ Zeus Col and then back down to the Zeus Glacier. The cooler weather gave us some welcome relief from the mosquitoes that night.

After moving camp to a basin under the Zeus/ Pegasus col, we made another pre-dawn start and traversed under Athena Tower to the East Face of Zeus, where we ascended the right-diagonalling couloir. After a dicey bergschrund crossing we found delightful moderate snow climbing under excellent, well-frozen conditions in the couloir, which we called the Zeus Chute. We arrived on the cold, windy summit at 9:30 a.m. under dramatic-looking skies. It appeared on the map that we could make a reasonable descent back to the Zeus/ Pegasus Col. We would soon find out that we had made a rather rash assumption.

We spent several hours of tedious downclimbing on front points and made a questionable rappel over a dripping bergschrund. Upon arriving at Pegasus Col, we looked back and saw what the map hadn't shown —a giant ice cliff that almost entirely split the slope leading down to Pegasus Col.

We arrived back at our camp elated with our successes over the past three weeks and glad to be headed back to base camp where more food and coffee awaited us.

We spent the rest of the trip slogging back to base camp in the driving wind and rain and waiting for our flight out. We celebrated with Bruno Burgers in Tatla Lake before embarking on our next Coast Range adventure.

New Routes:

Mt. Vishnu; Northeast Face to North Summit, IV, 50° ice, class 5 rock.

Septentrion Spire; Pirates of the Pantheon (SE Buttress) III, 5.10.

Mt. Manitou; Gitchee Goomee Buttress (E Buttress) III, 5.6.

Mt. Zeus; Zeus Chute (E Face, left side couloir) III, 45° snow.

First ascents by Carl Diedrich and Mark Landreville, July, 1991.

The outliers of the Waddington Range

Carl Diedrich

Surrounding the main peaks of the Waddington Range is a magnificent wilderness region containing dozens of lofty peaks. To the Northwest in particular are Mts. Roovers, Geddes and Bell, outstanding both in their beauty and as climbing objectives. Although not as high as the main peaks of the range and thus much less visited, these peaks have much to offer. Large glaciers, deep canyons and wild forested valleys abound in this region and conspire to make travel difficult. The quality of the rock in this area is generally very poor, so most of the more difficult climbing routes are to be found on the icy north faces.

The opportunity to visit this area presented itself last August when, after several weeks of adventuring in the Pantheon Range, Mark Landreville and I met Heather Paxson at the White Saddle Ranch. The objective of our trip would be to climb the three aforementioned peaks. Chief pilot and master of the skies, Mike King, flew us to the head of the Oval Glacier and dropped us off below the North Face of Mt. Roovers.

The following day we made the second ascent of the Serl/Down route on the North Face of Roovers, a classic ice face leading directly to the summit. The conditions were

Heather Paxson (above) and Mark Landreville on the North Face of Mt. Roovers. (Carl Diedrich)

excellent and we made good time allowing for a leisurely lunch on the summit. From this vantage we were able to study our proposed route to Mts. Geddes and Bell. Although Mt. Geddes was only a short distance away, to get there would require many miles of hard travel to outflank the numerous ridges and icefalls in between. As for Mt. Bell, we could not see the valley to the south of Mt. Geddes and thus were unable to determine what would be required to reach it.

We departed base camp with a week's supply of food and fuel and a bit of uncertainty as to the feasibility of our route. We knew only that we would have to descend several thousand feet to the grizzly bear hell of the lower Oval Valley. From there it would be a long slog up the Parallel Glacier to the base of Mt. Geddes.

The descent was rough and full attention was required to negotiate the many short but steep rock steps. We stumbled down glacial debris, slipping and sliding on steep heather slopes. Access to the valley floor was barred by a thick patch of slide alder, which is most certainly the home of a vicious clan of grizzlies. The bear that chased Guy Davis and me several years ago on the Scimitar Glacier probably lives here and a reunion seemed imminent. Our only option was to plow straight through the brush so we did, making as much noise as possible. It was truly frightening, bear scat was everywhere and a dank, musty odor filled the air. The black flies were so thick that we inhaled them constantly. Miraculously we emerged from the thicket without an encounter, only to be confronted by a 100m death moraine. Somehow we descended this without killing one another. We all agreed that we must find a better return route. Our day was finished with a strenuous slog through an icefall to a glacial flat well short of where we wanted to be.

We reasoned that with a very early start we might just be able to climb the Down/Howe route on the North Face of Mt. Geddes from our present camp. Our early start was bogged down in the breakable crust on the upper icefall. We arrived at the base of the route only to find it running with water. A tentative start turned into a hasty retreat as a barrage of large rocks peppered the avalanche cone. We returned to camp and spent the rest of the day moving it to a more favorable location above the upper icefall.

The following day we made another early start. Again it was too warm. Fortunately there were several other peaks nearby which could be climbed by mostly rock routes. Hermit Peak to the south was the choice of the day. Although not a high peak by local standards, it was not easily conquered. The rock was extremely rotten and our gear was nearly worthless. We made the apparent fourth ascent via the South Ridge. Not surprising was the fact that Fred Beckey and company made the first ascent way back in 1947. On the summit we had a front row seat to the Waddington Range. We were directly west of Combatant Col and about as close to the range as one can get without actually being there. It is truly an awe-inspiring sight.

Our hopes of going all the way to Mt. Bell diminished as we waited another day for cold weather. When it finally did freeze, Heather elected not to accompany us on the North Face of Geddes, so Mark and I went it alone. The route was pleasant on moderately-angled blue ice. We summitted well before noon and enjoyed the customary summit lunch. The view of Mt. Bell was very impressive; it stood secure in its remoteness and inaccessibility. We both realized that it would have to wait for another trip.

We made our descent via a long snow

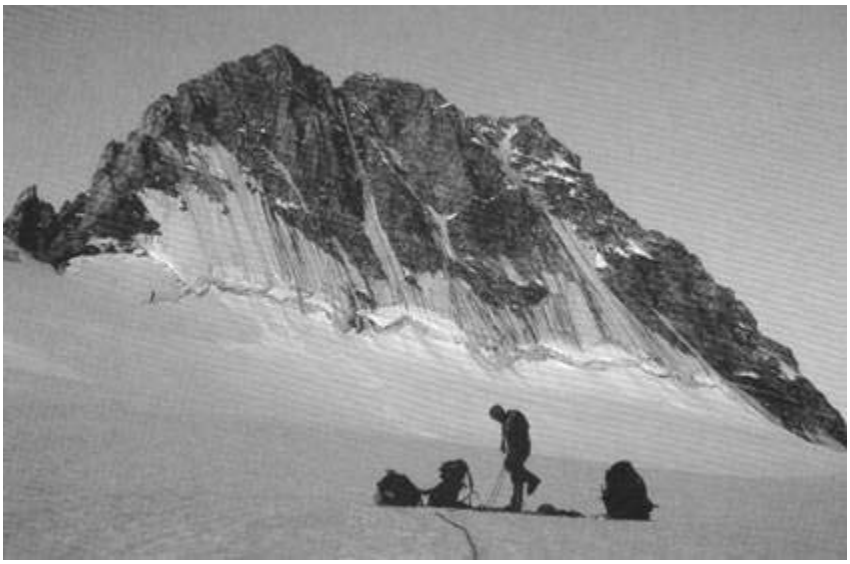
couloir on the south of the mountain and only one rappel was necessary. We arrived back in camp well before dark.

Over dinner we debated what to do with our remaining time. I argued convincingly for another route on the North Face of Mt. Geddes. This proposed route would climb the steep and narrow couloir to the left of the Down/Howe route. Even Heather was psyched for this one and we packed a lunch for three.

The night brought a good freeze and we were at the base of the climb right at dawn. A steep ice wall out of the 'schrund provided the initial excitement. We ran the belay for the first half of the climb. The ice was perfect, solid blue with just an inch or so of bubbly white on the surface.

From a solid piton belay we studied the route above. The couloir closed in and the angle steepened dramatically. The ice no longer looked so forgiving. As we climbed higher, sheltered belays were impossible to find and those below suffered the consequences. Heather was hit in the face by an ice chunk which I neglected to call. Thankfully the bleeding had stopped by the time she reached the belay. Sorry Heather! The exit pitch was a nerve-wracking jumble of loose blocks. A dislodged block at this point would have been bad. Happily we emerged unscathed into the sun.

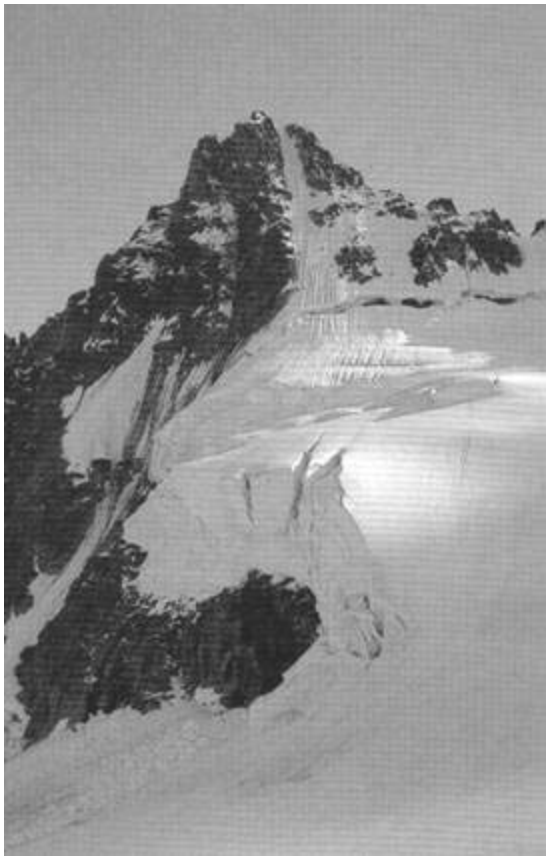
From here it was an easy jaunt to the summit. Along the way we discovered an incredible treasure, a deep hole lined with hundreds of crystals. Many were fist-sized and some were even larger. We gathered a few that were lying around, they would make a nice souvenir. We arrived at the summit for the second time in two days. This time however, there was no time to



The North Face of Mt. Geddes.
North Face Couloir on the left, Down/Howe route on the right. (Heather Paxson)

Carl Diedrich in the North Face Couloir on Mt. Geddes. (Heather Paxson)

Mark Landreville on the Down/Howe route on Mt. Geddes. (Carl Diedrich)



The North Face of Mt. Roovers. (Heather Paxson)

linger. The climb had taken the better part of the day and threatening clouds were moving in. We descended again via the South Couloir.

The following morning I made another early start to climb the highest point on Polydactyl Ridge in hopes of photographing the early light on the North Face of Mt. Geddes. I reached the summit shortly after dawn and was rewarded by a spectacular sunrise. The clouds in the eastern sky were aglow in an angry red. It was a vision so powerful in its raw beauty that I will not soon forget it.

Now all that remained was the long trek back to base camp where Mike was due to pick us up in two days. As we had hoped, we were able to bypass both the "Death Moraine" and the "Bear Patch". The weather on our pickup day was unstable and it snowed several inches. We had almost given up hope for the day when we heard the drone of the approaching chopper. We made a mad scramble to break down our camp as Mike made a dramatic entrance through the swirling clouds. The situation seemed a bit tense to me, but as usual, Mike was in complete control, reminding me once again of his superior flying skills.

New route on Mt. Geddes:

North Face Couloir, IV, Ice to 70°.

Exstew River

John Baldwin

Given the fascination that John Clarke and I have with glaciation it is only natural that our first trip to the Kitimat Ranges was to the head of the Exstew River. On any large scale map it readily stands out as by far the largest area of glaciation between Bella Coola and the Alaska Panhandle. But a few other things were a bit more surprising; despite the alpine nature of the area only a couple of the peaks top 2100m; and it appeared that much of the area remained unvisited since Culbert, Woodsworth and others in 1965.

We left Vancouver July 23 and, instead of the usual drive to Bella Coola or the island, this time we were flying to Terrace. I'm sure we were quite a sight on the plane, running back and forth from side to side with barely enough time to eat our lunch, but for us it was pretty exciting to see every mountain we'd ever climbed in less than an hour.

After a day's delay and a quick trip with Lakelse Air to put in several food drops we started walking up the newly developed ski runs at the head up the Shames River. A scruffy ridge led west to the first snowfield on the main divide above the Exstew River and before the weather deteriorated we were able to pick out Mt. Atna and the nearby Seven Sisters peaks. The following morning we were treated to sporadic views of meanders on the Exstew River from the nearby 2160m summit and heading north we packed over Mt. Morris before camping in torrential rain and fog near a few tarns and a small lake. The next day we reached the névé to the north and remained here for several days while the worst of a storm brought snow to 1500m.

We left this camp in a lull and, wearing our mittens, we packed down the glacier to the spectacular basin at the head of Bohler Creek. What looked OK on the map proved quite difficult as the glaciers had receded substantially, and before the final drop into the main valley we peered down steep water-streaked slabs that ran alongside the blue séracs of the glacier. The valley bottom itself was a wasteland of glacial debris but somehow small flowers grew in amongst the boulders and raw gravel. Thick forest grew high on the slopes above the old moraines and above this the steep slopes rose into the clouds. We continued up the next glacier in drizzle and patchy fog. Higher up this led through a deep gorge walled in on both sides by large cliffs and at 1430m on the far side of the névé above, we reached our main airdrop.

Light rain continued the next day but the following morning the clouds had risen and we headed straight for the nearby 1800m peak for our first real look at the surrounding country. This summit is situated right above the bend in the Exstew and from its top we could see the entire length of the river meandering down its deep coastal trench surrounded by icy summits on all sides. It was one of those rare vantage points where the two "sides" of the Coast Mountains can be seen together and we spent a long time here taking in the view. Our plans were to continue a traverse around the Exstew but the higher peaks to the west remained buried in the clouds. To the south a prominent peak caught our attention. We had camped beneath it for several days but had not even seen its base and now it seemed to lure us back helping to make the agonizing decision that it would be best to retrace our footsteps. We packed back down into Bohler Creek and camped that night on the mossy moraine above the glacier to the south.

Frozen sun cups greeted us in the morning as we moved our packs up the glacier to 1675m.

The sun was a welcome sight and sensing that it would not be with us for long we headed straight for the shoulder of our 2040m peak. Rock on its east ridge looked very difficult so we contoured underneath the main bergschrund beneath the north face. At the far side of this the snow connected and continued for a hundred feet to where the rock was blocky enough that we could reach the summit. There was no sight of the ocean to the west but somehow its nearby presence was written all over this place: Welcome to the Kitimat Ranges! For the first time we could see the group of high peaks to the north: Though these barely reached 2100m they were at least as heavily glaciated as 2800m peaks south of Bella Coola. We took advantage of the long daylight hours to linger on the peak while the warm afternoon light cast long shadows into the deep valleys.

The next day we stepped off the south side of the névé onto a spectacular meadow the size of a postage stamp. This was adjacent to an icefall and we were treated to stunning views of the south face of the

peak we had climbed the day before. Shortly after lunch we found a tarn to swim in, and late in the day we managed to pack over Mt. Morris before the clouds from the next storm arrived. The worst of the rain held off on our last day, and as we headed back to our start at the ski area we passed thick clumps of Lupins and a shortcut took us through a spongy subalpine meadow choked with luxurious growth. Our introduction to the Kitimat Ranges was complete.

The heart of the Exstew River country in the Kitimat Ranges, north of Prince Rupert. (John Clarke)

Coast Range 1991

John Clarke

After a few days of food buying, packing, sorting and driving, our transition from city to silence was complete. It was early May and we were camped at the end of a logging spur in the Machmell Valley at the northwestern edge of the 900-square-kilometer complex of glaciers between Owikeno Lake and Knight Inlet. With me were Sandy Briggs, from Victoria and Dave Sarkany, from West Vancouver. Dave was proud of his self-inflicted haircut done in the mirror of a Port McNeill washroom, while I was showing off a Goodwill store necktie that would be carried for summit photos on Mt. Silverthrone. Dave introduced himself to the Machmell Valley by lying motionless near an ant colony and allowing them to crawl all over him. He called it an ant massage. Sandy was shaping up to be the designated sane member of this well-matched team.

Next morning (May 4th), we climbed up through the timber and camped on firm snow at 1400m. A milky sky and ragged clouds signaled the end of 10 days of perfect weather. As snow started to fall, Dave set up a "pro shop" in a clump of trees and began filing our ski edges. During the next two days of storm, we practiced the type of extreme idleness that's required on long traverses. Tea, porridge, sewing, reading, tea... spaghetti with lentil sauce. A copy of "Arabian Sands" was passed around in the dampness. On the 7th, in fog, we skied over to Selman Pass and camped under the big mesa-crater formation at its south end. The kitchen that Sandy dug into the steep snow bank was so comfortable that it was decided he would have no other duties on this trip. His tea and meals would be brought to him and he would just dig! He has had a fascination with digging since he was a lad and at every camp he went mad with the shovel and produced lost snow-cities, each one abandoned as soon as it was finished. Another day of compassing through mist brought us to the first airdrop on a col in the group of 2100m peaks north of the Kingcome Glacier. Dave pulled his parapente (5kg) out from among the boxes and wondered when he would get to use it in the land of fog.

I went for a short boo tie walk in the morning and everything was plastered with rime. The howling wind and mist drove me back inside the tent where food, tea and more food were the consolation prize. Sandy had the maps laid out and observed the big distance we'd covered from Machmell, but then added "I wonder what any of it looks like?" Dave whittled a flute from a section of the bamboo pole used to mark the airdrop site. It cleared up and froze just before dark.

Next day, under a dark blue sky, we skied from bump to bump and climbed all the little snow summits in the vicinity. Dave took a few flights - launching from round snow domes and landing like a silent ski plane on the névés below.

On the 11th we packed up and skied east to camp on the summit of the big 2450m dome east of Mount Squire. This was a magical camp perched on an enormous white whaleback with jumbled frigid ranges in every direction. Sandy spent all next day digging a big subterranean kitchen, with a powder storm raging over his head, and the bamboo pole whistling in the wind nearby. He called it the "north pole", since the slope gradually curved away in all directions like the curvature of the earth. "Home sweet dome", we cheered after supper while abusing a bottle of pear schnapps that Dave had got from his dad.

When we crawled out in the morning it was pure magic. No wind - quiet and still - with a powerful brightness coming through the thinning fog. We saw a "fogbow", a half circle on the horizon opposite the rising sun. Heavy rime covered the skis and the parapet wall around the tent. The digging continued all day - another Aztec city was taking shape. When we skied off the dome the next day to go to Mounts Squire and Ardern, Dave launched from camp, flew over our heads and landed like a heron on the névé below. After a trip to Mt. Kinch and its neighbor to the west, we packed up and schussed 8km. north down to the main trunk of the Pashleth Glacier, and camped beneath Mt. Silverthrone. The climb up the northwest ridge of the peak was a big event for the three of us as this remote peak is rarely climbed and the summit dominates hundreds of square miles of lonely mountains. Dave beat us back to camp, launching the glider from a 2150m shoulder, flew broad arcs over the Pashleth and landed less than 100m from the tent.

Packing east up to a col in the morning, I got terrifically weak from a chest cold that was coming on. We had a little conference that resulted in Sandy racing off down the Pashleth Glacier and Valley to bring in the helicopter from the Machmell logging camp. Well, the trip was over for me but Sandy and Dave continued on to Knight Inlet through the Tumult Glacier country. I convalesced in Campbell River with friends for 10 days waiting to get the call from Coval Air that they were out. When the call came, I drove out to greet them and what a sight they were - very tired and hungry but with big smiles on their baked faces.

In June, after a trip to a granite needle above Meager Creek, I met three lads out from England on their holidays. Carl Freeman, Gavin Edwards and Steve Hall

were living in bivy bags in the rain under the Chief and spending the wet days of June in a coffee shop in Squamish while their belongings tumbled in the dryer next door. They accepted my offer of a change of scenery and we headed north through Mt. Currie, around Lillooet Lake, and then south into the river valley beyond. A good soak in the Skookumchuck hotsprings was followed by the first of thousands of cups of tea we would have over the next week. Our first climb was up the bulky 2225m dome between Rogers and Gowan Creeks. The approach was from the Rogers Creek tributary northeast of the peak. All trips from this valley begin and end at the hotsprings, so after another hot dip we drove down to Whiskey Lake and left a trail of tea bags up the logging roads that climb up to 1400m in the valley to the east. We climbed the elegant little 2100m peak west of Douglas Creek and north-northwest of Port Douglas. This pleasant summit has powerful views down Harrison Lake and into the Chehalis Range.

During the "unsettled" (rotten) weather of early July, Paul Adam and I went to the head of Stave Lake to traverse the Stave-Winslow Divide. This is monumental granite country and consequently many slopes that look encouraging on the maps are nearly hopeless for backpacking. Instead of an unsuccessful attempt on the divide we renamed the trip a "successful recce of the Stave Valley"! We wandered all the roads, found a trapper's cabin to stay in and generally scoped the place for future trips. The valley has a marvelous remote feel to it despite its closeness to Vancouver and the fact that it has been logged, hunted out and burned. Miles of giant stumps indicate the valley had been mostly big cedar.

Later in July, John Baldwin and I went north and spent 2 weeks on the glaciers of the Exstew River west of Terrace. Brief clearings revealed an extraordinarily beautiful place, but the weather was like Scotland in February! [See the preceding article "Exstew River" by John Baldwin]

Finally in August, in better weather, Paul Adam and I drove to Bella Coola to climb the 2500m Mount Saunders northwest of that town. After managing a boat ride over to the historic cannery buildings at Tallheo we camped on the grass in front of "The White House" - the only building in the complex that wasn't painted red. Next morning we packed up the timbered ridge west of the mouth of Nieumiamus Creek, followed the alpine ridges beyond and camped on the 1675m heathery knoll 7km due south of Saunders. The big peak looked fairly serious and rose in a grand pyramid 750m above the névé at its base. Next day we reached that névé after a long side-hill and gaped at our peak wondering which route would mean no bivouac. There were 2 ridges and a face, all of which looked steep. We chose the south face and couldn't even find a class 4 move on it! The precious hour perched on top was spent gaping at everything white - especially into the unfamiliar Kitimat Ranges to the northwest.

Dave Sarkany flying from a peaklet north of the Kingcome Glacier. (Sandy Briggs)

Back at camp I thought that this would be the perfect night to introduce Paul to "dried fish product" for dinner. Its virtues include low price and the appearance of "real flakes of fish" when reconstituted. The problem is the smell. Marine flavored ammonia invades your nose when you open the bag - even before you open it. It is important for the cook not to let his dinner guests (victims) smell it at this stage or indeed at anytime during the cooking. If you can manage this and get enough Ajun, curry, Tabasco things into it, you might

Randy Atkinson on Campsite Crack on the Meager Obelisk. (Paul Adam)

Benticnck Spire (2225m), SW of Bella Coola. (John Clarke)

hear - "This stuff isn't bad — I had my doubts at first".

This almost never happens. On this occasion, Paul (the victim) was sitting conveniently upwind of the bubbling pot quietly doing his crosswords and then the wind shifted. "Is there nylon or plastic burning?"

Back at the beach the next day, we clambered all over the marvelous old cannery buildings before our boat arrived to return to Bella Coola.

After a short trip to two little peaks northwest of Mt. Judge Howay, I went back to Bella Coola with Dave Lammers, to try the 2225m sharp rock peak west of lower Hot Springs Creek in the ranges west of South Bentinck Arm. (There is a photo of it in CAJ Vol. 73,1990, bottom of page 59.) The name "Bentinck Spire" appears on maps but its location is different on each one and doesn't appear at all on either of the two spire-like peaks in the area. The other contender is a 7,412 foot peak east of Hot Springs Creek. After dumping 5 boxes of grub out of a Beaver on the névé southwest of the peak, we were dropped off at the hot pools just north of the mouth of Hot Springs Creek. Well, the work could wait; we weren't going anywhere today. Hot tubs.

Desperately slow bush the next day resulted in our gaining only 2.2km and 200 vertical meters in 8 hours. The ground consisted of television-to Volkswagen-sized boulders, covered with criss-cross deadfall and enormous devils club growing up through the whole lot. Things improved on the second day when we turned into the western tributary that leads to the glacier south of the peak. We climbed the 300m of slabs below the glacier in the rain, and perched camp two on the edge of a steep moraine north of the glacier.

Rounding up the parcels in the fog the next day we were relieved to see that ravens had pecked to bits the only box without food - only crampons. Three hours of excavating in the rocks north of the 1890m col produced a level platform just big enough for the tent. This was what we wanted - a comfortable haven off the snow where we could wait out bad weather if necessary.

I raced off by myself early one morning and dropped into the valley west of the big peak. The very steep slopes beyond led to the high glacier north of the tower, and I finished the climb on the airy, blocky northeast ridge. The route had kept me guessing all the way and I was much relieved to pass an hour on this summit that I'd been admiring for four years. The 12-hour day ended groping toward camp in the dark.

Over the next few days we climbed the four little summits south of the névé. The westerly one of these is misnamed Bentinck Spire on the federal 1:50,000 map sheet (93D-3). The two-day thrash to the beach brought us back into the terrible bush, this time in pounding rain. We looked like contortionists crawling around in the soaking greenery and whenever the creeks weren't too deep and fast, we just climbed right in and walked in the water. It was a path at least.

At the inlet, the hotsprings held us captive until we almost passed out. In the morning, smoke from our fire hailed a passing airplane on its way to Bella Coola.

Nikaia Mountain, East Ridge

Don Serl

The high, dry country on the east side of the lower Coast Ranges caught my attention early last year, and drew me back repeatedly in a series of trips that netted a couple of new routes and opened my eyes to countless other attractive objectives for the future. The explorations started with an end-of-June drive up Botanie Mtn, just north of Lytton, which revealed spectacular views of the big peaks in Stryen Creek across the Fraser. Further west, Petlushkwohap and Skihist loomed through billowing clouds. The hook was set.

Two weeks later, I was back. Darren

Darren Melnychuck on the E Ridge of Nikiai Mountain. (Don Serl)

Melnychuck and I walked the remarkably fine trail into Stryen's east fork, and camped in a beautiful, open coniferous glade a half hour or so short of the old mining camp in the upper valley. A couple of hours the next morning put us out of the bush into the boulders below Nikaia, where we had the great pleasure of spooking off a superb, glistening cinnamon bear. An easy 600m of trudging put us on the east ridge, where we roped. A half a dozen pitches of fourth- and easy fifth-class terrain led to the upper slopes, which unfortunately disintegrated (more-or-less literally) into another 3 or 4 ropelengths of frighteningly loose blocks to the summit. Still, we were content, and the long glissading slopes on the descent of the northwest flank rounded the day out in genuine fun.

Nikaia Mountain. The East Ridge is on the left. (Don Serl)

Nikaia Mtn, East Ridge.

First ascent Darren Melnychuck and Don Serl, July 14,1991. About 10 rope lengths, with a couple of sections of mid-5th class. Considerable loose rock near the summit. A nice peak, but climb the north face instead — it looks to be aesthetic, direct, not difficult, and undoubtedly unjustifiably neglected (see Fairley, p 201).

Mt. Breier and Stonerabbit Peak

Dave Ewert

The day after a slow and rainy boat ride up Stave Lake, we endeavored to trace a path along the overgrown logging roads on Roaring Creek. Although last logged in the early 70s, the roads surprisingly still provide reasonable access to two small lakes below Mt. Breier. However, gaining the ridge 500m above the lakes involved a three-hour, leg-numbing thrash through more bush than anticipated. Happily the weather improved so that once atop the ridge, we gained spectacular views of the Judge to the west and Stonerabbit Peak to the NE.

The next morning in brilliant sunshine, we bump-jumped along the ridge, ascending the east ridge of Mt. Breier in about one hour from the base. Described as a "fine blade of a peak", Breier proved to be a rather bushy class 3-4 scramble. Certainly other steeper routes exist on the mountain, but the access and the quality of the rock on these routes are questionable. For about two hours on the summit, we amused ourselves building a large top-heavy cairn. Downclimbing from the peak to the ridge was interrupted by one rappel and several trees requiring Tarzan-like maneuvers. Back in our camp for lunch, we lazed in the sun and contemplated approaches to distant Stonerabbit Peak, tomorrow's objective.

The next morning at 6:00 a.m., we hopped over more ridge bumps, dropped 300m below the ridge, and traversed slabs and talus, eventually struggling back up to reach the southern moraines connecting to Stonerabbit Peak. At 10:00 a.m. after catching a few drips of water from a small snow field, we donned rock shoes and harnesses.

Granite slabs and crack systems on Stonerabbit's south face soared above us everywhere. With so many choices, we started from the west side of the south face, following various ledges and crack systems which trended towards the center of the face. About 5 pitches of mixed slab and crack climbing placed us above a prominent rib in the center of the face. From here another 5 pitches on lichen-crusted firm granite led straight up to the summit at 4:00 p.m.

Except for loose gravel on the ledges, the south face rock was very good. Any number of class 4-5 variations in the route appear possible, with good opportunities for retreat on the easier south-west ridge. Descent from the summit was via the south-west ridge, a forgettable maze of class 3 cliffs, ledges, and trees. Return to our camp on the ridge below Breier became a race for daylight which we lost, but stumbling home our thoughts were still on the beautiful south face of Stonerabbit.

Retracing our route back to Stave Lake the next day, we were pleased at having uncovered some of the secrets of this seldom-visited area.

First ascents by Dave Ewert and Reinhardt Fabische:

Mt. Breier: east ridge, August 15, 1991
Stonerabbit Pk: south face, 5.6, August 16, 1991

A Carefree weekend

Don Serl

One of the gems of the Tchaikazan provided Robert Nugent and I with a superb ending to the season last Thanksgiving weekend. The body-beating, mind-numbing overnight drive up made the gentle trail into the valley a relaxing pleasure by contrast, and by late afternoon we were settled into camp at the fringe of the moraines below the (so far as we could tell) ridiculously mis-named Miserable Glacier. Momma Grizz and her 2 cubs caused us a few anxious moments (and much frenzied twig gathering for a fire!) by sporting in the moraines 500m away for half an hour or so and then setting off down valley directly towards us, but they passed by oblivious on the opposite side of the creek, and we went back to dinner and sleep.

Our objective, the hanging iceface on the north side of "Carefree Mountain", glistened ominously above, encouraging doubts as we set off early the next morning, and the copious rockfall spewing out of the gullies right of the face into the glacial basin which we circled up through added to the aura of seriousness. Once we tied in, however, all uncertainties were dispelled. Three quick rope lengths dispatched the schrund and the icy valance below the rocks, and three more took us up a shattered chimney system to the lower right-hand corner of the ice. This late in the season, we had expected iron-hard, scratch-for-your-life conditions, but the ice was soft, pliant, and even wet in places. We belayed a pitch, moved together on crust for 4 more, and belayed again as the slope steepened and the ice hardened for another 4 to the left-trending exit ramp. A final 2l/2 lengths brought us out onto the upper east ridge, with sweeping views and awesome depths surrounding us as we moved easily up the snow crest to the top, only 8 hours from camp.

We lazed on top catching glimpses of alluring peaks for the requisite half or three-quarters of an hour, then a horrendously loose gully (easy, but not the place for a large party!) dumped us out onto the Friendly Glacier to the south-west. Three hours from the top we were back in camp, happy with the day and already planning routes for the following year.

"Carefree Mountain", north face. (Don Serl)

"Carefree Mountain", North Face

First ascent: Rob Nugent and Don Serl, Oct 13, 1991.2200ft, 18 roped pitches, 6 hours. 45° - 55C ice, 3 pitches rock (some loose) to mid fifth class. A highly recommended autumn outing.

The Black Dyke

John McCallum

In 1990 I was chasing my big granite dreams. Living an hour away from the tastefully-vegetated expanses of the Squamish Chief was just too big a temptation after five years of boulders and sport climbing in New Zealand. So I proceeded to climb big free routes with my new Canadian friends as often as my body and marriage would tolerate. All too soon the two-month BC summer was over and Harry Kettman and I were in Yosemite overclimbing and finding out the bitter truth — the big routes back home had better protection, more sustained and quality pitches, and that modest Canadian way about them too eh!

1991 was the season when my dreams chased me. My body and mind were badly rearranged by a recently-developed obsession with back-country skiing — the thought of moving at less than 30 kph was frightening. Dean Hart sowed the seeds of my season's dream/nightmare with serious talk of liberating the Black Dyke from the hurtful legacy of nailing. For eighteen months I had eyed this mother of all features from the highway and seen it drip repulsively or soar into the clouds or sky depending on the season. Of course there had been much idle talk talk talk of going to aid the thing but no one seemed to have the time, equipment, expertise or courage to commit to the dripping, flaky overhangs in the classic style.

Foolishly I expressed my interest in this project. And so it was that I found myself in a situation that was to become all too familiar that summer — heavily laden with gear, hiking up through the woods on the backside trail after rain, humidity 110%, over the slimy elephantine slabs onto Bellygood ledge and across to the dyke. Before I had time to think, Dean had clipped into some old fixed ropes and slid off into the void. I was soon beside him at a station on the edge of too much space, contemplating the great concave sweep of the wall to the trail below. I was already gulping on my old fear of death, and the faded 9mm single fixed rope below us did nothing to ease my discomfort. We tied into a more respectable cord and as I belayed Dean down into the never never he assured me he would clip it through some protection. Having watched the rap line saw over the all-too-numerous edges on the dyke after his departure I was little comforted and when it was my turn to slide, and of course the "good pro" was sketchy old aid nightmares. Soon I was swinging in space watching the belay rope arc down through this crap into goodness knows where. Naturally I was being very, very light and was soon being winched breathless into the cave below.

Our mission was to assess the practicality of free-climbing Zorro's Last Ride, and two big diagonal rappels led us across to the lip of the next roofs and revealed the depressing smoothness of the dyke on this route. However from the station at the lip a pair of conveniently-spaced thin cracks led across flawless stone to the Black Dyke. After a few more rainy summer days we approached this connection from below, climbing up the awkward but aesthetic pitches of Moving to Montana to where that route stops beside a big streak of prime BC slime. Undeterred by its blackness, Dean placed an aid bolt in the ooze and swung across to the base of a prominent groove. This provided several meters of excellent 5.9 stemming before opening into a ghastly death box slot overhang thing from which issued a stream of strongly smelling green mucilage. Somehow he climbed into and then out of this thing, placed a bolt, negotiated more slime and fixed a station under the roof. I enjoyed the groove but found the slot incomprehensible, solving the problem by falling out of it and across to less pungent ground. I found myself in a remarkable position above two large roofs under a bigger, monolithic, striped ceiling and contemplating an unexpected ethical crisis: reaching our station at the lip would entail placing bolts very close to the line Perry Beckham had nailed and drilled through the ceiling on Zorro's. Reminding myself that nailing seemed about as popular now as flared jeans I shouldered the Hilti and drilled my way upwards. I soon hung gasping near the lip, my senses abuzz with the volume of air and granite below and the harsh chattering of the boy toy that got me there. Two more holes at full stretch and I was over, contemplating the stupendous stretch of free-climbing ahead and shrugging off my post-mechanic depression. In my rock-intoxicated state I naively imagined that the next three pitches might take two days to prepare. Little did I know that steepness, looseness, gnarly access, and the wet summer would conspire to rob me of my fitness, leisure time and best energies for several months to come.

And so it was that rare good climbing days were dissipated in a blur of driving the Squamish highway under the influence of excessive cappuccino and house music to face hours of rapping, rock-trundling and scrubbing. Dean subscribes to the public service approach to route preparation, so the half-hearted cleaning and less-considerate style I was used to just wouldn't do. He would patiently re-scrub the way it should be done, play safety officer around the ghastly gear tangles at every station and generally show me how to cope with Projectosaurus maximus. The cost to us in bolts, hangers, gear dropped, lost and wrecked became rather ridiculous and I felt like I hadn't been climbing for fun in months. Dealing with the romantic opinions that some expressed about the dyke being left for further nailing abuse or ascent by "traditional" means made it clear to us that we were seen to be tampering with a glorious symbol of the big wall aid days of the fabulous seventies. Increasingly I found myself pushed to my mental and physical limits just rappelling and cleaning on what was fast becoming the project from hell.

One memorable day we enlisted Kaj — not because he'd done any climbing that season but because he was moving rocks for a living. After a full day of drilling and dirt shoveling, nightfall saw me tension traversing across the pitch on the lip of the roofs to retrieve our fixed rope and permit retreat downwards. Once back at the station I passed the line to Dean who took the drill and ghetto blaster and rapped off squealing into the blackness over the big, big roofs beneath us. Reaching the end of the rope he jumared the fixed line to swing to the station on Moving to Montana. Fixing a new station at the base of the V-groove he then winched in his companions as we slid down through space in the eerie dim light from the Squamish wharves. After two more big rappels and chopping yet another new rope we were stumbling through the woods after midnight. Halfway home we were delayed as Aurora Borealis turned on a big show for the weary workers.

Of course after all this nonsense we were in fine shape for hiking and scrubbing, but not for climbing. On the big day when we finally set off to climb the whole route I lapsed seconding the tricky start to the first

pitch, bouncing on rope-stretch and removing chunks of skin and lycra. The next few pitches flowed pleasantly underfoot until the dreaded Harting Slot, from which I was once again spat, cursing and further abraded. Then the pleasure resumed as we set off into space over the ceiling and then across the lip of the roofs. The traverse proved to be a stunning 5.11 dance across superb rock on the edge of the huge roofs. Dean led through up the long 5.9 dyke pitch on the huge slab and we took a well-earned cola caffeine hit from our stash in the cave to prepare us for the monster pitch above that had taken us days to prepare. As I am only a temporary resident in Canada, Dean generously gave me the lead. So I tied into double 10 mm ropes and swung out of the cave onto the great wave of rock that bulged out alarmingly above it. The sharp jugs felt comfortingly large but the brutal angle and devious climbing soon had me panting and thinking very hard. Making my limited fitness last the full fifty meters took all my experience and concentration. Fortunately Dean had done a superb job with the bolt placements, directing the ropes away from the numerous ugly edges on this section. A hyperventilating jelly, I swam up through the last few bulges and slumped onto the station, relieved that the project was finished and I could get my life back in order. But the Dyke wasn't done with us yet. As he began to second the pitch I felt a huge Dean-sized jerk on the rope and heard the familiar sound as pieces of dyke smashed on the slabs hundreds of meters below. This was followed by an avalanche of oaths and when he finally reached the belay, still cursing, Dean related how he had removed all traces of the crucial jug on the first bulge, fortunately with no damage to himself.

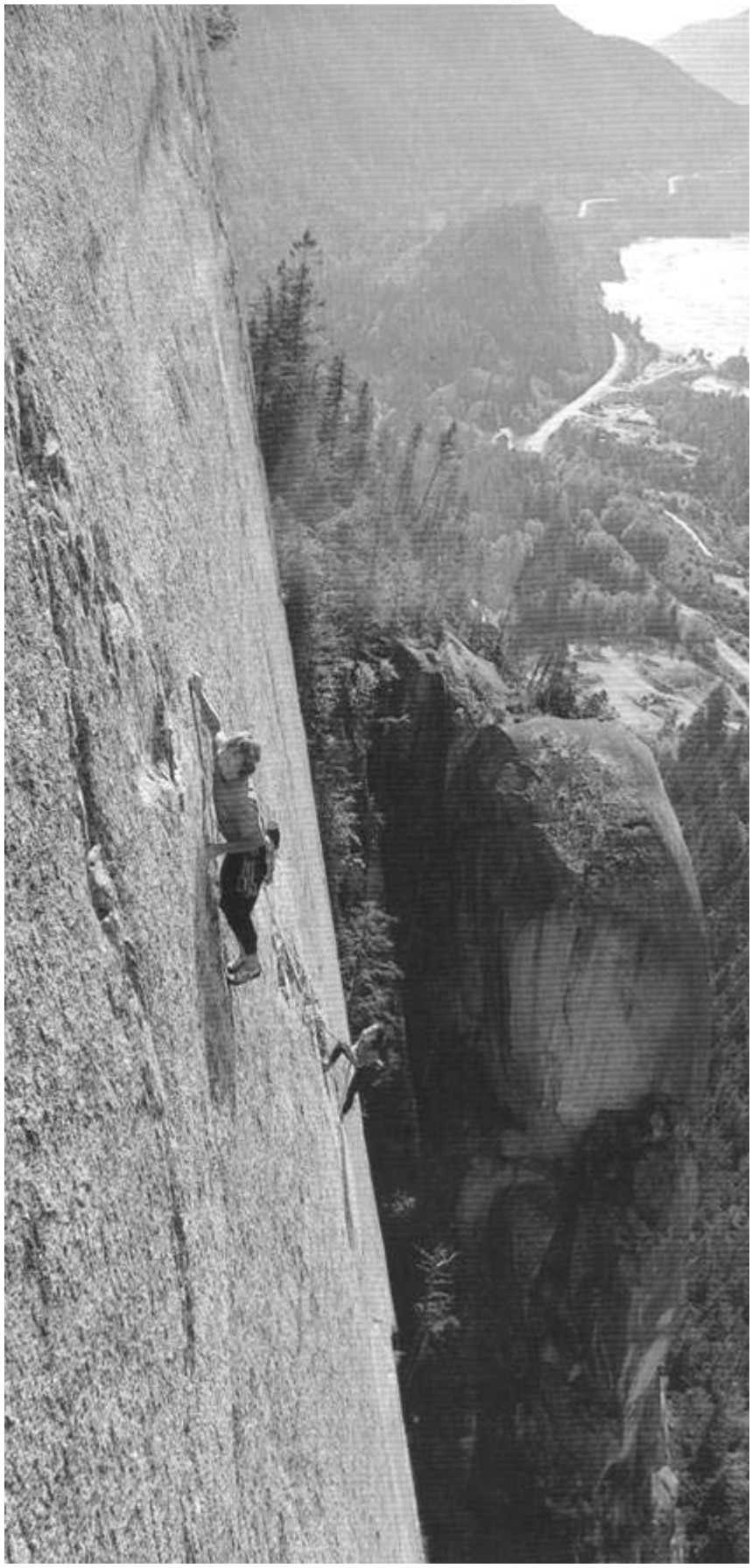
Negotiating the final 5.10 pitch to Belly-good ledge was distinctly anticlimactic and as we dragged our gear and bodies down the trail for the last time, I wondered just who had conquered whom today.

Squamish update

Jim Sandford

I'm sitting in the cafe, stirring yet another cup of coffee, perplexed by one local's comment that Squamish is finished - that there's nothing left. Staring at the 150-degree panorama of rock in front of me, it doesn't make sense. A friend strolls in and we jabber about finding the ultimate cliff out there in the granite wasteland...

One area which caught my attention last year was a small, well-hidden crag out by the Mamquam River. Early probes discovered its proximity to the local Rod & Gun Club — from the top of the cliff you look straight down the rifle range and into the bunker. Needless to say, it's best to climb when they're not shooting. Or at least keep your head



Jim and Jola Sandford on Cerberus (11d) on the Squamish Chief. (Larry Kemp)

down.

In light of the peril, the routes took on some memorable names. Sitting Duck 11a and Moving Target 12b climb a short steep wall on pockets and incuts. Very atypical of Squamish rock. Right of this, a fault divides the cliff and you're back to white granite with the proper angle. Fair Warning 12a and Open Season 12d climb some of the better rock around and make this a worthwhile weekday visit.

In Murrin Park, Keith Reid climbed Maximum Decibels 12d/13a, a right diagonal line on the Vultures Wall opposite the parking lot. At the left end of the Shaman Wall, Peder Ourom established Big Fish in a Little Pond 11b. Just before Petrifying Wall, Lakeside Wall had its first two recorded routes. Bruce Langereis climbed an unnamed 11a back in August 1990 at the far left end (1 bolt). At the opposite end and up the hill is Hand Over Fist 12b, a steep route past 4 bolts.

On the Pet Wall itself, Hugh Lenney added 8 bolts between The Baraka and Black Water to produce the lovely Fantastic Exploding Rectal Syringe 12+ -just what you always wanted. On the north end is Caress of Steel 13b/c through the bulge left of The Wrong Stuff.

At the base of the Chief, the infamous Kloset area now harbors four new sport routes. On the northwest corner of Kacodemon Rock is Young Blood 13b and Bravado 13d, the latter requiring a protracted amount of work prior to the redpoint. The west face of Eleven Bolt Rock also fell victim to the stampede. Technical Ecstasy 13b and Archives 12d (the dyke) are both pleasant additions to round out this quartet.

On the Grand Wall itself Mark Gandy, Peder Ourom and Hamish Fraser added another pitch to their Genius Loci. The pitch climbs the slab left of the first pitch of Merci Me and goes at 11+. The complete route is now a five-pitch Grade III.

Editor's Note: A new guidebook to the Squamish area (Vancouver to Pemberton in fact) is going to press at about the same time as this Journal. Kevin McLane's The Rockclimbers' Guide to Squamish should be available by the time you read this.

Reports from the Interior Ranges

Easy on the Granola, Please

Robert Enagonio

During the last two weeks of March 1990, John Moreland, Eric Trouillot, and I completed the classic ski traverse from the Kain Hut in the Bugaboos to Highway 1 at Rogers Pass, BC. This was a second attempt for me, after a near-disaster in April 1989. On that occasion, starting at the Rogers Pass end, we became stormbound on the Deville névé for three days, and then had to make a difficult and dangerous retreat in continuing storm conditions back down the Deville headwall to Glacier Circle, narrowly escaping an avalanche on the slope below the rappels. We then had to tediously ski out the Beaver River for a day and a half, stretching a five-day food supply into its eighth day... a true "epic". So there was trepidation mixed in with anticipation as we stood at the CMH lodge on a sunny Saturday afternoon gazing up at the familiar Bugaboo towers.

Having never been into the Bugaboos in the winter, we were quizzing Chris Newman, manager of the lodge, on the route up to the Kain Hut. Chris had arranged our flight into the lodge from Spillimacheen. "Well", he said, pointing, "you kind of head up the moraine on the left side and, you see those crevasses in the center below Hounds Tooth... yeah, you cross above there...". He paused for a minute. "You guys want to fly up there?" And thus the purity of our traverse, which had already been tarnished slightly by our failure to ski for two days up the Bugaboo road, took a major blow as the CMH helicopter deposited us right beside the hut at an elevation of 2200m. On a beautiful sunny and warm afternoon we left our big packs in the hut, and skied up to the Bugaboo-Snowpatch col for a run. This was the first time I'd ever skied with John and Eric. In fact we'd just met three weeks earlier, and now we were looking at two weeks of skiing, route decisions, and living in a tent together. So we were checking each other out that afternoon. Is anybody a granola-eater here?

Three days later we are in trouble. We had been zig-zagging up steep avalanche slopes above Crystalline Creek, sweating through some heavy trail breaking, heading for Climax Col. It was snowing and windy, and as we got higher, the storm intensified. We're traversing a steep east-facing lee slope, groping around in the white-out looking for the col and starting to get scared. We can hear the Bobbie Burns helicopter flying around on the other side of the valley. "They're probably depositing our food cache right now," John suggests. And in fact that was the case. The evening before we had been searching the landing sites in Crystalline Creek looking for our buckets of food. Being real wimps and having lots of friends at CMH, we had decided to go light at the beginning of the trip and use several food caches before entering Glacier Park on the latter half of the trip. We had figured on three or four days to reach Crystalline Creek, but it had actually taken us only two. Hence the food cache hadn't been deposited yet. That morning, not knowing when or if the food would arrive, we had elected to make a run for the next cache which figured to be only two or three days away. The situation got a little more tense when a pine marten carried off my food bag during the night. Now, high on the ridge it is getting more tense as a limited food supply forces us to continue traveling in deteriorating conditions.

The slope gets steeper and the amount of new and wind-deposited snow is appalling. John is thrashing about on a steep side slope up to his waist in snow trying to get a trail broken. This is crazy. We stop, pull our hoods on, turn our backs to the wind, pull out the map and compass yet again, discuss... situation getting desperate... should we dig a snow cave and wait it out, hopefully not for too long... keep searching for the col, or try some alternative? Staying on the present slope is suicidal, so we descend to a lower-angled bench. We figure we're somewhere on the east slopes of Deluge Mountain. A decision emerges to continue traversing here and cross the NE ridge to gain a small glacier running north from Deluge. This looks on the map to be a reasonable alternative to access the next valley, but we know nothing more about it. Eventually we reach a ridge, and as cornices and crevasses lurk about in the gloomy white-out we decide to throw on the rope. You could come to a 60m drop-off and never even see it before you fell.

After a few minutes of the usual comedy of skiing downhill roped, things begin to work out. With improving visibility, we can see that we are actually on the north glacier, and the rope can be removed in the better light. But it's not over yet. The glacier terminates by running over a cliffband, and we have to do some gnarly downclimbing under séracs. I cut off a small slab in a pocket here and it catches John and carries him down a short distance. But we work through it and eventually get down to the valley to rejoin the route from Climax Col. The food cache is still a good distance off and there's nothing but granola left, but at least we are past the obstacles and able to continue' onward. We camp right in the middle of Snowman Lake that night and are able to dig down to water instead of melting snow.

The next day features more bad weather and lousy light. We've been traveling mostly by sense of smell now for four days and it's getting tiring. We have to cross two more ridges to get to Syncline Pass where the food cache is (we hope) waiting, and the first ridge above Snowman Lake proves to be a major obstacle. Everything looks good as we work up a moderate slope to the pass. But as soon as we're on the ridge, the problem is obvious. Huge cornices hang over the other side, and a steep lee slope lurks below, smiling a satanic grin after three days of wind and snow. We drop the skis and start walking around on the ridge scouting.

Two hours later, we're still up there, cold, wind-blown and hungry. We've decided to throw Eric onto the slope to try to release it, but at the last minute he vetoes the idea. So we have to put on the harnesses and lower him over a small rock step where there's no cornice, and then belay him down through the fracture zone. At least we have one guy on downhill boards to be the guinea pig.

After Eric gets down, John and I glissade the upper slope and then get a decent run on the rest of it, while Eric stands around in the deposition area taking pictures and munching on a granola bar. By this time it's past noon and socked in again, and we're wondering if a night with no dinner is imminent.

Later in the afternoon I'm working up onto the next ridge, fully expecting to find cornices and lee loading again. As I get up there I let out a string of curses. Cornices, sure enough. But John is even more worried. He figures this is where the food cache is supposed to be, and that my exclamations mean this cache is missing too. It's the low point of the trip for everybody. But I get John straightened out on the fact that the cache is in the next col a short distance away. Meanwhile Eric goes up the ridge a little to bypass the cornices. So we all calm down enough to ski for another hour. There in the col are some brightly-painted buckets sitting in the snow. A cold wind and more snowfall arrive as we sit there drinking the beers and pigging out. Pretty quickly we have to move on, but a half kilometer down the glacier, we set up the tent on a nice flat spot, then re-ascend to haul the buckets. It's a secure and happy evening on the glacier at 2500m with a dinner of canned Irish stew and half a liter of Drambuie. Outside the storm rages.

Thursday, March 22. The alarm goes crazy at the usual 5:30 a.m. I stick my head out of the tent, get the stove going. But it's cold, -17°C, windy, and a total whiteout. We eat breakfast as if we're going to head out, but nobody believes it. The cold wet tent holds the sounds (and smells) of three sleeping bodies for the rest of the morning.

Just before noon, however, we can no longer ignore the obvious. The sun is coming out. I'm out of the tent looking around, and my trained meteorologist's eye

Eric Trouillot topping out on Sugarloaf Mtn., looking N toward Rogers Pass. (Bob Enagonio)

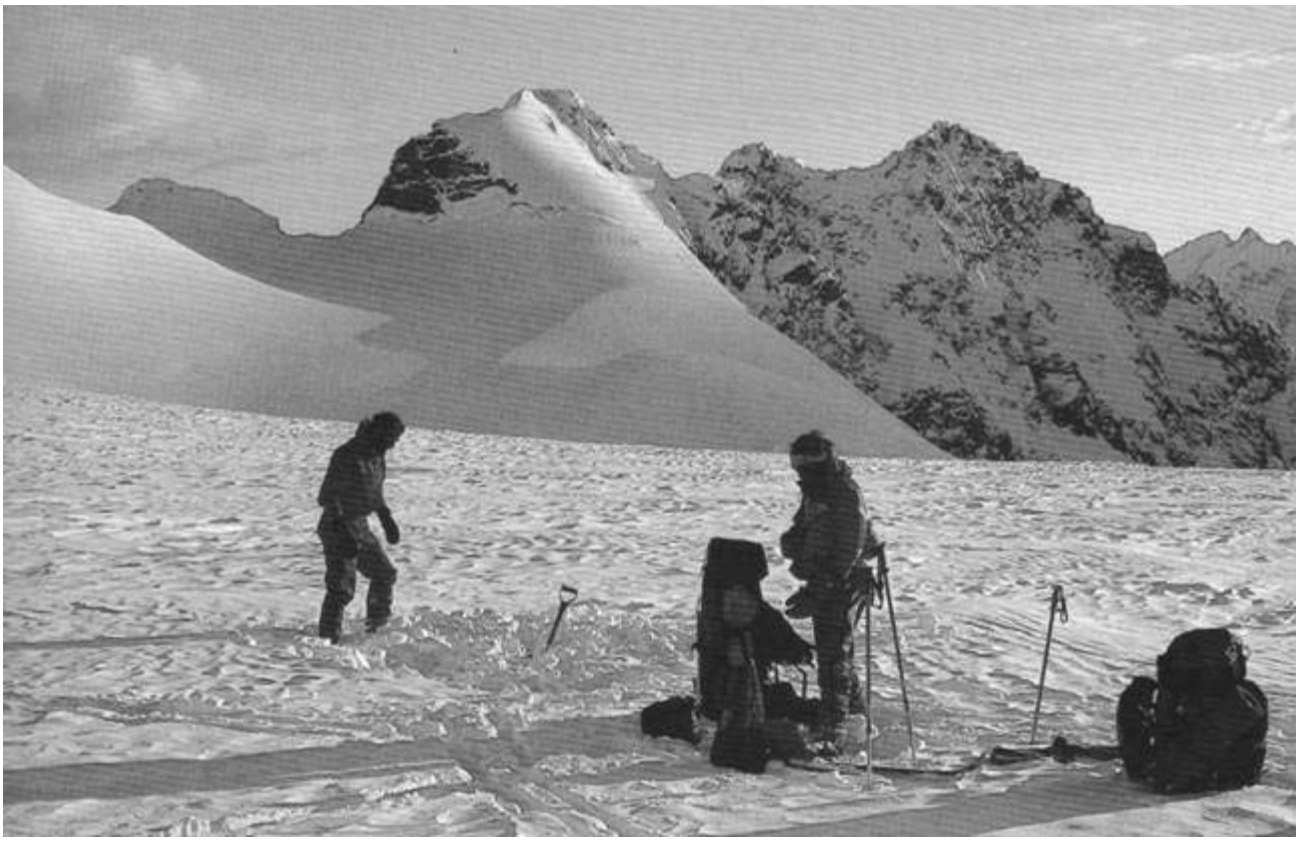
can read the signs of a miraculous change in the weather: light easterly winds, the tell-tale clear, ice-crystallized atmosphere, northerly winds aloft - a cold Arctic high, the only weather pattern that guarantees long-term good weather in the interior of BC. What a lucky break! In spite of the fact that John and Eric put three days of granola in this food cache, we're all smiles as the tent comes down. By 1 p.m. we're on our way again.

From the glacier north of Syncline Mountain, we proceed up and across the west face of Mount Syphax, passing just at the base of the west wall of the peak, and then descending off a corniced ridge to the north into Malachite Creek. This is a spectacular alternative to the normally-used route around the east side of Syphax. In fact, according to an article in the 1991 CAJ (Wagon,P.52), we may have been the first party to use this route. In the newly-discovered joy of traveling in perfect visibility, we are overwhelmed by the scenery in this area: big slopes and the sharp spires of the Carbonate Range near at hand.

Unfortunately, the next day finds us trying unsuccessfully to get onto the Carbonate Glacier. One of the cruxes of the route is the steep slope below Malachite Spire that gives the only access to the upper glacier. We started up this slope on a -22°C morning, hoping for stable snow. After lengthy arguments over the safety of the slope and what alternative routes might exist, we dig a snow pit, and then attempt to walk directly up the slope with skis on our backs. The snow pit revealed 15cm of powder atop a 10cm layer of graupel, facets, or some other kind of unbonded garbage and sure enough, about two thirds of the way up, a section of the surface layer comes unglued. Again it's me that kicks it off, and again John gets caught, although he doesn't get carried down this time. John is not liking me very much any more. Now the rest of the slope is poised to go, so we have to give up and retreat. John is convinced that there is another route onto the névé, but by mid-afternoon we have exhausted all possibilities and are back down nearly to our original campsite, heading towards the 2590m col west of Carbonate Mountain and eventually into a valley route through the whole area. This is a tremendous disappointment, to miss this part of the high route, but we have given it our best try.

Sunday, March 25 - Day 8. No alarm clock. Bacon and eggs for breakfast. No granola. A slight headache from the booze last night. Brilliant warm sunshine when we greet the morning air outside the cabin door, in contrast to the minus 20°C shadows of dawn outside a frozen tent the last few days. And most of all, no need to cram the feet into frozen ski boots. A rest day at McMurdo Hut. We pass the whole day easily - eating, chatting with a group camped nearby, washing clothes and bodies, eating, shampooing, eating, drinking, drying out gear, making repairs, eating, reading, sun bathing, eating, and... eating! The Arctic high has moderated. It's perfectly clear and wonderfully warm in the sunshine. As the day passes, so does the painful memory of yesterday's brutal climb out of the floor of Bobbie Burns Creek. That 900m slope was south-facing, too hot, too steep, the trees were too thick, we had to walk some, the skins started balling up with snow, and my new boots took the opportunity to crucify my feet in a way they had only hinted at previously.

When a group has to break trail up a slope like this, one usually pictures the members frequently alternating the lead position to give everybody a chance to rest for a while. But in practice, one person usually feels extraordinarily fit, motivated, scared, or angry and ends up breaking the whole thing, with the others unable to even keep up. We all had our days of



Setting up camp at 2650m in the Selkirks. (Bob Enagonio)

taking over when the chips were down. On this miserable climb out of Bobbie Burns Creek, John comes through.

Two days later, the stakes are bigger still. This time the elevation gain is 1800m, the terrain is crevassed, and our goal is a distant pass on the other side of Sugarloaf Mountain. This is no place to get caught by bad weather, but layers of cirrus clouds are shouting a warning. And this time, John is in the dumps —literally. He's got a case of the flu and the trots.

We have chosen to ascend the Beaver Glacier to get out of the valley into the Selkirk Range. Again this is a route that has been used rarely, if ever. And it wouldn't be a good move for those doing the trip in the reverse direction. An 1800m ski descent, roped, would try the patience of most parties. But traveling north and west toward Rogers Pass, it is the perfect route. After descending from Silent Pass, you simply follow the road up the Duncan River, and from where it terminates near the Glacier Park boundary, you only have to bash around in the forest for about 45 minutes before reaching the mouth of the Beaver Glacier where the open moraines come right to the valley floor. This compares with 7 or 8km of canyon and heavy trees up the normal Butters Creek route. From the terminal moraines, we follow a trough on the north side up a steep, gnarly slope between séracs and rock cliffs. After this the slope eases and we're forced out into the middle of the glacier to escape the ominous south-facing slopes on the right. Here the rope comes out. For next four or five hours we go steadily upwards, working through crevasses, aiming essentially for the summit of Sugarloaf Mountain. On a clear and sunny day it is a truly spectacular place to be. We're talking lots of sunscreen, lots of water and lots of photos. John is miserable. I'm in heaven - this is what this trip is all about. The rope tying us together is the only thing we have in common.

The slow pace eventually works. We round a corner below the final steep slope where a break in the cornices and some bridges through the bergschrunds suggest the best route. We stop, pull out the stoves, melt some drinking water, rest, wait for the slope to freeze. John sleeps. I fix my stove. Eric makes the water. We all get sunburned. By 3:30 p.m. we're moving again, up past the schrunds and then it's a long kick step to the top of the ridge. Up there it's flat, spacious, sunny, and beautiful. Sugarloaf is striking. We climb over its northwest shoulder, at 3200m, our highest point of the trip. The large flat expanses of the Deville and Illecillewaet Icefields are easily seen to the northwest, along with the big slopes east of Grand Mountain. This is tomorrow's project, if all goes well.

We de-skin and go down. We're snapping photos and going slowly and enjoying where we are. The snow is lousy, we can't get a decent ski run, but it doesn't matter. The descent goes well until the end, approaching the col, where the glacier breaks up into an icefall. We have to rope up again and work our way down, winding around and over a big bridge. Finally, at 6:30 p.m. after a 12-hour day, we're there, but not before John takes one last fall and pulls us all down. The col, at 2650m is our highest campsite of the trip. We're in the sun until the last minute, looking out over the Battle Range, everything turning rosy in the sunset. Temperature -9°C, a moderate wind, and when it gets dark, stars all over and the northern lights flashing out over the Grand Glacier. The quintessence of ski mountaineering.

March 28, 5:30 a.m. Why is John getting up so early? He's out of the tent into a cold windy dawn. Eric and I don't stir. A few minutes later John is back. Bad news. He didn't make it quickly enough. That pair of underwear needs to go in a crevasse. That's what you get for eating too much granola.

We assess the situation. John is still sick. The wind is rising and the clouds are racing in again. We're going to have to move. When we get started a couple of hours later, things are looking bleak. Eric now has the trots too. You know how quickly these things spread. Will it be my turn by noon? Will we end up pinned down somewhere around Grand Mountain again, only two days from the end? We start up the slopes above the col, anxiously watching the cloud layers thicken, saying nothing, fighting our own battles in silence.

7 p.m. the same day. We check into the Glacier Circle Hilton. It's a small, dark, cold and damp cabin, but it's a hotel nevertheless. Let's get this fire going...

It was an 11-hour day, but we're not overly tired. It's amazing how fit you get after ten days out. And how determined you get when the clouds start closing in around the summits. We even got a few flakes of snow during the rappels down the Deville cliff band, but now, in the evening, it's clearing up again. We still need one more good day to cross the Illecillewaet.

The route finding and navigation around Grand Mountain is easy in good light. John and Eric are feeling much better as we top the ridge north of Grand and start down onto the Deville. And I, by some miracle, avoid the thing entirely. We get a great powder run down from the col. cranking beautiful turns, dodging the crevasses, the big packs swaying from side to side.

A steep ridge intervenes before the flat part of the glacier. We have to back-track and go below to the east. I remember, a year ago, sitting in the tent just below this snow ridge for three or four days. A few hours later we reach the first rappel point on the cliff band. Now that nice, light 30 meter rope that we have been enjoying for two weeks comes to haunt us. You know how pointless a 15-meter rappel is? I go down first since I know the route. Eric and John, waiting for the "off rappel" from below, instead are surprised to see me emerge again at the top, jugging up the rope. The rappel is too short, it gets us nowhere. Eventually John goes down on a single strand, digs around for an anchor for a while and then calls for us to follow. Eric rappels, then I down-climb so we can get the rope back. It's mainly just 50° snow, but exposed below. After this, things go better. We do a belayed traverse with one pin for protection, then rappel off some fixed pins into another snow gully. A longer rope would have helped here too. Instead we have to down-climb the last section, and then walk out into the slope below Mount Topham for a big run down. We've only taken three days to get here from McMurdo, but it seems like a week.

The remainder is anticlimax. It's a cold and clear morning again as we start up towards the Witch Tower. This big and dangerous slope is frozen solid. We're on the Illecillewaet by 10:30, and again we roll on the sun cream for a last big glacier traverse. There's a 1200m descent to look forward to at the end, but when we get there it's a nightmare. The snow is the worst unskiable form with a breakable deep wind and sun crust. Even Eric on his alpine skis has a hopeless time of it. There won't be any corn snow on this trip. When the descent finally ends, it's just a flat ski out in the woods and a miserable walk up the highway to the hotel. At this point Eric has to hitch-hike to Golden for his truck, so John and I are left with no choice but to sit in the bar and drink. We pool all our money, it's only forty or fifty bucks, and John and I are through this and cut off by the bartender before Eric gets back. Then he has to practically carry us to his truck.

Bob backing off the climb up to the Carbonate Gl. after an avalanche. (Eric Trouillot)

Bob downclimbing the end of the Deville Gl. into Glacier Circle. (Eric Trouillot)

John skiing up the Beaver Glacier. (Eric Trouillot)

Skiing down Crystalline Creek. (Eric Trouillot)

We make it back to Golden and that's it until the next day. So in retrospect here are some recommendations for success on this traverse:

Go when the weather is good— easier said than done

Go in March, not in April (often late April) as has been the choice of most other parties. The weather seems to be better in March. There's powder snow to be found on the north- and east-facing slopes, and the low valley crossings on the route are much more palatable earlier in the season. Travel south to north. It's easier to arrange the timing at the Bugaboo end, and more importantly, you get to climb up frozen crusted south slopes early in the day, and ski down powder slopes to the north. Don't include granola in your food selection.

If you don't have a car waiting at Rogers Pass, carry more drinking money. It's not heavy.

Rediscovering Mt. Moloch

Ruedi Beglinger

"I have never had a more extensive and, so far as vastness goes, a finer panoramic view in the Rockies or Selkirks."
J.W.A. Hickson, on the summit of Mt. Moloch, August 10th, 1918.

"AH, 00, A, LA, LA, A! Yes dat is vat eik said on z top of da Spitz of la Grand Moloch. You know how she goes, one foot, then the next foot and before you know it...Ha dis is da top. It is unfortunate (or fortunate) that more people don't know of this grand route."
Eriks Suchovs, on the summit of Mt. Moloch, September 5th, 1991.

Today barely anyone can remember Mt. Moloch and its surrounding, primarily solid granite, mountains. They are peaks which have many first-class routes of over 20 rope lengths and anywhere from 5.6 to 5.10 difficulty. The monarch of all these peaks is the 3107m Mt. Moloch. An impressive-looking mountain between Tangiers Creek and Downie Creek, about 60km north-east of Revelstoke in the Northern Selkirk Mountains. Most people whom I have asked about Mt. Moloch did not know of what geographic area I was asking about. Some simply tried to explain to me that the entire area in that corner of the Selkirk Mountains is composed of very loose rock. After having climbed first ascents of several alpine rock climbs in solid granite in the nearby mountains, climbs that are hard to beat for either quality or scenery, I realized that it was not "rotten" rock that kept climbers from this area, it was the inaccessibility. Mt. Moloch itself is a gigantic mass of limestone. Although some of the rock on the mountain looks frightful this is never the case for the whole mountain. There is lots of solid rock and interesting climbing to be found.

During the summer of 1888 W. S. Green of the English Alpine Club and Royal Geographical Society surveyed and explored the mountains around Glacier National Park. Although he climbed no peaks of importance north of the Trans-Canada Highway (at that time the railroad), he referred to, in his book Among the Selkirk Glaciers, the peaks seen in this direction from a small mountain near Mt. Sir Donald: "Beyond the valley of the Illecillewaet to the north-west some fine peaks were visible, one dark, bare rock pinnacle bearing northwest was most striking and no doubt over 10,000 ft high." This was probably the first time that Mt. Moloch had been noticed.

Between 1893 and 1900, mountaineers

were active in the mountains of Glacier National Park (the old Glacier House). The first ascent of Mt. Roger and other peaks in the Hermit Range occurred. During this time a road was pushed from Albert Canyon to the Waverly Mine northeast of Mt. Moloch. In 1900 Dr. J. Norman Collie and his party of two other explorers, who had already made extensive exploration in the Rockies from the east, were on their way to explore more of the mountains west of the Rockies. One of the members, Mr. Hugh E. M. Stutfield, wrote in a paper describing the trip and published in the Alpine Journal in November 1901: "Down the Bush River the view was bounded by the Selkirk Mountains, with a grand Wiesshorn-like pyramid in the center. Some weeks later I had a good look at this unnamed monarch of an unknown region, and it is undoubtedly the highest peak of the Selkirk Mountain Range." As Mr. Howard Palmer wrote in his book Mountaineering and Exploration in the Selkirks (1914): "This is the first certain allusion to Mt. Sir Sandford which I have been able to find in literature."

In 1901, Mr. Jean Habel of Berlin, Germany, climbed the 3140m peak of Mt. Chaba and said in a letter: "To the left of Mount Eden the broad, wooden depression of Bush Valley was visible, and in the same direction stood the apparently highest elevation of the region within our horizon: two mountains in the Selkirk Range; the one a long ridge, its flank studded with pinnacles and small towers, like a Gothic Cathedral; the other a massive mountain , in shape like the upper part of a medieval house, the roof snow clad, the gable black rock." This description was for Mr. Palmer clear enough that the latter had to be Mt. Sir Sandford, where the first was probably the Granite Range.

None of the references written about the northern Selkirks, up to 1903, contained very much exact information. They describe pointed peaks, unidentified pinnacles and numerous glaciers, but a definite location is rarely mentioned. The Northern Selkirk Mountains were still unknown new land.

Mr. Arthur O. Wheeler, topographer of the Department of the Interior, was the first person who showed serious interest in the Northern Selkirk Mountains. While mapping this area for the Dominion Government in 1901 and 1902, he was able to maintain a good study of the area. In 1905 he wrote "From the summit of Mt. Bagheera in the Hermit Range, twenty glaciers were counted to the north and west; three in particular on the north branch of the Illecillewaet River being of large size and especially attractive. From the center of the nearest one rises a sharp pinnacle of rock which is seen prominently from many points. This we named Fang Rock: altitude 9302 feet [2836m]. A number of fine peaks, ten of which were over nine thousand feet and at least three reached to ten thousand feet. The more that was seen of the region surrounding this stream, the more attractive it appeared and the stronger its claims to be included in the area of high Selkirk Peaks worth visiting." The area Mr. A. O. Wheeler described was Mt. Moloch and its closest peaks.

In 1911 the north fork of Illecillewaet (Tangier Creek) received more attention. H. Palmer, E. W. Holway and F. K. Butters rode by train from Glacier House to Albert Canyon and on the following day, August 11th, they left up the north fork. About halfway up the long valley of the north fork they were astounded by a grand glacial amphitheater, surrounded by precipitous walls and ice streams reaching into the forest. This was the area at the base of Mt. Moloch. The plan of this expedition was the ascent of the 3174m Mt. Sorcerer, where they arrived on the summit at 11:10 a.m. on August 15th. Maybe there was some disappointment as these climbers found a rock cairn on a twin summit that looked as high. This first ascent had been made in 1904 by H. Peterson on a solo tour. But Palmer's group still enjoyed the rewarding view presented 30km. to the west. A continuous wall of sharp peaks caught their attention. This part of the world culminates in two main peaks about six miles apart, Mt. Moloch and Mt. Holway. From the present view point they called Mt. Holway a "handsome snowy pile" and an excursion to this mountain became a new goal.

It was August 17th 1911, only two days after their ascent of Mt. Sorcerer, that Palmer, Butters and Holway succeeded in the first ascent of Mt. Holway. "It was a panorama of superlative grandeur that burst upon us. Scarcely ever before had we been favored with an atmosphere of such clear and brilliant transparency." These were the summit notes in Palmer's book. Further he wrote: ".. .to the south present an interesting line of jagged summits, dominated by the forbidding snowless horn already seen from Sorcerer. This I have named Mt. Moloch and it has since been triangulated by the Dominion Survey at 10,198 feet." (It has since been re-surveyed at 10,193 ft [3107m])

On August 19th, 1911, Palmer's group planned to explore the glacial amphitheater of Mt. Moloch, however, sixteen hours of rain with a falling barometer brought an end to their expedition.

From 1912 on, the interest of Canadian mountaineering concentrated to a big extent on Mt. Moloch. Almost annually an attempt was organized. A very close credit of success was given on August 20th, 1915 to Paul A.W. Wallace, Prof. C. B. Sisson and H. Bennet. Their attempt led up Moloch Glacier onto the summit of Mt. Baal. From this summit they hoped to reach the highest point of Mt. Moloch via the west ridge and the col in between these two peaks. Mt. Baal is part of the Moloch massif, it is separated by a 120m col. The difficulty was much too serious and these great mountaineers returned to the summit of Mt. Baal. Although this attempt had some success, as they were credited with the first ascent of the 3000m Mt. Baal. Wallace started his report which was published in the Canadian Alpine Journal in 1916 with: "Few virgin peaks of Canada boast a history of six assaults repulsed. One that does is entitled to respect. In the Northern Selkirks, some twenty-five miles by trail and bush from Albert Canyon, stands a mountain the prestige of whose gaunt and massive walls has grown fat upon the defeats of its assailants. Wherefore, to the initiated, romance is wound about the name Mt. Moloch."

On August 1st, 1918 a very experienced climbing team left Albert Canyon with horses and supplies. It was J. W. A. Hickson and his guides, Edward Feuz Jr. and Ernst Feuz. Eager and full of enthusiasm they approached the glacial amphitheater to the north-east of Mt. Moloch. A serious storm over the past week had covered the mountain with snow, but this was of little concern as they knew from great experience that most of this white handicap would melt away before the actual attempt. On August 4th they reached their base camp on the edge of Mt. Moloch Creek and the ice-fall which formed the tongue of the eastern glacier of the mountain. This was somewhere close to the 1500m level.

It was Friday, August 10th, 3:00 a.m., the moon was lighting up glaciers and peaks when Hickson and the Feuz brothers left camp filled with great hope. They moved well and by 6:00 a.m. had already climbed the long and extremely fractured Moloch Glacier. The next step was a steep slope of

down-sloping loose black shale. It was very time-consuming to work up this slope in a safe manner. When they reached the south col three hours later, a long ridge to the east summit and another kilometer of extreme exposure to the main summit separated them from success. It was 1:10 p.m. when Hickson and his guides finally set foot on this 3107m summit. A peak which was first noticed in 1888, and as time went on became the big issue of Canadian mountaineering, had been climbed for the first time. The tour ended as a long undertaking when darkness and bad weather forced the three successful climbers to set up a bivouac, not too far from the base camp, after 18 hours of hard work.

Interest in this commanding peak then faded and it was not until August 1st, 1961 when J. O. Wheeler, H. Naylor and G. Sexsmith made the second ascent. Probably to avoid the rotten rock experienced by the first ascent just below the south-east col, this team set their base camp on the upper end of Fang Creek. From there they walked via Fang Col and followed Dismal Glacier downstream to its lower end. Further on an obvious rock and gravel rib led very steeply up to the south-east col. The rest of their route followed the route of the first ascent, leading via the east summit to the main summit. Upon arriving on the summit a light snowfall began, allowing only minimal time to enjoy this great second ascent. Twenty hours after leaving the camp they were back at the upper end of Fang Creek.

The third ascent went to Dick Culbert and Hamish Mutch on August 1st 1963. In a small note left on the summit they wrote: "by new route, namely over Mt. Baal from Downie Lk. - Rather sweatless but rotten (north-east ridge). Believe it or not, we are prospecting courtesy of Newconnex Ltd.".

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After I built the Durrand Glacier Chalet to the south of Mt. Moloch in 1985 I guided hundreds of guests to the many remote glaciers and peaks of this area. During the countless summer tours leading over rich, blooming meadows and sharp granite ridges and the equally countless, winter tours I would nearly forget myself while feeling so small amidst this absolutely untouched mountain world with its great monarch, Mt. Moloch. This was the mountain which again and again captured my attention. It was a long wait for a visit.

To the south of Mt. Moloch lies the Dismal Glacier with a most impressive glacial bowl (which I named Concordia) at its upper end. In 1988 I built a second Chalet, the Mt. Moloch Hut, on a rock ridge in the center of this glacial bowl and each time I was there I would catch myself studying Mt. Moloch.

It just did not make sense to climb this peak from the north, as on many mountains the north sides show enough loose rock to scare even an experienced climber away. To the-SE of Moloch is a very long ridge leading to Mt. Graham. On the end closer to Moloch this ridge forms an exposed rock-head (Moloch Shoulder) which is about 120m higher than the ridge. Could this be the most feasible route...? This was always my thought when I pointed my binoculars towards Moloch Shoulder. Often I also studied the south rib leading from the lower end of Dismal Glacier to the south col between the east summit of Moloch and Moloch Shoulder. This route never appeared as inviting, but since it was the route of the second ascent I continued to study it.

August 22, 1991

With Jim Gatycky, a guest from Calgary, I hoped to succeed in the fourth ascent of Mt. Moloch. My alarm woke me at 4:30 a.m. at the Mt. Moloch Hut. This was the moment that I had been waiting for, but one look out the window and...

"Shit!"

The weather did not look too promising as heavy black clouds hung in the sky. The answer was back to bed. At 5:50 a.m. I woke up again, a quick look out the window... The sky was clear. Full of enthusiastic energy I jumped out of bed, woke up Jim and within 25 minutes we were on the way.

In a fast but steady pace we walked over the huge granite slabs that led, between Dismal Glacier and Zwillings Glacier toward our destination. In the silence of the morning we both enjoyed the absolute peace surrounding us. After 50 minutes of pleasant walking we were below the steep grass slope which leads to the east side of Moloch Shoulder. We kept our pace and climbed up this amazing meadow amidst a high alpine environment. The wind and rough climate at this elevation do not stop the flowers from blooming — the meadow was covered in miniature Indian paint brushes, saxifrage, mountain daisies and many more varieties of alpine flowers. After 1 1/4 hours we reached the sharp east ridge. We only had a small break and then it was time to rope up. Following the sharp ridge we were soon at the beginning of Moloch Shoulder. Small ledges on the south side led to a solid limestone slab. The rock in this area reminded me of Swiss Muesli - in such a small area so many different types of rock. Only 30 minutes ago we walked on the nicest granite slabs, then we climbed the ridge on loose shale and now I felt as though I was back at home in Switzerland - limestone. This made me yodel! With an efficient short-rope technique I guided Jim up these slabs to the highest point of the shoulder. What an amazing view we got there. The entire mountain presented at our feet. There was lots of time to study the route we planned to take. The far west side of the shoulder had a very steep face of about 90m. To avoid time-consuming rappelling we downclimbed a chimney to the south which ended on a ledge. It looked as though the ledge was built just for us. With some easy climbing we were in no time on the ridge near the south col.

From here we had a perfect chance to observe the first two successful routes. The rib leading down into Moloch Glacier, north of us, must be the one the first ascent climbers took. It looked fairly obvious. Steep and loaded with loose rocks - it seemed to say that they had some kind a white-knuckle climb in this section of their route. To the south of us was an endless drop of moderate steepness the shape of a wide gully with obvious ribs on either side. This was the route of the second ascent. It did not look very hard to me, although millions of loose shale rocks had to be conquered to make it up the 900 vertical meters. It reminded me of "three steps forward and two backwards" and looked like a real nightmare.

On fair rock, back in quartzite material, we kept going on and it didn't take us very long to reach the steep south-east ridge leading up to the east summit. We decided to follow an easy ledge, going in a slight upward manner across the big, snow-filled, south facing diagonal chimney. We climbed the chimney on the right hand side. It was interesting limestone climbing with small handholds, too steep and too difficult to short-rope Jim.

On each rope length, while standing on the belay station, I enjoyed watching Jim's climbing technique as he climbed towards me. He had never done anything close to this. Only five days ago he had his first rock climbing experience. Now he was following me up Mt. Moloch, a mountain I have never seen from so close, a mountain only eight men have climbed and a mountain

where there are no exact route descriptions available. I gained a lot of respect for Jim, his climbing skills in loose and solid rock and his absolute trust in the guide. I can't remember ever having felt as strong and confident in any climb that I have done as a guide or as an extreme mountaineer.

After the chimney we reached an easy rib with a field of limestone gravel. We walked steeply up this short rib and stood at 9:30 a.m. on a small summit with extreme exposure to the north. Mt. Moloch forms three summits: the main summit to the west is the highest, then the middle summit which is also the middle point in elevation (this is where we reached the ridge) and the east summit with the lowest elevation. All three summits are connected by a one-kilometer-long ridge as sharp as a knife with exposure that is equivalent to sitting on the tip of the wing of a flying airplane. Our route continued west toward the main summit. There was a vertical drop of 1200m to the north and ending in the wild crevassed séracs of the westerly glacier (I named this "Baal Glacier" as it does not connect with Moloch Glacier). In several spots I dropped a rock over the edge and it went flying for about 450m until it touched the cliff on a flat angle. To the south the incline was a few degrees less steep, but the first flat area is Meeting of Glaciers, almost 1400m down the "hill". Meeting of Glaciers is the lower end of Dismal Glacier and Ruth Glacier or the point where Downie Creek starts.

The last 300m presented fantastic rock climbing on perfect red marble. At 10:00 a.m., only 3 3/4 hours after we left the Hut

Mt. Moloch. (Ruedi Beglinger)

Nicoline Beglinger and Eriks Suchovs high on Mt. Moloch. (Ruedi Beglinger)

A few steps below the summit. (Ruedi Beglinger)

Mt. Moloch received its fourth ascent.

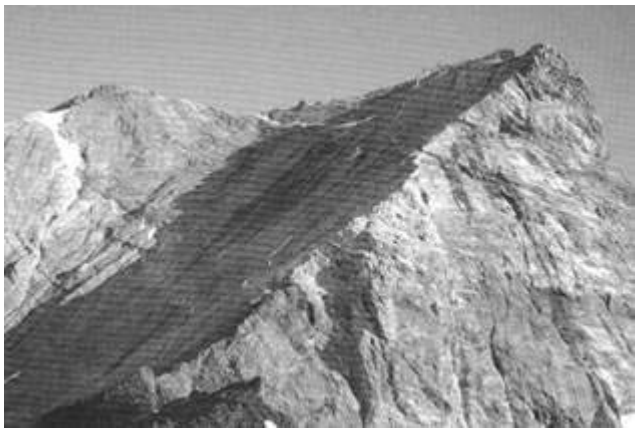
An unforgettable happiness came over me. I looked down towards the little red point far below me in the south-east —the Mt. Moloch Hut. A yodel came out of me, so loud that I probably scared all the mountain goats in the entire area. The only summit notes I found were of the second and third ascents, a scrap of paper in a plastic film container. For 20 minutes I enjoyed the most spectacular view over the entire Northern Selkirks, the Monashee Range, the Rocky Mountains as far as Assiniboine and to the west the very close Mt. Baal with its glaciated north face and behind it the beautiful Downie Lake. These were very special moments; being on a summit far away from anything and much higher than all other peaks in the area. In a silent way I celebrated this success.

For the descent we choose the same route as we came up. While down-climbing my mind was obsessed with this incredible mountain, reaching from the valley floors of Downie to the south and Moloch Creek to the north in an almost vertical manner for over 1500 vertical meters in the sky. Why only 4 ascents? I had a hard time finding the right answer. The rock on the route was good, the objective hazard was low and the mountain with our route is, with no doubt, among my best alpine experiences.

We kept descending over sharp limestone and along steep ledges. Our route was efficient and interesting. Step for step we climbed carefully down. Jim was ahead, belayed with a rope tied to me. Once in a while we stopped to enjoy the great emptiness in between us and the crevassed glaciers down in the valley floor. We both felt great, it was an overwhelming feeling of success and peaceful silence.

On September 5th, 1991, the sky couldn't have been clearer, the early morning hours cool and quiet. Again I was on my way to "my mountain", with me were my wife Nicoline and my good friend Eriks Suchovs. I felt honored to climb this mountain with Nicoline and Eriks, to show them what I had found ... a precious gem that only a very few people know about.

Never has a mountain grown as close to my heart as Mt. Moloch. Sharing an experience like this one is with no doubt an unbeatable highlight in the trade of mountain guiding.



The headwall leading to the 1 km-long summit ridge. (Ruedi Beglinger)

Sources:

Howard Palmer, Mountaineering and Exploration in the Selkirks, 1914.

Canadian Alpine Journal, 1916. Paul A.W. Wallace, "Elusive Mt. Moloch"

Canadian Alpine Journal, 1919. J.W.A. Hickson, "Ascent of Mt. Moloch"

Leaning Towers Group

Jonathan Preston

Mike Bennett and I (both British), walked in to the Leaning Towers Group of the Southern Purcells from the Kimberley roadhead, via Dewar Creek hot springs, eventually pitching a base camp at about 2000m on a flat meadow, SE of Hall Peak, on 3 Sep, 1991. Wet and unsettled weather on the walk-in had given way to clear skies and bright sunshine which lasted a week in total.

On 4 September we climbed Hall Peak (3041 m) by the N ridge (4 1/2hr from camp, 45 min from the col between Hall Pk and Block Tower up slabs to the summit.)

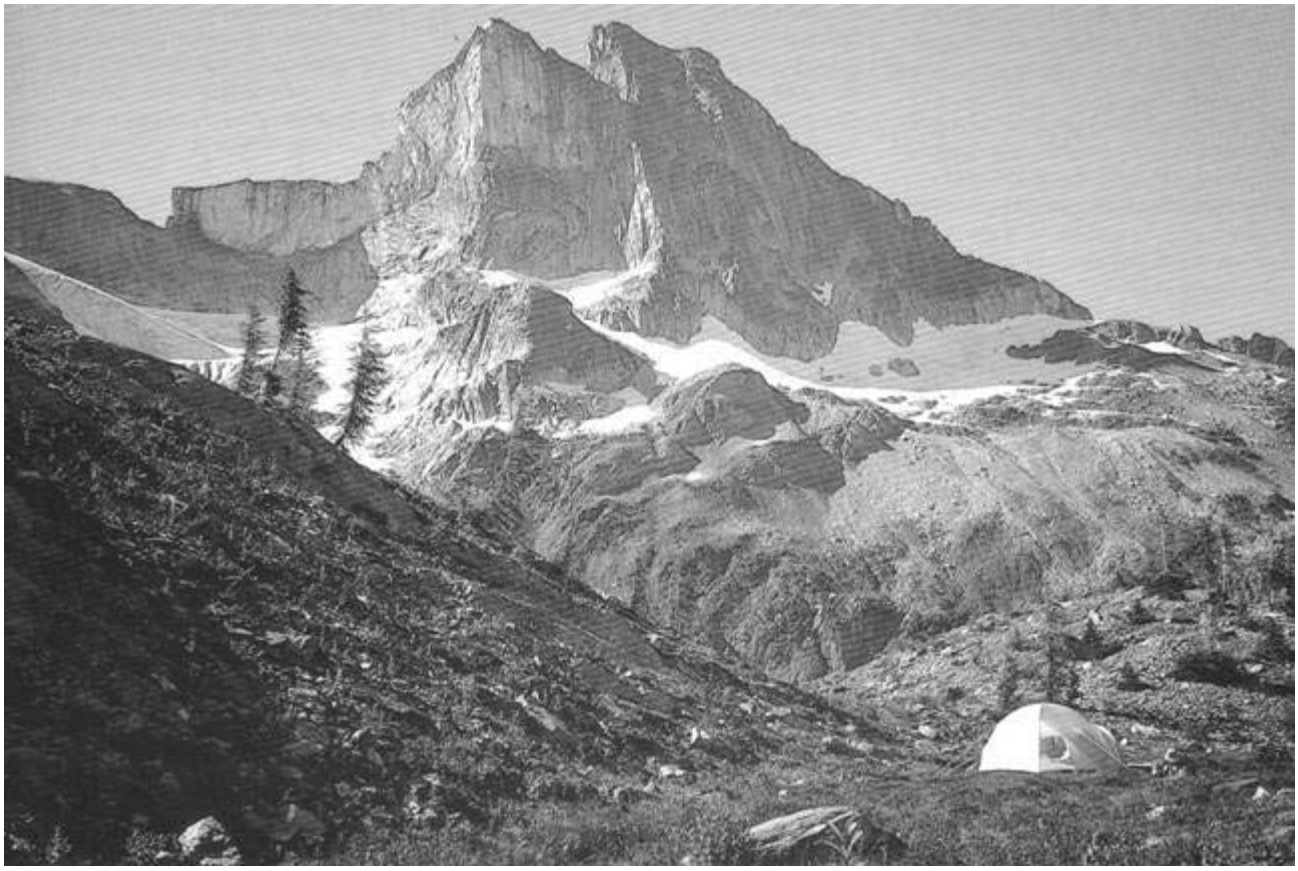
On 5 September we traversed the entire ridge from the Molars to Sharkshead Tower. We ascended one Molar, then from the col between the Molars and Wisdom Tooth we scrambled up loose rock to the summit of Wisdom Tooth (2972m), and made an exposed descent down the N side. Then up better, steeper rock on the S side of Bivouac Tower (3003m) and an easier descent to the col by Sharkshead Tower via Consolation Point. Pools of melted snow provided water here. The SE ridge of Sharkshead contained on long (40m) pitch of 5.8 climbing to a platform, followed by a wildly-exposed hand traverse under the south summit to emerge, in spectacular fashion, just below the S summit pyramid. It is a walk across to the main summit (2912m). We reversed the hand traverse and made one long rappel to the col, then descended the glacier N and then E to below the E face of Hall Pk, and then back to camp. A 12 hour round trip.

We walked out, taking a detour up Radiant Pk (ca. 2750m) in the process - a great viewpoint.

This is a beautiful area. We saw moose, deer, mountain goat, porcupine, and humming birds. I was depressed to see hunters, armed to the teeth, swearing and smoking as they rode in as we walked out by Dewar Creek.

Jonathon Preston on the ridge between Wisdom Tooth and Bivouac Tower, looking east.

The Molars, Wisdom Tooth, Bivouac Tower and Sharkshead Tower (l to r) from the east. (Jonathon Preston)



Basecamp below the east face of Hall Peak. (Jonathon Preston)

Downie Peak North Ridge

Franz Fux

Ever since I started working out of the Goldstream area in 1986, the pyramid of Downie Peak held a very special fascination for me. There was this incredibly beautiful ridge, a sweeping line so impressive, I could not help but wishing to be able to get closer to it and climb to the peak along that line.

Year after year I started out by promising myself to go and climb that ridge, but somehow I never made it.

I was working at the Adamant Lodge last summer, with Erich Unterberger, doing some landscaping and other odd things, when one day, on my way to town, I discovered the presence of some strange cars along the Goldstream road, suspiciously at a place where one would start for the same ridge I was dreaming about. That same night thunder and lightening was present in the area, and when I drove back up to the lodge the next morning, I met the same cars on their way out and back to Revelstoke. Once back at the lodge, I recollected my observations to Erich, and from that point on we were just waiting for the weather to improve.

Erich, also known as the "Adrenaline Junkie", is not one to leave a challenge by the wayside and I was very happy to be on an adventure like that with him. He was going to be the leader of the climb, as I had not climbed for almost ten years.

We started out August the 4th, at km 24 of the Goldstream Forestry Road, just after 6 a.m., on what promised to be a clear and warm day. The first 2 hours were prime Selkirk bushwhacking, thrashing our way through alders and devils club 3m high, until the creekbed was wide enough and the going became easy and enjoyable.

We continued along the creek for a while, then, when the terrain became steeper, switched to the west side of the drainage, followed some minor brooks, gaining altitude steadily and reached the base of our climb at about 1700m by 10:30 that morning. We filled up our water bottles, took a brief rest, and started with the main part of our adventure.

Studying the North Ridge and the adjacent West Face, we decided to use a ramp leading parallel and about 30m to the side of the ridge, up the face. The first few rope lengths were of moderate difficulty, and after 4 of them we were able to short rope for about 300m, coming to a steeper section in the climb and a possibility to gain the ridge on our left.

Five more lengths in very pleasant and mostly solid rock, of difficulties up to 5.7, let us gain the ridge and an exposed but extremely beautiful bivouac platform. It was 5 p.m., we were out of water, I was very tired, and the decision to stay for the night had my support without any arguments at all. We spent a while arranging for food and building a sleeping area and settled down for a peaceful and satisfying evening, topped off by one of those mountain sunsets that seem to last forever.

A strange feeling awakened me, in the middle of darkness, lifting my head I discovered the western sky displaying Northern Lights, they seem to be so close, I could have sworn that I could hear them. I watched them for a while, drifted back into sleep, and the next thing I heard, Erich was getting ready for the remaining 500m of the ridge.

We started climbing at 5:30 a.m., watching the sun come up over Mount Sir Sandford, to what promised to become another beautiful day. We stayed on the ridge for the remainder of the climb, five hours of pleasant moves in stable limestone, easy climbing intermixed with

Downie Peak. The North Ridge is the sunlight; shade divide. (Franz Fux)

the odd 5.7 move, reaching the summit and precious water, shortly after 10:30. For the next half hour we were occupied melting snow, resting and getting enough courage to start the descent along what proved to be the most nerve-wracking part of the whole trip, the very unstable South West Ridge.

After arriving at the lowest spot of said ridge, we discovered a snow field to our right, leading directly to a lake far below and to the terrain known from our approach. From that point it was straight walking down and out toward Goldstream River, topped off at the very end by the obligatory two hours of swearing through alders and the lovely devils club.

We arrived back at the road at 4 p.m., just in time for tea, goodies, and a few cold beers at the Adamant Lodge.

Interior updates

Gold Range

The Kootenay Mountaineering Club 1990 Climbing Camp was situated in the Gold Range (Monashees), right below the imposing N face of Mt. Odin (headwaters of Odin Creek),

When we selected this site we were hoping for good rock and short approaches. Well, the rock was just fine, but the approaches were anything but short. All of the major peaks were at least one drainage away, definitely not day trips unless one settled for the most straightforward routes. Still, it is a beautiful place. Fauna and flora were at their best, and the weather was co-operative, so we settled in for some very pleasant general mountaineering.

However, there was a fly, or rather a bug, in the ointment. A person unnamed brought a rather virulent variety of the stomach flu into the camp and, one by one, we all succumbed. A great opportunity for a field trip for an epidemiology class, but it somewhat limited our climbing.

Still, Paul Allen and I did manage some first ascents.

South face of Mt. Kelly: A super direttissima, straight up from 10 Cent Lakes. Good rock, mostly class 4 or low class 5 slabs, some 600 vertical meters ending right on the summit. A pleasant trip the highlight of which was being pelted by rocks that a strikingly beautiful white mountain goat rolled down on us. (The lowlight was the approach "hike".)

South ridge of Saturday Peak. A few leads of medium class 5 to reach the ridge proper (probably can be bypassed), then scramble to the headwall of white granite and two beautiful leads (5.6) to the summit. Would be a real classic if it was somewhere more accessible.

This area had good potential for enjoyable climbing. We shall return.

Steven Horvath

Egyptian Group: "Mt. Horus"

Mike Poutiatine, Roger Alfred and I climbed the major peak 2.7km north of Jumbo Pass in the Purcell Range on August 2, 1991. From a camp at 1675m along Jumbo Creek we ascended through forest, brush and scree to the basin east of the peak. We were able to find a fourth class route onto the north ridge at about 2550m, and followed the north ridge to the summit. The ridge included two pitches of basic fifth class climbing and a dozen pitches of third and fourth class. We found no evidence of previous ascent and as the other peaks of the Egyptian Group are clearly marked with cairns, it may well be that this is a first ascent. Our altimeters read 9040ft [2756m] on the summit, but the map indicates a summit elevation of 8950ft [2729m].

The descent followed the north ridge all the way to the pass south of Isis and required one rappel. Five hours to the summit.

The name "Thoth" was proposed for this peak by the first party to climb among the Egyptians in the early 1970s (CAJ , 1974). We would like to propose that the peak be named "Horus" in honor of the Egyptian god. This is in line with the other names in the range -which also refer to Egyptian gods - and is more recognizable than "Thoth".

Peter Green

Bugaboos

A number of new routes were pioneered during the Alpine Club of Canada's General Mountaineering Camp (GMC) in the Vowells/ Bugaboos in 1990. The area of cliffs around Tamarack Glen saw a myriad of short new routes up to 5.10 put up by countless individuals. Descriptions are difficult without photos. One particular new climb, Spring Loaded 5.6/5.7, offered me the opportunity to demonstrate why protection should be placed even when the climbing is not difficult. My 6m flight was initiated when a granite hold broke (WHAT!!) in the middle of this fine long lay-back. Spring loaded indeed! The group below was suitably impressed.

Don Vockeroth led a party up a new route on Brenta Spire. This fourth class route (perhaps some fifth?) followed a fairly obvious ridge/spur which was visible from the Vowell GMC site. Details would best be procured from Don himself.

My wife Sandra and I explored the massive, glacier-polished apron below the NW face of Northpost Spire. Our creation, In Search of the Northwest Passage (5.8), gave great runout friction climbing. This multi-pitch route followed a series of water-worn weaknesses in the apron to a large ledge, then traversed out toward the ridge which borders the face. At this point the rock deteriorated and we descended. We placed one bolt for protection on a particularly run out section, and left several bolts and pitons for rappel anchors. Future parties on this apron should come prepared with a fully-stocked bolt kit in addition to their regular rack.

By far the best new route was North by Northwest, again climbed by Sandra and I. It follows one of several obvious left-slanting dihedrals which split the North West face of Northpost Spire on the left-hand side. About eight pitches of reasonable granite lead to the ridge which borders the face on the left. The climbing on the face is predominantly easy-to-moderate fifth class with no real horror pitches. Three pitches contain sections of approximately 5.7. Route finding is not overly difficult, with traverses providing the answer to several

apparent roadblocks. The crux is the last pitch on the face, with a sudden abundance of lichen combining with laybacks, stemming and face climbing to bring the standard up to about 5.8. The route does not end upon reaching the ridge however, as an hour or more of ascent yet remain. The final steep, rotten wall just before the summit can be avoided by a rising traverse on loose rock to the left. Descent is down the North East rocks/North ridge. A complete rack including wired nuts and flexible Friends and Camalots up to the massive #4 were taken and used. Bolts were not required. One wired 'Rock' was left fixed in place after a protracted battle to extricate it gave unsatisfactory results. Knifeblade and lost arrow pitons could be put to good use on this route at belay stations (if you are into that).

Cyril Shokoples

Deville Névé

Doug Hogg and I helicoptered to the col between Wheeler and Kirkpatrick, and established a camp on the west arm of the Deville, about half-way between Wheeler and Cyprian. On the first full day we descended to the Bishops Glacier, climbed the north face of Cyprian, traversed across to Augustine, and back down to camp. The next day we made a more leisurely traverse of Wheeler and Kirkpatrick. The third day took us back down the Bishops Glacier, up the long south ridge of Selwyn, over to Häsler and then more or less the same thing in reverse.

Satisfied with six major summits in three days we headed for our vehicle, which we had left at the end of the Duncan River Road. We followed the ski route south for three days, over the east shoulders of Grand and Sugar-loaf, and finally down the Duncan Glacier. We climbed Sugarloaf on the way, but the summits of Grand, Duncan and Beaver eluded us. Something to go back for. I believe that the following two climbs are new routes:

Mt. Cyprian - North Face

We saw a photo of a friendly snow slope in Palmer's 1914 book about the Selkirks. Conditions change in seventy-five years! We encountered several pitches of semi-technical ice, which required two hand-tools, and ice screws for belays, before leading to easier ground.

Mt. Selwyn - South Ridge

Approaching this long ridge is like walking up a steep beach, which is not usually a good sign in the mountains. Fortunately, as the angle increased the quality of the rock improved accordingly. Several excellent pitches on the final headwall led to an exposed but solid finish on the ridge.

MacBeth Group

The quickest and easiest access to the two main peaks in this area, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth is probably via the North Fork of Glacier Creek. A recently re-built bridge, and an old logging road which is followed to its end, lead to the major drainage which separates these two peaks to the East.

Two or three hours of moderate bush travel end in an open valley below a small glacier, and a very spectacular camp-site. Three trips to this delightful location resulted in the following new routes. Lady Macbeth, East Ridge

Doug Hogg and I reached this ridge by traversing the pocket glacier below the north east face. We then followed the crest, on good rock, reaching the summit in 6 or 7 hours from camp. According to the summit record this was only the second ascent of the peak, which we found surprising. We traversed the peak by descending the broken west shoulder.

Mt. MacBeth, South Face, left

Lots of snow in the trees allowed Larry Smith, Diana Geller and myself easy June access from the north fork of Glacier Creek. Other signs were less propitious - heavy rain and a large inquisitive bear. The next day we climbed on, in and through ever softening and deepening snow, to reach the center of the south face. Our original intention had been to continue up the right side and finish via the top of the east ridge. Snow conditions forced us to angle left instead, until we reached the south ridge (Kruszyna-Whitburn route) a short distance below the summit. Not as pretty, but it worked. Lots of cloud, with occasional snow flurries and slides. A solemn sort of day.

Battle Range

Mt. Forecastle, South Ridge

Several years ago Doris Corbeil and I climbed this short but enjoyable route during the KMC camp at the head of Houston Creek. We started at the lowest point of the ridge, and followed it to the large snowfield below the summit. Sunshine, good granite and great views combined for a moderate and enjoyable day.

Findlay Group

Paul Allen and I made an all-too-short trip to this delightful area, camping at Lone Cairn Lake, the headwaters of Granite Creek. We were there in late July and only a tiny portion of the lake was ice-free. The view of Lees and Clutterbuck from here is definitely classic. We climbed Midge Peak via the standard south couloir, and also completed two new routes.

Mt. Findlay, South Ridge

Start at the obvious low point in the ridge, near a small tower (the Lone Cairn perhaps?), which is clearly visible from the lake. Two face pitches brought us to the crest, and easier climbing. We unroped and scrambled for approximately one and a half kilometers (yes, almost a mile) to where the ridge steepened again. 200m of exposed rock led to the summit. While it is possible to access this ridge at a number of places we felt that it was more aesthetic to follow the complete line.

Mt. Clutterbuck, North Ridge

The profile of this fine ridge confronted us across the valley, promising a challenging rock climb. Our day started with a 500m descent to the toe of the Lees-Clutterbuck glacier, and a hike back up the glacier to a point where we could gain the north ridge. Where the ridge steepens we crossed to the east side and continued up for several hundred meters, until Paul judiciously produced the rope—perhaps he was just tired of carrying it. We roped up and followed the ridge for 13 full and enjoyable pitches on excellent rock. A steep notch just below the summit looked ominous, but Paul led it smoothly. All day we enjoyed fine views of the Beckey route on the north ridge of Mt. Lees, a line which ran parallel to ours, across the small glacier—nice one Uncle Fred! Several short rappels helped us down the west shoulder. Well worthwhile area—puts the "P" back in Pristine

Hamish Mutch

Suffer Machine

Glenn Reisenhofer

Masten tells us there's a new route formed to the right of Nemesis. The only problem is that it hasn't formed all the way to the bottom. Yes, but that doesn't matter, because if you have an extension ladder you could reach the ice easily. It's "only SIX METERS up to the base of the waterfall" states Masten.

On the very next Sunday we are on our way up the Radium highway; Jeff Everett, Jeff Marshall, me, and a nine-meter extension ladder. Somehow Everett and I get conned into carrying the ladder. It seems as though the more experienced you are at the game, the less work you actually end up doing. Maybe you just get smarter with age.

Carrying a nine-meter ladder up a Canadian Rockies trail, loaded with switchbacks, is not my idea of fun... in fact it's a pain in the butt! Our method involves carrying the ladder between us, tied to our packs with webbing. Interesting eh? Wait till we get to the steep snow slopes...

Progress is made and we finally reach the base of the climb, but not without some anxiety over the questionable slopes. Can you imagine getting caught in an avalanche with a ladder attached to two people??? Pretty weird I think. We drop the much-hated ladder and gaze at the bottom of the cleaved pillar.

It doesn't look like the ladder will reach, but we try anyway. We pull it out to full extension and hoist it up ... DANG! It doesn't reach and we want to bolt Masten's genitals to the base of the climb.

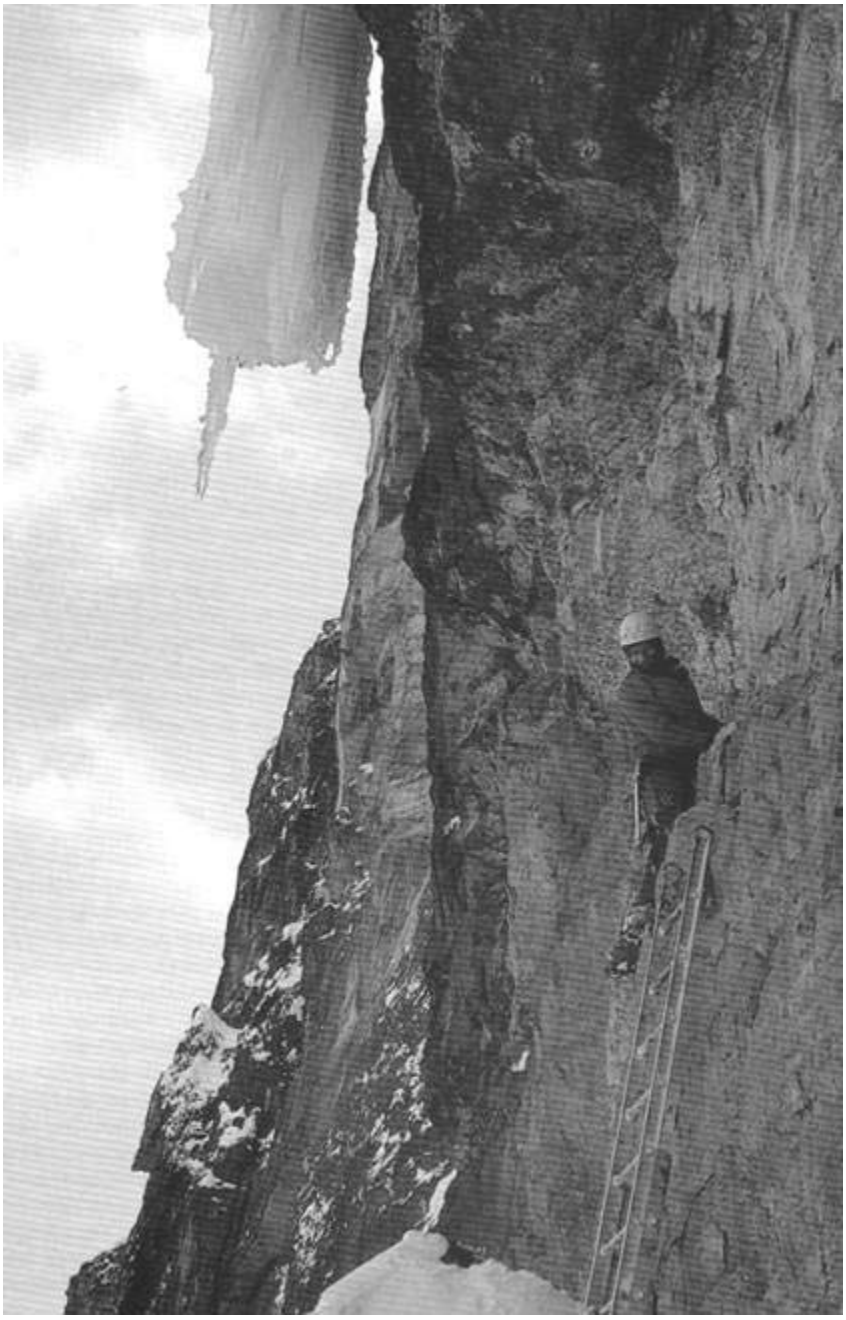
Everett (Zippy) climbs up the shaky scaffolding just to "have a look". I step back a bit to get a better look and realize that it's no go—well at least not on this attempt. After much consideration we pack up the ladder, figuring the owner (Mr. Ken Lowe) as well as the Park Warden would not appreciate us leaving it behind.

We ski off in the general direction of Nemesis, noticing a nice little pillar on the way on which Marshall decides to show off his ice climbing skills. Zippy plays belay-slave and I go and play in the snow. Jeffrey is in perfect form, or shall I say in his usual form of existence on steep ground (never putting in enough ice screws) and way up there with no possibility for rest. The only rest for the little man is up, and that is where he goes, with two skinny alpinists following his lead. We decide to call the route the Killer Pillar for folks out there with the desire for the big pump.

So the day is not lost, and neither is the ladder for we actually return it to the rightful owner. He is thankful.

Round Two is soon under way. Accompanying us on this outing is the National Telemark Team, who show us their marvelous turn-making techniques. Marshall has decided not to join us this time, or any time other for that matter, for he is still pumped from the last time, but we have brought our own special weapon: our aid-climbing gear. This ought to be fun, aid climbing in winter when neither of us has had any real aid experience in any season.

I start on mixed ground, bridging up a snow-infested scoop with very little pro. After thrashing my way up and onto a shattered pillar I can finally stuff a Friend in a nice crack. Then I find that placing a bolt on the underside of a roof is extremely tiring business. A little higher and one more bolt and I am a tired puppy, ready to go down and let Zippy have a go at the blank wall above.



"Hey Glenn, are you sure this is what they mean by mixed climbing?" (Glenn Reisenhofer)

Zippy jugs up to the high point and has a glance around, he's impressed with the situation. I can read his mind as if he were speaking to me "... I'm not going to free this face, forget it, I've got a kit, hooks and some pins and besides, I need some aid practice..." Two hours later spindrift is coming down on a regular schedule and Zippy has progressed a mighty eight meters. Hard aid climbing for lads who know very little of the sport. As he places the belay the drill bit breaks and he has to make do with a half-drilled hole and a crappy pin placement. He raps and we leave the line fixed while we head to town and debate whether a third attempt will take place.

A few days later we're on our way again, this time accompanied by the fine alpinist Dave Campbell. I am forced, against my will, to jug the fixed line. I always have a difficult time dealing with jumaring. It is not the technique that causes the problem, it is just that it scares the pants off of me. I always get flashbacks of chopped ropes on Wind Tower. Let's not talk about that.

During our last attempt Zippy, whose real profession is full-time sport climber, had to pull the ropes up the pitch he had just led, otherwise it would have taken him just as long to rap down as it had taken him to aid up. This turns out to have been a mistake, for all the gear is still hanging on the pitch, which now resembles Smith Rocks sport climb ready for the pink point, and I end up doing some penduluming to get the gear back.

Once I reach the belay I get a look at Zip's great belay-rigging technique. I am not impressed and decisively tell him so. Then I break a drill bit on the compact rock.

Once I get my wits back I resume the climb. To the left there is a shallow groove which consists of tiny edges with snow on them. Dang! I've forgotten the whisk broom. I aid up and across to the groove, which leads me up about six meters with no gear to a ledge at which I drill a bolt.

I have now done my part for the day and it is Zippy's turn. Once he is at the high point, Dave and I are treated to the most hilarious sight the Rockies have ever seen as we try to haul Zippy over to the waterfall from the ground. It is sort of like a pendulum game, but we are able to give a helping hand.

Once Zippy has reached the ice (for the first time in three days of effort) he carefully aids his way up the broken and shattered pillar until he reaches some "real" ice. He

Jeff Everett equipping the route for the pinkpoint attempt. (Glenn Reisenhofer)

Glenn Reisenhofer enjoying another day of ice climbing in the Rockies. (Jeff Everett)

Reisenhofer jugging the first pitch. (Jeff Everett)

The Suffer Machine. (Jeff Everett)

Reisenhofer on pitch five. (Jeff Everett)

frees up this until he runs out of daylight at about the same time as he runs out of rope.

We are confident that we will reach the top, now that we were finally on the ice, and two days later we are at it again - this time with Zippy's lap dog Uli. Uli is the toughest hound I know. She is capable of every approach put in her way and she does them with enthusiasm (unlike most alpinists). She can solo 5.6 slabs, always leaves us behind on approaches, has a grade five waterfall named after her (Uli's Revenge) and always waits patiently for the lads on the route. All this and more for just a sausage.

I find it quite amazing that as time progresses people become less and less leery of potentially dangerous slopes, like the one we have had to traverse twice on each attempt. We have begun to grow accustomed to the avalanche threat. In our thoughts we say to ourselves,"... if we just stay as high as possible... sort of skirt around the base of the rock... if the slope goes we'd be on top of it at least... that's not slumping, that's just air pockets... we'll be ok". But on this occasion we have another secret weapon... Uli. We'll let Uli go first and if the slope goes then... Yeah right, as if a twenty pound dog will exert the same force as a two-hundred-pound Zippy plus all his gear."

But the slope does not move as we cross it and soon we are back at our highpoint with Uli safe at the bottom. The technical ice pitches seem almost a let-down after all the previous excitement.

We have been climbing a lot of ice this year, but know very little about the finer game of aid and mixed climbing. I believe that the two of us are now hooked on having some more adrenaline-surging adventures in the fabulous winter arena of the Rocky Mountains.

The Suffer Machine, 5.6/A2, Grade V Ice; First ascent by Jeff Everett and Glenn Reisenhofer

Tomoesque

Robert Cordery-Cotter

"Only the passion and the agony are real"

René Desmaison

For nearly two years I had dreamed of the North Face of Mount Edith Cavell. Of all the great north faces in the Canadian Rockies, Edith Cavell appealed to my passion most; a massive, listing warship of red-brown quartzite looming a full 1500m above the tourist parking lot that had been eked out of the moraine in the gloom of its northern aspect. In November of 1989 I had first seen the face, a frozen apparition visible to the south of a then largely deserted Jasper townsite. Fresh from the Shroud three months earlier I spoke rather casually to some locals of soloing the face. They assumed me mad. Such madness is like a craving for heroin - never really abating, insatiable.

Two hard years were to pass, a time spent largely immersed in the rigor of my first two years of veterinary medical college. I familiarized myself with the Canadian Rockies, climbing upon the superb winter waterfalls there. The Rockies possess a profound seriousness owing to violent weather, extreme cold, severe rockfall, heavy snowfall, and a sobering remoteness. I adjusted gradually to these factors, perfecting my training, virtually re-learning how to ice climb, how to rock climb, in an effort to realize what I guessed could be my full potential. A painful time of mixed results and often virulent criticisms from my "friends".

Looking back, I know I toughened, but at the time I often doubted whether I would ever again climb hard.

By the spring of 1991 I had finished my second didactic year of school and decided, against a backdrop of easing scholastic requirements, to re-enter the arena of extreme climbing. In preparation I developed a regimen of long-distance runs, weight training, and circuit training on different boulder problems. In June I bagged my first alpine solo in two years - the Shooting Gallery on Mt. Andromeda's North ridge, in just three hours. The spell was broken. I could still climb and the Canadian Rockies were not impregnable to soloism. The reality was that the Rockies' propensity for rockfall, poor protection potential, and narrow windows for good conditions really

advocated the rapid progress of the soloist. Alpinism had changed. Two of the world's hardest climbs — Jannu north face, and Lhotse south face—had been achieved by the soloist Tomo Cesen. Reading of these events electrified me. One had succeeded where teams had failed. I needed my own (albeit more modest) Jannu north face, a novel route on a large mixed face where all my resources would be put to the test. The imposing north face of Edith Cavell would be my testpiece. My muscle, my steel, my judgement and resolve pitted against her bristling séracs, her steep quartzite, ice runnels and stonefall. In September of 1991 I was ready; the forecast was for high pressure over the northern Rocky Mountains.

Storms had pounded the big peaks of the Canadian Rockies in the weeks previous. My wife Susanne and I took one and a half days to drive the twelve hours from our home in southeast Washington to the face, a lazy autumn tour through the Rockies past sleek browsing elk amid flaming poplars and larches.

Farther north, below the inhospitable and rugged Sunwapta pass I shed my shirt as we bouldered amid a jumble of limestone blocks just off the Icefields Parkway. My form was excellent, the sun warm, my daughter snored peacefully in her stroller. To my astonishment a large shiny Petzl bolt appeared in the middle of a five-meter-high block. Is every block to be so protected?

By mid-afternoon, to the west of the highway, the north face of Mount Edith Cavell slid solemnly into view, an imposing hulk of dark stone and pale ice. The mountain bears the name of a British military nurse executed by the Germans in Belgium during the first world war for her role in smuggling allied prisoners from behind enemy lines. Her stoic British countenance had been immortalized in this magnificent north face, her exploit no longer a lost historical footnote of unheralded bravery. I hoped she would prove kind to me.

In the shade of the wall in our camper, Susanne brewed hot chocolate while I scanned the face with binoculars. Like the Grandes Jorasses' north face, Edith Cavell's consists of a series of spurs, the central spur bearing the original Chouinard/Beckey/Doody route that leads directly to the summit. Between the spurs lay uncharted ground, the realm of waterfalls and rockfall during the warm summer months when sun reached the face and the access road was open. Within a few weeks snowfall would close the road until late spring, but on this clear autumn day, the southward-retreating sun no longer touched the face, the waterfalls hung frozen in the couloirs, the stones lay still.

No line was immediately evident. The upper face and icefields were well-plastered with storm ice but the horizontal strata presented steep headwalls that broke the runnels and presented considerable obstacles. One feature had, however, captured my gaze: the central spur, in merging with the face to the west, formed an enormous dihedral. In summer water draining an icefield coursed down this "Great Dihedral" but now it was an impressive ice runnel. A prominent ice band ran across the face at mid-height and from this band, an ice-filled ramp led up left to the base of the great dihedral, though an obvious rock section atop the ramp apparently barred easy access to the dihedral. Once upon the icefield that spawned the ice runnel in the great dihedral a narrow goulotte cut the final and most imposing rock band, merging with the small second icefield before continuing to the third icefield. A final, less-imposing band separated the third icefield from the vast summit icefields. The goulotte between the first icefield and the upper third icefield was the key to the route. If the goulotte would not go I would be stranded, coinced high on the face, beneath what appeared to be a vertical, if not overhanging, headwall. Finally, I reviewed several options for reaching the prominent ice band that would lead me to the beginning of the ramp, deferring this route-finding decision until I reached the Angel Glacier in the morning. I set my alarm for 1:30 a.m. and went to bed.

A strong moon illuminated the trail atop the moraine that led from the parking lot to the start of the climbing. The tumultuous and potentially death- dealing Angel icefall spawned from the Angel Glacier could be turned on the right, up moderate technical rockclimbing by headlamp. Soon the apocalyptic sérac lines appeared above me, inducing me to scurry rightward lest they feel malevolent. Many thoughts crowded my helmet in the pre-dawn darkness, the way not always clear on the rugged face. I turned overhangs, stepped through waterfalls and at last climbed through a dry couloir to emerge above the Angel Glacier, opposite the darkened north face. Above, black-ice icefields gleamed like gunmetal in the moonlight high on the face. Somewhere below a sérac collapsed and rumbled ominously across the valley.

I was abruptly alone, minimally equipped and suddenly confronted with a truly halting sight. The face, considerably foreshortened from the parking lot below, was now evident in full stature, and viewed from my position seemed of fulminant enormity. My equipment consisted of two Pulsar ice tools, Asolo Superlite plastic boots fitted tight for rock climbing, Simond rigid-speed crampons, two pairs of tights, a heavyweight capilene undershirt and lightweight sweater, my dayglo headband, two sets of handwear, shell gear and, of course, my helmet. I had a hand-held radio to hit the CB radio in the van, a liter of coffee and a liter of Gatorade, biscuits, chocolate, energy bars and a camera. My hardware was sparse, a Metolius specialist harness, four blade pitons, six carabiners, two small slings and an 80m 7mm rope. Sparse armament, yet adequate I hoped.

The brittle glacier popped startlingly under my crampons as I made for the start of my proposed route - an erratic tongue of ice that conveniently bridged a bottomless rimaye. I hit my stopwatch at 7:40, and whacked my piolet into the ice tongue, pulling up onto the face with clean, smooth motion.

The day was perfect, the face silent and frigid. Reaching the rock I doffed my crampons and traversed to the right on a large, outward-hanging block secured in place by frozen gravel, avoiding eye contact with the waiting rimaye below. Though only 5.6 or so, the rock was numbing to my gloved hands, my sac disconcerting. Reaching lower-angle, broken ground I headed further right towards a series of small ice patches that led up to a shattered amphitheater down which cascaded a fragile frozen waterfall. As I surmounted this and moved left on 5.7 rock in crampons the sun found the McKeith spur to my right. Whrrrrr! Whack! The first stones shot past. Reaching the enormous ice band that cut across the face I sprinted up the band to the base of the headwall to take shelter.

"I could die doing this" I thought.

Ruff! Ruff! Ruff! Ruff! Ruff! Ruff! The first tourists had arrived in the parking lot below and my malemute dog Chamonix, moored to the van, issued her warning lest they venture too close, her barking audible to me almost a kilometer above.

Having reached the ice band, I front pointed left in search of the start of the ramp. After downclimbing a 25m section of 55° black ice, I spotted the ramp passing up and

overhead to end in a blank gray headwall. I attacked the ramp, linking plates of 55° ice, moving up and right. After a mixed bit led to a small alcove I saw above what I had feared encountering, a compact vertical section of gray quartzite some 15m high.

Susanne confirmed by radio what I already knew, that this section was the most direct and shortest way to reach the base of the great dihedral. Reluctant to cede defeat I pounded in a Simond blade and clipped myself and my pack to it, my mind racing. Then I thought of the 7mm rope in my sac. Double stranded it would hold a short fall, so out it came. I placed a second pin as a backup, clipping the pins together with an ice axe leash. Tying the two ends of the doubled 7mm to the pins, I tied a figure-of-eight knot in the strands and clipped them to my harness with one of my two lightweight locking carabiners. Equipped with two short slings, two carabiners, and two small blades, I lurched out onto the section.

Some distance out a hard move loomed. I needed to do a finger traverse left with 12mm edges for my plastic boots. In went one peg, one sling, one carabiner. I began tentatively, executed a hard leftward pull, then an awkward mantle on a layback hold. Tying a second knot with one hand to clip in further up the rope, I looked back at the limp, double-stranded 7mm shoelace guarding my life and reached deep down inside, staying in full control. One meter away I could see a big knob. Time to be concise. I stepped high with my left boot onto a concavity in a vertical edge and, with my right hand crimped off on a small edge, began scratching and sniffing with my right boot until the jug strayed into reach.

If you ever learn to do anything through bouldering, learn to dyno. My left hand struck, viper-like, at the hold. It was everything I've always wanted in a woman, and I soon left the section behind up more moderate rock, then snow, to near the base of the great dihedral.

I had one pin remaining, which I hastily placed as the rope ran out. Unhappy with the placement I hammered the blade back out to replace it more securely. Ting! The blade sprang out of the crack and disappeared down the face. I now had no means of anchoring the rope to rappel and retrieve my sac. Or did I? Remembering how the Dresden climbers used knotted cord to protect difficult sandstone routes, I formed an enormous knot in my remaining sling and slotted it into a crack. I rapped hastily, donned my sac and re-climbed the section using the doubled 7mm as a top rope to retrieve my pins.

Drinking coffee in hurried gulps, at the base of the great dihedral I eyed the start of the ice climbing and prepared for what I knew would come. Until now I had reasoned, the climbing would be moderate. Up that ice runnel, now largely hidden from view, lay long stretches of ice and mixed ground of unknown difficulty. As the hot coffee revived me, I packed away the faithful 7mm rope, clipped on my crampons, took the ice tools in my gauntlet-clad hands and attacked the start of the ice climbing.

What had been a torrent of water and stone-fall in mid-August was now an excellent goulotte, gray ice, thin but soft. I had soloed kilometers of such terrain in the Alps. I lapsed into an easy rhythm. Soloing high on a Canadian Rockies north face on a crystalline autumn day, a tidy didus of blood, muscle and fabricated materials, I experienced complete exhilaration. This was what I had trained for, prepared in every way for, to penetrate the interface between the passivity of blue sky and the assertion of steep ice and rock.

The ice was thin, but of a usable consistency. Appreciable in angle, yet never extreme. Midway up the great dihedral the ice changed course, straying over steeper rock to the right of the dihedral. This way I too strayed, until the ice resumed in the dihedral. At last I could see where the ice dissipated in a bulging, reddish quartzite headwall. Thin ice led off left to a rise which I judged to be the border of the first icefield. And so it was.

Above the first icefield was a vertical head-wall of red-brown quartzite that I recognized as the single most formidable obstacle of my proposed route. Clanking across the unyielding old ice of the icefield I craned my neck to view this bulwark. The rock was vertiginous, obviously overhung in places and appeared quite insurmountable. There seemed to exist only one flaw in this facade. A ghastly shaft of white ice imprisoned within the narrow confines of a vertical chimney, capped cruelly by an ice-glazed roof. Out came the radio.

"Am I below the correct exit goulotte?" Indeed I was, came the reply. "Are you sure the correct exit goulotte isn't further right?" I pleaded. "There is no other goulotte further right" came the reply through the radio, Susanne's voice small and distant.

There was an unworldly roaring about me suddenly as the wind came upon the face. Like a steel lash the spindrift twisted about me. In the ice before me my Pulsars waited. Above me, the specter of the ice goulotte waited, equally, if not infinitely, more patient. I told Susanne something about "having a go at this thing" and put the radio away. Like the Aussies at Gallipoli I was going over the top, into the Turkish machine guns.

Though less than vertical at its inception, the goulotte was narrow and immediately awkward, the ice of poor quality. Once in the goulotte, I could see that the roof had diverted the flow of meltwater from above so that the ice hung crazily on the vertical left wall of the goulotte. The right-hand wall was slightly overhung and ice-glazed, and I decided to turn the roof by climbing the thin, 90° ice on the left-hand wall. Several hooking moves into this prospect I sensed that much of the runnel was incipient. My tools rattled ominously in their hooked placements, but these were the best placements I would get. Locked off on my left tool on the thin vertical ice I probed higher with my right tool, to no avail.

Quickly my body over rode my intellect as my preservation response activated. My right foot kicked backward, seeking the right wall of the goulotte, finding purchase on an ice-glazed edge. Such desperate stemming gave me additional reach as I continued probing with my right tool. Nothing! Amid my struggles my sac caught on a protuberance of rock, nearly dislodging me. I gained a meter or two of height by stemming with my left front points in the ice of the left-hand wall and my right foot on the ice-glazed rock of the right-hand wall, hoping to rejoin better ice higher up. As I lodged beneath the roof however, not only was I approaching a Nureyev split, but I was also aware that there was now no way to regain the ice. Managing a 180° inward turn I came to face the right wall of the goulotte. On closer inspection it was really a slightly overhung arête, and as is the nature of quartzite, possessed incut holds, though they were covered in ice.

Maintaining the stem, I selected the largest hold and chopped the ice from it with the adze of my axe. I dropped the axe so it hung from my wrist by the wristloop and curled the fingers of my gauntlet-encased right hand about the icy edge. Abandoning the stem I committed completely to the arête, my crampon points now draped over several icy edges below. Over the top came a blast of searing spindrift

to accumulate in my collar and adhere to the fabric of my warmup pants. I cowered stupidly, unwilling to recognize that I was climbing the hardest pitch of my life. What then overcame me I can only describe now as the "rapture of the steep". Faced with a difficult and potentially fatal situation, I did nothing, content to remain clinging to these icy holds.

I did not feel panic, even a sense of urgency, only a measured patience to assess where I was and what I must do to survive this encounter. To this day I can still see it, a thin crack before my face. With great care not to drop it I removed a Simond blade from my harness, slotted it into the crack, pounded it home, and clipped in.

I would have liked for that to have been all there was to do, but several more meters still lay between me and the lip of the roof, beyond which lay I knew not what. Still, I reasoned that if I clipped into the blade via the long keeper leash that I used for clipping my ice tool to my harness, I could boulder out the next move with whatever protection the pin afforded. This I did, reaching another good set of holds as the leash went taut. Locked off on my icy holds I produced a Black Diamond knifeblade from my harness and beat it savagely into an ice-filled seam. After clipping in to my new love I hung down to retrieve the Simond blade. It stubbornly resisted removal and in a torrent of spindrift I deployed the Yosemite trick of clipping a sling and carabiner into the pin so I could yank it back and forth while I struck at it with my hammer. Out it came and I yarded up on the pin from which I had hung to regain my tenuous stance.

Though I was making progress, my situation was certainly a poor one. Spindrift continued to stream in chilling torrents over the roof onto me, inducing a cowering, dismal state. "This is turning into an epic" I stated out loud. After one particularly unpleasant deluge I was motivated to assess the next move. I hurriedly calculated that, clipped by the keeper leash to the knifeblade, I could probably reach the next set of good holds immediately below the bulging roof. What would happen then I could not say. I was now reduced to an agonizing assessment of each meter I needed to gain. Gripping the verglassed edges with my gauntlet, I was glad to have coated the palms and fingertips of the gloves with a type of seam sealant that made them very tacky, like having stealth rubber hands. Wearing crampons and the sac took the "sport" out of this rock climbing, but I made the moves and reached another set of adequate holds just as the leash went tight.

I was working against the clock now. Palming an incut edge covered with ice I took my other Black Diamond knifeblade from my harness and pounded it into a horizontal seam in the lip of the roof. I clipped into it and repeated the struggle to recover the knifeblade from below. After yarding back up I made several wraps around my right gauntlet with the keeper leash so I could use it, clipped to the pin, as a handhold. With my ice hammer in my left hand I tiptoed out and up on the snow-covered wall immediately below the roof. Reaching up over the lip, locking off on the pin with my right arm, I probed the ice veneer above, achieving a reasonable stick. My reconnaissance complete I removed the tool and retreated to the holds under the roof. In my mind I visualized what must happen for me to clear the roof.

Solo alpinism, "soloism", was always like this. A bizarre improvisation of rock climbing and ice climbing over great distances punctuated by segments of raw terror. No one ever wrote a book on how to solo extreme climbs, nor will anyone. This most demanding of the climbing forms is learned by a painstaking process of trial and error, a trial whose verdict might prove to be a death sentence.

I repeated the sequence, this time burrowing my left foot as high as it would go into the snow clinging precariously to the underside of the roof, and feeling the Pulsar stick, gradually weighted it to test its security. It held. Hanging from it I released the wraps of webbing from my right hand and with a quick flick of my arm flipped the axe hanging from that wristloop up and grabbed the handle in my hand. Cranking up on my left tool I struck up over the roof with the right, getting a good placement on my second try. I was still clipped to the blade by the keeper leash, and it was time to make the critical move.

There was one small rugosity of rock on the thinly-iced bulge of the overhang, so upon this tiny edge I hooked one curved front point of my right crampon and, applying steady pressure, stood up. The ice that my tools had been placed in was only a few centimeters thick so I moved the axe higher into slightly thicker ice. Having moved left from the knifeblade, and now up, the keeper leash had gone taut. It was time to bid the knifeblade, and the small security it provided, farewell. I clipped into the spike of the axe with a sling and, easing back gently onto this new support, reached blindly under the lip of the roof for the carabiner clipped to the knifeblade. My numb, gloved fingers fumbled briefly with the biner. The ping of the gate snapping closed signalled to my brain that the pin and its security were now gone. I clipped the keeper leash back into the wristloop of the axe where it belonged and kicked high with the left crampon, shattering away the thin ice on the very lip of the roof, but using the small purchase upon the rock beneath all the same. A newfound strength flowed through me. I brought up my right foot, advanced my left tool to better ice and gradually worked off right, over ice bulges to a small icefield where I halted. Weeks later I was to learn that my wife, viewing my excruciating progress in overcoming this section through her 600mm lens, had loosened the swivel on the tripod to permit her to follow the downward flight of my body.

Perched on the 55° icefield I removed my sac to have some coffee, change into dry hand-wear and figure out exactly where the hell I was. In fact I was on a small icefield, the second icefield, situated in the middle of the headwall above which was the third icefield that stretched across the upper face beyond which, through a final broken rock band, lay the summit icefield. What I thought, however, was that I had completely surmounted the headwall and was on the third icefield, that I need only traverse left to find an ice gully that led through the final broken band and to the summit icefield.

Traverse left I did, and almost immediately I came to the left edge of my tiny icefield, denoted by an improbably sheer wall of red quartzite. The goulotte immediately above me, a continuation of the one I had just climbed, looked no more attractive than what I had just finished, so to the right it was. This prudent traverse paid off handsomely. There was an easier-looking goulotte to the right, reasonable ice up to only 70° - a good thing as I only retained two of my four pitons.

After one hard move at the top I exited onto the bleak, windswept third icefield. I beat my way up brittle, black ice overlain with lousy névé, making for an obvious break in the shattered rock band. More tedious mixed climbing through the moonscape of the shattered band in a spindrift surf brought me to the prophesied summit icefield. Over 150m away, up hard,

fractious, 60° ice were the elusive summit shale bands. I could make out the summit cross against the skyline. Far below, in miniature, was the tourist parking lot filled with tiny Winnebagos and family vans.

In my mind I was transported two years into the past, to a cold day where, high on the Grandes Jorasses north face, I had hung upon the icefield of the Shroud and wantingly viewed the Arête des Hirondelles. Such experiences lend one strength, yet they also give testimony to the agony one must still endure.

I set a plumb course for a point immediately right of the summit shale bands. The summit icefields, melted back to bare ice in the summer heatwave, had refrozen with the cold weather, acquiring the consistency of bottle-glass. A few centimeters of friable névé had adhered to the surface, obscuring the numerous shale fragments embedded in the ice below. A shrill wind blew across the face, threatening my balance at inopportune times. My tool blades and crampon points were dull and mushroomed. Making them work was a real effort, but like a battered prizefighter in the twelfth round I slugged away, staying on my feet, determined to see the grim business to its conclusion. I employed all my energy-conserving tricks, kicking my crampons into the pockmark of the last tool placement, moving up on my placements until the tool head was below my knee, using my power-throw technique to allow the tool's weight to do my work for me, turning one foot pied troisième to ease the strain on that calf.

Still, that "easy" summit icefield proved a worthy opponent, never easing in either angle or consistency. Like a disease, the dull ebb of fatigue began to encroach upon me. I felt the temptation to slump down onto my tools. "Keep going!" I said aloud, rallying my spirits. "You've got this thing licked!"

From the valley several kilometers below wafted the familiar, menacing bark of Chamonix. She had no doubt spotted a rival dog in the parking lot, but I took it as encouragement. Beyond the summit shale band lay salvation, the familiar warmth and ease of family and profession, the summit ridge the demarcation line between extreme climbing and everyday life. Yet should I break a tool blade or a crampon now...

Dream-like, the shale band flowed slowly past me on the left, the angle eased. I scrambled over the last of the shale, not caring about the danger, the insecurity, over the ridge onto the south face into the harsh wind and sunlight, crossing the line that separates my worlds. Blinking and stupid I stood, awash in the realization that it was over, that I was safe. That the north face was behind me spatially and metaphorically. Tears welled in my eyes, I raised my battered ice tools over my head and stabbed at the sky with them.

Pulling back my cuff I looked at my watch. It was twelve minutes after four. I had been on the 800m face just over 8 1/2 hours.

I walked the hundred meters or so to the enormous wooden cross and cairn that mark the true summit, staying well away from the edge, stricken with the fear that some great mocking hand might sweep me off and destroy me upon that great north face.

I sat against the summit cairn and got on the radio. The airwaves were full of transmissions from truckers on the Icefields Parkway and beyond. "I made it!" I shouted into the radio. "I'm on the summit!"

"We' re all cheering for you" came Susanne' s reply. Indeed, a crowd of people had accumulated around Susanne as she peered through the scope and talked on the radio with me. Actually they had come to film and photograph the well-furred hulk of Chamonix, resplendent in her sled-dog racing harness. A solo climber on an icy north face was interesting, but a real-life sled dog, now that made the trip to Canada worth-while.

I've never really cared for summits much, the descent and its dangers are always on my mind. I snapped the perfunctory pictures of myself, the summit cross, the surrounding peaks. To the west Mount Robson formed an imposing white bulk. To the southeast were the splendid peaks of the Columbia icefields, a lifetime of climbing.

Vern Kassel had warned me about the descent— that I must first go down the easy southwest ridge and then traverse to the west ridge, so turning the treacherous shale cliffs on the upper west ridge. A month earlier a climber had fallen from those shale cliffs attempting to go straight down the west ridge. His body had fallen 1500m into the southern cirque while his wife awaited his return in the parking lot.

As I traversed below the cliffs I thought I heard shouts. Turning, I expected to see a party emerging from the east ridge, so real was the shouting. There was no one. I was completely alone. With wanton speed l hurried away down the west ridge.

Down, down, down. A pair of Golden Eagles swooped in to investigate what animal might be wandering about up here. They soared easily among the wind currents and I began to think that perhaps parapenting was not such a bad idea after all. Down relentless scree I slid and stumbled, overcome by the stillness and solitude of the setting, the sound of the scree like the sea surf upon a pebble beach.

Unlike the Alps, the Canadian Rockies remain largely wild and remote and their vastness will swallow your sensibility. I stopped briefly at a small spring to drink, joyful at the sight of green algae clinging to the wet stone, another living thing like me.

As dusk settled I crossed the last moraine and found the rough climber's trail upon which I set off at a brisk pace. With the mountain now behind me I feared meeting a Grizzly Bear in the thick forest. Some release from danger! But the only living things I saw were the trees, the plants, the thick clusters of forest mushrooms erupting from the rich litter on the forest floor. For hours I pounded down that trail, drowning in my thoughts. At last the track spat me out on the main trail, a broad, easily-graded scarface of boot prints, hoof prints, mud puddles and horse manure. My feet were swollen and painful, yet I pounded onward deep in my endorphin-induced euphoria.

A shout fractured my reverie. Susanne, with our daughter Simone in her high-tech stroller being pulled by Chamonix, emerged from the gathering darkness.

Amid hugs, kisses, licks, and waving infant arms I dropped my sac in mid trail and sat upon it amid the boot prints and horse manure, peeling off my plastic boots and recounting bits of the climb. Susanne had brought water, bananas, and, most importantly, my sneakers. While she took my sac and plastic boots, I, for the first time all day, took my time.

The next day was colder and cloudy. We photographed the face from a bridge spanning the milky Athabasca River that surged north to the arctic, ee drove south, to return to our "other" lives early the next morning.

The following day as I was leaving the stables at the Veterinary college I plucked a sharp needle from a Ponderosa pine on the campus grounds. About my neck hung the weight of my stethoscope, my coveralls flush with the warm, musky scent of horses. Turning the needle toward my palm I pricked myself several times. A smile spread across my face. The sensation of pain in my palm was real, no longer like

the north face of Mount Edith Cavell, a dream.

On-sight solo of a new route on the north face of Mount Edith Cavell (3363m) by Robert Cordery-Cotter; Sep,1991.

Tomoesque Grade V, 5.9, ice to 90° 800m from the Angel Glacier to the summit.

Heads or trial

Eric Trouillot

"Hey! wait a minute. I thought we were heading for Lake Louise! How come my skis are taking me down the Bush River?"

"Well Dude, I guess they figured they'd be better off drinking beer at the Mad Trapper than pushing their luck too far... and never getting to see a snow bunny again!..."

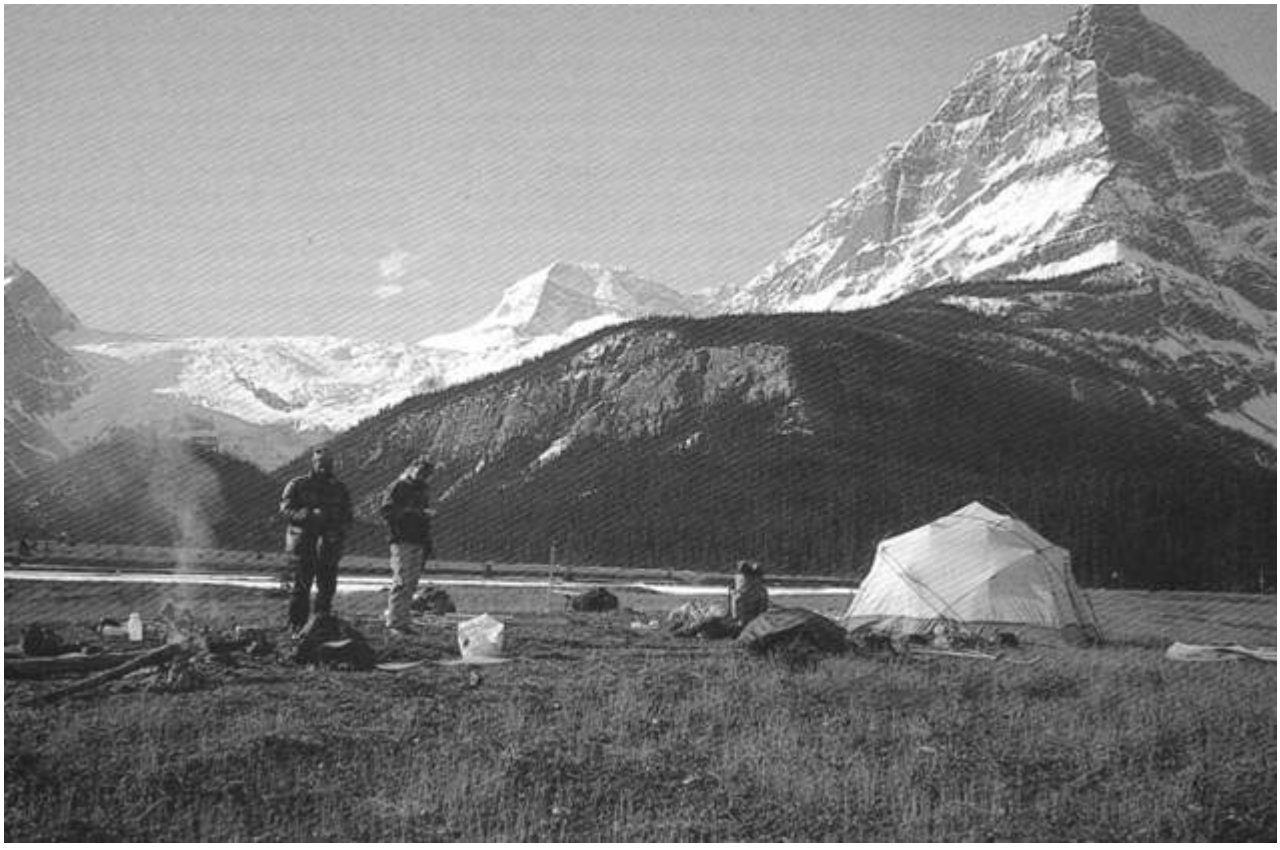
O.K., maybe we should have sacrificed one of us to appease the gods, but we couldn't decide which one smelled the worst! Our first mistake was to leave from Marmot ski hill. There were four of us on that April 30th 1991: Bob Enagonio and l, and my brother Yvan, and Pascal "Ushu" Gregnanin both from Grenoble on holidays... Boy did we ever fool them. We even fooled ourselves! Bob and I had started by planning a ski traverse in Alaska, but the three weeks our Grenoblois had was not enough. So, looking in our own back-yard, we decided to ski the Jasper to Lake Louise traverse.

It all turned out to be a succession of unexpected experiences that followed us to the end. On the first day we reached the beautiful Ramparts, starting up Portal creek and along Amethyst lakes. We were admiring the peaks all around us as we sat on our packs in the middle of the first lake. Ushu was going nuts, lusting over the attractive couloirs. A lot of them are skiable and have not yet been touched. This was an unbelievable sight for a French skier.

After a good night's sleep in the Ramparts we left this scenic place, fighting our first bushwhack down into Simon creek. We thought that was bad... little did we know! The temperatures were quite warm and the snow scarce at the bottom of the valleys. I'll have to admit that skiing up Needle Peak col, down into the Middle Whirlpool River and onto the Beaverdam ridge was just great, but did we have to end the fun so soon?

We then started having off-and-on rain skiing down to the Whirlpool river with an awful bushwhack. Soaked and tired we built a big fire in a completely snowless valley and eventually got everything dried out. The next day, skis on packs, we headed towards the Hooker Icefield, trying to negotiate the ascent of Scott Glacier by the moraine, but were stopped 2/3 of the way up by a very steep erosion gully cutting deeply into the moraine. Still skis-on-packs we descended to the ice and climbed up the rock and snow headwall under exposed séracs. Once on the glacier we finally enjoyed a bit of sun —just enough to remind us how good "it" can be. But the weather quickly shifted and we set up camp at 9:00 p.m. on a beautiful spot on a south col of the Hooker. It felt good to be high. We chatted away getting dinner ready, talking in a mixture of English and French. All the stories had to be translated into the other language, but so what? It gave us the opportunity to laugh twice at the same jokes.

When we woke up the following day the weather was still bad but visibility was O.K. Enjoying our ski down to tree line heading for the Wood Creek we stopped every now and then, checking the map and picking our route for the climb on the other side of the valley up to Cummins Glacier. It looked bloody steep and there weren't a lot of route-finding options. As we reached tree line we found an avalanche slope indicated on the map. The top part was very steep with a crux at 50°. When I looked back up at my



Looking toward the Scott Glacier and the Hooker Icefield from the Scott Creek camp. (Eric Trouillot)

partners as they were side-stepping down, I could see the whole width of the bases of their skis! Not too comfortable with big packs on. We ended up having to do a lot of downclimbing and pack-lowering and one short rappel when we reached a cliff band. It was raining again. Why now? Mother Nature was having a great time playing with our nerves. The trees got thicker as we reached lower elevations. BC bush! You can't live with 'em and you can't burn 'em...

The skis ended up staying on the packs most of the time. The forest was too dense to ski, and the snow was not strong enough to support our weights. So we sank, risking rupture over snow-covered logs, but finally reached the bottom of the valley under pouring rain. We were very tired, Wood Creek was high and of course there was no snowbridge to cross on, but we were soaked already so who cares. We waded across barefoot in our plastic boot shells.

The avalanche hazard, which wasn't very good to start with, had turned to very bad, then to extreme. A constant growling of slides around us put an end to the day. In order to raise our spirits and dry our gear we built a big fire, threw up the tent and gathered around this heat, this new source of motivation. Inevitably we ended up burning gear and from then on I had to ski with toeless socks in my boots... Great!

We were also running out of food and quite hungry. We had planned on a five-day traverse to reach Lawrence Grassi hut in the Clemenceau Icefield where we had a food cache, and this was our fifth day. It would be a one-day push to the food if the conditions were right, so we went to bed hoping the weather would give us a break. We couldn't help thinking about an optional retreat up the Wood Creek either.

The following day the conditions were at their worst. It was still raining and warm, and the mountains were alive and very threatening. We couldn't go up to the Cummins Glacier —it would have been suicidal —but we could still reach our destination by going upstream to meet Clemenceau creek and then skiing up the Tusk Glacier. So off we went along the river bank at the base of a continuously steep, avalanche-prone slope. The transceivers were on, the safety straps on our skis were off, and I had only one packstrap on my shoulder. If an avalanche released I was ready to dump my load and swim for life in a wild freezing stream. But all these precautions were just an attempt to make us feel safer, for we knew that if one of us was knocked into the stream he would have stood very little chance of seeing a better day.

When we finally reached Clemenceau creek, having used up plenty of spare lives, we realized that our problems were not yet over. The creek was more like a screaming river... and we had to cross it! After a bit of looking around — and sitting around hoping the creek would get smaller — we got ready to set a Tyrolian system to transport the gear across. Roped up, Bob bravely risked an unpleasant fall in the water by jumping from one rock outcrop to another and made it to the other side. Ushu followed and barely succeeded. With two of us on either side we managed to string the rope tight above the creek and pull the gear across, and Yvan as well. All I had to do then was untie the rope at my end and try my luck jumping across. I made it, but...

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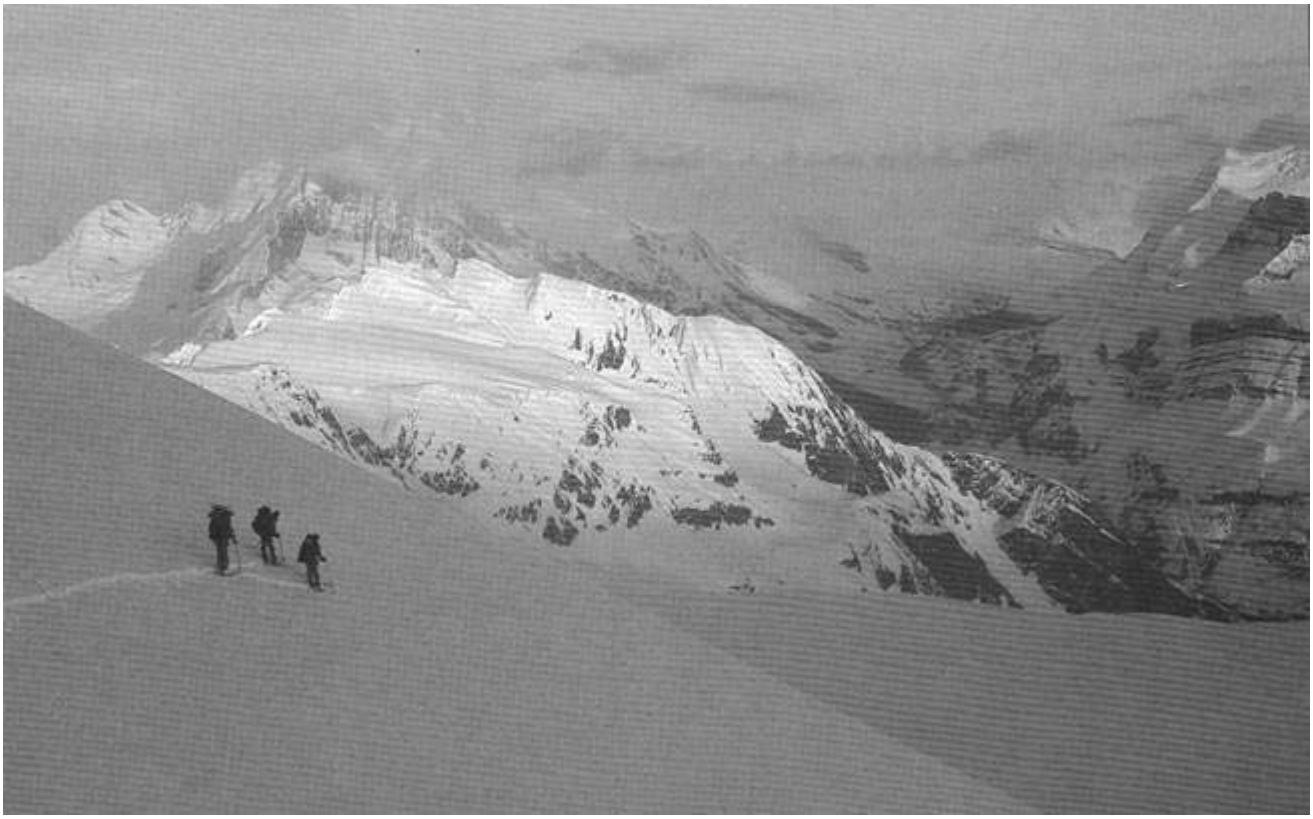
On the other side morale is bad. This has turned into a survival trip. We are not having fun. We're ready to call it quits and attempt going home via Fortress lake and the Athabasca river to the highway. Bob points out that it will be easier to keep on going. The food cache is only two days away compared to four or five days out through the valleys. It's raining again. He's right.

So up the creek we go towards the Tusk



On the Hooker Icefield. (Bob Enagonio)

Glacier.

These two following days are very tough. We meet fresh bear tracks and try to avoid an encounter. The moraines at the toe of Tusk, Clemenceau and Duplicate Glaciers are just about snowless, making progress very slow and depressing. It's exhausting to put skis on and off every five minutes with a big load on your back. We are out of food and starving. Bob and Ushu, both big eaters, are suffering a lot. Bob tells me that he has called upon the spirit of his dead climbing partner to help and protect us. He qualified the last day before we reach the food cache as "the worst of his life".

I've known Bob since last year when we skied from the Bugs to Rogers Pass. We have become very good friends since, and main skiing and climbing partners. He has a lot of mountaineering experience and is quite solid, but these last days are more than just an epic for him too.

My brother Yvan finds the drive to keep us going and we finally find the cache on the Tusk Glacier three kilometers away from the hut. It's getting dark so we set up camp with sixty pounds of food and a wee bottle of Frangelico. We have dealt with frustration, exhaustion and stress but smiles are back on our faces as we feed upon cookies, fudge cakes and a big dinner.

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Early the next day Bob took off alone to look for the hut and came back an hour later successful. Our bodies needed a good rest so we got installed in the hut, pigged out, slept, listened to music, bullshitted, and made plans to climb Mount Clemenceau. A storm settled in though and pushed us to sit it out for three days. What was it with this weather anyway?

We had left with a mascot (a Koala bear that I had attached to my ski pole) given to me by a very special person for good luck. It had slept outside all this time and I finally decided to bring it into the hut for the night. The following day was gorgeous!... You're supposed to treat mascots well! Why didn't anybody tell me that before?

It's so much better to ski when the weather's great. Even though it was still very warm we were enjoying ourselves. We set off traveling fast up Clemenceau Glacier past Apex Mountain and onto the Chaba Glacier. Of course we stopped once in a while to take pictures and goof off. The view was fantastic. The Clemenceau Icefield deserves another visit, there is so much to see and do here. Its remoteness makes it even more attractive. I'll definitely have to come back and spend some time exploring this side of the Rockies.

It wasn't long before we could see the Columbia Icefield, but of course we ran into some trouble at Chaba Peak's south col where we reached Wales Glacier. Not only did we find a steep cliffband on the other side but Ushu had to stick his skis on the cornice, which of course collapsed. One ski went back down the slope we had just come up and the other one fell down the other side of the ridge into the berg-schrund 50m below us... He wasn't too proud of himself. I found it a good excuse to drop my pack and enjoy a short run to pick up the first ski. The other one was on our way down anyway, but it had hit the rock a few times as it fell and it could be broken. That would really have handicapped us and we'd have had to shoot Ushu ...

Yvan being towed across Clemenceau Cr. (Bob Enagonio)

The rappel was a little gnarly but we recovered his ski without damage. He was so relieved that he took off skiing joyfully down the glacier and right into a crevasse! Damn.

This was not funny any more. He was held up by his outstretched arms, but he had the rope in his pack and all we could do was look at him and shake our heads at his calls for help -he had to get out of this one alone. Which he finally did, after lots of cursing and struggling.

He was breathing heavily as he crawled back to us.

"What do we do next, tie him up?"

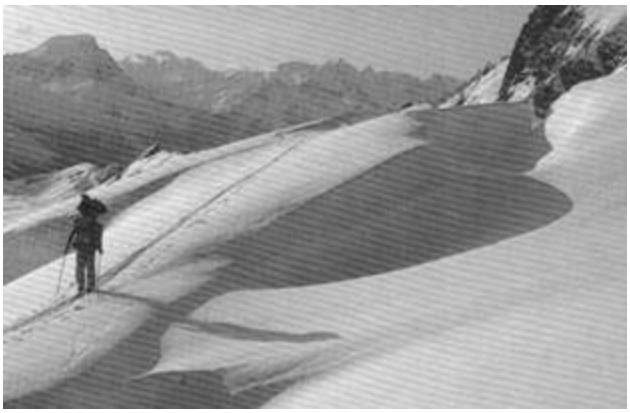
Actually we all roped up and tied him between us.

"Let's be careful now boys, we still have a ways to go and it's getting late."

Time flies when you're having fun!

After these emotions we set up camp on our way to Mount King Edward. Another beautiful site, another great view. The clear skies allowed very good visibility and we could clearly see far away peaks. Nor could we help admiring the mountain close by: the majestic Mount Alberta. And even closer, the North and South Twins.

Was the weather going to hold? We needed another day and a half of good



On the Clemenceau Icefield. (Eric Trouillot)

Typical Rockies ski touring. (Eric Trouillot)

conditions to negotiate the crux on the Columbia Icefield. We had to climb and cross a high ridge that splits the glacier at the level of Mount Columbia.

Well of course the weather broke down the next day as we reached the ridge. It crapped out very fast, and in no time was pouring rain again. A retreat down the valley to tree line was a must, but even that was not easy. We had to rappel a cliffband before we hit valley bottom. Avalanches were coming down one after the other. A small one released above us as we were setting a rappel station... and stopped before it reached us.

Thank you Koala bear...

Another fire was necessary to dry us out, and more gear was burned.

"Let's give it until noon tomorrow and we'll make a decision then as to whether we should climb the ridge or go down the creek and contour this wall. We can come back up through Bryce creek and onto the glacier again."

Ha! I knew that it was going to rain throughout the night and the following day. What I didn't know was that skiing down the creek would be that gnarly... Steep walls on both sides threatening to release and cover us with heavy snow in the open creek. And this lasted more than a few hours too.

That was it. We couldn't deal with going through this again up Bryce Creek.

"Let's not push this."

What was I saying? We'd been pushing our luck to the limits for days and days. Without the Koala bear...

We did have another food cache just two days away outside the Warden's cabin in Castleguard meadows. But this time we knew we should definitely call it quits and go home while we still could. Unanimously we agreed on that and started a long trip down the Bush River. 135km to Golden BC! With ski boots and big packs. Maybe we would get lucky and catch a truck on the logging road. We were actually counting on that...

The first night we found a trappers cabin with food, a bed, and a wood stove. Oh! luxury. We partied and cooked a big meal to forget our ordeals.

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Morale is more or less back. We need some water to cook so I grab the pail and go out to the creek. On my way back I climb onto the top of a tree stump and sit looking around, thinking about the past two weeks and all that has happened. We had put up quite a struggle. We'd had a lot of emotions that we'll never forget. The bush, the rain, avalanches, river crossings, bears, starvation, crevasses...

My thoughts are interrupted by a racket in the cabin. When I look back I see Bob run out with my sleeping bag and throw it in the mud! What kind of joke is this? Two seconds later he comes back out with more of my gear, followed by Ushu who does the same... with his own gear! What is going on?

Oh, shit!... The cabin's on fire. I rush over with my pail of water and give it to Yvan who's already on the roof and he pours it down the chimney. Within 35 seconds the cabin is empty. Yvan's hair is on fire, but he quickly puts it out. After a bit more fighting and running around we're in control again. Or have we ever been? What next?...

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The end was more painful than expected. The hike down the Bush creek logging road was a nightmare for our feet... I was limping badly with horrible tendonitis in my right Achilles and the others had bleeding blisters. And we still had 135km to go?

Well, after walking 37km in ski boots the first day we were all looking pretty grim. There were no recent vehicle tracks on the road. It was time to call Scotty to beam us out of there, but again he was nowhere to be found.

The mascot saved us one last time by sending us two bear hunters in their truck at 10.00 p.m. Needless to say that the following day it took some heavy decision-making to leave the Mad Trapper and go home...

Out with the Jzaing again

Glen DePaoli

It's mid-February, about 7:00 p.m., pitch black, and I am rapping blindly off one pin into a couloir boiling with spindrift. Right! Must be out with the Jzaing again! He says he doesn't have epics, but this outing has quickly turned into one. You know, the kind filled with fear and mortal terror you look back on later and remember what great fun it was.

Moe Jzaing and I had spent most of January ice climbing and generally entertaining ourselves down in the Bull River canyon, enjoying the sunny, warmly-crisp winter afternoons. Moe was getting restless however, and wanted to get up high into some alpine climbing. "There's this line on the south face of Mt. Fisher, a buttress. Tried it once before but Draper's crampon fell off. Should be in great shape, pretty easy."

I have trouble sometimes gauging the difficulty of what the Jzaing has planned but usually he is quite sensible. His credo for climbing new ground is; 'If it looks easy, it's hard. If it looks hard, it's impossible.' Anyway, he assured me the route would be within my 5.4d standards. We left the truck at first light on a very dull, overcast day. (We could have left earlier but Moe doesn't believe in headlamps.)

Now my enthusiastic partner keeps himself in pretty good shape and has an endless reserve of nervous energy. I, on the other hand, have a naturally slow pace and a substantial layer of winter fat, so it was no surprise that I quickly fell far behind. Actually, the Jzaing's fitness and natural climbing instincts combined with my waistline and Piglet-like boldness makes us probably the greatest climbing team since Reinhold Messner and Friar Tuck.

So, onward and upward, slog, slog, slog. Up through the lower wooded slopes and the old avalanche cone. Up through the descending clouds into the lower cirque. I was trying to convince myself that I was so far behind because Moe believes in going light and 'covering ground', while I was weighed down by frivolous items like a first aid kit and a headlamp.

Traversing to the left side of the upper cirque and below the south face I could just make out my partner 150m above, chewing on a frozen Mars Bar and patiently waiting for me where the rock began. Across the cirque When Mommy Goes to Bingo stood gray and cold in the gloom. Remembering his tales of that route I began to wonder if maybe I shouldn't have opted for going to the cabin with my father this weekend.

When I eventually arrived at his stance the Jzaing had finished his lunch and had his crampons on. The wind had picked up and it had begun to snow lightly. Not able to wait any longer he moved out left and began soloing the first verglas-coated step. He had moved up a few feet when, foreshadowing events to come, the spindrift began. The snow falling on the face above was funneling down violently on Moe's head and he was caught, unable to risk moving lest he get swept away. He

was held there balanced on his front points for at least two minutes. It reminded me of one of those old movies with Preston of the Mounted Police where he is riding along in a snow storm while above, just out of the shot, a bunch of flunkies dump buckets of shredded paper on the hero's head. There was nothing for me to do but take a few pictures and size up where he might land. When there finally was a let-up a very, very wet and sore climber quickly retreated and suggested that maybe we should rope up right where we were.

"Glen, do you know how to remove pins?" " What? Will I? Or do I know how?" While I got a quick lesson in pin removal the snow began falling harder and visibility was down to about 30m. By the time we actually got set up and started climbing it was early afternoon.

The route was classic alpine climbing (I guess). Bridging and stemming on rotten ice and snow mushrooms, scratching up smooth rock slabs while trying to manufacture holds out of unconsolidated pus, traversing under scary overhanging snowflutes into even scarier gullies. My newly acquired pin-removal skills went mostly untested as most of the pitons pulled out by hand. The rock was a soft, foliated shale and liked to bend and crumble under any protection placed in it.

We had completed four pitches when I began to get concerned about the time. There were now hints of twilight in the storm and we had no idea how far from the top we were. The last belay stance did little to ease my worry. This time it was my turn to get pinned down by spindrift. Five, ten, twenty, thirty minutes bent over, pressed against the rock in one of the deepest, foulest folds in the mountain. I was wishing desperately that I had gone to the cabin instead where at this very moment I would be relaxing by the wood stove with a glass of wine and a cigar discussing the unanswerable questions posed by Steven W. Hawking's latest book and the fishing regulations. Relief finally came when the rope went tight and with the help of some tension I swam up and out of the determined shower of powder.

My enthusiasm was really shaken when I unfroze my eyelids and saw what had taken the Jzaing so long. The rope went right over a two-and-a-half-meter overhang! It was now almost completely dark and what can only be described as panic set in. In a move that would have made Friar Tuck proud I just grabbed the rope and hauled on it like I was ringing the chapel bell. I had dragged myself half way up the overhang and was wondering why this sort of performance is never shown on 'Living Dangerously' when, BANG! I was on my ass at the bottom of the overhang. "What the hell was that?" Meanwhile, up above, a surprised belayer was pulled off his stance and three meters down the mountain and wondered, "What the hell was that?" I was all ready to break out the prussiks when I noticed Moe's footprints going up a perfect staircase just to the left. I've always been a bright boy.

After I explained to my partner why he was standing in this new spot he announced, "Looks like we're spending the night, mate" I looked at him as I shivered violently, "Don't fucking think so, mate" We quickly debated the options. I was all for risking a descent rather than sitting there and freezing to death. Mr. Jzaing argued that without a headlamp it would be suicide, especially because we had several rappels to negotiate. I produced my headlamp and cemented my case. The descent began.

Being the one so keen to head down, and the only one with a headlamp, I began gingerly down the gully to our right. The snow in the bottom of the gully was in just as much of a hurry to get down as I was (great, more spindrift!) but thankfully no big surges surprised us. The big problem was that I had no way of sizing up the ground in front of me. The snow and wind had turned the evening into a whiteout (if you can have one in the dark) and I couldn't see when the cliff bands might decide to show up. After belaying me for one rope length Moe stumbled down in the dark to join me. "This isn't working very well," I said, "no use you belaying me". He agreed, "We have at least a couple of cliff bands down there and I've been having a shitty time all day finding pin placements in this pus!"

Amazingly we hit on what turned out to be a pretty good system. Descending together we let the rope get pulled down ahead of us, when it disappeared, we rappelled. Aside from a bit of trouble scouring for piton cracks and the fact that the spindrift flipped the Jzaing upside down on the second rappel (which was particularly interesting because, continuing on his theme of going light, he hadn't brought a figure 8 and was rapping body-style), it went surprisingly smoothly.

After the second rappel a slow metamorphosis began. The couloir widened ever so slightly and the angle eased off just a wee bit. Our pace quickened and we were no longer hunched over our ice axes like two old men, peering into the darkness. I began to feel a little hopeful. A little further down the ground lost its concave character and the angle eased off even more. I stopped. "Hey, look around, I think we're back down in the basin." The Jzaing strode past me, "We are out of here McLean!" Our timid plod became a victorious march down the cirque wall into the bottom of the basin.

Stopping to take off our gear, I put forward to Moe, "We did the right thing you know. coming down wasn't all that bad." A big ironic grin spread across my partner's face, a nice accent to his protruding chin. I thought how much he looked like the old pictures of Tom Patey. "Well, sometimes you get lucky mate, sometimes you get lucky."

The Muskwa Range

Ralf Zimmerman

Translated by Morrin Acheson

After our visits, in August 1985 (CAJ 69/69, AAJ 60/1(4)) and June 1989 (CAJ 71/24-5, AAJ 62/149-151) we were certain that it was not for the last time that we would be in this area.

Fascinated by the solitude, remoteness and the interesting unclimbed mountains of this range, we decided on another visit, if possible of some weeks, in order to try to make some first ascents. David Weins brought us with his Cessna to a point north of Mt. Roosevelt, and then we had 6 weeks in which to climb in the central part of the Muskwa Range. Over the next 4 days we carried our equipment, and food for 4 weeks, to the place we had chosen for our base camp, 4 km north of Arnhem and Scheldt Mountains. The remaining supplies, for 2 weeks, we left in the valley to be collected later.

After we had reconnoitered various possible routes up Arnhem and Scheldt Mountains the weather deteriorated, and a few days later we returned to the valley to get the remaining 14 days supplies, which we had hung up "only" 2.5m above the ground between trees so as to be safe from animals. A bear had found this depot and cleared it out. On one tree trunk we found pale colored hairs stuck in the resin, which gave us the idea that a grizzly bear had been responsible. It had ripped to pieces the once-suspended duffel bag, torn out the bottom and had eaten all the food. Within a circumference of 70m lay the torn-up

residues of the packing material, 20m away was the 41, sheet-metal gasoline container which had not stood up to the bear's paws. After the shock we cleared up and burnt what was left. This meant we would have to leave the area 14 days earlier than planned, and on foot.

We had decided on the routes we wanted to attempt, and on Friday, 29th June, after travelling along the north glacier and getting up and over a 50° ice wall, we reached the beginning of the west ridge of unclimbed Scheldt Mountain. The climbing on this ridge went up to 5.3 in places, and was broken up by sections of sharp-edged loose blocks. A thunder and lightning storm, with rain, snow and hail, blew up and forced us to wait for over an hour on the ridge.

The last 120m of ascent consisted of firm snow and a ridge of loose blocks which led us to the summit. We stood on the peak, at 2759m, at 8:00 p.m.

We descended the northern branch of the south glacier and bivied at midnight. The following day (Saturday) we were lucky enough to make another first ascent, of an unnamed mountain in cloud and rain, from its west flank. We reached the summit, over easy ground, at 8:00 p.m.

Looking down from the west ridge of Scheldt Mtn toward an unnamed, unclimbed peak. (Ralf Zimmermann)

The weather did not improve on the descent. It rained continuously, and because of the clouds we had no means at all of finding our bearing by sight. We nevertheless reached our camp at noon.

Clouds and heavy rain kept us another day in the tent. We had only enough food for 4 more days so it was time to leave. There was too much too carry out so we had to get the equipment into the valley and then Dave should fly it out. We left only essentials in camp, the rest we put into our rucksacks and at 12:45 left for the valley.

The north side of Scheldt Mtn. from basecamp with the first ascent route marked. (Ralf Zimmermann)

Fifty meters from the mining road we found 2 thick trees and were able to fix a rope a good 5m above the ground, where we pulled up a kit bag and 2 other bags so that they were over 4m above the ground. We returned tired and starving to the camp at 11:30 pm. The next 4 days were necessary to reach the Alaskan Highway. The river crossings we had to make in these 4 days were no longer difficult as the snow melt was over.

Before we reached civilization again we spent a few hours in a small camp of Cree Indians. Two old women with their 74 year old brothers lived here in the summer. The camp consisted of two sleeping tents and an area covered with a tarpaulin under which everything was cooked, worked on, and time was spent. Pieces of meat hung on a wooden frame to dry in the sun, underneath was a place for a fire, so that the rising smoke could smoke the meat. The dogs which were tied up crouched down in the shadows of the trees. The younger of the two women was busy with preparing the skin of an elk. This skin, which was stretched over a wooden frame with leather thongs, was being dried in the sun and the hair was being laboriously removed by a 5cm wide piece of iron. A lively discussion, over a cup of tea, took place using sign language as these Indians could only speak a few words of English.

Somewhat strengthened, and relaxed, the time came for our bush pilot to come to the ranch. We told him about the incident with the grizzly and asked him to fly out our equipment the following morning. At 05:30 Dave and Ralf, armed with a colt, started off for our equipment depot. He had asked before how much the equipment weighed, to be certain that the takeoff on the short runway should be alright. They found the equipment unscathed. After having landed again at the ranch Dave remarked that a colt was not much use against a grizzly, but it was better than nothing. In the evening they took us both to the Alaskan Highway, where we took the bus to Fort Nelson.

For us it was necessary to get used to civilization again. The previous week our motto was "By fair means" to be able to manage without the help of others. We have learned to love, to treasure this marvelous lovely piece of the earth and know it will be a long time until all and interesting mountains have been climbed.

Mt. Niles from the Scott Duncan hut. (Murray Toft)

The East Face of Mt. Niles

Murray Toft

The Alpine Club's construction of the Scott Duncan hut in 1989 near the south edge of the Wapta Icefields created a comfortable base for both summer and winter mountaineers. Though most peaks in the area are non-technical rambles over either glaciated or broken terrain, Mt. Niles provides the prominent exception, rearing more 300m above the surrounding icefields. Every time I have skied under its east face on the Wapta Traverse, I've taken a few moments to gaze up at this steep, open wall. It was obvious that a summer rock route up there would add an exciting new option to the venues possible from the hut.

On the long weekend in August 1990, Allan Derbyshire and I approached the mountain from "the other side" however. After a late lunch at West Louise Lodge on Wapta Lake, we took the single lane footpath up to Sherbrooke Lake. Cruising the lakeshore trail gave us the momentum for the final thousand feet of trail up to a comfortable bivy at just over 2100m at the last timber in the west fork of Niles Creek.

Next morning we were excited to find a well-defined trail continuing up the shaded face of the long southeast spur of the mountain. A stroll in the morning sun along the flat top of the ridge gave us plenty of time to survey the east face for possibilities. Water weeping from the summit snowcap divided the face into halves, and just right of this streak, in the upper section, was a very steep yellow wall capped by a huge, hanging, boxcar-size block. As we traversed below the face on the tiny Niles Glacier, we finally chose a line just to the

Allen Derbyshire on pitch five. (Murray Toft)

right of this feature where the angle eased off somewhat.

From the junction of the east and north faces we scrambled up the low-angled broken preliminaries shooing a goat ahead of us. The speed at which he traversed out of our way was amazing and reassured us that a good rope-up ledge existed at the base of the main cliff. After some enthusiastic trundling, we reached his exit ledge and traversed south to a series of three distinct chimneys, about 75m left of the north face. The left-most chimney contained three large chock stones and marked the start of the route. The pitches evolved as follows:

Climb the chimney, stepping out left below the final chockstone. Continue directly up over alternating short steep walls and ledges to belay at a major transverse ledge. (45m, 5.6) Could easily be made into two shorter pitches.

Move left 15m along the ledge to the base of two corner/grooves a short distance apart. Climb the first right-facing corner to a small overhang, forcing a traverse up and left to belay on a small ledge below the center of a long ceiling. (35m, 5.8) A bolt anchor would be useful here...

Climb up and around the left edge of the ceiling to gain a beautiful hand crack back right above the belay. Follow this directly up to a ledge and belay. (45m, 5.8)

Move slightly up left and around to the foot of a groove running up the steep wall above. Climb the groove on excellent rock until it is possible to continue right across the wall and up to gain the obvious left-leaning ramp. Continue up the ramp to a good belay situated where the ramp steepens to form a big dihedral. (45m, 5.8r)

Climb the dihedral. At its top, continue past the first ledge to belay at a second ledge a few feet higher. (45 metres, 5.7)

Move up and right over fourth-class terrain through weaknesses to a snowpatch in a large bay over the northeast corner of the mountain.

Kick up the summit snow to the top. Enjoy the incredible view!! Descend easily by the south face scree slopes. Notes Best climbed in August when summit melt is minimal.

Take a small rack of nuts to 1 1/2 inch, and 1 each of Friends to 3 1/2. A couple of blade pitons are useful at the second belay, or create a bolt station here. Once you get to the start of the roped climbing, the rock improves with each pitch.

The route can be done in a day from Wapta Lake by a fit party.

Roche Miette, West Face

Ken Wallator

Days off rolled around. Kevin and I had climbed a new route on the North Arm of Throne Peak and, having three more days, we decided to have a go at the west face of Roche Miette—a route Rick Costea and I had climbed three years ago. The idea this time was to free the route.

The first time Rick and I came here a beautiful golden eagle careened about us at the base of the face. Being very superstitious, I took this to be a good omen. This time it was a herd of mountain sheep searching around the alpine plants for their daily food. I know why I live here in Jasper - the untouched wilderness and animal spirits that dwell in this place left alone by man's greed for timber and mineral rights for economic growth.

The wind was blowing strong and it took a while to motivate ourselves to get climbing, but after a good rest we got it together...

Kevin leads off on the first pitch. It's 5.8,but loose blocks make it gripping. That's why we're here though, to get gripped.

Next lead is a lot easier, feels good to move fast and free. Third pitch goes as fast, putting us into a steep left-facing corner. I psych up at the belay to lead what turns out to be a full 50m of 5.10a. Climbing the pitch goes smoothly, and I'm grooved up now. We're going to get up this wall.

We're now at the halfway ledge on the face and from here thin, bulging seams lead up toward a ledge about 25m away. Last time I was here it was minus 10°C and the pitch went at 5.7/A2. It's Kevin's lead and he carefully pieces the pitch together at 5.10b.

We're over the crux now and I'm happy this route will go free.

The next three pitches to the top go by with no problems. Roche Miette has let us into its realm one more time.

Roche Miette West Face

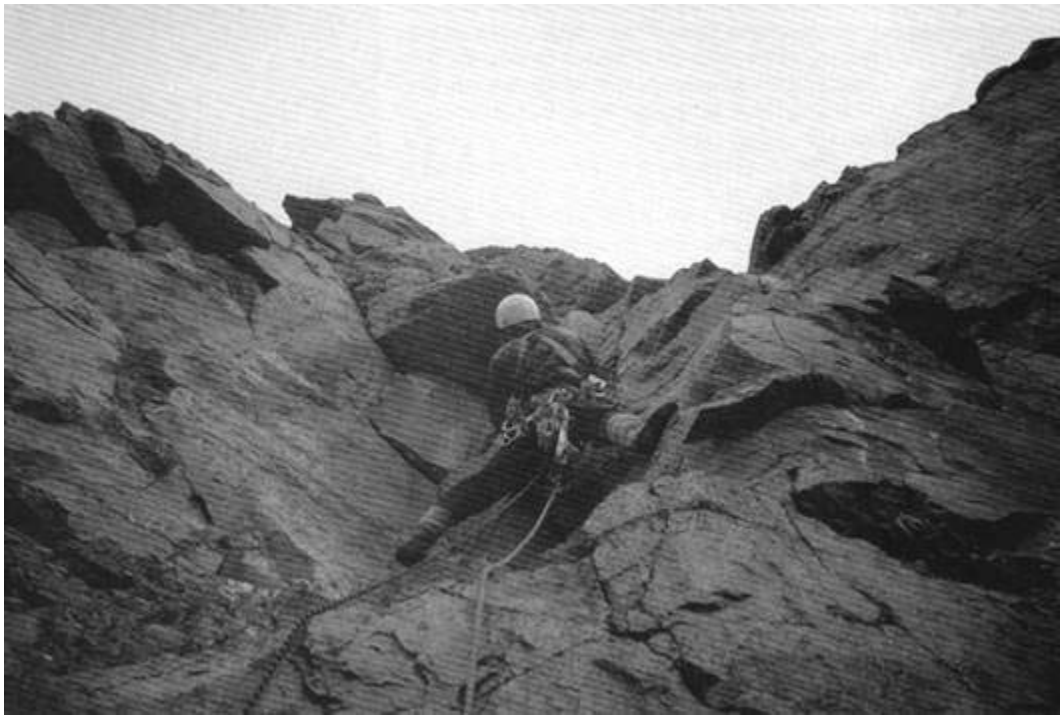
F.A. Rick Costea, Ken Wallator 5.9/A2

F.F.A. Kevin Christakos, Ken Wallator 5.10b

Peaks East of Mount Cromwell

John Martin

About 1.5km from Mt. Cromwell on its long east ridge is a sharp unnamed peak with separate summits of 3160m and 3080m (referred to subsequently as CE1 and CE2; CE1 being the higher and closer to Mt. Cromwell.) This peak first



Rick Costea on the West Face of Roche Miette. (Ken Wallator)

CE1 and Mt. Cromwell from CE2. CE1 ascent route on facing ridge. (John Martin)

captured my interest in 1975 on a trip up Diadem, but it was not until the glorious weather of late September 1991 while on my way to another mountain entirely that I impulsively decided to attempt it. And so it was that the unconscionable late hour of 10 a.m. had already passed by the time I had forded the Sunwapta River and was starting up the valley of Stutfield Cr.

After 3km of easy going on Dryas-covered alluvial flats, the terrain became more difficult. At this point, some gaily colored aspen trees beckoned me up to an avalanche slope to the north, which ended up giving a virtually bush-free and screeless route to timberline. Above, a long ascending traverse left on steep grass led to quartzite blocks, then low-angle shale and finally the top of a 2760m outlier at the end of Mt. Cromwell's east ridge. A nearly level shale ridge now provided a pleasant "sidewalk in the sky" stroll over to the base of CE2. A direct route up the east face appeared feasible, but after climbing a short gully which turned out to be more difficult than it looked, I elected to traverse left on a system of scree ledges in the hope of finding easier ground. I continued traversing past a scree slope which descends from the CE1 /CE2 col and then climbed a wide, easy gully, reaching the east ridge of CE1 some distance above the col. Steepish class 4 rock then led in about 150m to a surprisingly sharp summit connected by a narrow ridge to another of equal height about 200m away. There was no evidence of a prior ascent. After an entertaining scramble over to the other summit and back, I descended the east ridge to the col and then walked up easy slopes to the top of CE2. This peak had apparently not been climbed either.

Although by now it was 4 o'clock, it was still so warm and windless that I was comfortable in shorts and T-shirt. Unfortunately, it was time to think about descent. The scree slope below the col that had been so unappealing as an ascent route now provided an expressway down to the lower slopes and I was soon retracing my route back to Stutfield Cr. The ford of the Sunwapta was scarcely deeper than it had been in the morning and I was back at the highway by 7 p.m.

This interesting and highly scenic outing could be substantially improved upon by climbing CE2 directly from the east side (an interesting-looking route which probably has some short class 5 pitches) and then continuing on to CE1. It also appears feasible to descend the west ridge of CE1 and extend the traverse to Mt. Cromwell.

"Mystic Peak"

John Martin

North of Mt. Ishbel about 3km is an unnamed 2960m peak which overlooks Mystic Lake. "Mystic Peak" is prominently visible from the TransCanada Highway, but despite its interesting appearance seemed to have escaped the attention of climbers as late as 1990. I made an unsuccessful attempt on it that year and returned in August 1991, under better circumstances, for another try.

After taking the Johnston Cr trail about 1km past the Inkpots, I headed E up a steep-sided stream valley and after a relatively short but sharp struggle through the bush reached open ground near the base of the SW face. The face consists of moderately steep slabs throughout and offers no evident easy route from this point, so I selected a rib leading directly to the summit. A straightforward approach led to the base of the rib, where I changed into rock shoes. The slabs were steeper than I expected and the rib gradually narrowed while the rock quality deteriorated, until about 1/3 of the way up it became thoroughly unpleasant. Fortunately, a traverse line not far below provided an alternative. The traverse led out left across rock ribs of varying character and quality, and I had only to select the most promising one to continue my ascent. Continuous climbing eventually gave way to scree only about 20m below the summit. There was no evidence of a previous ascent. After wasting an hour in an unsuccessful attempt to descend the NW ridge, I returned to the summit, downclimbed my ascent route and was back at the highway after a 10hr round trip.

"Mystic Peak" by the SW face offers about 450m of virtually continuous class

Mystic Peak. (John Martin)

4 climbing on reasonable rock, with the occasional short section up to perhaps 5.5 in difficulty. Unless the far right side of the face offers a hidden passage, there may be no easier route on the mountain.

A prospective study of the effects of pristine ice surfaces on the physiology and behavior of mountain climbers

Cyril Shokoples

Anecdotal data suggest that ice surfaces that are inclined away from the horizontal have unusual effects on the behavior of persons engaged in mountain climbing. These effects reportedly become more pronounced as the angle and length (height) of the ice surface increases. Initial behavior changes are noticed at angles of as low as 35° and with ice features as small as 2 meters. Critical behaviors are noted above 50° of slope angle or 10m in height. A third dramatic influence has appeared in the mountain literature. It seems that despite length or angle of an ice surface, behavior changes are more pronounced when a "pristine" or unclimbed ice surface is encountered. Secretive or even paranoid behaviors have been reported together with tachycardia, tachypnea, diaphoresis (rapid pulse, rapid breathing and sweating) and other physiological changes.

Method

To study these behaviors, four mountain climbers were exposed to three previously unclimbed natural ice formations of various lengths and degrees of steepness. Frozen waterfalls in the area known as "David Thompson Country" were used. Using the severity indices proposed in Waterfall to-second edition (A. Sole, 1988), the degree of technical difficulty of these surfaces varied between 3 and 4, with seriousness ratings of between III and IV.

Two of the subjects were also exposed to a mountain that had no history of a previous ascent in winter, to determine if the effect is limited to ice surfaces. One of the subjects had extensive experience on pristine ice formations ($n > 30$). The only female subject in the study had extensive mountaineering experience but only limited pristine experiences of this type ($n = 4$). The remaining two subjects completely lacked experience on pristine ice structures ($n=0$) and had limited total experience on this medium in general.

Subjects were exposed to the following Class B hazards: rockfall, avalanche hazard and brittle or friable ice features. They were also exposed to the following Class C hazards: dehydration, mild starvation, moderate cold, wind, snowfall, poor visibility and nightfall. The subjects were monitored during the study and aberrant behaviors were noted. The subjects were allowed to climb the structures at whatever speed and using whatever technique was deemed appropriate.

The study took place during the latter part of 1991 and the early part of 1992.

Results

When exposed to pristine ice features, the subjects generally presented with what appeared to be a typical adrenaline response. Even discussion of such features was capable of bringing about elevated pulse and respiration. Proximity to a given feature accentuated the response as did the length and anticipated degree of difficulty of the feature. The female subject showed a less pronounced response to exposure during this study.

Prior to each session discussion of a given ice feature was open and boisterous among members of the study group, but socialization with climbers outside the study group was found to fall off during the same period. Open discussion of location and nature of features was withheld by the subjects from all other persons until after the study surface was no longer pristine. This seems to confirm the secretive behavior noted by others in the lay climbing literature. Paranoid episodes were not noted, and upon completion of a session information was distributed freely, but often in what would appear to be an understated manner.

Class B hazard exposure (moderate potential for morbidity) brought about vital sign changes which were consistent with an adrenaline response. In addition, the greater the degree of experience of a subject, the more a given subject would feel compelled to discuss concerns about such hazards openly. No reason has been postulated for this latter behavior.

An exception to this was noted when the most experienced subject was exposed to brittle ice and a near-fall situation with significant potential for morbidity or mortality (Class A hazard). The penultimate section of a particular segment of an ice feature was allowed to separate from the parent body of ice, thus allowing the subject to lose attachment of his upper body to the wall. This situation was exacerbated by the near-vertical nature of the section and the weight of the 15 kilogram section falling against his anterior thoracic area. Through instinctive reaction, some degree of skill and an undetermined degree of SHL (Shit House Luck - Murphy, 1946), the subject regained total control in a combination chimney and bridging position with no loss of elevation.

The anticipated rise in catecholamines (fight or flight reaction) apparently did not occur during or immediately following the event. The behavior of the subject could best be described as "calculating" in extricating himself from this rather compromising circumstance. Delayed reaction included unusual laughter and reference to an out-of-body experience or "vision" of the previous day. (But note that this subject has previously been described as displaying bouts of "histrionic" laughter - C. Davis, CAJ 1990). The subject presented with agitation and elevated pulse and respiration when subsequently exposed to similar ice features in the latter stages of the study. This delayed response diminished to near normal levels by the termination of the study.

Exposure to Class C hazards (limited potential for morbidity) was met with amused disinterest by the subjects. It was thought that the severity of these factors did not reach critical levels. The notable exception was dehydration and lack of adequate nourishment during one test in which all three subjects involved complained of headache and fatigue, with one subject experiencing abdominal cramps. Consumption of copious amounts of fluid and nutrients reversed most complaints promptly. (Note: The dietary intake of subjects did not conform to the Canada Food Guide.)

Each of the subjects displayed Post Event Euphoric Episodes (PEEE) to a greater or lesser degree. Noted behaviors included smiling, shouting, arm waving and in extreme cases, prancing or gyrating that resembled the ceremonial native "Hoop Dance". The intensity of PEEE was inversely proportional to the experience level of the subject. Regardless of intensity, PEEE was thought to be caused by greater-than-normal levels of certain neural-hormones. None of the subjects felt the need for a PEEE when in public places.

When two of the subjects participated in a non-ice-related possible winter first ascent (Earnest Ross Peak), the intensity of PEEE was diminished. The reason was unclear, but may be related to the uncertainty regarding the pristine nature of the accomplishment. All subjects commented that they thought it was important to have a good PEEE once in a while.

Conclusion

Proximity of mountain climbers to pristine ice surfaces was found to have profound effects on climber physiology and behavior. Increasing length and slope-angle appeared to intensify reactions. Experience level appeared to be a moderating influence. Exposure to Class B and C hazards produced either no effect or a cumulative effect dependent upon the hazard intensity. In the singular situation of exposure to a Class A hazard, an unanticipated paradoxically calm reaction ensued. This was followed by a potentially deleterious delayed stress reaction. Due to the small sample size and limited number of tests, no conclusive statement can be made in this regard. Further experimentation is necessary to differentiate between those effects unique to pristine features and those effects common to the larger body of mountain experiences. Investigation of reaction to hazard-related stressors in mountain environments is warranted. It is not known if summer and winter activity would produce similar effects and whether a rock medium would elicit similar reactions.

Information regarding the location of further pristine features and financial contributions to enable continued research should be forwarded to the author in Edmonton. Other researchers wishing to duplicate this study can consult the appended route descriptions. Although no longer pristine, the ice features described can help provide valuable insight into the human condition when coupled with other aspects of the mountain experience in moderate doses over a long period of time.

Good Luck & Bad Dreams 150m III, 4

FA: December 28,1991; Dave Devin, Cyril Shokoples

This climb is located on Mt. Stelfox above the helipad between the Cline River bridge and the David Thompson Resort on Highway 11. Park at the Cline River or the helipad turnoff and hike for 45 minutes through the trees. This climb is a David Thompson CLASSIC! It does not always form completely and many years there has been no ice at all in this bowl. The first pitch is often missing. The climb is subject to extreme rockfall in warm weather.

The first pitch begins as a pillar (crux) which then eases to a good belay spot in 25m. When the pillar is missing, a 5.8/5.9 pitch with crampons is possible on the right. The second pitch is 50m of rolling ice. Belay under the protection of the ice curtain on the right (rock-fall/icefall potential). The third pitch of 50m starts easy, then stays at 70° to 80° until you reach a great belay platform. The last pitch begins with a short steep bit then some easy, low-angle ice to the open area at the apex of the great funnel above.

Although there is a little ribbon of ice above (which was taken during the first ascent) when avalanche hazard is present you should bail out now. The easiest descent is to head for the trees and then walk off the back side toward the Cline River. Be sure to scope out the descent before you go. It is possible to rappel the route, but no fixed anchors are in place.

In Search of Flying Squirrels 400m III, 3

FA: December 30,1991; Dave Devin, Cyril Shokoples

This climb is located on Earnest Ross Peak, 100m left of Nothing but the Breast. Park below it and pound straight up in 1/2 hour. This route is best done early in the year before snow covers significant portions of the route and turns it into a miserable snow slog. If found in good condition, it is a gas.

The first section is 4 1/2 pitches of Grade 2 rolling bulges and sheets with two short steeper sections near the top. When clear of snow, this is a lot more fun than you would think. To get the last piece of ice, you have to suffer through 150m of scree or snow to an upper 50m pitch of Grade 3 ice. It starts low-angle then rears up to become steep and thin on top. Protection in the upper section and the belay above is poor. To get off, scramble or downclimb rock on the left, then work your way to the base of the upper pitch. You may be able to scrounge a rappel if you really look. The rest of the descent is the same as for Nothing but the Breast.

Dry Ice 400m IV, 3

FA: January 11,1992; Yves Carignan, Cyril & Sandra Shokoples

This route is on Mt. Stelfox, North of the David Thompson Resort (DTR) on Highway 11. It is in the leftmost of two obvious avalanche gullies. Although the climb has formed in many years, fear of the great white wave from the hideous avalanche bowl above has kept visitors away. When snow conditions are stable, this is another fine climb. If hazard is high, drive on.

From the swamps near DTR, bushwhack through open forest, then poplars, to the creek bed/gully at the bottom of the climb in 1 1/2 hours. Stay out of the creek bed as long as you can. The climb begins with six steps (short, short, long, short, short, short) which vary from 2m to 20m in length. Varying amounts of snow separate the steps. Some steps may bank out with snow and debris as the season progresses. The first long pitch beyond the steps is classic Grade 3 for 30m to belay at yet another short step. Past this step and more snow, another 30m pitch of Grade 3 ice forms the crux. A fixed piton is located on the rock wall at the bottom of the pitch. Belay from two more pitons at the top left-hand side of the pitch. Two more short steps and even more snow lead to the final 15-20m of climbing. Although it looks like still more ice could be hidden around the final rock wall above you, there is not. Do not tempt the slide-path gods any further.

A large tree on the left (looking down) was used for a full 50m rappel to get off the final pitch. Rappel the next big pitch from the two-piton anchor. Downclimb the small bit (or rappel from the small tree) and use an Abalakov or other appropriate ice anchor for the last 30m rappel. With 50m ropes you can get past an extra step on one of the rappels. Downclimb the next two short steps. From here, if the slopes look safe, you can traverse out left from beneath a large rock wall which overhangs the gully. Keep high and in the trees, avoiding open slopes where possible, until you can safely walk down the left margin of the creek bed and regain your tracks lower down.

Rockies ice update

Joseph Josephson

To the surprise of many locals the winter of 1991/1992 was a great one for Rockies Ice Climbing. A snappy Arctic front in October followed by three virtually snow-free months of mild temperatures kept the waters flowing and most existing routes, plus many new ones, formed up fat. The entire season seemed two months ahead

of itself. Early season, which is typically characterized by chandelier and brittle ice, sported near March-like conditions with easy approaches and blue, plastic ice. Many routes like Selenium Falls, Sacrebleau, Cascade, and Polar Circus had seen repeated ascents by mid-November. Some routes like Ice Nine and Pilsner formed early, completely fell down and then formed again! However, by March the warm temperatures caught up bringing an early end to enjoyable, safe ice in many areas and an early call to the rock season.

With the proliferation of hard new routes, grading has become a bit tricky. Despite Bugs McKeith's best intention to create an open-ended system, and the introduction of a two-part grading system in the latest edition of Waterfall Ice, more and more routes are being packed into a few grades, particularly technical Grade 5. This problem may never be sorted out - leaving climbers to sharp screws and their own judgment; and, hopefully, preserving some room for adventure (if not a few sandbags)!

Ghost River

"The Recital Hall" is the name of the spectacular bowl above Aquarius, a popular Grade 4 in Devil's Gap. Perfectly oval and barely 100m in diameter, the Hall is one of the wildest areas in the Ghost. It offers two new climbs that are reached by climbing Aquarius. Rarely formed, they are two of the Ghost's hardest routes and certainly the most technical.

Rainbow Serpent 85m Grade III, 5+

FA: Joseph Josephson, Brad Wrobleski. January 1992.

Tucked into the far right corner of the Hall, it is only visible once directly below it. (Quite a sight when you come around the corner!)

A spectacularly aesthetic pillar climbed in two pitches. The first pitch climbs a free-standing pillar up lacy chandelier ice to a comfortable belay on the right. The second, harder pitch works its way around overhangs and caves to a narrow pillar and a unique ice arête near the top. Rappel the route.

Fearful Symmetry 60m Grade III, 6

FA: Bruce Hendricks, Joseph Josephson. January 1992.

A picture of this route is featured on page two of the second edition of Waterfall Ice. It is on the right side of the Hall and is visible from the first Ghost Lake. Another unique climb and a bold lead by Bruce, it sports two very narrow free-standing pillars separated by several 1 to 1 1/2m overhangs formed by the intense winds. Easy ground is climbed to a bolt belay behind the pillar. The next pitch is primarily overhanging and, at 35m, maybe the shortest technical Grade 6 in the Rockies.

Bow Valley

Arterial Spurt Grade llI, 3

FRA: Allan Massin, Stephen Bertollo. 1989 Park at Heart Creek near Lac Des Arcs and follow the canyon up and into the obvious bowl on the east face of Mount McGillivary (600m of vertical!). Up to 4 pitches of low-angle thin ice can sometimes be found. Rappel the route, pitons may be useful.

Kananaskis

Chief Five Star 300m Grade III, 3

FRA: Allan Massin, Stephen Bertollo. December 1989.

Approach the route by wading the Kananaskis River or alternatively walking down the trail from the Galatea Creek Parking Lot. The climb is located in a deep gully that splits the lower rock bands on the east face of Mount Kidd. Several parties have used this to reach a prominent rib on winter attempts at the face.

Tasting Fear 35m Grade III, 5

FA: Steve Chambers, John Whiteman, Martin LaLonde. December 1991.

A short vertical pillar located 50 minutes past Bridge Too Far in a small canyon of Galatea Creek. First ascent party rappeled into the canyon from above due to open water below the climb. In colder times, one may be able to approach from the creek directly.

Lake Louise Area

Mon Ami Grade IV, 4.

FA: Allan Massin, Serge Angelucci. February 1989.

Located between Protection Mountain and Castle is a large bowl requiring a 4-5 hour approach up the drainage from the 1A

Rainbow Serpent. (Joseph Josephson)

Fearfull Symmetry. (Joseph Josephson)

Gimme Shelter (l) and Arctic Dream (r). (Joe McKay)

highway. Visible from only one small area along the Trans-Canada, this route rarely forms completely and up to 4 pitches may be found. Some very interesting mixed climbing has been explored here as well.

Arctic Dream 300m Grade VI, 6.

FA: Joseph Josephson, Joe McKay. March 1992.

Located 20m to the right of Gimme Shelter on the NE face of Mount Quadra. Ski to Moraine Lake and then continue on to Consolation Valley. The route is obvious. Allow 5-6 hours.

This winter was the first time this route has ever been known to form up. (In fact, this was also the first time Gimme Shelter has come even remotely close to forming since its bold first ascent in 1983.) Considerably thicker than its neighbor, Arctic Dream offers incredible climbing in a wild alpine position. Hopefully these routes will be more consistent in the future.

Climb two pitches of moderate ice to the base of a long, sustained pillar. Climb technical ice up the pillar in three full rope lengths. Another 55m of Grade 4 ice leads to a snow gully below the séracs. Rappel the route. (This could also offer a reasonably quick and safer descent for Gimme Shelter).

Radium Highway

Suffer Machine 200m, Grade V, A2 5+.

FA: Jeff Everett, Glenn Reisenhofer. April 1991.

Located 100m right of Nemesis.

The first attempt on this route, which has never completely formed, was with an extension ladder to reach the broken-off pillar. Not quite able to make it, the first ascent team finally aided the rock and pendulumed onto the ice and continued up three pitches of steep climbing on good ice. If it ever forms completely it will be a beautiful pure ice climb.

Field

Talisker Grade IV, 3+.

FA: Rob Allan, Jeff Marshall, Glenn Reisenhofer. February 1992.

This climb takes the often-looked-at ice found far above Silk Tassel. Beware of the potential for extreme avalanche hazard. In fact, this was the site of a serious accident later in the year. Up to three significant steps of ice can be found with the last being the hardest.

Blessed Rage.
The view down the pillar from half height. The snow bench traverse leads to the mixed traverse. The mixed corner is visible appearing to have a wall of snow and a wall of rock. (Bruce Hendricks)

Corax Grade IV, 4+.

FA: Jeff Everett, Bill Kavanaugh. January 1992.

This area West of the Yoho Park Gates contains some of the best, most-forgotten-about ice around. Approach up the north side of the Trans-Canada Highway 3km west of the park gate. Stay on a prominent rib in order to avoid avalanche hazard. The route is located 150m to the left of French Maid (an obvious pillar first climbed in 1991).

The first ascent party climbed one pitch of mixed to the right to pass an unformed pillar then followed up two pitches of moderate ice to a cave. Climb a short steep pillar to the top. Similar in character to Louise Falls. Rappel the route.

Blessed Rage 200m.

Grade IV, 5.7, 5+

FA: Bruce Hendricks. Feb. 1992.

A bold solo first ascent. It is located directly across Emerald Lake about 400m to the left of Cold Choose and is identified by a huge curtain pouring over a steep rock band up high. Ski across the lake and continue up steep slopes (potential avalanche danger) to a moderate ice pitch. Above this, climb a snow couloir into a right-facing corner. Continue on mixed terrain up to 80°. Near the top, traverse out left across snow-covered slabs (beware of rockfall during warmer temperatures) to the base of the pillar. Continue up very sustained but good ice for a full rope length. Rappel straight down the route (double ropes recommended).

Banff-Jasper Highway

This area has been the focus of much new-route activity this past winter. Mount Wilson, which has tantalized climbers for years with countless impossible drips, yielded four new routes, and has finally seen the remaining major lines climbed. However, numerous futuristic thin smears still await attempts. Snowshoes are recommended for the timbered approaches on many of the Mount Wilson climbs.

Political World 170m, Grade III, 5.

FA: Joseph Josephson, Brad Wrobleski, April 1991.

Located directly across Bow Lake from the scenic pullout. Climb a narrow pillar for 30m leading into a gully (old bolt). Continue up snow to the right-hand of two falls which doesn't always form. Traverse across steep, snow-covered rock (5.8) to vertical thin ice and up to the crux pillar. Climb steep to overhanging ice for 15m until it eases off. Continue to a bolt station on the right. Rappel the route.

Unnamed. 45m. Grade III, 4.

FA: unknown climbers (Serge Angelucci?). November 1991.

Yet another climb found on Mount Murchison. This one is located on the buttress far right of Murchison Falls and faces the road. It offers some interesting technical climbing. A bolt belay on top.

The Full Potential 50m, Grade III, 4+.

FA: Joseph Josephson, Barry Blanchard. December 1991.

Two gullies right of Oh le Tabernac,

identified by a spectacular icicle hanging from the rock band above. One hour approach. A fun, varied route sporting a free-standing pencil, "Borgeau-Like" thin detached plate and vertical plastic. Rappel the route.

Hypertension 280m, Grade IV, 5+.

FA: Joseph Josephson, Jeff Nazarchuck. December 1991.

Located one gully north of The Full Potential. This is an excellent climb, but the bottom free-standing pillar rarely forms completely. The pitches above have even inspired past parties to attempt aid climbing past the overhangs. After climbing a one-meter-wide pencil and thin ice continue up snow and easy ice to a cave betweentwo free-standing pillars. Climb a long vertical pitch above on good ice. Continue up the gully on more moderate ice for two pitches. A long, sustained curtain 200m above may form in some years and would offer a great challenge.

In the spectacular bowl above Oh le Tabernac up to five separate climbs can be found. There has been some confusion about names, so to set the record straight they are, from left to right: unclimbed, Meech Lake Memorial, N'ice Baby, Whoa Whoa Capitaine, Les Miserables.

Meech Lake Memorial 60m, Grade IV, 4.

FRA: Jeff Nazarchuck, Joseph Josephson. December 1991.

A wide flow of good sunny ice to the left of the above routes. This is the easiest route in the bowl and offers moderate to steep climbing on a number of different lines. Great views of the nasties to the right.

N'ice Baby 110m, Grade IV, 5.

FA: Robin Clotier, Philippe Pibarot. March 1991.

Located just left of Whoa Whoa Capitaine this is an excellent route on good ice. Ascend 30m of low-angle ice to the base of the pillar. Climb steep ice for a full rope length to where the difficulty eases off for a final 30m.

Rappel the route, or rappel the icefall on the left from the trees up on the left.

Les Miserables 80m. Grade IV, 6.

FA: Barry Blanchard, Kevin Doyle. January 1992.

This test piece is the right hand of two narrow pillars. Even though only a few meters from Whoa Whoa Capitaine this route is quite different in character and considerably harder. Climbed in two pitches it offers sustained climbing throughout on extremely technical and overhanging ice.

Seven Pillars of Wisdom Grade IV, 5.

FA: Troy Kirwan, Barry Blanchard. December 1991.

This is the rarely-formed top pitches of Damocles. Climb that route and continue up among spectacular quartzite cliffs for a total of seven pitches, including another Grade 5 pitch at the top. This beautiful route is as least as long as Polar Circus and more sustained. Rappel the route (pitons advisable for the descent).

The Pencil 40m Grade 6.

FA: Grant Statham, Diny Harrison. December 1991.

The infamous Pencil (see page 99 in the second edition of Waterfall Ice) on Polar Circus formed for the first time in many years. Quite similar to Pilsner Pillar and, even with the tell-tale crack near the top, it was quite solid and received numerous ascents throughout the season. After years of down grading, Polar Circus may possibly be back to the technical Grade 6 rating it first received.

Up to five independent lines of varying thickness and quality formed on the Upper Weeping Wall this past season. Uncharacteristically, good climbing was found early in the year and most of the Upper and Lower Walls fell apart by March. In all, two new routes were finished.

Tales of Ordinary Madness 180m, Grade IV, 6.

FA: Barry Blanchard, Joseph Josephson. December 1991.

This route is located on the far right side of the Upper Weeping Wall. The first ascent party climbed a steep technical pitch just to the right of the main Weeping Pillar route to the snow ledge. They then traversed under Nasty Habits to an 80m narrow blue pillar that spills over a left-facing corner. Rappel the route.

Nasty Habits - Left 200m, Grade IV, 5.

FA: unknown climbers, winter of 1991/1992.

Climb the first pitch of Tales of Ordinary Madness to the snow ledge. This is the crux of the climb. Directly above, is a wide flow that may be considered part of Nasty Habits but is considerably easier. Either rappel the route or traverse left and descend Weeping Pillar.

Mix Master 300m, Grade IV, 5.8, 5.

FA: Troy Kirwan, Joe Buszowski. December 1991.

Surprisingly, this route is located in the first significant gully 200m left of the Weeping Wall and is less than five minutes from the road! This may be one of the first significant mixed ice routes in the Rockies (other than larger alpine routes) and is highly recommended.

The first two pitches ascend a Scottish-style narrow ice gully into a small amphitheater. From here traverse right to a tree and up a short water ice pitch. Above here, traverse back left across rock, up a short steep wall onto a snow-covered ramp. Continue into the main gully. After a low-angle thin ice pitch up a corner and some snow, the final rope length ascends

Troy Kirwan on the third pitch of Mix Master. (Joe Buszowski)

Joe Buszowski on the seventh pitch of Mix Master. (Troy Kirwan)

Barry Blanchard does his winter thing. (Troy Kirwan)

a vertical, ten-inch-wide ice vein (crux). Rappel the gully direct on fixed anchors and trees.

Sister Moon 140m, Grade III, 4.

FA: Karl Nagy, Glenn Reisenhofer. January 1992.

This route spills out of a hole in the buttress about 500m south of Curtain Call. Approach is straightforward and about 45 minutes. The climb is three pitches high and quite narrow near the top. Rappel the route.

New routes in the Rockies

Mt. Bryce for Bushaphobics

Mt. Bryce/N Face S. W. Peak 3507m

Dave Chase/Brad Wrobleski, Sep 1991

On our third attempt, in as many consecutive weekends, we made the 140km pilgrimage up the Bush River Road from Golden.

With a newly-developed strong dislike for Devils Club we ascended the major drainage off Bryce, next to the last (at the time) cut-block, just after crossing the Bush River. Easy terrain up the drainage brought us to a head-wall. We avoided the wall by traversing diagonally north through an hour of light bush and trees to reach the rock bands. We climbed the rock bands (5.6, NW Shoulder) keeping diagonally to the north.

After a bivy in Fiberglass Pink insulation bags on the NW shoulder, next to the N face, below rock band, we traversed onto the N face proper.

Following a direct line to the summit, we simul-climbed the Styrofoam névé, (4.5hr).

From the summit we downclimbed the NW shoulder (5hr) to another plastic bag bivy. The next morning we traversed rock bands diagonally, rapping the last bands to enter back into the drainage. (48hr car-to-car.)

p.s. Chaser, thanks for the boots!

Thanks for support from Mont Bell and New England Ropes.

Brad Wrobleski

New & Exotic Ascents in the Rockies

by the Old Goats' Group (and Associates)

Mt. Avens (2972m):

First Ascent, 7 Oct, 1990. Reg Bonney, Rick Collier.

We hiked up Baker Creek, turned SE just past the N ridge of Protection Mt. and proceeded 3km up what James Porter called Wonder Valley (about halfway to Mitella Lake). Avens forms the E boundary of this valley. From our camp we ascended scree and slippery ledges through the first cliff band, then traversed S (trending up) at the foot of the second cliffband to an obvious break. 25m of scrambling (rope used) brought us to a keyhole exit and onto the upper scree slopes - 360m to a col between N and S summits. The scrambly N ridge led to the true summit - no cairn found. On descent, after downclimbing the upper cliffs, we traversed E and rapped into the high valley between Avens and Pulsatilla.

Mt. Schlee (ca 2843m):

New route under winter conditions, 17 Nov, 1990. Reg Bonney, Rick Collier, Bob Saunders.

We skied to Little Elbow Lake, then up the valley between Schlee and Tombstone. Our ascent followed the S side of the E buttress, across the col, and then directly up couloirs to the summit. Mostly snow and ice.

Nestor Pk. (2972m) (Assiniboine Park):

First winter ascent. 15 February, 1991. Reg Bonney, Rick Collier, Istvan Hernadi, Henry Lickorish, Bob Saunders, Peter Wolfe.

After skiing up the Simpson River and Surprise Creek, we ascended Nestor easily from Ferro Pass N over snow and scree in strong winds.

Prairie Lookout (3186m):

First winter ascent; 24 Mar, 1991. Reg Bonney, Rick Collier.

3 hours up French Creek; then E,

ascending to highest point on snow rising toward col between French and PL; ascended cliffy couloir above snow cone, exiting on ramp to N, leading to upper scree slopes and scrambly summit.

Old Fort Peak (ca. 2390m):

First ascent; 1 Jun, 1991. Reg Bonney, Rick Collier, Bob Saunders.

This is the obvious pinnacle at the head of the S branch of Old Fort Ck on the Goat Traverse ridge near Yamnuska (82O/3-288650). Hike 6km up Jura Cr, scramble 550m to base of NW ridge, then up ridge to first wall. Two loose, technical pitches to summit.

Mt. Tyrrell (2760m):

First ascent; 1 Jul, 1991. Reg Bonney, Rick Collier, Bob Saunders.

We hiked 13km from the Ya-Ha-Tinda Ranch to the E park boundary, then 6km along the Red Deer River to Tyrrell Cr, which we followed NW for an additional 5km. From our camp we ascended the first major SW trending valley (game trails), then scree, snow, and cliff bands to the summit ridge, which offers an easy walk to either the N or S summit (S is slightly higher). No cairn found on either summit.

Protection Mtn. (2786m):

First ascent; 14 July, 1991. Rick Collier, Mardy Roberts.

Ascent made from Baker Cr directly up N ridge. 90m from top of ridge a traverse left across a major (NE) couloir leads to easier ground. Two moderate pitches (rope used) take one to the broad upper shoulder, which is followed to the summit nub at S end. No cairn found.

Mt. King Albert (2982m):

New route (E. Ridge). 21 Jul, 1991. Rick Collier, Bob Saunders.

We ascended the alpland and snow above Back Lk to a couloir which was climbed to the notch between King Albert and Queen Elizabeth. A 10 m blank wall of some difficulty and exposure led to a rock and snow arête, which we followed to the summit.

Flints Pk. (2951m):

First ascent; 28 Aug, 1991. Rick Collier.

I cycled, ran, and walked N up Cascade Fire Road, W through Flints Park, and 2.2km up the North Cascade River (W of objective). I ascended directly to the summit tower up the obvious drainage that trends NE. 75m of moderate scrambling brought me to the top. No cairn found on summit.

I descended to the S, down a classic U-shaped valley and back to the Cascade River trail. Approximately 70km round trip - a good day's jaunt.

Indian Pk (2993m):

First winter ascent; 28 Dec, 1991. Reg Bonney, Rick Collier.

We skied up the Simpson River and Indian Ck, turning NE at the major drainage SW of the peak (not easily seen from the creek). We ascended this drainage, staying on the right (E) until we could take off our skis and climb the scree and hard snow (crampons) of the shelves sloping down from the summit ridge. The summit ridge itself, despite considerable exposed slab, presented only minor difficulties. Because of its remoteness, this peak has probably not been climbed since the original (1912) ascent by R.D. McCaw and party.

Rick Collier

Long Knife Peak, N. Face

During August last year, Dave Jones and I climbed the North Face of Long Knife Peak from a camp in Starvation Creek in the extreme southeast corner of BC (the Canada/US boundary splits the face at 2/3 height with the summit being in Glacier Park. Extensive blow-down has made approaches to this area a real challenge.

About 8 hours return from camp at the cluster of small lakes; longer if you get lost in the dark on the approach, as we did.

Steve Byford

Rockies rock

Bow Valley Sport Climbing Update

In 1990 the Bow Valley became home to one of the hardest routes in Canada when Resurrection (13c/d), on Water Wall in Grotto Canyon, was finally redpointed by local climber Todd Guyn. Guyn also made the first red-point ascents of two neighboring routes, Cause and Effect (12+) and Burn Hollywood Burn (13a/b). Resurrection and Burn Hollywood Burn were manufactured by other climbers using a compressor-driven drill in 1988 but had not previously been climbed. Elsewhere in Grotto Canyon, the last available space at The Alley was filled by Snakes and Ladders (12a), while on Hemingway Wall, Stone Age Romeos (11d), was squeezed in right of Walk on the Wild Side. Carrot Creek was the scene of 25 new routes, mostly in the 11b to 12b range. Gently impending Graffiti Wall, on the right side of Westside Buttress, was perhaps the find of the year, yielding 5 outstanding short climbs. Technical, sustained and pumpy, No More Mr. Nice Guy (11d) is the test piece here. On Raven's Nest Buttress, noteworthy additions included The Warlock (12a) and the very steep Shadow of a Thin Man (12a/b), respectively left and right of The Wizard. The deceptive Entrance Exam (12a), near the canyon entrance, and The Illusionist (11b), which can be combined with the classic Sorcerer's Apprentice to make a single 50m (19 clip) pitch. Three new cliffs were also explored. The buttress right of Graffiti Wall gave Sun City (11d), while farther upstream, Small Wall and the Wall of Jericho yielded an additional 9 short routes in the 10c to 11d range.

At The Stoneworks, the 5.12 grade was consolidated with Slapshot (12c/d), a sustained overhanging face left of Penguin Lust, and Blue Lotus (12b), on the pocketed wall right of Electric Ocean. Wings of Desire (11d), right of So It's a Sport Climb, was another worthwhile addition.

Cougar Canyon continued to be busy as 28 new routes went in, nearly all on previously undeveloped cliffs. Creekside Crag, about 20 minutes farther up the canyon beyond Cosmology Crag, has a dozen climbs featuring short but sustained routes in the 10a to 10c range, as well as several harder roof problems, notably the exciting Withering Heights (11b). Nearby Canadian Forks Cliff features sustained climbs on overhanging rock including Phlogiston (lie), and vicious little Danse Macabre (lie). Further downstream, the bouldery Natural Selection (11e) gives good excitement value on Cavern Crag, as does Trinidad (lie), which is across the creek from Cosmology Crag on Caribbean Crag. Another new area is Catamount Crag, between Cosmology and Covert Crags. Four good quality moderate routes were completed here. On the established cliffs, the main additions were the tricky Outer Limits (12a), on the steep face right of Prime Cut, and Rough Trade (11b), a roof problem left of Dressed to Kill.

John Martin

Shredder Reef

My wife and I did some development work on a totally new set of slabs found below Roche Miette, east of Jasper. The "Shredder Reef is an amazing formation of the sharpest limestone imaginable. This small area of dark rock is likely a reef formation and is certainly without peer in the razor sharp category. The slab is quite steep, but due to the high coefficient of trauma (friction), the climbing here resembles face climbing more than friction climbing. The approach is relatively short and so are the climbs.

To find this formation, park at the gate blocking the small unpaved access road just east of Disaster Point (where many people park when heading off to climb Miette). Walk along this road for a short while until a cairn marks an indistinct trail heading into the brush. The trail follows along the east bank of a small creekbed issuing from the west side of Roche Miette. Avoid the creekbed and the small canyon. As you walk along gaining elevation it becomes obvious that the first set of cliffs/ canyon and the creek are below you. As you proceed further, you may notice that the creek meanders away from the base of the cliffs. Past this, watch for a set of very rough, dark-colored slabs below you. A cairn was built at this spot. Then look for the bolts in the rock at the top of the slabs. The slabs which are visible further along past this point are all insanely loose and crappy. The sun hits the slabs around noon, so the slabs are best visited after that time.

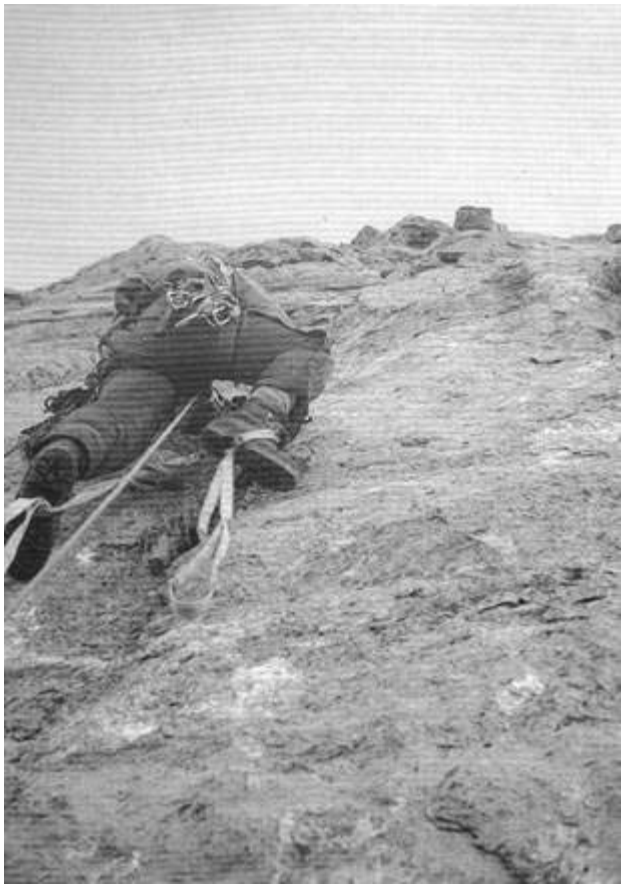
The first route put up here was called Limestone Ripped My Flesh (5.6). This is the only route with any fixed protection, but dual bolt anchors have been placed above three sections of the slab so that top-roping can now proceed in relative safety. Subsequent routes have names like Laceration, Avulsion, Abrasion, etc. as a testament to the wounding capacity of this material. The climbing does not get any harder than 5.7/5.8. Experience leads me to state that leading routes here can be an exercise in runout masochism as protection is often non-existent and protection bolts have not yet been placed on the many routes which have been led. Nonetheless, this is a unique place to go for an afternoon of "Shreddin' the Slabs".

Other areas in Jasper continue to produce new routes. The Rock Gardens is becoming popular once again. Jasper locals have rappel-bolted a number of hard new routes in the 5.10, 5.11 and perhaps harder range. Dozens of new routes have sprung up in the Hidden Valley/ Disaster Point area. Due to the complexity of the area, it is nearly impossible to describe how to find some of them. Some initial exploration has also been done in areas just west of Roche a Perdrix.

The Jasper Park wardens and others have done a lot of fine multi-pitch climbing at Bedson Ridge in the front ranges with the major problem being access across the river. Ashlar Ridge is still visited only sporadically and new routes are slow in coming. The Dune Wall on Mt. Sorro has a number of good routes in place. Check with the warden's office and other Jasper locals for details and new developments.

New Routes in Ogre Canyon

Route activity has been slow at Ogre Canyon (north of Jasper east park gate) of late, in part due to the constantly deteriorating state of the access road. A recent washout at a fairly critical spot has been a significant source of concern. It took 8 people 45 minutes to dig out the van I was driving when I managed to get it stuck at this spot. The road was somewhat improved by the time we were finished. Be that as it may, if you can get there, the area still offers good fun climbing. The area past the creek which emanates from the canyon is no longer accessible by vehicle. The Alberta Forest Service has declared this a reclamation area and motorized vehicles and camping are no longer allowed in this area, but this only extends the approach by 10 to 15 minutes.



Ken Wallator on Roche Miette. (Rick Costea)

1990 saw the standards rise at Ogre with three new 5.10 slab routes put up on the left hand wall. All of the 1990 routes are bolt protected. The easy first pitch of Layback has had three protection bolts added to reduce the long runouts. In addition, the belay/rappel anchors on Layback are now all doubled. The new routes are as follows:

Pneumatic Pneumothorax 5.8 -First pitch as per Layback. From above the large ledge, the second pitch follows the first line of bolts left of Layback. It begins at a small, obvious, right-slanting ramp feature. The line proceeds up the slab and to the right of the large grass/moss patch in the middle of the slab. The route rejoins the Layback route at the traverse just before the last bolt of the second pitch. Belay from bolts on the large treed ledge. The last pitch follows Layback to just past two rappel/ belay bolts on a smaller treed ledge, then trends left to follow a set of new bolts which are visible on the slab above. Belay from a two-bolt anchor in a small outcrop at the top of the route.

Cardiac Tamponade 5.10a - First and last pitch as per Pneumatic Pneumothorax. This route follows a line of bolts just left of P. Pneumothorax and offers a thinner start. The two routes join just before you reach the Lay-back route.

Tension Pneumothorax 5.10b - First and last pitch as per P. Pneumothorax. This route follows the line of bolts just left of C. Tamponade. It begins with a thin, tricky bouldering start before you clip the first bolt. It offers the best climb of the slab routes in this part of the face. It ascends to the large grass/moss patch which you surmount on the left. From this area

ascend more or less directly to the right edge of the large treed belay ledge above.

Unnamed Original Direct Slab Route 5.9 -Located just left of T. Pneumothorax. This route proceeds directly up from the belay bolts at the end of the first pitch of the Layback route. Make your way past the tiny treed ledge and head straight up for the right hand side of the large treed ledge above. This older route (c. 1987/8) has no fixed protection at this time and is runout (ground-fall potential). Try the three routes to the right first.

(The above routes were done by Cyril Shokoples and Ian Chisholm, except for the original route which was done by Shokoples and Morgan Neff. A rack of small to medium Friends and wired nuts is required for the third pitch. The second pitches require about eight quick draws, plus slings for belay anchors. To rappel these routes requires two 45m ropes. A walk-off descent is possible on the trail to the south.)

It's Great To Be Young and Insane 5.10b -This is definitely the best route on the left wall of Ogre Canyon to date. It was put up by Cyril Shokoples and Morgan Neff over two days at the end of the summer. The route overlaps with the old Sandy's Slab route in spots, but removes all the kinks in the older wandering line. It is very well protected (perhaps over-protected in spots). This is a sport climbing route with almost all protection fixed. All that is required is a few small/medium nuts, about ten quick draws, some 1 1/2m slings and some long double slings for belays.

The route starts about 20 to 30m left (south) of the beginning of the Layback route, almost directly below a solitary spruce tree growing on a small ledge in the middle of an expanse of slabs. Climb up broken fourth/fifth class terrain for 20m to a small broken ledge atop a pedestal (belay bolts).

Climb up and slightly right to a break in the rock which allows access to the slabs above. (No fixed protection; nuts helpful here.) At the point where you break out onto the slabs, there is a narrow, mossy ledge above which is the first protection bolt. From here you curve up and right through the scoop of rock and follow the bolt protection (5.8, 25m). Belay from bolts behind the spruce tree ledge. The next pitch starts just right of the ledge and follows bolts and fixed pins fairly directly up to the next ledge. This pitch follows the line of least resistance and is never runout (5.6, 25m). Watch for hidden protection in corners. Belay from bolts on large ledge.

The final pitch is the crux and the best of the route. From the belay head right, then straight up to below the left edge of a treed ledge. The crux comes just below this ledge and has maximum protection. Climb up and left of the ledge, never quite going far enough right to actually stop at the ledge. The second half of the pitch goes almost straight up and ends at the belay bolts on top (5.10b, 40m)

This route can be rappelled with a single 55m rope. A 50m (165') rope just barely reaches, but with no margin for error. First do two 20m rappels down the last pitch of the Layback. Traverse over and do the last three rappels directly down the route of ascent.

Cyril Shokoples

Rock around Banff

Murray Toft

Over the past five years, canyoneering in the gorges of the Fairholme Range around Canmore has focused rock climbing energy on the pursuit of the impossible. The safety, difficulty, and ease of access to the short, sport-climbing cliffs found in these minor haunts, appears to have had an enervating effect on the exploration of the larger crags just a little further upstream near Banff.

A sampler to some post-guidebook multi-pitch areas around Banff offering quality climbing in the traditional style is hereby offered as a balance to the bolt-dominated clip-ups of recent invention.

Bourgeau Crags

The big acreage of cliffs above the Sunshine Ski Area parking lot supporting the waterfall climbs of the same name. South facing exposure. Season from April to October. Approach time from the parking lot 45 minutes to an hour. Find a creekside trail at the far end of the upper parking lot (behind the lift terminal).

Italian Birdcage Maker Crack (8) May have been climbed by Tim Auger in early '80s? Two long pitches of shallow left-facing corner crack on the steep gray slabs 80m right of Bourgeau Lefthand waterfall. Very good rock. Nuts and Friends only. Descend double rope in two raps from bolts at the midway ledge on the east side of the waterfall. Swing east to find the second semi-hanging stance on top of a little flake!

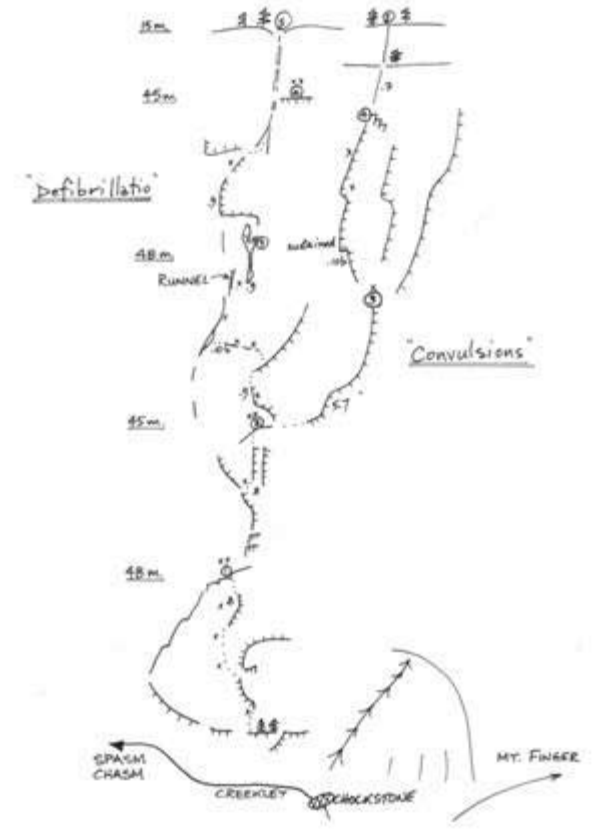
Son of Cyclops (10b) Murray Toft, Frank Campbell. June 1988. The right-facing left-leaning groove-cum-corner line 30m left of Bourgeau LH waterfall. 2 pitches up the groove. 1 pitch hard right to the Cyclops cave. Another diagonally up from the cave to belay below a roof. Finally, over the crack/bulge from the stance and up the left-facing corner to a steep left traverse and final stance. Good rock to this point. Rock degenerates above. Fixed pins and bolts to assist clean protection. Descend double rope from 5th stance bolts into the cave. Rap double rope from the tree and swing left to bolts at belay one. Rap double rope to the ground.

Rainmaker (9) Murray Toft, Iain Stewart-Patterson. June 1988. Two pitches following the water stain above the first trees left of Bourgeau LH waterfall. Climb past a bolt on the wall to gain the right end of a longish horizontal overhang. Undercling et cetera left to work around the overhang and continue up a short groove. Make a step-a-cross left and then up to a bolted stance in the right-facing corner above. Continue up the shallow corner and where it fades, climb up to the rightmost final steep corner/dihedral. End on the big seam ledge below the lichened roof. Very good rock. Descend by walking off the ledge left until possible to down-climb to tree anchor options and a single rope rap to ground.

Spasm Chasm

Paralleling the 1A highway west of Banff is an uplift of quality rock starting with Paper Chase in the south and running northwest up through Mount Finger. Spasm Chasm is a deeply cut canyon containing a gushing snow melt tributary that feeds the drainage immediately north of Mt. Finger. Start at the "Sawback" picnic area on the 1A Highway about 10km west of the junction with the Trans-Canada (from Banff). Pass through the picnic area and follow the river bed leading up to the cliffs. In just over an hour of steady walking, the main drainage swings around right toward the north face of the Finger. At this point Spasm Chasm with its steep 200m cliffs is visible a short distance off to the left. Best left until late June when the turbulence of the canyon abates. Afternoon sun only. A lot of steeper, blanker looking rock in here for generations to come. The first two routes to be done here start in the first open bay above the big chockstone and are best described with topos.

Defibrillatio (10b) Murray Toft, Jim Preston, Allan Derbyshire. June 1990.



Topos by Murray Toft

Convulsions (10b) Allan Derbyshire, Choc Quinn. July 1990. 1 set of nuts to 2 inch, 1 #9 hex, Friends to #4, TCU's useful. Critical bolts in situ. Double rope rap from anchors on Defibrillatio.

C-Level Cirque

Running along the base of Cascade Mountain in the direction of Lake Minnewanka are several major buttresses. The easternmost of these is Bankhead Buttress. When viewed from a point about 3km along the Minnewanka road, this buttress seems to fade into a ridge to create its righthand edge. The ridge is really an illusion formed by the cliff swinging back and cutting deep into Cascade Mountain to form an amazing hidden cirque. The cirque is gained by a maintained trail from the Upper Bankhead picnic area in slightly over an hour. A small tarn at the base of the cirque is a handy place to chill the afternoon ale while enjoying the symphony of marmots, pikas and whiskeyjacks. Looking up into the cirque on its left edge is a squarish looking cliff ("Circus Left") with an obvious streak of waterworn rock running directly down its face. (Early season expect a watercourse!) Two interesting routes were climbed on either side of this waterstreak. Beware the family of goats who sometimes traverse and trundle from above the cliff. Best season after winter run-off; end of June to September. Shaded in the afternoon. Many more high-quality routes to be done up here.

Ringmaster (10a) Murray Toft, Allan Derbyshire, Gerry Rogan. July 1990. Identified by the yellow left-facing dihedral at mid-height on the left of the waterstreak.

Balancing Act (10b) Murray Toft, Jim Preston. August 1990. Follows the series of left-facing corners just right of the waterstreak.

Unclimbed peaks in the Canadian Rockies

John Martin

The Canadian Alpine Journal (CAJ) of 1941 carried an article by J. Monroe Thorington entitled "Unclimbed Peaks in the Canadian Rockies". In it he enumerated some 46 named, unclimbed summits exceeding 10,000ft (3050m). Although seeking first ascents has since then passed far from the mainstream of mountaineering activity in the Rockies, there are still some climbers who feel the lure of untrodden peaks. To those few at least it should be of interest to re-explore Dr. Thorington's subject some half century later.

To address this topic I decided to follow in Dr. Thorington's footsteps and consider only peaks higher than 10,000ft/3050m, as shown on the National Topographic System 1:50,000 scale map sheets. Through a review of the Rockies guidebooks, the CAJ, and local Calgary climbing publications, supplemented by conversations with other climbers, I drew up a summary of first ascent activity since 1941.

World War II practically shut down civilian climbing for the first few years after the publication of Dr. Thorington's article, but during the period 1946 to 1954 there was a spate of activity in which 25 of the listed peaks were climbed, as well as 15 others. 1955 to 1966 was a relatively quiescent period with only 16 more first ascents. The "last 11,000ft peak", Mt. Harrison, was discovered and climbed during this period. Another flurry of first ascenting occurred between 1967 and 1975, with no fewer than 67 new peaks falling, including another 11,000er. Since then there have been only 25 additional first ascents of 10,000ft peaks, the last real 11,000er being among them. In the past 10 years the pace has been particularly slow, barely averaging one per year; however, the period has been enlivened by first ascents of at least 2, and possibly 3 major peaks previously thought to have been climbed decades earlier. In all, some 148 new 10,000ft peaks have been climbed since 1941.

So what's left? By carefully examining the 1:50,000 scale maps and applying some objective criteria for defining what

constitutes an independent summit, I identified 78 peaks exceeding 3050m that are still unclimbed. Most are unnamed; however the list includes 5 of the peaks mentioned by Dr. Thorington— Mt. Prince John, Mt. McConnell, Golden Eagle Peak, Mt. Odell, and Obstruction Mtn.— as well as 9 other officially named summits and a handful more with unofficial names.

Of the 78 peaks, only 5 are south of the Trans Canada Highway, and all of these are in British Columbia. The 2 highest unclimbed peaks in the Rockies are both in this area: an unnamed 3262m (10,700ft) peak on the north ridge of North Goodsir and Mt. Prince John (3230m/10,600ft) in the Royal Group. Neither of these peaks meet the criteria for separate summits mentioned previously, but are included because of their height. Both are a full day's travel from the nearest road, as is Mt. Swiderski (3140m/10,300ft) in the Italian Group. Russell Peak (3050m/10,000ft) and a nearby unnamed 3050m peak, both in the North White River drainage, are comparatively accessible.

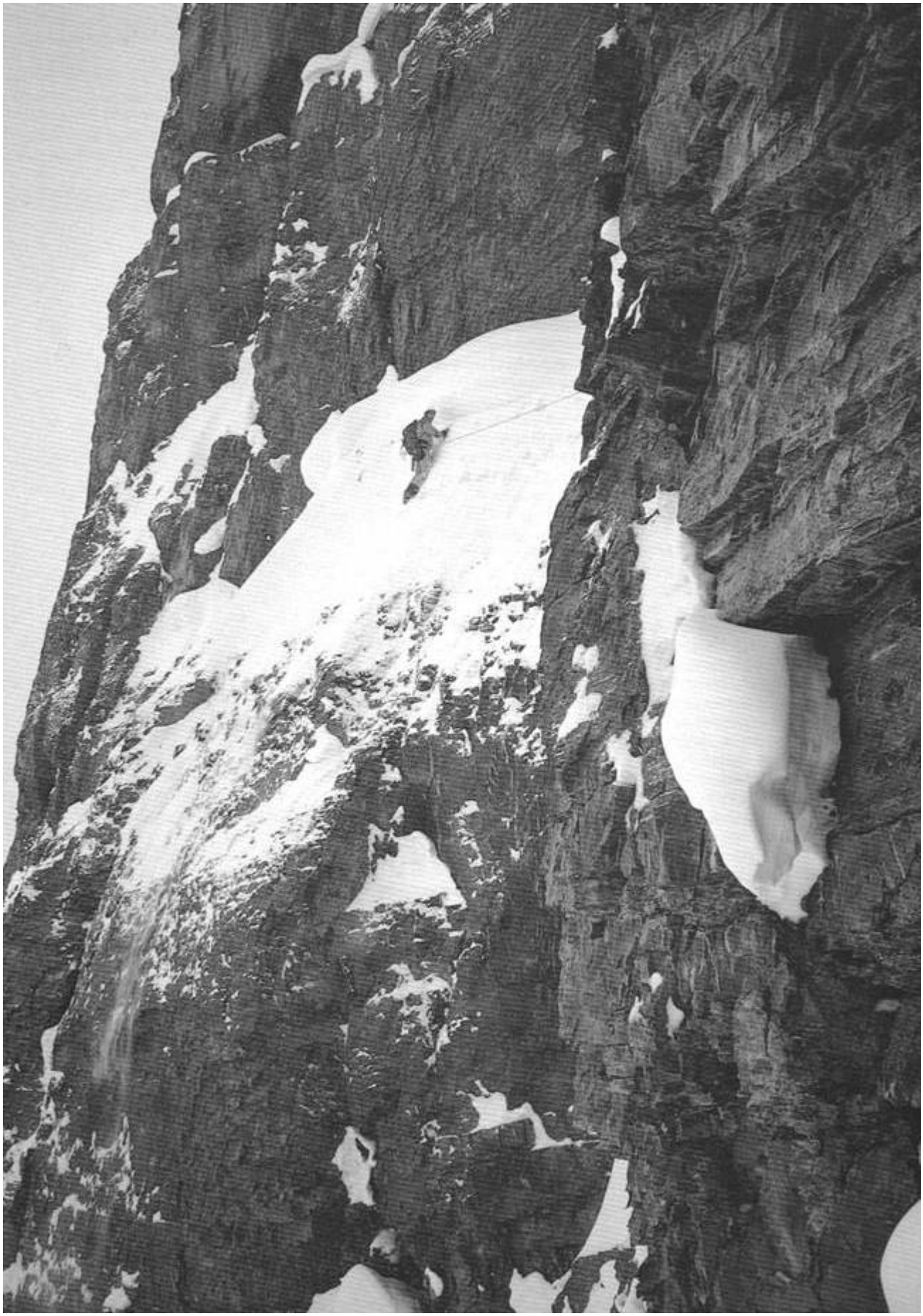
By far the largest number of unclimbed mountains, some 55 in all, lie in relatively remote parts of the Front Ranges. These peaks are generally a day or more from the nearest road and most (but not all) are of the writing desk variety. There are two major areas of concentration, separated by the North Saskatchewan River. The southern area encompasses the Siffleur Wilderness Area and adjacent portions of Banff Park, as well as some Forest Reserve land farther east. Pre-eminent here is Recondite Peak's unnamed northeastern neighbor (3200m/10,500ft). Mt. McConnell (3140m/10,300ft), in headwaters of the Red Deer River, Dip Slope Mountain (3110m/10,200ft), and Mt. Huestis (3080m/10,100ft), both in the Clearwater River drainage, and "Mt. Further" (3050m), between the Siffleur and Escarpment Rivers, are some of the other attractions. The northern area includes the White Goat Wilderness Area, southeastern Jasper Park, and areas to the east. Two summits in this area reach 3200m (10,500ft): Obstruction Mtn, beside the Brazeau River; and an unnamed peak east of Mt. Brazeau. Lesser peaks include Aztec Mtn. (3110m/ 10,200ft), Opabin Mtn. (3080m/10,100ft), and Chocolate Mtn. (3050m/10,000ft), all in the Brazeau River drainage; as well as Afternoon Peak (3140m/ 10,300ft), and Minister Mtn. (3080m/10,100ft) in the Cline River drainage.

Nine peaks are scattered from the vicinity of Saskatchewan River Crossing north to the "big bend". Some of these are quite close to the Icefields Parkway. Most accessible are two unnamed 3080m towers of Mt. Murchison, neither of which appears to have a non-technical route. Also close to the road, but on the wrong side of the North Saskatchewan River, is an impressive unnamed 3170m (10,400ft) peak northeast of Mt. Amery. It too has no easy route. An unnamed 3140m (10,300ft) peak across Huntington Creek from Mt. Coleman is relatively accessible as well. The other summits in this area, including Golden Eagle Peak (3050m), are more remote.

Three of the remaining nine peaks are in reasonably accessible areas west of the Icefields Parkway; two near Catacombs Mtn. and one near Mt. Quincy. Two more are in the remote and virtually unexplored block of mountains east of the Canoe Reach, buried deep in the BC bush. Also in this category is Mt. Odell (3140m/10,300ft), south of Tsar Mtn. The interesting-looking "Pawn" and "Rook" (both 3080m/10,100ft), west of Mt. Bryce, may be accessible from the Bush River logging road. Finally, there is a single unclimbed 3050m peak north of the Yellowhead Highway - the south summit of the Mt. Longstaff massif.

Some of the "unclimbed" peaks enumerated here may in fact have had unrecorded ascents. Clearly though, there are more than enough to last well into the next century, and maybe even until 2041!

An unclimbed Rockies peak. (John Martin)



Tom Fayle on The Andromeda Strain. (Grant Statham)

Peak 12380

Rowan Harper

Our intention had been to climb the Cassin Ridge on Mt. McKinley, but after six days of trying to acclimatize on the west buttress it was obvious that Mark's cerebral cortex did not care for the thin air, so we pointed our skis and toboggans toward warmer and friendlier climates below. The next day was spent eating, drying gear and consuming all the alcohol we could find. We said goodbye to new friends and hello to others.

Morning brought snow, hangovers and bad attitudes. But things can change quickly in Alaska, so we decided to take a recon trip up the Southeast Fork to look at a nasty project I had spied on the north side of Mt. Hunter. It looks great! Mark is not as enthusiastic. Something to do with the minefield of séracs to be negotiated at the base efface. Further up the Fork we meet Jay and Paul from Lake Tahoe. They are psyching themselves up to re-attempt Mt. Hunter after Jay took a fall. We discuss the peak at the end of the Fork, Peak 12380. Its beautiful 1000m west face rises from the valley floor with some interesting gullies on it.

Peak 12380. (Rowan Harper)

A plan is hatched!

The next day finds us up at the crack of noon (no need for an alpine start in Alaska). We pack and ski to our proposed project. Past Mt. Hunter and the monstrous Moonflower Buttress, and onto the pyramid that caps the toe of the Southeast Fork. 8:00 p.m. crampons on and Marko and I have at it. 450m of pleasant snow climbing leads to a bottleneck of ice. Here we pull the rope out and start up the gully. The climbing just gets better and better with every pitch. We find perfect ice and steep bulges. Howls of appreciation to the alpine gods echo through the Alaskan night. A mixed pitch, then one more on that fine ice and we're on south ridge. Steep! Very different from the ridges back home in the Rockies. Two pitches up this and we are on the summit.

The Alaskan sunrise rewards us with fantastic views. To the east spreads the Ruth Glacier with its steep jagged spires. To the north rises McKinley with its many ridge lines spiraling out like tentacles. Foraker dominates the view to the west, capped with séracs, cold and quiet. Hunter lies to the south bathed in morning alpenglow.

Now, as we all know, getting to the top is only half the battle.

And it's becoming apparent why this route hasn't been climbed before. We carefully begin downclimbing the south ridge pitch after pitch. It's becoming a real pain in the ass. When we arrive at the first rock outcrop we decide to start rapping the face. A pin here and a bollard there then monotonous downclimbing starts again. It ends with a beautifully executed belly flop back over the bergschrund by yours truly. Bathed in sweat from the hot afternoon sun, but with grins from ear to ear, we click into our skis and cruise back toward camp.

Ah Alaska, you've treated the lads well! As we ski out below Hunter, I can't help peeking back at the gem we've just visited and gazing up at the possibilities that still exist in this great range.

Peak 12380 South West Face

Mark Austin, Rowan Harper

June 6, 1991

Everest, 1991

From Peter Austen

After Tienanmen Square it was business as usual and I still had a Chinese Everest Permit. It took 4 years of raising money for 34 hours per week, in a recession, using my home as an Everest Hotel for potential team members; and trips to Mexico, Alaska, the Pamirs and all over Heaven and Hell's Half Acre, to produce a team of 15 and some major sponsors (Compass North, Cathay Pacific Airways, Associated Grocers of Calgary) and many minor ones. We also had a documentary team lined up through Yaletown Productions of Vancouver who in turn were sponsored by CTV in Toronto. Our satellite system had been put together by Alan Hobson of Calgary and his bundle-of-fun assistant, Jamie Clarke. James Nelson, our Base camp Manager, had put much effort also into securing financial backing for the system.

I had succeeded in putting together Canada's first truly National Everest team. We had climbers from BC, Alberta, Ontario, Yukon, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Manitoba.

Our goals were: to climb the Mallory Route; to raise awareness for Rett Syndrome, a neurological disease which disables young girls; and to find Mallory and/or Irvine.

We left at the end of July to a big send-off at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Vancouver, did a promotional climb of an institution in Hong Kong, and got locked in a night club in Bangkok and held to ransom. (We battled our way out.)

In Kathmandhu one of our Sherpas who had previously been on the summit of Everest with Pat Morrow (who was one of our cameramen) was arrested for foreign currency possession. We found Lhakpa, the Sherpa, in jail, in good spirits, although he had been beaten, and we persuaded the Nepali judges to release him. Trying to recover the money taken from Lhakpa merely brought the response "How would you all like a spell in a Nepali jail?" Three people running abreast do not fit well in an Eastern law court doorway.

This was Monsoon time and the road to the Tibetan Border at Zhangmu was washed out in five places owing to landslides. This caused another one-week stay in Kathmandhu where we all took turns in being host to the local virulent strain of gastric flu.

Eventually we reached Zhangmu, in Tibet, where 400 wild-but-eager porters carried our gear over more landslides to waiting trucks. Our Liaison Officer, Mr. Li, informed us, courtesy of the CMA or Chinese Money Association, that we owed another $2,000 for the trucks which had been waiting over a week for us. We had already paid $120,000 plus for services which turned out to be worth about a tenth of that amount - transport, hotels and Yaks. Transport was mainly riding in the backs of trucks and hanging on for grim death while the chain-smoking drivers careened madly round hairpin bends over mind-numbing abysses. A huge black pig ran by Alan and myself in one hotel. Plastic bread, stone-age cabbage and peanuts were available for breakfasts.

Three weeks after leaving Canada, we rolled into base camp at 5300m, after swollen river crossings and regular snowstorms. We sensed ghosts from earlier expeditions over the next 6 weeks as we were camped on the site of the 1924 expedition. Memorials to Tasker, Boardman, Marty Hoey, Roger Marshall and many others were very sobering. After much excavation I actually found a piece of the 1924 memorial cairn, long disappeared and forgotten.

Everyone acclimatized well, including wives and accompanying friends. Hiking up to Advanced Base Camp was glorious, even when setting off at the 4 a.m. Yak Driver schedule. The 22km and 1200m altitude gain took an average 10 to 14 hours spread over 3 days.

Fixing ropes to the North Col was exhausting and dangerous. The ropes were avalanched after one week and much time was spent excavating them. Our 4 Sherpas would make the trip up in 3 hours while we took 4 to 5 hours. The constant snowfalls in early- to mid-September allowed us only limited movement, but 70 loads were placed on the North Col, including 45 oxygen bottles.

As we moved up, media attention grew; newspapers phoned us all over the mountain. It was fantastic when my wife, Kay, phoned me on the North Col, the first time this had ever been done in the history of Everest.

Late one evening, a huge sérac broke off and removed the fixed ropes again and at the end of September during a push to 7600m Tim Rippell [Spelling? Cloutier spells it Ripple.] stepped in a patch of soft snow and damaged some ligaments. A "Hollywood" rescue ensued, the rescuers themselves being narrowly missed by a nearby avalanche. Tim was carried out by a user-friendly Yak, avoiding the kind of beasts which cause tent devastation by Big Yak Attacks.

The Jet Stream winds dropped much earlier than usual and the UFO-shaped clouds were timed, using Bonatti's "Doppler Effect", to be moving at 130kph.

Using bottled oxygen, Dennis Brown from Ft. St. James, BC, Mario Bilodeau from Chicoutimi, Quebec and John Mclsaac from Calgary battled upwards in gale force winds to 7900m, only to find everything blown away and Camp 5 as bare as a Russian food store. Fearing frostbite of most appendages, they struggled down in heroic style to the North Col, arriving there around 2 a.m. totally extended and exhausted. Mario's fingers were turning black.

It was over. Indian and Belgian teams on the North Face retreated from much lower than our high point. The Canadian Changtse Team was also worn out by load carrying and this onset of winter. Without the winds, I feel sure the 3 climbers would have made it.

Dealing with Chinese logistics, permits, visas, dollar figures and inscrutability prior to the climb was almost more difficult than the climb itself. Next time will have to be through Nepal unless someone discovers another country that Everest is in.

Irvine was found by the Chinese in 1975 at 8300m and then lost again. We didn't find Mallory but discovered that after climbing Everest in 1924, and desiring seclusion from the media, he disguised himself as a Yak, then as a boulder, and finally as a Chinese Customs Official. His descendants run the Yak and Yeti Hotel in Kathmandhu.

From Ross Cloutier

Well, the North Ridge of Everest remains unclimbed during the post-monsoon season. Although it has been used extensively to access the North Face during the fall, the ridge itself remains evasive. A noble goal - but elusive in all attempts; and has, in those attempts, killed between 38 and 64 climbers, depending upon whether you believe the Chinese eradicated 26 climbers in 1966 or not. To the end of the post-monsoon 1991 climbing season, 349 climbers have summited Everest, and a total of 109 others have died trying.

Our own attempt started with the characteristic Chinese hassles, although the opportunity to visit Tibet was well worth the change in locale from past big mountain excursions.

Our intent was the North Ridge proper, something which is easy to sway away from once seeing the enticing and more direct North Face. The ridge has a tendency to wander, and still be a long ways from the summit, even after attaining most of the necessary elevation. From Camp 5 at 7,774m, the summit is still a long, remote kilometer away along the ridge, with Camp 6 still to put in first.

What follows is a brief chronicle of the trip.

August 16: After a quickly-paced drive across the dry, barren plateau, we arrive in Base Camp, which lies at nearly 5300m.

August 25: After the usual requisite acclimatization hikes, we left Base Camp for the 6,400m ABC. The two-day yak chase through an amazing assortment of scree, talus and teetering séracs, was a headache's Mecca. The yaks were in good shape, and carried 60 kilos each, as compared to their ability in the spring of only carrying a 40 kilo load. How any beast alive can carry 60 trundling kilos, at 6,000m, for two days, without slowing down, is a sight, ad nauseam, to behold.

August 29: Reconnaissance of the slopes leading to the North Col began. As the 750m lee slope is totally broken up and is the catchment for huge amounts of snow, it is not hard to see why it avalanches readily. Just prior to our arrival a 750m-wide slide has cleaned off the whole right side of the face. It's either up this or straight up the sérac-prone center section. The yaks' second supply trip arrives.

August 31: Rope fixing on the North Col Slopes began.

September 2: We could've topped the ropes out on the Col today, but turned the wrong way around a sérac, and ended up starting the top section over.

September 3-5: It snowed 60cm at temperatures of 1-6 degrees. The face is sliding constantly. Well, we came early expecting this. The yaks' final trip arrives.

September 7: The ropes were swum to the Col today. Snow everywhere, and digging and swimming is the name of the game. -10° at 3:00 a.m., but +10° by 10:00 a.m.

September 8-9: Load carries to the Col. Peter and others already disagreeing over style. He wanting coddled, others wanting only to do their jobs.

September 9-10: Snowing 30cm each night.

September 12: Daytime temperatures are 33°inside tents, 23°outside. Four of us spent all night pulling and replacing ropes for a morning load carry for the others.

September 15: Mario, Dennis, Pat and Mike K. moved to the Col to begin work putting in Camp 5.

September 16: Peter sick - out of commission until the end.

September 17: Tim ripped his knee on the ridge coming down from Camp 5 today. John, Mario and Mike dragged him down the ridge by his parka hood and everyone arrived in Camp 4 trashed. Bad news as he has been the strongest climber so far. It's still snowing almost every night and it's an enormous effort to work on the ridge.

September 18: In what was later referred to by the media as the "Ripple Rescue", Tim was lowered 800m directly down over the North Col séracs on 7mm rope, and then tobogganed down the East Rongbuk to ABC. This is probably the highest vertical lower that has been done, but certainly only to improvised specs. Tim remembers none of it.

September 22: Most of us have now spent 4 weeks above 6400m, and are now starting to feel it. Lethargy is the tone of the day. Down to eight relatively healthy bodies and Base Camp is starting to look very good.

September 23: High winds have started to hit the summit, and it hasn't quit snowing yet. Some climbing season. Camp 5 looks pretty precarious as there is nowhere to dig it in.

September 26: Winds have chased everyone down to ABC and it's not looking good for the break that's normal between the monsoon and the winter jet stream's arrival. Decision time.

September 28: We re-occupied the Col in hopes of putting in Camp 6 and installing John and Mario in it for one summit shot. A very exposed and windy night.

September 30: Too windy to carry to Camp 5 and expect the camp to stay up. After much discussion, Pat and I decide to go down. John, Mario, Timo, Jim and Dennis decide to stay and see what tomorrow will bring.

October 1: It brings wind. John, Dennis and Mario attempt to get to Camp 5 anyway, and after seven grueling, oxygen-filled hours, make it. But it's gone. Blown away. In the ensuing melee with trying to dig in, they lose a sleeping bag and pair of overmitts to the 2400m drop to the glacier below. They have no choice but to follow the fixed ropes down in the dark. After an epic, they make it back to Camp 4 at 2:00 a.m. Cold, beat, and very freaked.

October 2: The climb is over. The other expeditions on the north side have long gone home. Except the Brazilians, who in their first ever Himalayan expedition, are just arriving. Bad news blues.

October 3-4: Jim and I trundle over to the Lho La. Of the 150 climbers on the Nepal side this fall, none have made it up so far. It's been too windy.

Personnel

Permit Holder: Peter Austen.

Climbing Leader: Ross Cloutier

Climbers: Dr. Dennis Brown, Mario Bilodeau, Ross Cloutier, Jim Everard, Mike Kurth, John Mclsaac, Tim Ripple, Timo Saukko, Dr. Mike Sullivan, Ang Nima, Ang Temba, Danuru, Lhakpa Tsering. Support: James Nelson, Alan Norquay, Hilda Reimer.

Cameramen: Pat Morrow, Bill Noble. Communications: Alan Hobson, Jamie Clarke.

Sharing the magic

Climbing writing as ghetto literature

An address to the Montagna Avventura 2000 Conference by David Harris, 19 November, 1991

This is my last year as editor of the Canadian Alpine Journal, and as a farewell editorial I offer the text of an address I gave to the Montagna Avventura 2000 conference in Florence last November. I hope it will give you some understanding of who your editor has been for the last six years, and why he approached this Journal the way he did.

In 1987 I was invited to take over as editor of the Canadian Alpine Journal. I accepted, and then began a long debate with myself over the role of the printed word in climbing. What sort of writing was relevant to climbers? Did the desire of some climbers for exciting and inspiring reading conflict with the desire of others to have a journal of record? Where did photography fit in? What about literary quality? Would an emphasis on good writing lead to pages of correctly placed commas and no excitement? Would it discourage people from submitting at all?

The answer came in the mail, in the form of a submission from the Vancouver climber Don Serl, who had just made the first ascent of a big, remote rock wall in Canada's Coast Mountains. The article he sent was short, and didn't really say much about the technical nature of the climb, but rather focused on his motives for doing the climb and for writing about it.

In the middle of his article were two short paragraphs which crystallized my own feelings and gave me the answer I had been looking for when I had asked myself how to approach the job of editing a climbing journal:

Why did we do this route? We sure didn't do it for you, so why did we do it for us?.. .And why should I struggle to write anything at all about it? The only feasible answer is: to live - and to share. We climb to live. It's in the blood and it needs to circulate. The fears need to be confronted, the abilities need to be tested, horizons need to be gained, paths need to be followed. And these things need to be spoken of. We are all in this together and we need to pass the lore around, to share the tales. We climb for the magic of it...

That pretty much sums up my own feeling about climbing writing: That the function of all worthwhile climbing writing is, in one way or another, to share the magic.

We climb for the magic of it.

And we write about climbing to share that magic.

Whatever its other qualities, and whatever I say about it in this address, climbing writing is important because it reassures us that we are not alone. That it is okay to want to climb, to live to climb. That it is okay to be a climber.

So, there you have my personal view of climbing writing. And bear in mind that to me climbing writing is not at all the same thing as mountain writing. What I call climbing writing is, in English at any rate, a relatively recent phenomenon. I feel that it is fundamentally different from mountain writing - that it represents an entirely new genre.

So, it is to North American climbing writing, its conception, its birth, and its growth in the last twenty-five years, that I wish to devote my time today.

The evolution of mountain writing

Mountain writing evolved from the literature of exploration and discovery, and has been with us at least since sometime in the seventeenth century. By the mid-nineteenth century a considerable amount of this writing was about climbing. But writing that is about climbing is different from climbing writing. "Mountain writing" whether it features climbing or not, was, and to some extent still is, written for the public. It is often written by climbers, but it can be written by anyone who visits or studies the mountains, and it is accessible to the general reading public. "Climbing writing", on the other hand, is a true ghetto literature, written only by climbers and essentially inaccessible to anyone but climbers. The seeds of climbing writing may have been planted long ago, and its roots may have been growing out of our sight for years, but it flowered as a separate genre in English only recently.

Now please bear in mind as I speak that I am no historian of mountain literature. I am involved in climbing writing on an almost full-time basis, but it is the writing of Canadian climbers in the present day, and I do not have a scholarly knowledge of the entire historical body of mountain writing. But then, what I hope to give you today is not a list of historical footnotes, but the distillation of my feelings about the way we write about something that matters intensely to all of us.

With that caveat out of the way, the first thing to note about mountain literature in North America is that while mountains have been a part of the fabric of life in Europe and Asia for thousands of years, North Americans did not encounter their mountains until well after the European view of Nature had gone through its great romantic transformation in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. North Americans have viewed their mountains as recreational facilities almost from the start; and while some of the early North American mountain writing was based in science or exploration it very quickly became a literature of recreation.

Having reached this point, North American mountain writing continued without much change through eighty-odd years. During this period the world changed as it never had before, and climbing grew and changed almost beyond recognition, but English-language mountain writing sailed on unchanged until it was turned upside down and shaken back into relevance twenty-five years ago.

The creation of the ghetto

Before we look at the changes to climbing literature though, we must look at a fundamental change in climbing itself- the creation of an international climbing ghetto.

The social and economic upheavals of almost 30 years of war and depression from 1918 to 1945 had a profound effect on climbing everywhere. In the English-speaking world, this change was most immediately pronounced in Britain, where there was a mass inva-

sion of climbing by the lower class folio wing the 1939-1945 war, but the focus of this conference is on North America, and it is to that continent that I will confine myself.

North America had suffered relatively little from the wars, and from 1950 to 1970 enjoyed a period of wealth and prosperity unsurpassed in human history. There was well-paid work for anyone who wanted it, the future had never looked brighter, and if a single word can describe two decades of history for a whole continent, that word would have to be 'contentment'. But contentment for the many was frustration for the few, and the makeup of the climbing population began to change as more and more young people turned to climbing in search of the adventure that had gone missing from their society. Where climbing had once been a pastime of the well-educated and relatively wealthy professional, it now became the passion of the young rebel. Where climbing had once been a healthy, if eccentric, adjunct to an otherwise normal life, it was now looked at by some as a replacement for a normal life.

These new climbers rejected the society in which they had been raised. They rejected, or were unaware of, the history of climbing, and they spurned mountaineering in favor of rock climbing. They were philosophical refugees from the real world who saw climbing as the focus of their lives, and they found comfort in a small community of like-minded souls.

They became residents of a new ghetto.

Now clearly, not every North American climber in 1965 was a committed dropout from the American Dream. But equally clearly, by 1965 climbing in North America had changed dramatically. At the physical level, the focus had shifted from mountaineering to pure rock climbing. And at the human level the focus had shifted from climbing as a recreation to climbing as a way of life.

At the literary level however, nothing had changed. The American Alpine Journal and the Canadian Alpine Journal were still publishing the same old articles, written in the same old style. But where this style had once - fifty years earlier - conveyed a true depth of feeling, it now often rang hollow. And where these journals had once reflected the North American climbing scene reasonably accurately, they were now hopelessly out of touch.

How could this be? Why was the spirit of the new climbing not reflected in the literature? The answer lies inside the ghetto. Or, more accurately, inside the ghettos. I have spoken of these climbers being residents of a new ghetto, but in fact they were residents of many small ghettos, and they had yet to perceive their place in a larger climbing community. Furthermore the newcomers were primarily rock climbers, and neither they nor the mountaineering establishment had yet perceived climbing as a continuum. It was not that the gulf between rock climbing and mountaineering was unbridgeable, but rather that, for most climbers, the thought of bridging it simply did not occur.

There were social issues involved as well. In Britain the class system ensured that many of the newcomers, however bright, had neither the ability nor the desire to write. It also ensured that they came to climbing with an almost reflexive distrust of the kind of people who made up the climbing establishment. In North America, with a better educational system and a society largely free of class bias, the newcomers could have written if they had chosen to, but for the most part they chose not to. It was not that they had no need to share the magic of their experience. In fact for them, as for the dwellers in ghettos everywhere, the sharing of magic was an essential part of their lives. But they shared it around the campfire or in the bar, not in the official Journals of a society of which their climbing was a rejection.

If the new climbers found themselves increasingly ghettoized, the world around them was changing in just the opposite way. The electonization and globalization of the entertainment and news industries were shrinking the world and ushering in the age of the global village. By the mid-sixties the most popular musicians in North America were the British groups the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, and the most revered form of transportation for any climber was the German-made Volkswagen Microbus. But the influence of this shrinking world was forgotten when the rope was tied on, and Yvon Chouinard, in the 1963 issue of the American Alpine Journal, could still write:

... most American climbers are unaware of what is happening in their own country. Yosemite climbers in the past have rarely left the Valley to climb in other areas, and conversely few climbers from other regions ever come to Yosemite...

The traditional mountaineering community, made up as it was of the wealthy and the well-educated had always been somewhat international in its outlook, but in 1963, when Chouinard wrote those words, the bulk of the climbing population was made up of rock climbers who knew very little about what was going on outside their own regional climbing scenes. Other than word of mouth there was no way for them to find out, for the existing national Alpine Club Journals simply did not reach them. But they could not escape the twentieth century forever, and change was just around the corner.

The bursting of the dam

Imagine a small stream blocked by a dam with a small spillway. Now imagine some upheaval causing that stream to be fed by new sources, turning it into a rushing river. If the spillway is inadequate to cope with the increased flow the result is inevitable: Either the dam will burst, or the backed up water will overflow it. I think that this is a particularly apt analogy for the climbing scene at the time. The literary needs of an ever-increasing number of new climbers were dammed behind the stone wall of Alpine Club traditionalism, a situation which persisted right up until 1967, when the dam finally burst. Or rather when a small band of literary commandos finally blew it up.

Nobody acts in isolation. Nobody writes in a vacuum. To single out one person, or one event as the key element in an historical or literary movement is always an over-simplification, but it does seem to me that there are two recognizable events which can reasonably be said to have turned the world of English-language mountain writing on its head.

The first was the publication of the first issue of a periodical entitled Ascent 1967. Ascent was a celebration of the new climbing life-style and marks the first real flowering of climbing writing in North America. Nothing like it had been published there before. It was presented in magazine format, and was, by the standards of the day, well illustrated. This immediately gave it an approachability that was missing in both the American and Canadian Alpine Journals, which looked like academic journals.

But Ascent was much more than glossy wrapping on an old product, for not only did the writing cross geographical boundaries, but also, and this is even more important, it swept away the barrier between rock climbing and mountaineering. The article "Games Climbers Play", by Lito Tejada-Flores addressed that issue head-on, by treating all climbing activities, from bouldering to expeditionary mountaineering, as parts of a continuum. "Games Climbers Play"

has become probably the most widely read, widely discussed, and most influential article in English-language climbing literature. It has been reprinted and analyzed to such an extent that there is no need for me to comment further on it here. What does need comment though is the fact that there was far more to the early issues of Ascent than this one article. Where the Alpine Journals of the day focused almost exclusively on mountaineering, Ascent opened its pages to climbing of all kinds. Rock climbing, both free and aid. Mountaineering. Technical ice climbing. Expeditions. All were represented and there was no editorial bias implying that one form of climbing was better or more important than any other.

In fact the real thrust of the writing was that the essential climbing experience was an inner one. The message that Ascent trumpeted to the multitude of climbing ghettos across the continent and around the world was that there was much more to a climb than its location and its difficulty. That the worth of a climb was measured not in numbers, but in the struggle of the climber - a struggle which took place not just on rock or ice or snow, not just on a crag or a mountain, but in the mind.

The writing in Ascent evoked the magic of climbing in a way that nothing in the Alpine Journals ever had, and it awoke in young climbers the realization that while they might not have a place in the family or the community of their birth, they did have a place in the extended family of climbing.

The second event that helped spark the birth of climbing writing in North America actually took place in England, where, in 1968, Ken Wilson took over as editor of a hiking-oriented magazine called Mountain Craft. Inspired by what he saw happening in Europe and America, he changed the magazine's name to Mountain, and gave it a new design and a completely new orientation. Under his stewardship Mountain became an international news magazine of climbing.

In an age when we know about the latest climbs in France or Argentina almost before the climbers have untied their ropes, and when the way we conduct ourselves at our local crag is influenced by what is happening in Australia or Italy, it seems strange to think of a time when climbing was largely a regional activity. But prior to 1969 or '70 when the first issues of Mountain appeared in North America, most climbers there knew very little about what was going on in their own countries, let alone in the rest of the world. The tales told on belay ledges and in the pubs by those few climbers who travelled were very nearly the only contact that the isolated climbing communities had with one another.

In Europe things were different. The German magazine Alpinismus was big, glossy, and full of climbing news from around the world; and it was on Alpinismus that Wilson modeled his new magazine. Each issue of Mountain featured climbing news from correspondents around the globe, well-illustrated articles, and a "Letters" section in which ethical issues were debated on a world-wide basis.

Ascent gave us a spiritual home, Mountain showed us that that home spanned the world.

For European climbers, and for those North Americans who have come to climbing in the years since 1968, it is hard to appreciate the impact of these two publications. If you are used to being able to make a choice from a variety of well-edited and well-designed climbing magazines, and being able to supplement your periodical reading with a choice from hundreds of books and dozens of videos, then you probably can't imagine a time when there was nothing to choose from. A time when there were no climbing magazines, no climbing videos, and few climbing books.

But that time did exist. In fact it existed until less than twenty-five years ago, and it is only due to the vision of a few extraordinary climbers that it ended then...

... or perhaps it was due to end anyway. Perhaps the ghetto would have come to literacy at that time regardless. But that is something we'll never know, because those climbers did write and did publish at that time; and for me as a climber, as a reader, as a writer, and as an editor, their contribution is immeasurable. They understood our needs for membership in the family of climbing and for a literature of our own before we were aware of those needs ourselves. They understood that climbing could be the foundation of a life-style and a belief system for those of us who could find no such foundation in the political, economic and social world around us.

They defined our ghetto and enabled us to be proud to live in it.

Today and tomorrow

Had I given this address five years ago, this is where I would have concluded it: The two decades following the appearance of Ascent and Mountain saw the volume of English-language climbing writing swell, and by the late 1980's the North American climbing community was well-served with magazines, journals and books that were based on the fundamental principals exemplified in Ascent and Mountain: That is to say, the writing was by climbers and for climbers, it covered the whole spectrum of climbing activities from bouldering to expeditions, and it reflected the world-wide nature of the climbing community.

But this is not five years ago. The five years that have passed since 1986 have seen the walls of our ghetto crumble as climbing has changed from a way of life practised by a small number of real-world refugees, to a mass sport practiced by well-adjusted people everywhere.

Clearly, climbing has changed, and to Tejada-Flores' continuum we must add two new elements: sport climbing and competition climbing. Exactly where on the continuum they belong, or whether they belong on it at all, is not directly the subject of this address, but before I conclude, I must consider the effect of competition climbing on climbing writing.

Until now climbing has been a participants-only activity, but competition climbing brings us face to face with the possibility that climbing may become a spectator sport with governing bodies, producers, sponsors, and rules. And while spectator sports may be exciting, there is no magic in them, and they can produce no magical writing. No sport with formal rules and governance by non-participants can produce the kind of literature that climbing has produced.

So does this mean that competition climbing will bring an end to climbing writing? No! Not at all. Competition climbing, if it gains acceptance as a mass sport, will no doubt produce writing that is similar to writing about golf or football, and climbing events may become part of the mainstream sports news; but the fact that non-climbers may one day write badly about climbing does not mean the end of climbing writing any more than competition climbing means the end of adventure climbing.

The mountains and the rock walls will still be there, and people who cannot find what they need in the cities and towns and climbing competitions of mass society will continue to turn to those mountains and rocks for fulfillment. They will continue to

push themselves out to the edge because it is only out on the edge that they will find the magic they so desperately need to find. And when they come back they will say, as Don Serl said in 1987...

We climb to live. It's in the blood and it needs to circulate. The fears need to be confronted, the abilities need to be tested, horizons need to be gained, paths need to be followed. And these things need to be spoken of.

We are all in this together and we need to pass the lore around, to share the tales.

We climb for the magic of it...

Words without pictures

Stories and essays from the mountain world

Paradigm shift

Brad Wrobleski

It was going to be a new route — virgin ground. We had driven by it forever. It was always there, a slender smear of frozen motivation fuel to which we would apply our ambition. It had been waiting there all winter, and we had always been somewhere else... until today.

It was him and I, me and him, two young alpine enthusiasts with a passion for anything that would make us think — two young risk volunteers with a passion for anything that would make them think.

She looks out the window at the snow clad, pristine beauty and splendor of the Rockies. The blue sky day is perfect for a scenic drive.

We punch trail up through a quadriceps-searing surface crust to survey the potential. It looks good. We tag the pillar as ours, crank up our egos and descend to wait for tomorrow's return.

The morning panorama is an ambiance of calm, peaceful seduction, a royal sky suspended over the motionless, bracing, lucid air of a March morning. The snow on the lake glistens. It is a good day for a ski, a fantastic day for a new climb and an incredible day to be alive. She sits in the backseat playing with her family. She sits close to her mother. "Look Mommy", she points wide-eyed at the plane of Bow Lake as it shimmers white in the spring sunshine. They drive north.

The first pitch is easy. My experience places the ice-tools and my ego makes the time. The thought of a new route - new ground, accelerates my pulse.

They spend the afternoon together, her and her family. They window shop in the sunshine through the streets of Jasper. They stop for lunch. They sit and talk and laugh and enjoy the day together - relaxed.

Tension. The second pitch isn't going to be as easy as the first. It's his lead - good thing. This is an ice climb but the second pitch isn't made of ice. It is crap - a disintegrating, crumbling mess - a thin veneer of unconsolidated late-season snow crystals. Creepy. He tightens the knot and I feed the rope.

He cautiously swings the first tool into the dissolving drape. It holds. The next one holds. His experience pulls the rope through the belay. Five meters out the pro is bad, ten meters out it is worse. He manages to dick in some pro. The crack is thin, and the pin thinner. A lot of blood pumps through my pounding heart before I hear the sound I wait for - the comforting 'click' resonance of a closing biner. A full circle of metal around the rope. The sound usually denotes security and safety - the audio cue to sigh and relax. Not this time. The pro isn't great, and I know it isn't going to get any better, so we ignore it - we refuse to think about it. It is better that way. I have a little comfort in knowing that it is him up there. I know he won't blow it. I know he won't when he can't. And now there was no option.

Late in the afternoon they climb into their van and begin the long ride back to the city. She sleeps languidly, gently, her head resting peacefully on her mother's lap... sunlight flows through the window, warming her sleeping form. The adults talk and laugh and chat about the day and enjoy the scenery, enjoying the day in the mountains. They pass Bow Lake, the driver takes his eyes off the road...

He contorts and twists upward to meet the contours of the slush, up past the tied-off titanium, past the vertical and onto the overhang. Impressive. He places his tools with the sensitive familiarity of difficult ground. "Lookin' good man, almost there!" He is almost over the bulge. Front points sink into the foam, grapefruit-size fragments of icy shrapnel splinter and fall from each pick penetration, each step upward. As he reaches for the top of the bulge a canvas of cover-photo action combusts overhead -a spectrum ring of vibrant color halos the sun. A raven eclipses the light just as a truckload of spindrift releases from above. It flows past. My heart pounds like punk music and my eyes go as wide as kiwi fruit - I'm sure his do too.

At the top we drill a station, throw down the lines, and descend back into the sunshine. We laugh and yell and laugh and revel in the rapture and bliss of the moment.

At the car we peel off the battle gear and toast ourselves and the experience. We applaud ourselves for pulling it off. We drive away with wide grins and plump egos. It was a good day. Thirty seconds up the highway we pass the spectacle of a van askew in the center of the road, the roof is crushed, broken glass sparkles black asphalt. The scene is littered with stopped cars and scurrying people - everyone is asking questions, offering assistance. A woman sits at the edge of the road. She holds, clutches, a little girl. The girl doesn't move. I look into the mother's eyes - horror, anguish and fear. We pass in the cerebral slow motion of tragedy. In the distance, the red monolith of a chopper whirls toward the mayhem. Our smiles are gone. We drive quietly southward.

The next day I scan the papers for more information. I search to find out— "What happened?".

The little girl died.

I close the paper and think about the day—the route. It all doesn't matter now.

Vision thing

Barry Blanchard

I sat in the restaurant at the Puenta del Inca lodge sipping strong black tea. Outside the wind pounded the building in waves and I

could hear its power in the pulsations of dirt particles that rattled the windows like heavy rain. Yes, this part of Argentina was indeed famous for wind.

The wind had come in the night, my first night alone there.

Four days earlier (January 25th, 1991) I had summited Aconcagua with seven clients and a fellow guide. On the 28th they boarded a bus for Mendoza and I checked into a single room and prepared my gear for a solo attempt on Aconcagua's South face.

Like the wind I oscillated between blasts of strong resolve -when I knew that I could do this - and moments of lull - when I thought that I should just pack up my bags and get the hell home, to Jill. Why bite off so much risk? For one thing it makes me famous, and to that end I had hired a press agent back in Canada. If I have a public profile it will make getting money for expeditions easier, right?... but that contaminates the second reason: to experience what Bonatti did on the Dru, a rebirth, a moment of grace, a vision.

My friend Thomas doesn't suffer my reservations. On January 2nd he soloed the South Face in fifteen hours. His major sponsor: Mercedes Benz. Steve Marts filmed a recreation of the climb. A half dozen high-end European magazines will cover the ascent and Thomas will return to his beachfront apartment in Monaco and promote himself another six digit year.

Who is Thomas Bubendorfer? On our side of the Atlantic some enthusiasts may know that he holds the record for the Eigerwand: four and a half hours, solo. Thomas is a full-time professional soloist. He bills himself as Europe's fastest, and in his arena of operation: Italy, Austria, and Germany, he is as well known as Messner; and is, in fact, Messner's biggest competition for money. And herein lies the difference, I approach climbing as a discipline; for Thomas it is a business, one that he is good at. Like that of any star, Thomas' job is the packaging, marketing and selling of himself.

As with all his ascents Thomas had calculated out all the aspects of Aconcagua's South Face. He knew the lower face, having retreated from it the year before. Watching the face from base camp since mid-December he learned in which half hour of the day the avalanche chute above the Messner direct finish spit out its afternoon drivel of wet snow. He planned to be secure on good holds, still the slide surprised him and ripped away his wool hat and glasses.

I had ignored the face, telling myself that I knew enough, that I could figure it out when I got there. I told Thomas that I wanted to preserve the adventure, to do the first on-sight solo! He disagreed, argued that despite all his calculations it always, at some point, gets wild. We concluded that we were different climbers.

The last of my tea was cool. I slurped it down and gazed out the window. The wind seemed to have died down. I decided to approach the face the next day.

The morning sky was the color of the Mediterranean and I vaulted up the trail content and exited. Mid-day I met Tom and Dudley, two young Canadians, retreating, having been defeated by the wind halfway up the face. My research was done there and then. Tom and Dudley supplied me with some first-hand secrets and three precious topos: valuables that I had been too busy- or too lazy-to unearth myself. My research has always been like that, occasionally I've been fully prepared, usually I just look at the face and decide on the line. I suspect I could have racked up more success on established routes had I been more studious, but I believe that habit would have robbed me of the hundreds of decisions that have formed my sense of route.

Dudley told me that between Bubendorfer's filming and the Korean siege, the route was fixed. I decided to climb without my self-belay device or my rope. I thought I might even start the next morning.

Thirty minutes later a cramp twisted my guts and I splattered the ground with diarrhea. I swore out! It was not fair, not then, not after three weeks of being careful and healthy. I cleaned myself up, booted a worthless Argentinean rock, and stomped off to Plaza Frances.

I am used to being beneath large mountains, still the South Face of Aconcagua halted me and forced some moments of awe. It's uniqueness comes from it's abruptness. It rears like a planet and has no slope to soften the transition from glacier to flank, like it's being thrust from the sea.

A lenticular cloud was stretched taunt over the summit. I decided to wait a day, watch, and, hopefully, recover.

Plaza Frances was deserted. I psyched up by reading Patey and recording my thoughts - journalist like - on the small tape recorder that my press agent asked me to carry:

4:45 p.m., January 31,1990, a Thursday. Well I've been here for over 24 hours. The weather seems to be observing the same pattern it did yesterday, relatively calm with clouds building up about three in the afternoon. In today's case cumulous clouds that I hope are fair-weather cumulous clouds. My diarrhea, I hope, has taken a turn for the better.

Earlier today I hiked down to the glacier to check out the approach to the route; it all looks pretty straightforward actually. My plan is to get up at 2 a.m. tomorrow and pack up. I hope to be on my way by 3:00 or 3:30 and over towards the base of the face by 4:00. Two hours of climbing by headlamp should see me through some of the easier terrain at the bottom and hopefully by first light I'll be at grips with the first technical passages.

At two that afternoon four specters of cloud clung to the summit ridgeline. By 5:30 the face was obscured in a towering, cannon-black, cumulonimbus cloud. By 8:15 the sky was clear, but the Yugoslav route displayed a fresh dusting of snow. The French route, however, was clean, the storm had missed it. I set my watch for 2:00 a.m. and with my commitment came a religious calm, like the glass surface of the glacial tarn I was drawing water from. I was ready.

I jerked to full consciousness, like someone had slapped me in the face. I overslept! I'm too late? I grabbed at my watch: 1:04 a.m... relief. It was the light from the full moon... perfect, in 56 minutes it would be a blessing.

My custom-made, zipperless, 1 kilo sleeping bag; a three-quarter-length, ultralight sleeping pad; my bivy sac; a stove with one spare gas cartridge; two pounds of food; a small down jacket; crampons; two axes with one spare pick; and - to feed the fame -the tape recorder and my camera; it all fit into my daypack and weighed less than 10kg.

My moonshadow guided me and I laid strong steps over piles of rock that litter the glacier like bombed and broken bricks. I skirted low - out of firing range of the face—until I was perpendicular to the start of the route. The séracs of Aconcagua terrify me.

At 5:15 a.m. I bumped into the twin horns of a dilemma. The moon was within 15 minutes of setting behind the mountain, dawn was an hour away. My options: wait below the shelter of the

rockwall, safe from the séracs, until it was light and lose 45 minutes; or gamble on the bergschrund in hopes that it was straightforward and that I could find the start of the route by headlamp.

Of course I gambled. The bergschrund wasn't a problem and I touched rock just as the moon set. Where was the route? I twisted on my headlamp and laughed out loud. The first of Thomas' blue polypro ropes hung limp, like a Christmas ribbon, a meter in front of me.

Climb by numbers. Follow the blue, but don't clip it, that would be cheating. Shattered... granite? Lots of sharp edges like stacked cinderblocks, then dawn, hang the headlamp - off -around my neck, keep moving, go for the protection of the big fin. A lot like the Rockies, you have to know which piece you can grab. Then the gully, stick to the edge, some of it is solid there, keep moving, out the top, Tom and Dudley's traverse with little Korean croquet flags to guide me around the corner, to turn the steep bank.

I don't feel good, bad balance. No Barry, no decisions now, this is your bad time, you never make good decisions at dawn, something weak in you at dawn, wait, keep moving.

Up the edge of the death chute, yet above it (safe?) the séracs are gleaming in the sun, arcing across the horizon like the scythe of the reaper. Oh God! I have to dump! rip at the zippers, no control, damn, damn Argentina.

The first real move, 5.6 with the death chute yawning below, more of Thomas' blue line, I clip it, wouldn't it be irrational not to?

At 9:00 a.m. I stepped onto a tent platform at 4570m. The Central Spur - the prominent feature of the lower face - stretched above me like the leading edge of the schooner's sail, all along it wound twin blue polypro ropes. I thought of chopping them but decided that it wasn't my place to. It was an Argentinean mountain, their call. Besides I might need them.

The higher I climbed, the worse the rock got, even by Rockies standards. Initially I ignored the blue lines, then I used them as a handrail over short vertical steps of disintegrating rock. At the top of the Central Spur I entered a field of scree and adopted a total kletterstag approach. No one in his right mind would forego a hand rail there.

At noon I stood below the first crux of the route, a vertical groove glazed with patches of ice, 5000m. I was massively aware of the air at my back. It pulled on my psyche like my head was in traces, I couldn't shut it out. If I slipped - screwed up - here I would die. I wove a half-inch supertape sling around the hawser-laid Korean rope, passed the bottom loop through the top and pulled down. It held. I clipped my cow's tail into it and slowly squatted my body weight onto the knot, all the while maintaining a clip on the fixed piton in my right hand. The rope didn't break, I decided that it was secure... either that or it was hanging on by several strands that would snap if I really loaded it. Mentally I saw John Harlin falling from the Eiger in '66. I cinched up the autobloc and bridged into the first move.

The climbing was true 5.8 and loose. Thomas had free-soloed this pitch in rock shoes, on film. It had scared the hell out of Steve Marts just watching.

Fear, like a thick liquid, rose steadily from the pit of my stomach, immersed my guts and heart and - as always - went for my throat. I— as I always do—clenched and breathed and tried to press it down, fought to keep my airway open, and to stop my calves from vibrating. One of the terrors I carry while soloing is breaking a hold, the other is losing it, letting the fear take over and trembling off the holds and screaming as I jump off. I abandoned what little ethics I had left and made myself a deal: I would not load the rope. I hooked a finger through the autobloc and pulled with the least amount possible, my boots pressed against larger holds, tension and pain left my calves, and the fear and asphyxiation receded down my throat. I hung my head and sucked my lungs full.

Towards the top of the groove I saw that the rope was intact to the anchor. I shifted it and a barrage of loose rock bounced over my pack. Dust filled my eyes. I closed them and listened to the reports echo away to a whisper. I rubbed my eyes clear and looked down. The exposure grew, like my double boots were bridged between skyscrapers. Screw it! I wrapped the rope around my hand and hauled into the alcove.

Standing there I felt no pride. I was not doing a very good job. Perhaps I should have brought a rope and my self-belay. Maybe I could have climbed that pitch. But given the fixed line how could I have kept my hands off of it when the climbing got tense? I would have used it for protection. It would still be artificial - fake - and it would have taken longer, more time under the séracs, lolling about beneath the scythe.

I considered retreating, leaving with some dignity. I still wanted to climb the wall; in the end my desire won out and I wriggled into the primal security of a chimney and began scraping my way up.

At 5180m the fixed line ran out and I balanced on the edge of the ridge with 1200m to my left and 1200m to my right. The first icefield lay out of reach 30m above me; a slab separated me from the ice.

I've always disliked slab climbing. The minute, laydown insecurity of it. That Apron hopelessness of teetering on glazed nubs while sweeping the horizon for the glint of a bolt - any bolt -knowing you've fluttered across several routes already; and your feet are slipping.

Aconcagua slabbing was worse. My plastic boots smeared about as well as hockey skates and all the handholds flaked off like plaster when I lifted out on them. I felt like a moth clinging to a light bulb. I felt more hair turn gray as I exhaled long and deep, forced the calm, and pressed up.

Topping it I screamed obscenities till my vocal chords cracked. I absolutely despise total rolls of the dice.

Paradoxically the Middle Glacier was secure. Fins of ice the size of surfboards grew out of it everywhere. It would be impossible to fall there, those things would grab you like the bleachers in the Astrodome.

At 3:00 p.m. I reached several tent platforms chopped out of the last section of the ice arête. The logic being that the sérac would calve to either side, hmmm? I had scaled fourteen hundred meters on a chocolate bar and one liter of water. It was time to brew, and record more hype:

3:00 p.m., February 1 st. I'm just below the second rockband. Got a big gray snow cloud moving in here. I think it would probably be prudent for me to look at bivouacing, at least until tonight and hopefully the clouds will clear off, possibly till tomorrow morning. Just drank a nice warm liter of tea with sugar and milk, feel real rejuvenated and ready to continue this thing.

At 4:00 p.m. I touched the rockwall. I gazed up to the murderous sérac that caps it. On cue, a sheet calved off over the chute five

hundred feet to my right. The vibration and thunderclap groaned through my guts and it hurt. I wrapped my arms over my navel and squeezed.

The sky was black and snowing heavily. I had to get into my pit and wait it out. Hopefully it would be over by 7:00 or 8:00 and I could continue.

I hacked out a ledge under an overhang, tight against the face. My confidence waned. Maybe I should just bail, maybe I could be off the face today; but if I did and the snow stopped, I would have lost. I squirmed into my bivy sac and blindly removed my gaiters and boots. That took 15 minutes. I wriggled into my sleeping bag and peeled off my neoprene liners and socks, another 10 minutes. Snow piled up, the wind clawed at the sac, I fought for a channel to breathe - even bit a hole through the sac - snow dust pelted my face, my exhaled breath condensed against the inside of the sac and my bag began to get wet.

At 6:00 p.m. I looked out on a raging blizzard. Turtle-like I retreated my head back into my sac/shell.

The first clap of thunder exploded like a sérac and I spasmed into a cast-iron contraction, holding my breath waiting for the impacts. My guts groaned again. I thought about bailing again, but realized that it was now too late. I would have to wait for morning and - God please - the calm.

My feet grew cold so I put my liners back on. I wished there was some way that I could cook but there was no room in the sac and outside all hell was doing it's thing. For ten hours I lay there occasionally shaking off snow, sometimes sleeping, always worrying.

At 4:00 a.m. it was calm and a soft feminine moonlight was caressing the South Face like a lover. The stove whomped to life then settled to a dull hiss. I clunked fragments of coarse snow into the pot and punched them into sand against the cold aluminum. I wondered what Jill would be doing today? Up early, groggy-eyed in her winter flannel that's so soft and can break my heart because it amplifies her beauty and innocence; pad off to the shower; herbal tea and toasted muffins - generous on the butter; brush and floss; change sweaters several times till it feels right...

I brewed four liters and guzzled it all. Dawn revealed a white valley that, the day before, had been black. I decided to continue, up may be the safest option.

The rockwall was, thank God, much more solid that the Central Spur. Dry, the climbing would be enjoyable, covered in snow it was tedious and insecure. The Koreans had fixed 9mm there and I advanced using my kletterstag technique. Two hundred feet up the 9mm changed to 7mm. Facing me was a hundred feet of horns, all iced and covered in 2cm of snow. The 7mm was tight as a cello string and forced me to climb direct, not the best line. I used the autobloc as a handhold on every move, and of course I agonized over what the rope was fixed to.

It was secured to a large horn, and it ended there. I slid my axes from their holsters and sunk them into ice. Seventy feet higher I exited onto rock feeling clumsy, off balance. My gloves skated on the snow-covered rock. My grasp on the situation had faded from firm to faint, I wasn't in control, too much risk, I bailed.

I expected the descent to be a horror show and it was. The Korean line creaked when I rappelled on it and Thomas' blue rope was about the same diameter as a ballpoint pen. Twice my feet whipped out from under me and twice I was caught by that darling blue line.

At the bergschrund I realized that I hadn't eaten in 24 hours. I was satisfied with a chocolate bar.

I stumbled onto the glacier at 4 p.m. I felt light and alive. Clouds were building again and I gleefully congratulated myself on being where I was.

At a small glacial rivulet I got down on my hands and knees and sunk my lips into the running water, slurped greedy mouthfuls, the end of my nose cold in the water. Raising my eyes I was arrested by the perfection of four small pillars of ice. No larger than my fingers, the contoured columns fell from an arc of dirty glacial ice down to the running water below. Grains of earth were suspended in them like jewels encased in crystal clear glass. I saw that each of the columns rested on a small disc of ice afloat on the living water below, and that each one bridged the gap from there to the black scythe of glacial ice above: life and death, two phases of the same element.

Some time passed. I wondered if the President of Argentina was aware of this small area of perfection in his country, or if my Prime Minister was aware of like areas in Canada. I decided to release my press agent. I missed Jill and asked myself aloud why I ever leave her; it was February 2nd, our sixth anniversary.

It was time to go. I rose to my feet, a gust slapped hair into my eyes, I swept it aside and staggered off across the glacier a happy man.

Each step of the way up the heights of being demands greater strength than the last one. The way narrows as we ascend and the abyss on either side grows more terrible. The path of the ages is our greater life and will make heroes or devils of us all.

-Lawren Harris, as quoted in R.W. Sandford's book:
The Canadian Alps, The History of Mountaineering in Canada, Volume I

Dreamwhile, back at the France

David Dornian

Brenda was curled against the wallpaper in our sagging bed, coughing a rib loose. I was outside on the balcony, hunched against the tar and tin eaves, trying to keep the tip of my Toscanni dry. I was watching the smoke swirl out into the endless rain. It was sweeping the facade of La Grande Hotel Moderne and the gray canyon of the Rue des Ecoles. I was thinking about my European vacation.

La Grande Hotel Moderne had been decorated in pink, mostly, once, and what was now a kind of Weight Watchers Creamy Cucumber salad dressing green, with gilt accents and cheesy floral motifs. It was probably entitled to bill itself as "Grande" and "Moderne" solely on the basis of its bridge-of-the-Enterprise automatic front door, and the elevator. This latter squatted like an ambitious telephone booth at the bottom of a gravel-screen tube that rose through the center of the only stairwell. It was big enough to take both the Lowe Expedition and the Berghaus — if neither Brenda nor I insisted on riding up with them — and most days it would make it, squealing, in about the same time it would take us to use the stairs to meet it, all the way to the sixth floor, only one cramped flight short of the slanted hallway where our room and the broken shower were. The rest of la Quartier Latin, and indeed all the rest of Paris as far as I could see, seemed to have been modeled pretty much from a clay of wet newsprint and moldy iron. I thought it was perfect. The old world. Victor Hugo and Al Dumas territory. Romantic. Inspiring. I leaned in through the curtains and

offered these thoughts to Brenda's heaving back. She stiffened and it looked like she was going to say something for the first time since breakfast, but then she slumped again and returned to the wallpaper and her coughing. I went back to my rain.

Okay for the star-crossed stuff. Apart from us lovebirds, the hotel, the Sorbonne, enough Gambas joints to spit the entire crustacean population of the Mediterranean east of Albania, and much more dog shit than someone who only packed three kinds of rock shoes and a single pair of Teva sports sandals can rationally handle, Paris' Latin Quarter is notable for housing Au Veux Campeur. When your partner is sick, the weather is bad, and the three dollar espresso is making you seriously consider six dollar beer, THIS is the place.

Au Veux Campeur is the West Edmonton Mall of gear. Beyond big, wider than expansive, more than complete. It occupies twenty or so different stores scattered across five or six city blocks - one just for sleeping bags, one devoted exclusively to hiking boots, yet another with only mountain bikes... There are color-coded and numbered maps under glass at each cash register just to help you find your way through the streets to the next department. If you can name it, or point to its picture in an issue of Vertical, Au Veux Campeur has it. And it has a lot of stuff you can't name, too, which is even more fun. If the Mountain Equipment Co-op on a Saturday afternoon is like church for you, then Au Veux Campeur is nothing less than, well, Vatican City. Or Jerusalem. It was springtime in Paris. It was raining. I was on a pilgrimage.

I got myself a map of the stores and visited them all. I marveled at tiger-striped plastic rock shoes. I fondled tri-colored artificial climbing wall holds molded in the shapes of birds and squirrels. I bought stainless steel, wire-gated carabiners with fixed rings welded to them, designed for permanent installation at the chains on sport routes-just pump, clip, and jump. I pulled so many pile sweaters over my head that the fluorescent lights were flickering and loose price tags and paper clips were flying through the air to stick to my face. And coming down the stairs from the second floor of the guidebook store (bigger than some libraries I've been in) I saw the most amazing thing.

On the wall over the landing was a black and white glossy photo/poster of what was pretty clearly an elephant. The beast was standing in a sandy clearing in some trees with its head down and its trunk curling to encircle a large big-top prop of a ball that lay at its feet. And there was a guy climbing up the elephant's side, just in front of the right rear leg. Really climbing, with Boreal Ninja slippers on his feet and his back knotted up like a plate of fettuccine. The cut line under the photograph read "L'elephante; la foret de Fontainebleau". I looked more closely. There were little numbers and letters painted on the side of the elephant and dibs and dabs of chalk here and there marking the creases in its hide. I turned around and went back upstairs and found the guide book to the place where that stone was and bought it.

And it was totally incomprehensible. Totally. I'm an educated man - I have a graduate degree in Philosophy and I've read Descartes in the original - so I've dealt successfully with some pretty Gallic and oblique stuff. But this was strictly from Mars.

To begin with, and perhaps intended as a warning of sorts, the cover for the book featured a climber wearing Richard Simmons hair and a pair of navy dress socks in his EBs. A quick check of the flyleaf revealed the guide was published in 1988. This was a portent if ever there was one. There might just as well have been a pterodactyl and a volcano in the picture, like on an old Dell "Turok, Son of Stone" comic book. Hah. Subtitled, maybe, "Fontainebleau, The Land That Time Forgot".

Carrying the theme, the introduction to the text offered much obscure advice and no small amount of preaching. Climbing ethics, natural aesthetics, local tradition, and bouldering etiquette were given equal weight of consideration, and advance admonishments were made to visitors and the almost certain prejudices and lack of sympathy for local policies and practices they would bring with them. History was touched upon - members of la Club Alpin Français had been "developing" the boulders at Fontainebleau since 1874 - and emphasis was laid on the proper use of "pof", a powdered rosin superior in all respects to the demon dust that you modern rock monkeys carry around in those little bags strung to your waists.

This impressive screed was followed by endless lists of numbered and graded problems (few, if any, names anywhere, and what's to be made of ten-foot routes rated II+, or IV-?). These were sorted into categories and assigned to colors - bleu, blanc, rouge, orange, jaune - and then associated with schematics that looked like VDT screen captures from a game of Asteroids.

But according to the salad of topographic map fragments littering the text, just about all the action was near a road. Of one sort or another. My style for sure.

It kept raining in Paris. Then it rained on us some more in Buoux. It was too crowded at Volx (because it was raining). They tried to rob us in Cassis. Cimai was too hot. We were robbed at Sugiton. It rained at Chateauvert. It rained HARD in the Verdon. We were robbed at la Palud. It rained in Chamonix. The climbing wall at Megeve was closed for renovations. And so, five weeks after lashing south past the dripping trees on our escape from Paris, we were back pitching our tent on the soft lawn at Samois Sur Seine, ready to give the old boulders another try.

Simon had fled the Verdon about the same time we had, but hitchhiked directly, so he had a couple of days on us and knew how to get to at least one of the more popular and accessible areas. Which meant we only had to drive around in circles for twenty or thirty minutes before we found our way to a boulangerie and thence out of town. This would become a recurring theme: Hosting Louis the something-or-other's summer palace, a quaint family cabin that is larger than Prince Edward Island and fancier than your sister's wedding plans, Fontainebleau is a tourist trap of both size and substance. The town is boutiqued within an inch of its life, featuring parking problems, busloads of seniors dressed to meet royalty, and all the postcards you didn't send back to Canada from more interesting places earlier in your trip. Camping? What camping? Climbing shops? What climbing shops? Cheap cafes? You've got to be kidding.

Finally in the parking lot at Bas-Cuvier, we spent some time dividing what we wanted to lug around the boulders for the rest of the day from what we wanted the local thugs to have when they broke into the Renault, gathered it up into our arms, and followed Simon into the woods.

"Try this", he said a few moments later (I couldn't complain about the approach), gesturing grandly to some mossy lumps oozing out of the trees.

Things didn't look too promising. The rock was green and oily-damp in the shade, with a fine, emery-paper hand. The stones slumped and surged into and out of the flat sand of the forest floor like the blobs in a lava lamp. I poked around a bit, peering at the sides of the low formations. There wasn't a decent finger edge

anywhere in sight, or, for that matter, any chalk marks, or other climbers, either. In fact, all there was to go on was the ridiculous guidebook, anchored in real-time (on closer inspection) by tiny little numbers and arrows... enameled on the rock itself...

Aha. I scrambled into my shoes, and did a couple of quick knee bends in front of an orange arrow pointing up a scooped seam. Then I was on it, stemming and palming and groping and wishing I'd done a better job dusting the sand from my Sportivas. But a couple of lurching moves later I had my nose in a little pothole on the rounded top of the rock that marked the end of things. Sadly, both hands were still bending backwards in police control-holds somewhere below my waist, and my right foot was behind me, toe down and heel grinding against an imagined shadow on the facing side of the groove. Seconds earlier, the left one had dissociated itself from the enterprise entirely. I sniffed at the hold and dropped.

Two tries later I was standing on top, massaging my knuckles and wondering how to get down again. A classic problem in bouldering anywhere, answered in this case by another little orange arrow at my feet, pointing to the right. A few feet away, a third arrow led me over the edge, to a tree trunk I could bridge to lower myself on the backside of the rock. I landed in a crouch, facing yet another orange arrow paired with a small number in a white square, painted on the adjacent boulder. I scuffed sand from my shoes, dusted up, and had at it.

And so it went. One problem led to another, and then drifted into another, and another, as the three of us were lured, Hansel-and-Gretel-like, into the forest. We each soon settled into our own particular styles. Feeling a need for authority, I followed the guide and my arrows in numerical sequence, twisting and hopping on the tops of formations, looping out into the surrounding woods and then back again as I worked my chosen circuits. Simon and his sun-blocking shoulders simply took things as they came, demanding difficulty and to hell with numbers and colors. Brenda sought the obscure, avoiding the more trampled landings to crash into the bushes at the backs of the formations.

The sand was a problem. It was clean, but it clung. Here we developed our own styles also. Simon worked out a strategy whereby he scarfed his lunch to liberate materials and then took to wearing a bread bag on one foot and a plastic Super Marche sack on the other, shaking them off like a dog when he started to climb. I sacrificed my T-shirt, using it to slap at each shoe in turn as I lifted them to the first holds of a climb, then dropping the garment over my shoulder once I was under way. This worked pretty well until I needed two hands to get off the ground, or a problem started with a stem. Brenda's approach was to leave the sand in play, straightforwardly grinding her way up the rock and gradually scuffing her shins bloody with the soles of her shoes. Eventually a local came along to show us how it was done.

We first realized we were not alone when we heard a muffled "Merde!" come drifting down the corridors between the stones. Feeling the nervous interloper, I assumed the expletive was uttered by a native discovering foreign intruders in the area he had chosen for a solitary constitutional. That would be us, callous Canucks messing up his favorite boulders with Endo and sunscreen. And I think I was pretty much right, although it was damn hard to tell — our new companion had few other words in his vocabulary.

He was an older gent, and smaller, with ropy arms sticking from the huge holes in his tank top, and Softball knees above heavy wool socks padding out a new pair of Lazers. I guess he thought he needed to buy them big so he would have room to grow into them. Or something. He was carrying one athletic sock, a little brown-bristle doormat, a dour, faintly pissed-off look, and a dirty gym bag. He looked like he might be an actual elf. That, or a beleaguered husband who had got himself lost taking out the garbage.

But he had the routine DOWN, and we kind of froze in our places and watched with rapt nonchalance as he pointedly went about his circuit, giving us all a lesson in Fontainebleau style.

To begin with, he had obviously climbed these problems before. Many times. And had them TOTALLY wired. On his way into the amphitheater we were working, he sent, without even looking up at the holds, three or four vicious little numbers it had taken me forty-five minutes and fifty francs worth of rubber to solve. And this despite the fact he was twice my age if he was a day. (Well, okay - twice Simon's age then). Anyway, the way he would do it went like this:

Faintly grumbling, he would shuffle over to a spot in the sand and throw down his little doormat. It seemed to be almost coincidence that the spot it landed would always be below the next number on the white circuit. He would then drop the gym bag beside the mat and take up the athletic sock he was carrying. This was stuffed and tied with an overhand knot so that a ball was formed in the toe and the open end made a kind of loose tail. Without looking up at the rock, he would hold the sock in his right hand, lift his left foot, and swat the sand off the sole of his shoe with the tail of the sock. Then, still balancing on his right foot, he would grasp the raised left with his left hand, deftly flip the sock in his right, and scrub the toe of the shoe with the ball part of the rig before setting the now properly prepped ped carefully on the left side of the mat. After a pause, the whole process would be mirrored with the right foot, and not until this was properly clean and safely established next to its mate would our man deign to consider the climb in front of him. Next, he would examine the rock close to the ground and flip the sock in his hand once again, this time grasping it by the tail. He would now proceed to bomb the first footholds with the ball in the toe of the sock, swatting the stone with an authority that spoke of long familiarity with the difficulties each particular nubbin or smear would give him. Lastly, he would shift his attention upward and deal similarly with the holds above his head, grunting with satisfaction only when chalk left by the attempts of previous pretenders no longer puffed from the rock with each blow. Finally a kind of stillness would descend - and he would gaze into the center of the boulder like Orel Herschiser looking to his catcher for the signal, idly working the ball of the sock between his fingers before dropping it carefully - on the mat - at his feet.

After all this Zen stuff, I kind of expected the guy's actual climbing to be an act of athletic transcendence and communion with the rock, or at least show the polish of much practice. But he would just, simply, Do The Climbs. Who knows? Perhaps our presence put him off. While he ascended, the grumbling would continue, improvising around his theme of excretion as he heaved and slapped his way up the familiar territory with all the grace and careful attention of an airport baggage handler loading a gurney.

Simon raised his eyebrows and gave me a sidelong grin as a too-casual dyno from our hero resulted in a quick peel and a particularly emphatic "Merde". The spell was broken. We returned to our own projects with a renewed vigor, and before half an hour had passed were exchanging pleasantries with the old guy and slyly allowing him to sandbag us on routes we had solved before he arrived.

Eventually, some true talent showed up in the form of a couple

of silent stick people with taped fingers and quick, birdlike eyes. As they began to waft over everything, our companion shrugged goodbye and allowed his circuit to pull him further into the forest.

The showers arrived at about the same time that our shoulders and biceps were leaving. We decided to adjourn to town for coffee and haircuts.

Sitting under the awning at the cafe with my feet up on a bentwood chair, I was smoking the second half of a broken cigar and watching the rain soak down the tour buses in the parking lot beside the palace. I was thinking about our departure. The car was owed to the Renault dealer in Paris the next afternoon, and we were due in Canada a couple of days later. Brenda was at the table beside me, trying to decipher an orphaned newspaper (Madonna was still wowing 'em in Cannes) and making plans for a dinner that would include everything from the food box that had broken or spilled or got wet since we left Chamonix. Simon came running up the street from the barber, wearing Vidal Sassoon's worst nightmare and excitedly waving a postcard with a picture of what had to be the weirdest looking rock formation in the world. The back of the card said "Cul de Chien-Trois Pignons, la foret de Fontainebleau". I put my cigar in the ashtray and reached for the guidebook.

The sun came out.

Mountain cruising on the west side of Chilko Lake

Alex Frid

1) A few statements to further confuse the issue

Until the age of 18,I lived mostly among the concrete, steel and bars of Mexico City. In 1983 my family moved to British Columbia, and my whole system was shocked with the gift of space. I soon ran into Pierre Friele, the train-hopping hobo who taught this city boy how to tie his shoe laces. In 1985, Pierre and I dove into the glacial waters of Chilko Lake, on the east side of the southern Coast Mountains. We immediately called it "home". We meant it too. Over the next years, sometimes with Pierre and sometimes with similar misfits, I embarked on several Chilko journeys that deeply shaped my worldview. We have written of these journeys in past issues of the Canadian Alpine Journal (1988, 1989, 1990), but somehow, one of the earliest tales got shelved. This forgotten trip and its writings came to be in the fall of 1986. Perhaps I waited so long to publish it because I felt it was all too naive, too huge a chunk of our souls that it wouldn't do anybody else any good. But stumbling into the abandoned manuscripts on this winter night, I realize that our 1986 Chilko journey had a carefree innocence that is lost in many "serious" mountaineering stories. Jane Porter, Pierre and I had scarcely learned how to tie on our crampons. All that mattered was that we had a home made of forest, a mountain range full of dragonflies, and no school bells to be heard. It was then that I began to understand why Annie Dillard, after successfully stalking elusive muskrats, had written "I felt a rush of such pure energy I thought I would not need to breathe for days." (from Pilgrim at Tinker Creek).

As I read through the moldy manuscripts, I feel comfort in knowing that even though I may often find myself heading into the mountains under the guise of research or "firsts", what I am really after is the thrill of howling in tune with kindred souls. And, praise the loon, Mexico City and its derivations are a human misconception, not the real world.

And just as forestry and mining have slipped out of control severely threatening the Chilko Wilderness, climbing publications are swollen with examples of how ego and quantification have gotten out of hand, threatening the human wilderness. Praise the loon, there are several tales, such as that of Steve DeMaio and Jeff Marshall climbing the north face of Wind Tower (caj 1989), which delightfully illustrate how friendship, mischief, and "serious" goals are not necessarily incompatible. But watch out, most examples do support the feeling that playground and child are fading away.

Having said all that, and hoping to strike a few sensitive chords, I think I can allow myself to resuscitate the tale of us kids mountain cruising on the west side of Chilko Lake.

Alex Frid, January 5,1992

2) Mountain cruising on the west side of Chilko Lake

Prelude

With a loony Mexican showing off his Mexico City cab driving skills
Cuddled up bodies bouncing among piles of gear on the back seat
Fiddle tunes playing full blast
And kayaks skidding off the busted roof rack
The old land rover goes on through the night
leaving a wake of rising dust behind

Epic mountain cruises begin with epic road trips The kayak journey has been long. Hours of having our faces washed by the waves of Chilko Lake. Hours of seemingly sitting in one spot while fighting the wind. But south of Franklyn Arm the mountain air becomes still and the rhythmic exhaustion of the kayak marathon continues on smooth water. It is only Pierre, Jane and I, heading to the cabin Pierre and I and two other friends built the previous summer. The western mountains fall in shadow and the eastern peaks become crimson, like a dragonfly that dies with the mountain sunset. Mars rises on the southern sky, followed by Saturn to the west. Darkness falls. As we near the cabin, Pierre tells me, "Alex, this is the only true home we have".

It is morning, and I lay in my bag at the edge of Muir Lake, where our homestead lies (Muir Lake is a small lake near Chilko Lake). A spider web sways back and forth with the wind. Marston, Farrow, Merriam... all the peaks rise impressively with their cliffs and icefalls. And the moon is high on the sky.

We are eager to begin our mountain trek, and that afternoon we pile our bodies and packs into the expedition vessel Anakeena I to cross Muir Lake. This is an epic crossing, for Anakeena I is an unstable, small and ancient rowboat without oarlocks. The hull cracks, threatening to sink us with our life's possessions to the lake bottom. Of course, doing two ferries across the lake would have made too much sense. But luck favors the brainless, and once on the other side, we bushwhack north through swamp and forest and eventually reach the alpine.

The following day we continue north, ascending on steep and loose scree to the Mount Merriam/Mount Keese pass at 2750m, only to lose every meter of elevation gained by dropping down to the other side. We then enter the frozen world of the Glasgow Glacier. Base camp is made by simply laying our bivy sacks in the middle of the cirque created by the peaks of Glasgow, Pluvius and Good Hope.

A new morning comes and we ascend snow gullies and ice-

slopes to the summit of Good Hope, the highest peak in the vicinity of Chilko Lake. Endless glaciated ranges spread to the horizons. Mount Waddington, the highest peak in southern British Columbia, towers to the west with a single lenticular cloud on its summit. And below us lies the aquacolor expanse of Chilko Lake, bordered by dry volcanic ranges on its east side, creating an image reminiscent of the Red Sea. It is a time to look for possible traverses and ascents.

Reluctantly, we leave the summit, and our descent ends with a long glissade. At the bottom we walk on ice hummocks. Tiny round holes filled with water and golden gravel appear as we go up and down the ice. They are the glacier's eyes staring at us. Suddenly, ice breaks off loudly from the Pluvius icefall. We are safely out of its reach, but nonetheless, it is a reminder of how easily this gift can be snatched away from us. Beyond the waterfalls that carve the ice lie our bivy sacks. Safety, warmth, food, home.

With the new dawn, Pierre and I begin to ascend the snowslope up to the Pluvius icefall. A snowbridge takes us over the bergschrund onto a rotten arête, which we ascend to the southeast ridge of Pluvius. From there, we become immersed in the task of climbing exposed and rotten fifth class. Below the summit pitch, we must go over a massive boulder, which seems to be precariously glued to the knife edge ridge by sheer nothingness. It is a long, steep way to the lower icefalls, and I ask the mountain spirit to keep the boulder from letting go, catching the rope, ripping our belay station off, and taking us for a ride. Suddenly, the Clark's Nutcrackers we have occasionally seen gather closer to us. In their company, we complete the summit pitch.

The ascent had required going around gendarmes and covering horizontal ground on a knife edge ridge, so the descent is almost the equivalent of re-ascending the mountain. Subtle tones and large clouds come and go from the sky. A front blasts the east side of the lake. And all too soon, dusk catches up with us. What follows is an unroped, full speed descent on exposed, rotten rock. Rocks thunder down ceaselessly; in the gathering dark, they ignite with sparks as they bounce off the face onto the icefall. In complete darkness, we front point down a steep slope above a major crevasse, balance our way on a narrow bridge, and glissade to the bottom of the mountain. We will not have to spend the night on a ledge without food and sleeping bags. I jump on Pierre giving him a hug and we roll on the snow like little children. The close contact of sweaty bodies confirms how foul the smell of adrenaline is. A front is moving in as we rejoin Jane; and in the spirit of Doug Scott we move into a shallow crevasse where we spend a cozy night out of the wind.

Late afternoon finds us laying in the sun, on the moraine of Glasgow Glacier, procrastinating an ugly scree ascent back to the Merriam/Kesse pass. Rice and tea sink into me, making me feel as if I was in a far off Himalayan valley.

The ascent to the pass is long and painful, but feeling energetic, I get ahead of Pierre and Jane. In the loneliness of the long slope, I find among boulders and rock crumbles clusters of red mustard and purple pea flower. They are a reminder of friendliness and delicate life in an unstable, barren environment.

I reach the pass. It is late afternoon and the shadows of Keese and Merriam are cast on Chilko and Muir lakes. Low clouds from the west enshroud the peaks and crawl down the glaciers. I am alone in this pass, with the murmur of distant creeks, and space, and myself.

Pierre and Jane join me. We spend the night on the pass.

Morning. Fog rises from the valley and sun pokes through the sea of mist, lighting it up. The sight confirms for me how much more meaningful things are in the mountains. Every drop of condensation we keep off our bags. Every bread crumb that touches our mouths. Every ray of sun that reaches us in the morning cold... it all brings the greatest elation.

We descend through the dimensionless world of fog, sliding with big leaps on a patch of snow, and break through into the sunshine. The mystical atmosphere of the moraine east of Mount Merriam is irresistible, and we each find an isolated corner to be alone with the mountain.

Merriam, our next objective, is before me. The cliffs and icefalls are intimidating. Clouds cross the face and summit. I doze off. The world seems far away. Silence is only broken by creek murmur, rock falling from the ice, and the call of a Clark's Nutcracker. I have lost my history. Jane and Pierre are the only people in the world. Ice, rock and sky is the only habitat I know. Completing a move. Placing a piece of protection. Waiting for the thunder of falling rock to cease. Nourishing my body with food and sleep. Sharing... that is all I have been living for. It is important to have a history, to be able to look back and relive an experience. But it is also equally important to go through periods in which we have no past.

In the afternoon we cross the Merriam Glacier and get on a steep and narrow couloir of ice. The humble protection of our only two ice screws, seemingly kilometers below my front points expands my definition of fear. But eventually I reach the southeast ridge of Merriam and the others follow up. We watch the sunset from our bags and drift into sleep.

In the cold of dawn, we cruise on the ridge that takes us to the upper glacier. The steepness is not extreme, but the ice is hard and the run out ends in a 1800m vertical drop. With long lead outs between our two trusty ice-screws, Pierre leads a running belay to the summit.

We have been rationing and are now totally out of food, so we are anxious to return to our home made of forest. A long downclimb of the glacier is followed by the descent of familiar loose and rotten rock. Lower down, a goat path guides our return into the life-abounding forest, where we delight with gifts of the earth: Belitiz and Coral mushrooms. We cross the rumbling Merriam Creek among boulders the size of houses, and then find ourselves among a well-known assortment of slide alder and windfall, racing darkness to make it home. An insane, high-speed bushwhack. At one point, Jane appears out of the bushes with blood stripes on her face (she has painted them with a fingercut), and like a huge bear, this little mountain goat releases a terrifying growl, and keeps on going ahead of Pierre and I, breaking branches and sinking into bottomless windfall. But darkness wins the race, and inside the dense jungle, we crawl into our bags with empty stomachs. The thought of food makes me nauseous after the physical effort.

The next morning we quickly reach Muir Lake. At the edge of our sunny lakeshore, Jane sits on my lap with her arm around me. Even though we will soon be relaxing by our cabin's wood stove, feasting on forest elderberry crepes and marsh Labrador tea, Jane's gesture and the completion of our mountain cruise nourish me more than the long-awaited food ever will.

Alex Frid, 1986

3) North Wind

Let me speak with the gods of vorticity,
for they have taunted us.
I can throw my weight against the wind,
but neither shall win.
For we both have time.
And I am happy here,
with the forest birds,
the predator accipiter, and
the brilliant paintbrush
that colors the streams
I am not angry,
but let us go in peace.
For the dragonfly is dying and
I want to rejoice in its spirit.
Listen, the ancient loon has spoken too.
It is winter, let us move on.

Pierre Friele, 1986

4) Home made of forest

From the river of ice
we return to our home made of forest.
And with gifts of earth and fire
our empty stomachs become full, warm.
By the sculpture of wood
ripples caress granite as the stove pipe smokes.
And lonely goldeneye floats among mist.
And marsh awaits for feeding moose.
Ominous clouds sweep the mountains
And our gaze turns up to crags where our bodies have pushed.
And stories fall on paper.
But journals are soon put down; there is work to do.
Roaring wind heeds winter's warning.
And warmth must be kept within our home.
Chinking, chinking with moss,
we create a garden between our cabins logs.
Wind dies down and pots of moss are laid to rest.
Wrapped in night
our stove
glows on the porch.
Joining dance of aurora borealis
flute song travels through reflection of star and mountain.
And wrapped in big cocoon
we dream of dying dragonflies.

Alex Frid, 1986

Murphy was a climber

Martin Conder

Murphy's Law for climbers clearly states that when more than one party arrives at the bottom of a multi-pitch route, the slowest party will always go first and will encounter difficulties as soon as others begin climbing.

Cries of "tension" and "I can't make it" accompany the windmilling feet and flailing hands of an unhappy second stuck on the crux traverse of Outer Space.

Take a ticket and stand in line. We are #5 and they have just started serving #2.

Aha! There appears to be a detour here. Maybe a quick end-run around this prow and up the corner will get us onto those chicken-heads of the top 2/3 of the climb before the pair suffering from 'inertia nervosa' come to and struggle on upwards.

Corollary to Murphy's Law: Any apparent shortcut or direct line will involve deceptively sustained climbing that was last done so long ago it is rated only by anecdotal comments.

It is dirty. It is continuously 5.9 (or more). Additionally, it sprouts a beautiful variety of local flora from every nook of its single crack. Of course, it overhangs at the top.

Surmounting this means that three parties arrive at the dead-bush belay in the alcove at the same time. Great! Lucky thing we all took knitting... the connections look like cat's cradle played by drunks.

Murphy's Law (subsection on belays): The longest delays will always occur at awkward stations; and even on casual ground, the parties ahead will find unique ways of stalling the cramped observers.

Two parties leave, only to get tangled up on the next pitch, while two other groups arrive. How can this be? We are 100m up in the air, 1 1/2 hours trudge from the road, on a massive piece of granite featuring at least five quality climbs. So where are all climbers within a 5km radius? That's right - at the same belay station.

Conversation topics have run out and it appears that the parties ahead are completing housekeeping arrangements on top of the pedestal so it must be time to get going.

Murphy's Third Law (see also Newton's Third Law): Actions taken to make any climbing more comfortable will be met with an opposite and equal reaction.

My feet had swollen due to the heat and so off came the polypro socks. This enabled the wasp to get trapped inside the boot and savage my ankle. Just try to maintain three points of contact with the rock and still unlace your Fires while on lead.

Now the foot was swollen twice as much as it had been. Murphy's Adjunct: A trip leader responsible for the safety of his party shall be aware of all the activities of the group only until somebody gets into difficulty. (See the fine print on the ACC waiver form.)

"Is this where the route goes?" The finger crack faded into the vertical desert above. Hard 10 perhaps. Certainly not 5.7 as advertised.

"No. You step right, around the corner down here."

"I'll just lower off this piece then."

That had better be a good piece, because if it pulls there will be a 12m fall directly onto the belay. Why wasn't I more specific about navigating this section?

A few impromptu backseat directions about tension traverses and the show is back on the road.

At the top, the goat family greets us. The parents carefully point out to the young kid that humans are masochistic imbeciles who wear tight rubber shoes, girdle themselves in nylon webbing and decorate themselves with clanking chunks of aluminum.

Murphy's Law of Climbing Journalism: Stories of climbs will take longer to write than the time needed for the actual ascent and will bear little or no resemblance to events recalled by other members of the party.

Moss

Ben Gadd

SCENE: a mossy crack in a cliff.

First moss patch: "Holy shit, look what's coming!"

Second moss patch, higher up: "What? Climbers?"

First patch: "Yup."

Second: "Coming this way?"

"Uh - looks like it. Yes, indeed. Right under us. Jeez - now they're looking up the crack at me."

"Been nice knowin' you, bud."

"You too, kiddo."

"How long you been here?"

"Oh - let's see. Late Pleistocene, I think. How about you?"

"Bout the same."

"We should have talked more."

"Never mind. You gave great spores."

"So did you."

"Hey - why do the humans do it?"

"Exchange spores?"

"No, no. Why do they climb up and go after us?"

"They just hate moss, I guess."

"Must be it."

"D'ya think they'll last long? These humans?"

Second moss patch pauses, thinking: "Probably not. Too destructive."

"Too goddam many of'em, too."

"Hell of a combination. Be gone soon."

First moss patch looks down again: "Well, here they come."

"They're climbing?"

"Yeah, One of'em is just coming up to Maggie's colony."

"Let me know what happens. Damn this bulge; I can't see a thing down there."

"Okay; here's the blow-by-blow. It's at the patch. Here comes the digger. Ooo - there she goes!"

A scream.

Second patch nods its sporophytes sadly: "Always liked Maggie's clump. Not our species, but okay, you know?"

"Yeah. Well, that's the end of her crowd on this cliff."

"They got them all?"

"Sure did. Peeled off Art's colony over in the dihedral last weekend."

"Shit."

"You said it - uh oh, it's getting closer."

"Jesus."

"Oh, man, it's right in front of me. Christ, I can smell it!" Sound of moss puking.

"Hang in! Hang in! Maybe it'll go by!"

Still gagging: "Ack, ulk - no, it's got the digger in its hand! Aieeeeeee!!" First moss patch falls away from cliff, followed by soil as climber jams digger into crack repeatedly.

Remaining moss patch: "Oh, no - it's over the bulge! Oh, shit - " Sound of scraping.

"Aaaaarrrrrrgh!!" Sound of moss patch hitting the ground.

First climber, calling down to his belayer. "That's it. Whole crack is clean."

Second climber. "All riiight!"

First: "I'm gonna try to top out."

Second: "Go for it."

First climber, stopping to reflect: "I just thought of something. This is the last crack on the rock."

"Jeez, you're right."

"Just face routes left to do."

"I hate face routes."

"Me, too." Starts climbing, then stops. "Hey— you know of any more unclimbed cracks in this county?"

"Nope. And I've looked high and low."

"In the state?"

"Uh — probably aren't any left. No, wait, there's a cliff over by Hoppsville."

"A whole cliff? I've never heard of it."

"Oh, it's down by the river. Not very big. Hidden in the trees; can't see it 'til you're right' there."

"Well, let's go take a look."

"Can't. It's on some college professor's place. Won't let anybody climb there."

"Why the hell not?"

"The guy just hates climbers, I guess. Jason talked to him once. Told him something really weird - "

"What's that?"

"Said he was worried about the moss, if you can believe it."

"The moss?"

"Yeah. The moss."

"This green shit?" Finds a bit remaining in the crack. Pulls it out.

Moss mantling

Grant Statham

Every Climber dreams of an ice runnel, but have you ever dreamed of a moss runnel? Thirty centimeters wide, 80°, spongy, and great stemming on huge loose blocks! This along with tales of Devil's Club, thick trees, deep valleys, and logging roads lured me to the Selkirks on a summer climbing adventure.

I was thinking more and more about steep moss on the approach as I beat my way through some savage bushes, wishing I was packing a machete. Memories of a coastal adventure. Wet, mossy, runout slabs, spores and peat falling past my head as the scream "Watch me!" fills the air, and dynamic moves from lichen-covered granite to well-rooted ferns. I was snapped out of my trance quite suddenly as I watched my screaming partner get dragged under and disappear in a patch of Devil's Club. Was this a poisonous forest? Something eerie here made me feel as though I had entered the Land of the Lost.

Sometime about noon the next day, another reality set in. Here we are, no rope, big pack, 500m up, loose rock, and yes, you guessed it, no lack of vegetation.

"Dudes, this sucks. Let's get outta here!"

Down we go, multiple rappels on creative anchors and a rather long stretch of interesting/terrifying downclimbing.

Steep Grass (steepnslimy) Noun: similar to moss but with better handholds and less secure footing.

One new skill I learned on the descent, which undoubtedly should be mastered by all aspiring mountaineers, is the moss mantle. First you must locate a nice spongy patch about knee level, then place your hand on it. Weight the patch slowly, feeling the dirt and water seep through your fingers and soak the cuff of your jacket. When you feel as though you have taken the spring out of the patch, swing onto it and allow it to take your body weight. At

this time you can probably plow your toe into some muddy streak below you and with any luck you might not grease off.

Complete the move by getting a foot onto a similar mossy patch below, recite one "Hail Mary", and stand on it, praying that it's firmly embedded.

Throughout the move you must remain completely oblivious to the 400m of exposure that swallows you from below. This should complete the moss mantle.

Hours later I lay in my sleeping bag, covered with aphids, feeling the rain pelt my forehead and soak my hair (I'd neglected to bring a bivy sac). Through squinted eyes I could see the rubble heap looming above me. "The mountain mocks me!"

I had another engagement with the poisonous forest scheduled for tomorrow and I dreamed pleasantly of giant slugs and stinging nettles as I drifted off to sleep.

The story of a thwarted attempt at the unclimbed Downie Peak in the Northern Selkirks.

Solo

John Pratt

It is about four o'clock on a very hot afternoon in late July and the long journey to the trailhead is over at last. The trail begins at the boundary of the untouched forest; before me stand the giant trees, the light filtering down through their cathedral-like gloom to dapple the forest floor, rank with decaying vegetation.

Out of the sun at last, I sit down to rest a while and fill up my water bottles in the roaring, rushing creek. Now I can start climbing; indeed, I think I had better, as I have little idea how long it will take to surmount the 1200 vertical meters to the cabin high in the alpine zone, and I have only a few hours of daylight left.

The steep trail enables me to gain altitude rapidly. As I climb higher, the creek falls away below me and its noise slowly subsides, gradually to be replaced by the more gentle sounds of the solemn old forest, pungent with evergreens. The trail crosses a number of small rockslides with every now and then a partial view out over the Cheakamus valley to the ranges westward. Nothing very extensive but a pleasant change from being hemmed in by the giant cedars.

I take my first break at a sizable open space by a large rockslide at the foot of which runs a cool, clear brook. By now, I am perspiring profusely and, throwing my pack down among the rocks, drink thirstily and at length. Being alone in such a place is immensely exhilarating, a strange mixture of a deep appreciation of the scenery and peace there, a faint tremor of nerves at my isolation, and an excited anticipation of what it will be like high on the mountain the next day.

After about another hour of forest, I notice that the trees are becoming markedly smaller and less dense and through them I catch occasional, intriguing glimpses of the shoulder of a mountain towering high overhead. Abruptly the trees stop and I step out into a steeply sloping alpine meadow dotted with small clumps of stunted fir, but otherwise quite open. The mountain of which I have hitherto been granted only occasional views now rises before me unobstructed with its huge dark cliffs, deep, talus-filled gullies, and beetling crags, black and windswept against the blue sky. More immediately, a small sparkling stream runs at my feet, colder and more refreshing still than the last and I sit down here for another rest and a bite to eat. My sense of urgency has largely gone now and I can see the low notch in the skyline ahead just over which I know the cabin to be situated. It looks a good hour away, but that means nothing now and all I have to do is keep going.

A good guess: another hard hour brings me to the ridge-crest.

I have enjoyed many wonderful visual experiences in the mountains but the one which I am now savoring is to hold a special place in my affections, for I am unable to do anything but gaze in wonder. Down in the shallow valley before me lies a lake of an exquisite turquoise shade at the far end of which, perhaps a mile away, a glacier terminates in ice-cliffs. Round about, as in a vast amphitheater, stand the rock peaks, royal with height and solemn with snow. Huge black cliffs drop down into steep scree slopes which form the right hand, or southern shore of the lake. From the meadow and glacial debris bordering the lake on the left rise the steep slopes of sprawling Mt. Weart, cradling a pocket glacier high on its face. Ahead, over the main glacier is a high, rolling divide, mostly snow covered, but with large patches of honey-colored rock which glow warmly in the evening sun. Peering from behind one of the smaller, nearer peaks, ahead and to the right looms the icy pyramid of Wedge Mountain, the peak I have come to climb. Its long, snowy north arête flows downward to peter out among the nameless bumps of the divide. It looks a different world up there on the glacier and beyond, bleak and lifeless.

I drop my pack in front of the cabin and peer inside. It is dark and musty with a thirty-centimeter-square window at the far end through which the last rays of the sun shine, lighting up a myriad of dust specks and a few stray mosquitoes which drone aimlessly around. Stepping back outside, I brew myself up a cup of tea and sit down on a boulder to continue gazing out over the lake. The only sound is the faint rushing of a meltwater creek from the glacier cascading down some bluffs on the far shore which seems only to magnify the almost overpowering silence. I decide it would be a good idea to make myself a warm meal before it becomes too dark to see what I am doing. It has become chillier now and a slight breeze has sprung up so I crouch down in the shelter of a large boulder and restart the stove. After eating, I saunter back to the ridge top to watch the sun sink in a blaze of color over the western peaks. Behind me, the valley containing the lake falls into shadow and I return to the cabin to bed down. With the sunlight now gone, the place has taken on a faintly menacing aspect; the breeze strengthens slightly, adding its own gentle rushing sound to that of the meltwater cascade across the lake.

I do not sleep too well. Rather, I doze fitfully, disturbed by the scratching, scurrying mice that race to and fro in search of morsels. At one point, there is a sharp clatter from outside of one rock against another as if someone in heavy boots had taken a few steps then stopped. I sit bolt upright and seize my ice-axe, the only weapon I have. I listen, straining every sense, but there is only silence. Realizing that I have to leave the cabin and go outside anyway, I cautiously poke open the door. There is nothing to be seen but the full moon, rising above the divide: brilliant, white, ghastly, lighting up the valley almost as bright as day and overhead an icy splintering of stars twinkling in the frigid night air. I return to the cabin and try, once more, to get some sleep.

When my eyes open next, it takes me a few seconds to realize where I am. I stumble, yawning and bleary-eyed from a wretched night's sleep, into the crisp air outside. The valley is still in shadow, but the sun illuminates the highest mountaintops which thrust boldly up into a sky of pale, clear blue. The breeze is still there, making it chilly enough to wish the sun's warming rays, slowly creeping down the black, turreted cliffs on the opposing shore,

would hurry along. I crouch down behind my usual boulder, my parka done up tightly, and fire up the stove for some tea, oatmeal and soup.

With breakfast completed, I ditch the excess gear in the cabin and set off. The moraine and lakeshore are rough but straightforward travel and twenty minutes or so later I arrive at the snout of the glacier with its twelve-meter ice walls calving off small bergs into the lake. The route still appears feasible as I set off up the snow. On my left rise the steep cliffs of the broad valley containing the glacier, the bare, crevassed ice which stretches away to my right, its surface liberally plastered with debris from the mountainside which it is inexorably grinding down.

Abruptly, my snowy highway stops where the bare ice has crept to within ten feet of the cliffs, separated from them by a deep, evil-looking hole from the black depths of which comes the muffled roar of subterranean glacial melt. To the right, large crevasses rule out any possibility of unroped travel, but to the left, a bulging rock buttress offers a technically easy traverse around the obstacle. Easy, but exposed - a slip would put me at the bottom of the hole where I would remain for geologic time. I decide to go for it and step off the snow and onto rock.

The first part of the traverse is very easy, but as the climbing becomes harder, I pause to kick away the loose rock from the small ledges that serve as my hand and footholds, thinking out each move carefully beforehand, then carrying it out decisively and boldly. Face into the rock, don't look down. Good, only lightly perspiring, but my throat and mouth are bone-dry. The hole must be right under me now. Never mind the hole, concentrate on the climbing! Just another few feet and I'll be able to reach that huge jughandle hold - then it'll be safe to jump the last bit. Carefully, slowly does it. I grab the large handhold firmly, swing around onto another wide ledge, then jump the six feet back down onto the snow, letting out a whoop of joy as my feet hit and I roll over.

I sit for perhaps five minutes in the warm sunshine, recovering from my exertions - nervous rather than muscular - before continuing up on the gently-sloping glacier, at this altitude completely covered in firm snow, with only a couple of minor crevasses which it is easy to avoid. At the high col between Wedge and Parkhurst mountains, I step off the glacier and sink down, tired, on a large flat boulder to take a well-deserved break in this magnificent and lonely place.

A clean, easy-angled snow ridge gives access to the halfway point of the giant talus slope which stretches, unbroken, for 1500 vertical meters from the green meadows of Wedge Pass, now nearly 900m below me, to the wind-raked summit ridge. Owing to its southerly exposure, there is little snow on the talus, but it is hard going with its treacherous, loose, sharp rocks. Then, as if in answer to my growing confidence, the angle of the slope eases off and before long I am standing on the upper summit ridge. At my feet is an impressively long drop down the mountain's North face; a few snow cornices point like fingers out over this precipice. The 2904m summit lies a hundred meters to my right up a gently angled stone slope and I arrive there a few minutes later.

The view is tremendous. There stretches in all directions a sea of mountains, sharp and clear for some kilometers, hazy thereafter. To the north, the jagged crests of Mt. Weart, my slightly lower neighbor, dominate the view. Southward, across the valley of green, swampy Wedge Pass, now a vertical mile below me, rise the peaks of the Spearhead Range, their northern flanks well-mantled in glacial ice, but nursing in their corries several attractive little tarns of wildly improbable shades of green and blue. A few miles to the southeast stands Mt. James Turner, a dark, rugged peak of sharp and ferocious aspect, well guarded by steep cliffs and surrounded by miles of glacier and snowfield.

Gazing across that icy expanse, I decide on my next solo trip.

Rolling the dice on Assiniboine

David Brown

Outside are night and fog. Here in my cocoon I am warm and safe, deep in sleep, wrapped in a pre-natal bliss. It is warm, warm inside. The wrist alarm beeps four a.m. at me. I slowly rise from sleep and remember the what and where of my surroundings, if not the why. I and a dozen other climbers are at the Hind hut, in the Canadian Rockies, at the 2700m level of Mt. Assiniboine. I pull my body out of my sleeping bag and do a quick pivot on my back to bring my feet forward without kicking Jane, who is sleeping next to me with her head in the opposite direction, in the face.

Wayne and I may do the climb today, if we can form a party with other climbers and if the weather is right. I use headlamp and flashlight to get dressed, then call softly to Wayne. No response. Let him sleep. An immediate response is not required. Stepping carefully around the other sleeping bodies on the floor, I clear an area on the cluttered table and start cooking oatmeal. Lunch was made and packed last night. A glance outside shows black fog but no overnight snow. Assiniboine above 3000m is obscured.

Breakfast is cooked and eaten. Wayne, Pierre and Rob get up and look outside. It is five a.m. and still dark. Will we do the climb? We discuss in whispers. For Wayne and I, this is our last day with a food supply. It is day three of three, and tomorrow we must go down or go hungry. Wayne and I have done some practice climbs in the last few days. I am less experienced than him. He has climbed Mt. Victoria, Mt. Columbia, Mt. Edith Cavell east ridge, and part of Mt. Robson. Rob I know only from yesterday's easy climb of Mt. Strom, a 3000m peak near our hut. (Later in the day I will look down on Strom and see that we only reached a false summit in the fog.) Pierre is an unknown quantity, but sounds experienced. We agree that Wayne and I can accompany Pierre and Rob on Assiniboine, provided we don't slow them down.

By 6:30 a.m. it is starting to get light. We pack up and move out, downward across unstable boulders, moving slowly to the base of the northeast ridge. The summit is 1000m above us, invisible in the fog. A glacier lies to our left. Easy snow at its edge leads us up 120m to the base of the ridge. We have daylight now, with perhaps 200m visibility in the fog. Temperature is around freezing. The limestone is loose, but not unusually so. A wind starts to pick up. Pierre is in high spirits. "This is beautiful rock. No problems!" The others agree. Somehow I don't share their enthusiasm. A cold nausea grips me as we move higher. They are right— the rock is easy for the moment. One small outcrop is followed by another, and another. A drop-off develops to the left of the ridge.

The northeast ridge of Assiniboine has a UIAA grade of III-, as do the east face of Flatiron Peak in Colorado, and the Hornli ridge of the Matterhorn. It is not considered difficult by mountaineers. But am I a mountaineer? Yes, temporarily, but there are categories also, such as good mountaineers, lucky mountaineers, and dead mountaineers. The good category includes novices who know their limits and extend them carefully, attempting to control and manage their risks.

We cross a short bank of 30° ice, no more than 7m of it, without

crampons. Pierre leads, cutting mini-steps which are little more than toe-holds. We follow, enlarging the steps slightly with our picks, but each step is precarious. The fog lifts momentarily and the mountain is revealed above— the Red Band at 3350m and the Gray Band at 3500m are surprisingly close. The summit pyramid is out of sight, just above the Gray Band. The fog closes in again, eliminating all but our immediate surroundings. We move up. Suddenly we are at the base of the Red Band, a 20m cliff which is the usual limestone gray from a distance, but up close indeed has an abundance of dull red chips and stones. Pierre leads again. The holds have a light covering of snow, but they are good. The rock is mostly firm here. I suggest roping up but my request is ignored.

We reach the top of the Red Band without difficulty and walk onto another 30° snow slope. The plan is to traverse a short distance left along the top of the Red Band to the northeast ridge, climb the ridge to the Gray Band, climb through the Gray Band on the ridge or immediately right, continue up through another steep area called the Buttress, and continue to the north summit. These areas are supposedly very exposed, that is, you have to face severe drops immediately underfoot. I make a second request to rope up, and the others reject it. Roping up, they say, will slow them down too much. Yet it is 9:30 in the morning and we are already at 3350m, only 275m below the summit.

Suddenly I realize that, so far as the laws of physics are concerned, I am alone on the mountain. There is also a risk of ice beneath the snow. We just crossed ice 100m below. None of us is wearing crampons. The Red Band is immediately below us on the left. I am aware of the more difficult ground higher up, and I am not impressed by my companions' refusal to rope up. Reluctantly I ask Wayne for my rope, which is in his pack. It will help my descent.

My decision to go down is difficult. I did not come all this way in order to quit. There is also some nagging self-doubt: Am I a coward? Can't I cut it? These things are on my mind as I watch my partners disappear into the mist. The cliff is less than 2m to their left. I know they couldn't self-arrest a slip on snow in that distance. In my judgment, they are rolling the dice.

Just below me is a rappel anchor— two slings of nylon webbing tied firmly around large rocks. The nylon is not frayed. I pass the midpoint of my climbing rope through both slings, don harness and crampons, set up a Münter hitch as a rappel brake, and step off the edge. The crampons are on because there is a snow pitch at the bottom which may contain ice. I don't want to find myself at the end of my rope, on ice, and without crampons. The rappel is uneventful and the snow at the bottom is ice-free. I tug on one end of the doubled rappel rope to bring it down. Nothing happens. I hang on one end with all my weight and it remains hung. Problems like this I don't need. I'm still wearing the crampons, which are a quick release model. In my haste to free the rope, I leave them on. Leaving my pack at the bottom, I re-climb the cliff along the dihedral feature of the descent line, occasionally using the rope as a point of support. I am climbing badly, like a novice. The rope is underfoot and once or twice I step on it with crampons. Some guides will smash your teeth in if they see you do this. As I climb I occasionally tug on one side of the doubled rope to try to free it, but only when I am near the top, with the anchor in view, does this succeed. I downclimb the Red Band with no protection. Something about this focuses me very much in the present. With some effort I force myself to stay calm. There is a good foothold 45cm below for my left foot. I put weight on my arms and right foot, lower carefully, test the hold with my left foot. Nothing shifts. More weight to the left foot. Solid. My right hand moves down and finds a jug hold, then my left. Shift, test-weight gently, repeat. Don't trust this rock. There will be no second chance if the rock comes loose. The wind picks up a bit but the fog is still with me. Now jamming the toe of the right boot into a crevice. Solid, not icy here. Lower and hold. Crampons constantly lousing up my foot placement, front points especially awkward.

Then I am down from the Red Band. The rope gets untangled and stowed. The crampons stay on until I negotiate the icy area below, then they too get stowed. My tension breaks. I wolf down two tuna sandwiches and an apple. How are the others doing? Are they on top now?

Alone near the top of Assiniboine. Gray rock obscured by grayer cloud. Intermittent thudding of the wind, a pause in the wind, awful silence. The mountain has no statement to make. This is the ragged edge of the planet. It is beautiful from a distance, and no more than a waste of shattered limestone up close. What am I doing here? Worshipping false gods? The mountain is not a god, though it can and has killed, with an assist from human error, gravity, wind, cold, faults in the rock. The climb is all about self-mastery, disciplined movement, planning, risk evaluation, decision making. To an extent it is about overcoming fear. To an extent it is about spirit, and learning, and mastery of equipment. The truths of physics take on a new meaning when you are dangling on a rope.

The remainder of the descent is a long, long trial demanding patience, strength and continual caution. Facing in to the rock, I peer down between my legs, selecting footholds, finding them, putting weight on them, occasionally seizing the rock hard as a foothold crumbles or shifts. This slab or that small rock? This crevice or the loose stuff on the right? Is this an two-meter fall coming up if the right foot slips on loose garbage rock? I do a couple of rappels toward the bottom, having gotten off route a little. Another climber finds one of my rappel slings a few days later, declares it highly insecure. Luck overrides my bad judgment. Finally there is the short slog down over packed snow, then up over unstable boulders to the hut. It is time to rest, to contemplate the attempt, and to await my partners' return from the summit. The mountain has a pass/fail system, and I have passed. It will still be there next year.

A dream like mine

Bob Park

For some reason I snap out of it and realize I've been staring, glassy-eyed, at the moist coffee ring on the table like some cult victim in dire need of deprogramming: limbs limp, mouth agape, and head tilted to one side. My train of thought was good but it chugged right by all my friends as I entered an altered state where their noisy conversation faded away down the tracks and they, along with everything else in the room, became non-existent. But time and reality, stretched long like a rubber band, eventually either snaps back or breaks—and so I find myself in the kitchen.

As I swallow some coffee I peer sheepishly over the rim of the mug to see if anyone has actually noticed that my attention had been elsewhere. I am not overly conscientious about my trips inside—into memories of climbs past and dreams and hopes of the future. Climbing is what I love best and if I cannot be making memories then I'm probably planning or reliving them.

I cannot fool myself or anyone else — climbing is in me and to

not climb is to die. It is to die each sunny day fingers and toes aren't poked and repoked into cracks and crevices in solid granite and the wind doesn't snatch at my hair and clothing like a playful child; or the airy, solid, blocky, warm rock of some remote mountain ridge doesn't pass beneath the continuous movement of ever-ascending footfalls. Even packing a load from road through bush and tree slopes, slide alder, across rocky streams to scenic alpine ridges and tarns is a cherished memory in itself and a day without it is a day gone by the wayside. There are only so many seasons to climb and those days I am not enveloped in the adventure and beauty of a mountain or rock environment, hurt to the core. To plan, or to remember, is the only survival.

When events and circumstances keep me pasted to the walls of the city—confining every ounce of energy and ambition for movement, I look back and often abhor decisions I made as a kid, when parts of my anatomy, that don't have a brain, were making choices for me before I knew what I really wanted out of life. Words like "responsibility" and "expectations" became important and I learned some very difficult lessons. So sometimes now I escape into the hills, like last summer...

It is not difficult to picture the graceful, steep ridge again with its blocks and corners, cracks and flakes. I knew from the moment I peered up at all the possibilities that the movements up this giant would be smooth and fluid.

From the heather, and after some scrambling there was a huge flake that seemed to arch its way up into eternity. Its edge was white and thin. The gray-white face around the flake was speckled with small pimply nubbins and dark pie-like knobs. Footholds would be as plentiful as candy at Christmas

Above that was a long corner, an overhang, and then far above, dark cracks in white granite fell from the skyline like ribbons from buildings on parade day. Release was imminent and I couldn't help grinning and blinking up into the sunlight. I had escaped and I was climbing!

Easy movements upwards began as nicked, white-chalked hands caressed the flake's edge arpeggio fashion with the feet, as I glided up carried along with the symphony of that place — the music of the wind across the ridge and the gentle rhythm of climbing shoes on stone. Everything seemed in time: the ambition, the body, the movements and even the giant of a mountain didn't seem to mind having its backbone tickled.

The corner above the flake was a cruise but I had to pause at the overhang. It was just too good to let fly by. I stemmed up high on both walls and, with a hand pulling out on a hold back near the inside of the corner, I peered over the lip. Small blocks above formed a right diagonal crack and with my hands placed firmly here, I gently cut loose with my feet and softly placed them on the outer arête of the corner. Glancing down there was no question that despite all the shit I had to go through to get away climbing, the myriad of emotional ties to home and the daily grind of 9 to 5, this moment reconfirmed it—I had found my place and as long as I had breath I would climb and climb and climb. There was nothing to compare —this was the happiest I had ever been.

Easy blocks lead up to the final steep bit and all those yummy-looking cracks. They were deep and cool and they sometimes pinched in to provide great finger locks and hand jams-all so tasty I had to suck back the drool. High reaches and bringing the feet up close under me before I went for another jam typified this section, though neither technique was really necessary as a plethora of nubbins and face holds appeared. Yet I was content jamming away, hanging off narrowing cracks and dancing the feet up the rock then sinking them into the crack again.

The blue-black sky of such high places contrasted greatly with the gray towers and milky-white glaciers far below, their smiling crevasses grinning up at me. Grinning as I grinned. The heights, and the rock, and movement and adventure that bring joy, that draw me up here, were back again.

A few short easy corners and some blocky scrambling on wonderful granite finally brought me to the pointy top and with a few Tarzan yodels and, hopefully unobserved, Madonna moves, I balanced on the summit and took in the views that inspire. It had been perfect. I had simply been one person moving through the mountains. It was so complete. I just as well could have been a bird that passed over the ridge, or a small creature that scampered up in search of food or a vantage, or even the wind running up the ridge as some thermal took it into the heavens.

Up here it was so simple, so uncomplicated. But I knew that to keep it fresh and to keep it simple I had to have contrast, I had to have something to compare it to. With much regret I turned my back on the summit and began descending towards home...

For some reason I snap out of it and realize I've been staring at the moist coffee ring on the table...

Letter to a friend

Cyril Shokoples

Dear David:

It has been an interesting two years since my last letter to you. I have been as up and as down as you can get. Summer of' 90... just a few days before I am going to take a group of young (teenage) friends for a week of climbing in the Ten Peaks. Brain in high gear. Driving home from a good time in the Interior Ranges. Juiced and ready to go again. Give Sandra a call on the radio phone. Her voice sounds odd, missing its usual lilt. Just before I am about to sign off she begins to sob and says, "Brent has been killed in a car crash." The next three and a half hours are a solitary drive in hell.

Brent Batke was part of a group adventurers, older Boy Scouts, that I have worked with for a couple of years. All were young, vibrant and inexperienced. They had no idea of what hard was, so they had nothing to hold them back. The funeral brings me way down. Another bite of the reality sandwich. Four of us go climbing to the Ten Peaks anyway. I have a seven-foot steel cross welded together. We are going to drag this monstrous thing to the top of one of the peaks. Imagine what it's like to drag a steel cross up to over 3000m. I use it as an ice axe on the snow. It's weight drives it in four feet with every step. Brutal. We look like "crusaders" with our colored nylon armor and the cross leading the procession. At last, the hut... crash and gorge.

Early a.m.... summit and excavate a suitable site for the cross, cairn and a few momentos. Mt. Temple stares from across the way, powerful in its silence. Finally done, I ask Aaron (Brent's best friend) if he has anything he would like to say. Aaron looks at me and says, "It's all been said." He's right. His simple statement serves to punctuate our ordeal and has a powerful cathartic effect. I feel better in some odd way.

The Bugaboos/Vowells General Mountaineering Camp brings me back up. That's the big roving ace summer camp. Everyone just calls it the GMC. It's Huge. Riots. A total gas. Two new routes on Northpost Spire; Six ascents of Bugaboo including a blazing drag race descent with "Thumper" and "Bambi". Tons of other climbs.

Life is a rock. Even an ankle sprain can't stop the pace. Rick's tape job keeps the foot together. Back in Jasper, Ogre Canyon got a bunch of new routes done. I am almost back on top. In the quiet moments I still sometimes think of Brent.

1991... A year leave of absence from work. Yes! Skiing, climbing, teaching courses, more skiing, more climbing and so it goes. I am skiing better than ever. Go out for a short run around home. I hate running, but I think I had brain damage that day. A bit of black ice around. Argh!!! A cracking sound in my ankle alerts me to the fact that the slip I just took has disastrous consequences. A visit with Dr. Al "the kiddies pal" confirms I have done it again. This time it's bad. Al knows what this means to me. He gives me hell for not getting my first sprain looked after when I got home. The spring and summer outlook is bleak. Six weeks with Ed, the physio from hell, and I feel like I should try out a few moves on the rock. It feels good; Ed is now my hero. Later that week Ed tells me it's O.K. to have a go at some easy rock climbing to test things out.

I don't have the heart to tell him I already did. By the time Ed is done, my ankles and legs are better than they ever were before. Good thing. I am booked to begin a week of guiding in five days time.

Lots of activity with the sartechs (Search & Rescue Technicians) has me busy with rope rescue work & climbs for the late spring and early summer. I can do no wrong. All of my plans are coming together. I defeat bad weather with good timing on such a regular basis that I forget what it is like to be caught out. By the time the Farnham Creek GMC rolls around, I am flying again. Long days are the norm, but the GMCs are always a hoot. Brad Harrison (you know, the camp outfitter) has a way of growing on you. It is more than ten years since we met at Clemenceau and he's getting weird. I'm getting weirder. Weird is good. Weird is healthy. Some people think we're brothers. The big peaks are falling like flies. My luck just keeps holding. Brad asks if the horseshoes up my butt cause me any discomfort. Two weeks later, as the helicopter whisks me away, I can feel a lump in my throat. "Parting is such sweet sorrow."

Two more trips on the Wapta and my guiding commitments are done. Lots of great folks on these trips and a "ton o' climbing". Drag my ham radio along and have some qsos from a few summits. (That's hamster talk for shooting the breeze.) My lucky rabbit's foot is getting a bit worn. What? The sound of frying eggs at noon. Electrical storm at Balfour high col. Run away. It had to happen sooner or later. Make up for it tonight. Night climb!! Those lights on the highway are soooo far away. Got a couple of postcards and letters from people on that trip. I guess they thought it was pretty keen too.

Called up Ziggy for a last-minute trip in the fall. Up Temple in 2 hours and 45 minutes from the car. Could probably do it faster, now that I know what can be done. Nah, probably not. Back to the car in time to be lazy all afternoon. Next day... late start. In the middle of leading a rock pitch on Mt. Whyte my radio goes off, "VE6MTN, VE6PY". "Just a sec, Paul, I am right in the middle of something here." Blah, blah, blah, I talk all day long to VE6 GRA (Graham from the ace) and a herd of other hamsters on the airwaves. Ziggy doesn't mind the chatter, his dad had the same evil affliction as I do. The snow is falling now and it's totally whited out. I guess I should have at least glanced at a route description. Nah, probably not. I hike up my shorts to check if the horseshoe is still there. Yup! Over the top and down we go. "Zig, wanna nab Niblock while we're here? It looks close." "Nah, probably not." Up we go anyway. "That's a big storm over there, Cyril." "Nah, probably not." Blah, blah, blah goes the radio all the way up another summit then back down again. Climbing and electronic gadgets; I'm in heaven.

Back at work in Lac La Biche, summer is over. Watchin' the tube, catchin' up with the world. Ring! "It's for you. It's Brad Harrison."

"Cyril, It's Brad. I thought you should know; Marcel Bosnian was killed in a car crash." I don't hear much else. I find it difficult to say much as a tear runs down my cheek. It isn't any easier the second time I hear those words. Marcel was one of the GMC boys of summer. Summer is definitely over. Who is it that said "Climbing is hard, but it's easier than growing up?"

The next time you ask me how I am, I'll probably answer, "I'm O.K. now." I guess you'll know what I mean. Please take care and drive carefully.

Your friend Cyril

Who is that masked man?

A portrait of Don Gardner

Chic Scott

Last spring a strange scene was enacted in Squamish, BC. A man, who some say looks a lot like a Norwegian troll, walked down the main street of town - pack on his back, wearing mountaineering clothes and carrying a pair of nordic skis over his shoulder. At the end of the street he put on his skis. Then, to the amazement of those watching from the nearby yacht club, he slithered down the seaweed-covered rocks and into the water! Up to his knees in the ocean, Don Gardner's voyage was complete.

Thirty years ago, when I first met him as a teenager, Don would sometimes speak of his dream of skiing across the mountains, from Calgary to the Pacific Ocean. On March 27,1991, at the age of 45, he fulfilled his dream. Over a period of 28 travelling days, he had covered 900km of wild mountain terrain. He had been alone all the way. He had travelled light - his pack never weighing more than 10kg. He carried no tent or stove. At night he simply curled up in front of a fire at the base of a tree. His meagre rations allowed him a few handfulls of granola for breakfast, a bun and some cheese for lunch, and a packet of noodles for dinner.

Don has always admired the early Canadian explorers and he has diligently read most of their journals. One of his particular favorites is Samuel Hearne. Don wanted to experience a long journey similar to theirs - a journey where simply the travelling and the lifestyle is the goal. Times have changed since men such as David Thompson travelled the western mountains, so Don had to adjust to the geography as he found it. Don says that he wanted to feel equally at home in the forest camped under the stars, or in some small BC town having a beer with the locals in the hotel. The goal is to be a master of your environment and to travel through it with familiarity and comfort. The western Canadian environment is now a complex mix of cities and towns of all sizes separated by vast forests and formidable mountains. Don himself is a strange mix similar to the geography. He can be found at one moment in the smoky King Eddy Blues Club in Calgary and the next day might be wandering in the wilderness somewhere, immersed in bird calls and wolf tracks.

Don's ski adventure began from his childhood home, near downtown Calgary. He donned his skis and set off up the Elbow

River, rounded the Glenmore dam and crossed the reservoir. At the far end, near the Sarcee Military Shooting Range, his trip ran into its first major barrier- gunfire and explosions could be heard nearby and explicit signs were posted saying that the area was CLOSED. This was during the mid-east conflict and the Canadian army was on alert and practising in earnest. Don felt it best to work his way around the area and eventually found his way back to the river. Skiing into a powerful Chinook wind, he headed west.

Don has been subject to serious bouts of arthritis for several years and it now started to act up on him. Taking his anti-inflammatory medication, he pressed on. In places the snow was too thin to ski, so he walked. He continued up the Little Elbow River, over Evans Thomas Pass and down Evans Thomas Creek. After his first four days he reached Kananaskis Village.

Here he simply pulled out his plastic and checked into the Kananaskis Lodge for the night. However the room was hot, his hips continued to hurt and he could not sleep. He seriously debated calling it quits.

The next morning he skied up Galatea Creek with bitter pain. He crossed a high alpine pass and reached Rummel Lake named after an old and close friend, Lizzie Rummel. Lizzie herself had suffered for years from extreme hip pain and Don thought fondly of his friend. At this point in his trip Don said that he started to relax and strangely enough the arthritic pain began to abate, Don skied from Rummel Lake down to Engadine Lodge where he spent a pleasant night.

From here on Don says that he truly entered the adventure and ceased to think much about the future. Don says that often he would get into a trance and ski all day without lunch or without stopping at all. Mercifully, his hips no longer hurt.

From Engadine Lodge Donnie continued his quest - through Whiteman Pass, down the Cross River, along the Kootenay River and then through Sinclair Pass over to Radium. His family drove over from Calgary and they all spent a pleasant weekend at Fairmont Hot Springs.

From here there was a very pleasant section of the trip, up Toby Creek and Jumbo Creek, over Jumbo Pass and down to Duncan Lake. His next break of civilization was a comfortable night with friends at the town of Meadow Creek. After Meadow Creek there followed two of the most difficult days of the trip. In poor weather he skied up Poplar Creek, spent a long a frightening night as the snow fell and the wind blew, then the next day crossed a high and treacherous pass. A marathon ski into the small hours of the morning took him to the town of Nakusp.

Nakusp is his father's birthplace and Don has plenty of relatives there. Five days were spent resting and relaxing. But soon it was time to move on again and he took a ferry across the lake, just south of town, and once again pointed his skis west.

The next 100km to Vernon was gruelling. It snowed several meters over the following days and Don was breaking trail up to his thighs. In the obscured visibility and low mountainous terrain everything looked the same. Quite simply he was lost. So he just followed his compass and kept trudging. A point came when he started to work his way down and he eventually reached the Monashee Highway not far from Vernon. In a motel room in town he lay in bed and watched the weather reports on television. Phone calls to the weather stations in Kamloops and Vancouver confirmed that a series of lows would persist for the next week. So Don caught a bus back to Calgary and waited for the weather to change. In a week he returned on the bus and continued his journey. From here on Don was blessed with good weather.

Over the next five days Don made a bee line for Merritt, 150km distance. It was good travelling and long days. Along the way he stopped to visit his cousin who manages the Douglas Lake Ranch. Near the ranch he had a thrill, having to walk through a large field surrounded by several hundred bulls. Don says he was scared.

Another three days took him from Merritt across to Lytton on the Fraser Canyon. Here he passed several evenings relaxing in the bar, playing pool.

The Fraser River was crossed on a small, motorless ferry, and Don embarked up the Stein Valley. It was beautiful, wild and rugged and by the second day Don had good snow to travel on. In one day alone he made 50km. By the end of day three he was over to Lillooet Lake.

By now he could smell the Pacific and he felt it was time for the trip to end. There was no good way through the wilderness to the ocean and even a phone call to John Clarke for advice turned up no alternatives. So Don simply walked and hitched his way down the road to Whistler. After a night in the luxurious CP Hotel and a back rub he carried on down the highway to Squamish where he enacted his curious ritual on the waterfront.

Don had travelled across the western mountains the way they are today. He admits that he was shocked by the extent of the clearcuts along the way, but the logging roads and the clearcuts had made for excellent travelling. He had stopped in many towns along the way and met the people. It had been a learning experience not only for him but for the locals who found it hard to understand what Don was doing.

It had also been "a quest for the ancestors". It was a chance to meditate and reflect on some of the old-timers he had known and admired - Lawrence Grassi, Ed Feuz, and of course Lizzie Rummel. It was also an opportunity to think long and deep of his father who had died the year before - throughout the trip Don wore his father's shirt and skied on his father's skis.

Don has been a traveller all his life. Early in his teens he discovered cross-country skiing and it has ever since been his passion. During the '60s and 70s he was on Canada's national ski team. During the same period he pioneered the great alpine ski traverses down the backbone of the Rocky Mountains, the Selkirks and Purcells. Up north in the arctic he made a 500km traverse of Ellesmere Island and a lengthy traverse across the barrens of the

Who is that masked man? Don Gardner on Dhaulagiri. (Chic Scott)

NWT.

Don likes to put miles behind him even when he climbs. At 18 he did a winter traverse of the 15km ridge of Mount Rundle. The next year he traversed the mammoth Moraine Lake/Lake Louise horseshoe — 23 peaks over 3000m in six days. A few years later he traversed the four peaks of Mt. Lougheed, and not long ago he traversed all the peaks along the west side of the Icefields Parkway from Saskatchewan Crossing to Peyto Lake (Mts. Sarbach, Kauffmann, Chephren, Howse, Stairway and Patterson).

Donnie has always been young at heart. While the rest of the kids were learning to play baseball and football he was rafting down the river. Later on, while the boys were discovering alcohol and girls, Donnie was building his own telescopes and discovering the beauty of the night sky.

He was born into a family who loved the mountains. He spent his childhood holidays at Mt. Assiniboine Park, playing in the meadows. By his early teens he was climbing the face of Yamnuska and working as a "Junior" guide for Hans Gmoser at ski camps. Don has always been a fine climber but he seemed to prefer unfettered travel through the wilderness to the highly technical act of modern climbing.

Don can at times be found in his back yard in Calgary, in his replica of a 4000-year-old pre-Dorset tent. Sitting on the caribou furs in the smoke-filled interior he will chant to himself. Don has a long-time love affair with the arctic and has worked perhaps ten summers north of the Arctic Circle as mountain guide, archaeologist and geologist. Don earned a university degree in archaeology and specialized in Indian and Inuit tools and weapons. He now makes a substantial portion of his income making museum-quality replicas of bows, arrows, quivers, harpoons, knives and scrapers. What else could be closer to a boy's heart!

There is no pretending that you can go back to times from the past, but Don feels that you can learn to be in tune with the world the way you find it - the mix of both the natural world and the man-made world. He says that like anyone else he is simply trying to make sense of it all and trying to feel at home in this world.

At this point in his life Donnie ventures off on 900km solitary adventures, travelling with the wolves, across the passes and through the canyons, knowing that a slip, a sprained ankle or a torn knee can be the end of it all. He says that we must learn to be trusting of fate and not to continually worry and be frightened of what may befall us.

For the less adventurous among us we can begin our quest on the marvellous ski complexes at Kananaskis Lakes or at the Nordic Center in Canmore. Donnie Gardner was largely responsible for designing and creating these Nordic ski trails and in fact he spends much of his time as a consultant planning trails all over Canada. Don feels the whole quality of the experience changes if you can just get the folks a few hundred meters from their cars.

Don's goal is to be a master traveller and at home in not only the wilderness, but the total world the way we find it. He has several more outrageous dreams up his sleeve - he would like to ski to the Arctic Ocean some day, and for a truly bizarre union of the old and the new he even talks about a ski trip from Calgary to Disneyland. Even now I can see him, wearing a Lone Ranger mask, cruising on his roller skis through Pasadena. Disney might even consider making a movie of it.

Living in the world

Thoughts on alpine ethics

In celebration of foreplay

Emily Butler

Our land is huge and empty, and we are rich. We live in a society that allows us personal freedom on a level never before approached in human history. We practice an esoteric activity that removes us from most human interaction. And yet in the last few years it has become clear that even in the remotest regions our actions affect the lives of others, and our lives are affected by the actions of others

What's wrong with a little intimacy before the big orgasm? A little sweat, some give and take, a bit of knowing and accepting your lover's less pleasant side? Or do we always have to make love to an idealized image which conforms to our own ego, and gives in with just enough resistance to tease?

As my calculations of how to negotiate the devil's club were interrupted by slipping off the wet slide alder I had been perched on, and finding myself lodged in the mud with my pack holding my head downhill in a stinging nettle bush, I suddenly realized that I didn't feel much like a virgin at all.

I was recalling Paul Adam's article, "On Ethics, Emotions, and an Epic", published in the 1991 Canadian Alpine Journal In that article he equates pure mountain ethics (i.e.: doing a peak from the beach with no air support) with virginity. He also brings out the absurdity of taking any such moral precept to it's extreme,"... hitching a ride on a logging truck seemed to me the ethical equivalent of being half a virgin." Still, absurdities aside, as I sat in the mud picking prickles out of my hands I was struck by an incongruity in his metaphor (you have to think about something to remain sane while bush-bashing!).

Thinking back, the trips that I've done in "pure" style seemed to more completely caress the mountain than those on which air support was used. Instead of landing on a shoulder and leaping immediately onto the phallic summit spire, one was forced into exploring the mountain intimately right from its seaweed-strewn toes, feeling along its structure created by the flow lines of rivers and glaciers, pushing through its dark steamy forests, embracing the open alpine, and finally grasping the rocks of the summit block. Perhaps the moment someone puts down the climbing magazine and leaves on their first hike they have lost their virginity, but certainly the from-the-beach-self-propelled trip seems to demand a more mature understanding of the mountain, a greater competence, and a deeper interaction with the object of desire (the very opposite attributes to those of virginity) than the one-night-wham-bam-thank-you-sir approach of the heli-supported summit attempt.

As you might be able to tell I have trouble thinking of any mountaineer as a virgin. Have you ever met a climber who would admit to being one? Nevertheless, following my line of thought right along (it was a long bush-smash) the metaphor of differing approaches to sexuality appeared significant. I know many people who would consider a one-night stand to be unsatisfying, perhaps even repellent, and yet they will fly to a col, since they only have

the weekend off, and take their pleasure on the last thousand feet of a peak. Even if the project is 5.12 and 90° ice with no pro, they have still avoided changing their lifestyle to allow for a longer-term relationship. They can ignore such hard give-and-take decisions as whether to take 500 grams more oatmeal or an extra two pins. The commitment level is greatly reduced when a helicopter will be back at a prearranged time .They have sacrificed the foreplay of rivers and bush, glaciers and meadows, as well as the fond farewell provided by a long descent through a beloved landscape. These people, who value commitment, compromise, and long term intimacy in their sexual life, have apparently discovered the truth in the cliché, "You get back what you put in." It seems inconsistent to me that they would favor in their mountaineering a casual, self-gratifying summit orgasm. Perhaps they've just been doing what everyone else is doing and haven't thought it through yet. We all have to go through puberty.

But the joy of sexual discovery and the ongoing adventure of maturing eroticism surely makes adolescent conquests pale. On long approaches, as in a developing sexual relationship, one learns the Zen lesson of living in the moment. Sensuality is dependent upon being completely present in your body and not preoccupied with concerns about the outcome. Likewise, in the bush it is imperative to focus on each move, just as you would rock climbing. Then the beauty of the foliage, the intricacy of the net surrounding you, and the joy of solving a physical problem in an elegant and balanced way (O.K., so maybe it's more like aggressive and dynamic) comes through.

If one is to avoid boredom in one's sex life, creativity is necessary, since even having a different partner every night eventually becomes repetitive. One is also forced to be creative once air support is left behind. I discovered the joys of ocean kayaking in order to avoid the mechanized world. It introduced me to the mountains' deepest reaches, and made me realize that their true feet lie well below our sight at the bottom of the oceans and inlets.

Approaches allow one to develop a physical understanding of how the mountains are formed and how they are changing, just as over time the contours of our lover's body become engraved upon our mind, become a part of ourselves. The map becomes understood in terms of landscapes seen, effort expended, and emotions felt. One is also forced towards self-honesty and a clear evaluation of priorities by accepting the challenge of mountain approaches. If one truly desires intimacy with the entire mountain then one must structure the rest of one's life in order to leave time for that love. One is rewarded with the clarity of self-definition and the sheer pleasure of living one's favorite fantasy for extended periods of time— although one may have to accept being broke much of the rest of the time. One comes to fully comprehend the consequences of one's actions when one is a week into the middle of nowhere with no outside support. The resulting commitment is invigorating and gives a sense of delight in being alive.

Now don't get me wrong! I'm not against just having a little fun sometimes. I enjoy lift skiing at Whistler and car camping/climbing at Joshua Tree. I might even admit, under pressure, to a few one night stands when I was young and flippant. It's only when the bright lights and chop-chop-chopping sounds of the bar scene intrude upon my marital bedroom that I get offended. To be fair, in the mountains there are no existing guidelines as to where the red light district begins and ends, and so I can't avoid stumbling into it sometimes, and its patrons can't help but crash into my intimacy occasionally. Furthermore, as increased numbers of suitors are attracted to the mountains these intrusions are going to become more frequent. I like to think that with a little cooperation the mountains are large enough to accommodate all our loving styles. I don't know how we're going to figure out which peaks are playboys and which prefer a longer-term relationship, but it seems to me that some such communication is going to have to take place if we're not all going to feel either defiled or limited by each other's sexual preferences.

Bow Valley Climbers Community Forum

Geoff Powter

Guidelines for the present and future of Rockies' climbing

The Bow Valley Climbers' Community Forum was constituted in a day-long gathering of local rock climbers in Banff on November 2,1991. This meeting of climbers of several different styles and points of view was convened to declare the first communal perspective of the current state of climbing in the area, and to create a vision for the future which could proactively address those issues which have complicated or prevented climbing in other areas.

The 1991 Forum was composed of Peter Arbic, Tim Auger, David Dornian, Jon Jones, J. D. LeBlanc, Jeff Marshall, John Martin, Simon Parboosingh, Geoff Powter, Chic Scott, and Mark Whalen.

Members were selected primarily on the basis of their contributions to local first ascents. Some invitees could not attend, and some asked that their views be represented by proxy.

The forum involved the identification of issues, both immediate and potential, which were discussed with the goal of creating guidelines to help local and visiting climbers understand the dominant philosophies and practices in the valley from Calgary to Lake Louise. These guidelines, outlined below, are not meant to be final nor exhaustive, and they are certainly not meant to be enforced as rules. Climbing has always celebrated the right of the individual to free choice in his or her actions; these guidelines are simply offered as a set of collectively-agreed-upon principles which were felt to best reflect the memory of the past, the necessities of the future, and the responsibilities of individuals to the community of climbers and the larger communities around us.

N.B.: Majority consensus, if not unanimity, was achieved in each of these guidelines.

Guiding principles

The basic philosophies which should guide our actions were defined as:

1 We should try to be as unobtrusive as possible.

The climbing community as a whole will suffer from flagrant actions. Climbers should refrain from postures which make us too visible– whether that be by minimizing rockfall on Sundays, leaving only naturally-colored anchors, or by cleaning up our crags.

2 Be courteous and friendly to all users of an area (hikers, horse riders, etc.).

We have entered an age in which the crags will be public places– respect this and we will be able to keep using the crags.

3 The personal is the political.

The actions of the individual will reflect on the community as

whole - be responsible to everyone.

4 We believe peer pressure is the best controlling force.

We feel the community can legislate itself, and that the position of the majority is sufficient to control damage by the few.

5 Guidelines must embrace a wide range of styles and attitudes. To be valid, values must not reflect just the position of the elite or the most radical, but must encompass the needs of the range of practices.

6 Some places are sacred.

We must recognize that our sport is not suitable in all places -some places have a history or a beauty which climbing will violate and we feel these places must be identified and protected by the community.

7 We need to take pride in our climbing areas - to the point of caring for them regardless of personal responsibility for their condition. We are a high-profile user group. We will be seen as responsible for many issues of impact regardless of fact. We must therefore take complete responsibility for our crags or risk losing them.

8 Theft and vigilantism are not acceptable solutions to problems.

Personal communication and public consensus are always more valid answers, and vigilante actions (route damage, bolt chopping, etc.) will only hurt the image of the whole community. In "wars", it is always the rock that is the loser.

9 Climbers are responsible for their own actions. "Following trends", or "Thinking it was okay", are never sufficient justifications for errors in judgement – individuals are responsible for their own decisions, and need to answer to their community for them. We also need to recognize that people will follow examples, and need to remember this when we make a radical move.

10 We recognize the need for sensible consistency within areas, and on climbs, regardless of grade.

Although the fist ascentionist always has the right of style, it is suggested that climbs should be sensibly offered to the whole community. This guideline should help in decisions regarding having one piece of natural protection in an otherwise bolt-protected area; whether the 5.11 climber should bother placing bolts on the first ascent of a 5.8 slab, etc.

11 We can't please everyone.

Guidelines for the style of route creation

1 Objective safety is a priority.

It will always be the prerogative of the first ascentionist to forge a technically or mentally demanding route, but it is strongly encouraged that objective safety not be compromised. If resident gear is left, it should be placed as well as possible. Gear should be of a quality to permit a volume of future ascents, or a warning should be circulated. When cleaning a route, the safety of others should be a priority, both during the creation of the route, and in the condition the route is left in by the first ascensionist. Scree on the tops of crags, for example, should be cleaned as well as possible.

2 The first ascentionists have the rights of decision. They should be asked to consent to changes to a route (retro-bolting, etc.), but it also needs to be acknowledged that the style of a climb has a place in history.

First ascentionists have the right to establish the route of their choice, but there are parameters to this right. If an area is designated by consensus to be reserved for a certain style of climbing, then this should be respected. Equally, if consensus dictates that a climb has historic value then changes should not be made to that route regardless of the agreement of the first ascentionists, and first ascentionists themselves should be discouraged from changing the route after the fact. The rights of the first ascentionists do not constitute ownership of the rock.

3 Some areas need to be protected as reserves of tradition. Traditional forms of climbing, particularly the bottom-up, clean protections style, were felt to warrant areas of preservation. The Forum suggested that Yamnuska should be afforded this status, with a ban on top-down, and retro-bolted routes, except to improve stations and replace clearly dangerous fixed gear.

4 In all areas, it is legitimate to retro-fit belay and top-rope anchors when required to improve safety.

5 The intentional artificial creation of holds (chiselling, chipping or epoxying of new holds) is illegal in the National Parks, and is not acceptable in other areas.

6 Minimize your impact.

On limestone, there will always be a gray area between cleaning and hold creation - be reasonable, and don't play games with yourself. Always ask if a route is worth doing. Is it ever worth cutting down a tree, or damaging a beautiful clean piece of rock? Keep scrubbing and lichen/vegetation damage to a minimum. Stay on established trails during approach and descent.

7 Fixed gear should be unobtrusive. Camouflage your bolt hangers and the top-rope chains.

8 On pre-inspected, pre-cleaned, pre-worked routes minimize the potential for injury.

Climbing will never be truly free of hazard, but it is an essential element of sport-climbing that the potential for injury be minimized. The object on these routes is to throw out a fair challenge, not to hurt or sandbag a fellow climber. Protect against body contact with the rock, especially in ground falls. Work a route through fully before bolting it to ensure placements are right and wastage is minimized. Traditionally-protected routes in a sport-climbing area may be inherently dangerous unless obviously identified.

9 A sport climb should be safe at its grade, on-sight.

The 5.8 leader should not be hurt by a poorly-protected 5.8 at a sport-climbing area. This guideline also applies to a 5.8 first pitch of a multi-pitch 5.12. There is a dearth of easier climbs in the area, so think of the community and protect your routes adequately.

10 Bolting and other fixing of protection should be done responsibly, with attention to proximity of other routes, adequacy or over adequacy of protection, etc. climbers must seriously, and hopefully communally, consider whether bolting a specific line is justified by the quality of the line.

11 Respect the efforts of others creating routes.

A rope may sit for a long while on a route that you want, but responsible creation of a climb in this area can take time and considerable effort. When a party is actively working on a route (defined by obvious cleaning and/or pre-placement of gear in a sport-climbing area), stay off the route.

12 Honesty should be a prime factor in both the creation and reporting of routes.

Routes should be created with a willingness to report all details of the first ascent style. If you alter the rock, have the courage to admit so in public. Climbs should be graded and protected for a no-beta, on-sight lead. Don't protect a route as though every subsequent climber will know all the key sequences or hidden holds. A route should be red pointed before it is considered "completed". If you

cannot live by these rules, you should not be creating routes.

13 Painting of route names and other desecration is illegal in the National Parks and strongly discouraged elsewhere.

Current action suggestions

Several issues were identified at this year's Forum as deserving of attention in the form of direct action. These are offered to the public in this document and will also be directly addressed to specific funding bodies.

1 Several high-use climbing areas, notably Cougar Creek and Grotto Canyon require toilet facilities. Various groups will be approached about sponsoring such an effort.

2 For the sake of ensuring safety and minimizing environmental impact in the sport-climbing areas, local retailers will be approached about the possibility of the funding and administration of a pool of naturally-colored gear to be used exclusively for the installation and maintenance of high-use belay stations. It was suggested that this pool be kept at local stores.

3 The cutting down of trees, both on routes and at the base of climbs, was identified as a serious concern in some of the local canyons, and it was strongly suggested that climbers refrain from seeing routes as so valuable that they warrant the killing of trees.

4 Recent developments regarding access to Cougar Creek suggest the sport is about to have its first real encounters with political forces. It was felt that similar problems might also emerge regarding access to Stoneworks with the continuing development of the Hyatt Regency Hotel. It was advised that the best individual position to take on these issues was to continue to lobby the Town of Canmore to create Municipal Reserves to permit access to these areas—if your voice is not heard, the areas may be closed to us.

We clearly do not support the vandalism of a few in destroying the Cougar Creek signage.

5 It was strongly supported that recent rumblings of efforts to develop Lake O'Hara as a sport-climbing area be stopped in their earliest stages. We propose that Lake O'Hara constitutes one of the sacred areas mentioned earlier, and demands no fixed gear.

Ecological Adventure

David Harris

Manifesto of the Montagna Avventura 2000 Conference

- It is time to recognise that we are in the dawning of an era of ecologically-sound adventure.
- In today's shrinking world a mountain journey must show extraordinary sensibility.
- CLEAN AND LIGHT will be our motto as we climb and travel with minimum impact on the mountain, its people and environment.
- This includes removing all equipment and refuse from the mountain and its approaches.
- We encourage the expansion of mountain preserves and the respect for their integrity. A BARRIER OF FATIGUE - a buffer zone that demands physical effort to pass through is needed to protect mountain regions.
- We advocate integrating the environment into all aspects of education. This begins in kindergarten and continues to guidebooks, magazines and climbing schools.
- Since the most valid communication is by example, we will strive to live by these principles ourselves.

Montagna Avventura 2000 is a biennial conference held in Florence. It is a four-day gathering of climbers from around the world with discussions on a variety of alpine topics - adventure, education, literature - all focused on encouraging us to give back to the mountains as much as we take from them.

The 1991 conference concluded with the preparation of the above manifesto by a group of about 15 climbers chaired by Chris Jones, and its near-unanimous endorsement by all present. The document was not completed until near the end of the conference, so there was not time for lengthy debate on its wording. I suspect that many of those present would have argued for some small change here, or a different phrase there, but there was overall agreement that this was a good summary of the four days of presentation and debate.

The following people attended the conference and while I can't say with certainty that everybody signed I suspect that all, or almost all, did.

Valentina Antinori	Italy	Franca Gattini	Italy
P. Luigi Bini	Italy	GiancarloGazzola	Italy
Leonardo Bizzaro	Italy	Bernard Germain	France
Barry Blanchard	Canada	MaurizioGiordani	Italy
David Brower	USA	Angelo Giovagnoli	Italy
Brunetta Brunoni	Italy	Cristina Giovagnoli	Italy
Oscar Cadiach	Spain	Eugenj Gippenreiter	USSR
Gianni Calcagno	Italy	Carlo Giuntini	Italy
Tiziano Cantalamessa	Italy	Kitty Calhoun Grissom	USA
Gabriella Ceccatelli	Italy	John Harlin III	USA
Mary Ellen Chatwin	Switzerland	David Harris	Canada
Greg Child	USA	John Hart	USA
Jacopo Ciampolini	Italy	P. Jaccod	Italy
John Cleare	UK	Chris Jones	USA
Elena Cosenza	Italy	Jon Krakauer	USA
Eric DeCamp	France	Jeff Lowe	USA
Catherine Destivelle	France	Paolo Maddalena	Italy
Giorgio Daidola	Italy	Janusz Majer	Poland
Michele Da Pozo	Italy	Rosana Manfrini	Italy
Kurt Diemburger	Austria	Roberto Mantovani	Italy
Suman Dubay	India	Sergio Martini	Italy
Enrico Ercolani	Italy	Armando Menocal III	USA
Miri Ercolani	Italy	Pat Morrow	Canada
Assia Fabi	Italy	Sally Moser	USA
Bruce Fairley	Canada	lleana Napoleone	Italy
Oreste Forno	Italy	Bernard Newman	UK
Giorgio Gabbi	Italy	Roberto Palagi	Italy
Al Reid	USA	Stefano Righetti	Italy
Daniele Remotti	Italy	lacopo Roda	Italy
Claude Remy	Switzerland	Lalli Roda	Italy
Dario Rodriquez	Spain	Paolo Roda	Italy
Walter Silverio	Peru	Marco Scolaris	Italy
Galen Rowell	USA	Roberto Seragin	Italy
Dinu Solojean	Romania	Paola Tantucci	Italy
Allen Steck	USA	MirellaTenderini	Italy
John Thackray	USA	F. Thomasset	Italy
Cristiano Virgilio	Italy	Marco Tonini	Italy
Roberta Vottorangeli	Italy	EugenioTurri	Italy
Jon Waterman	USA	Gionanni Valdre	Italy
Ed Webster	USA		
Krzysztof Weilicki	Poland		
Gordon Wiltsie	USA		

Naming Canada's geographical features

Ted Whalley

Introduction

It is not unnatural that those who have climbed a mountain, or visited virgin territory may wish to name what they have climbed or seen. To help those wishing to submit names, the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPCGN) has issued a small pamphlet entitled Naming Canada's Geographical Features (also available in French as La dénomination des entites géographiques du Canada) and a brochure entitled Geographical Names and the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (Les noms géographiques et le Comite permanent Canadian des noms géographiques). All who are interested in the geographical names of Canada, and especially those who intend to propose a name or names, should read this material. Copies can be obtained from the Executive Secretary, Geographical Names, 650-615 Booth Street, Ottawa K1A OE9.

The following text was written by members of the CPCGN's Advisory Committee on Glaciological and Alpine Nomenclature and is the basis of Naming Canada's Geographical Features (!SBN 0-662-17416-X;and for the French-language version, ISBN 0-662-95775-X).

Names and Naming

The naming of geographical features is as old as humanity's sense of place. We need to feel familiar with our surroundings and to relate continually to the world around us.

Features do not move, but people do, and geographical names enable us to express this sense of place in spoken and written language.

Who names Canada's geographical features?

How are the names chosen?

Can members of the public submit names for consideration? How? To whom?

What sort of names are likely to be approved?

Everybody knows that this feature is called Mount so-and-so; how can I get this name on topographic maps?

Can I name this lake after my father, who died last month?

What is the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names?

This text attempts to answer these and other questions about geographical names in Canada.

Geographical Names: Official Versus Unofficial Official names are names that have been approved or authorized by the appropriate authorities on geographical names, which are listed in Appendix A. These authorities keep records of all official names, and publish them in a series of gazetteers, including the Gazetteer of Canada, le Repertoire toponymique du Quebec, the Place Names of Alberta Series, and the Gazetteer of Names of Undersea Features. These gazetteers list alphabetically all official names of physical features, incorporated communities, localities, etc., with their latitudes and longitudes, and map references. They are starting points for anyone interested in place names. Unofficial names, although not approved or authorized, are often widely known and used locally.

Native peoples may have names in well established use for creeks, hills, and other features; mountaineers and hikers commonly name peaks in remote areas that they have visited; fishermen or cottagers may have familiar names for lakes, islands, and coves; logging companies may have names for creeks, both large and small, that are crossed by logging roads.

Such names, while of undoubted local value, do not appear on official topographic maps.

In some cases, a feature may have different official and unofficial names. For example, a particular river in British Columbia is officially called the Zymoetz River, but it is far more commonly called the Copper River by local residents; in Quebec, the rivière aux Mélèzes is known unofficially as Kuuvik or Larch River.

Official names: the decision-making process

The power to accept or reject geographical names lies with the province or territory in which the feature is situated. Exceptions include names in federally-administered lands, such as national parks and Indian reserves. The Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names is a federal-provincial-territorial committee administered by a secretariat in Ottawa. The CPCGN acts in part as a clearinghouse and central registry for all approved names in Canada, but the Committee as a whole has no power to accept or reject a particular name. The Secretariat enters all official, and some unofficial, names into the Canadian Geographical Names Data Base, a computer file from which the official names are drawn for gazetteers and topographical maps, and from which information is retrieved to respond to enquiries. Usually, the geographical-names authorities do not generate new names; most are obtained from the general public.

The authorities responsible for name decisions are listed in Appendix A of this article. In most provinces and territories, only one official name is approved for each place or geographical feature (Alberta is one authority that does not adhere to this policy). As part of the decision-making process, a proposed name is verified to see that it is suitable, and local residents and other experts are consulted to determine if the proposed name is widely known and acceptable. If the name is approved, it is entered into the official records of the appropriate jurisdiction or jurisdictions, and a copy of the record is sent to the CPCGN Secretariat for entry into the Canadian Geographical Names Data Base. The name will then be included in the next edition of the appropriate gazetteer, and on topographic maps and hydrographic charts.

How to propose a name

Proposals for names should be sent to the appropriate provincial or territorial authority. First, contact the appropriate names authorities, which are listed in Appendix A, to obtain any necessary forms or additional information. Then prepare a thorough and well-documented submission that should include the following information:

location of the feature;
reason for proposing the name;
origin, meaning, and significance of the name;
research material you have gathered;
references to previous publications.

Location of the feature

The accurate geographical location and the extent of the feature

are needed. This information ensures that the name, if acceptable, is applied to the feature you intend, helps cartographers to position the name correctly on maps, and avoids duplication of names through quoting ambiguous locations.

Geographical features should be outlined on a copy of a large-scale published map: a 1:50 000 map of the area, if available, otherwise the 1:250 000 map. Be specific and precise; avoid lettering strewn loosely over the map as this makes interpretation difficult. For example, mark creeks with a coloured pencil, and, if a creek has several branches, indicate to which one the name applies. If a mountain has several summits, indicate the one to which the name should be applied and the extent of the named feature. If you are naming a ridge or a cluster of peaks, show which parts of the ridge or which peaks are included in your proposal.

Geographical coordinates, both latitude and longitude, or Universal Transverse Mercator coordinates, should be provided. The coordinates should label the centre of the feature, except for rivers and streams, where they should label the mouth.

If the feature is not shown on the published map, because the map is not detailed enough or is incorrect, position it as accurately as possible, and describe its location with respect to other features. Submit ground photos, copies of air photos, or sketch maps, if available.

Reason for proposing the name

There is not a pressing need to name all geographical features. Most jurisdictions insist not only on a valid name but also on a valid reason for naming a feature. Surveyors, prospectors, and geologists commonly need names for reports on areas where few official names exist. Mountaineering parties in remote areas name features in order to describe where they have been. (Mountaineers should propose names only for the peaks that they have climbed.) Local residents may wish to honour a pioneer of their community, or to have a locally-used name made official. These may or may not be considered valid reasons.

Ownership of a lake does not in itself bring with it the authority to ascribe a name. Similarly, the first ascent of a mountain does not confer the right of naming. Does the mountain need to be named? And, if so, is the name appropriate? Is there another name used by local people? Wishing to honour a living person is almost always an invalid reason for naming a feature.

Origin, meaning, and significance of the name

The geographical names of an area are closely linked with its history. The origins and meanings of such names preserve historical information that might otherwise be lost. Information on the origin or meaning of the name is, therefore, very important.

For example, Mount Janus, in the area of the Exploits River in Newfoundland, was first named by Lieut. John Cartwright and shown on his map of 1768. Owing to the great view the hill commanded in all directions, it was called "Janus" for the double-faced Roman god who could look in opposite directions at the same time. Although lost for generations, this name has recently been reassigned to the feature so designated over two centuries ago.

If the proposed name is a person's, then biographical details are required, such as, for example, a copy of a obituary or an article about the person. The connection of the individual with the feature in question should also be described.

Information on the origin and meaning of other names in the region of your proposal may be included if you wish; such information is always welcome.

Research material you have gathered

The lack of a name for a feature on a map does not necessarily mean that the feature is unnamed. It may already have an official or an unofficial name. List the sources you have consulted in verifying that the feature has no name. Consult books on local history, magazines, newspapers, climbing guides, and sailing directions; talk to knowledgeable local residents, and enquire of government agencies, local historical societies, and Native organizations, which may have relevant information.

References to previous publications

If the name is in local use, indicate how widely it is used. If a feature has more than one name; note which is most commonly used. Indicate if the name appears on any map and provide copies if possible, and give references to books or articles in which the name is used. The publication of a name in books, reports, or on maps does not guarantee official status.

What Is A Suitable Name?

General guidelines for geographical naming are set forth in the booklet Principles and Procedures for Geographical Naming, published by the CPCGN Copies of this booklet are available without charge from the Secretariat. Although they provide a national framework, some aspects of these guidelines may have been modified by particular provincial or territorial authorities. Some have published their own handbooks.

Obscene or derogatory terms, and company or product names, are unsuitable.

Names in general use

First consideration is given to names that are well established in local use. This principle should guide your selection of names. Some names may be long-established in maps, government documents, or other records (climbers' guides and nautical handbooks). Some features have no currently-used names, but may have names that were used in the past. Reference to documents that include the name; should be noted in your proposal.

Creation of new names

For features with no locally used name, the proposed name should have some logical connection with the feature. A name might describe the feature itself, e.g. The Red Pillar, Cats Ears Peak, Plain of the Six Glaciers, lac Rond, and rapides des Sept Soeurs. Names of early settlers, trappers, and explorers may be suitable if the individual or family had a direct connection with the area, for example, Nelson Flat, sous-embranchement Gagné. Features might be named for historical events in the regions, for example, Battle Bluff, pont de la Chute Minée. Repetition of commonly used names or names of nearby features should be avoided.

Dictionaries and lexicons of local native languages of the area might provide ideas for appropriate names, such as, for example, Annuhi River, a Kwakiutl name that means "where hump-back salmon go up".

Commemorative names

Except in unusual circumstances, most jurisdictions will not

approve personal names for features, unless the person has been dead for at least one year and had a strong connection with the feature or area. The once-common practice of naming features for members of the royal family, international or national figures, and personal family members is now strongly discouraged, unless the names are established in local use.

Appendix A: Authorities On Geographical Names

Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board Department of Environment and Lands

Howley Building, Higgins Line P.O. Box 8700 St. John's Newfoundland A1B4J6

Director of Surveys, Department of Natural Resources 780 Windmill Road Torrington Place Halifax, Nova Scotia B3B 1T3

Office of the Clerk Legislative Assembly P.O. Box 2000 Charlottetown, PEI C1A7N8

New Brunswick Geographic Information Corporation P.O. Box 6000 Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 5H1

Président, Commission de toponymie 1245, chemin Sainte-Foy Quebec, Quebec G1S4P2

Ontario Geographic Names Board Ministry of Natural Resources 4th Floor, ICI House 90 Sheppard Avenue East North York, Ontario M2N 3A1

Director of Surveys Department of Natural Resources 1007 Century Street Winnipeg, Manitoba R3H OW4

Saskatchewan Geographic Names Board 2045 Broad Street Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3V7

Geographical Names Programme Historic Sites and Archives Service Alberta Culture & Multiculturalism 8820-112th Street Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2P8

Director, Surveys & Resource Mapping Branch BC Lands Parliament Buildings Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4

N.W.T. Geographic Names Program Government of the N.W.T. Department of Culture & Communications Yellowknife, N.W.T. X1A2L9

Director, Heritage Branch Department of Tourism P.O. Box 2703 Whitehorse, Y.T. Y1A2C6

Director, Historical Research Canadian Parks Service Environment Canada 3rd Floor, Room 303 Les Terrasses de la Chaudiere Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1G2

Director, Lands Directorate Lands and Environment Branch Dept. of Indian and Northern Affairs Les Terrasses de la Chaudiere Ottawa, Ontario K1AOH4

Director of Cartography National Defence Headquarters Ottawa, Ontario K1A OK1

History

Climbing Mount Cheam

Zipporah Barclay

The following article was written by Miss Zipporah Barclay, of Iroquois, Ontario. It was discovered among the family documents of her sister, Mrs. T. Stanley, who died a few years ago, and forwarded to this Journal by Mr. Ken Hewitt.

September, 1897

Having heard of the pleasures of Mountain Climbing, we at last, overcome by the seductive attractions of Old Cheam, resolved to scale its majestic peak. With all the characteristic fluster and excitement of inexperience, we questioned and criticized the instructions of our leader and guide, Mr. Isaac Henderson of Rosedale, as to what we should take with us, while his experience and prowess in mountain climbing should have commanded our confidence and obedience.

Our preparations done, we started from Popcum on the morning of Sept. 14th, 1897. There were eight of us: Mr. Henderson; C.W. Munro; Mr. Elgin Munro; Miss Barclay, Iroquois; Miss Gibb, Vancouver; Miss Lizzie Henderson, Caufield, Ont; Miss Maggie Coverdale, Caufield, Ont; Mrs. C.W. Munro.

Each man carried a pack weighing sixty pounds, comprising of tent, blankets, cooking utensils, flour, sugar, beans, rice, bacon, butter, tea, baking powder, salt, pepper, hardtack, canned goods, soap, combs, towels, shaving outfit, toothbrushes, and "Lyn" medicine. In addition to this each man carried a gun and twenty-five rounds of cartridges, the ladies started with eight loaves of bread among them.

Short-skirted, shod with Hungarian nails, humps on our backs like camels and Alpenstocks in our hands, we looked like a caravan of Oriental pilgrims starting for Mecca. After an hour's climb, we halted for lunch beside a mountain stream which roared by us like a baby Niagara. One of the ladies, in removing her pack of bread, gave us a beautiful exhibition by literally casting it into the turbulent stream. It was, however, rescued as a reward to her faith and the two entire loaves eaten on the spot. This lunch formed a basis of calculation as to how much we would eat in a week. Refreshing ourselves with a final draught from the crystal stream, we set off again, delighted with what we had seen, and the prospect before us. By 5 o'clock we had reached "Forest Camp", an elevation of 2500 feet. Here we pitched our tent and started our camp fires, spreading our blankets for the ladies to rest, while the gentlemen prepared our supper and arranged a bed of boughs for the night. What a supper! Never did bacon taste so good, nor tea so sweet as by that glowing camp fire among those giant trees. This

was camp life, and how we enjoyed it, the wildness of the scene, the intense surrounding darkness, the tea songs sung, the stories told, all conspired to fully engage us in the present. Fatigued with our march and soothed with the sound of murmuring waters, we soon entered dreamland.

Next morning we arose, performed our ablutions in ice cold water and enjoyed a breakfast that would tempt the most fastidious. To our surprise it was nine o'clock. We hastily packed up our outfit and set out for the bluffs. This was a hard climb and tested our powers of endurance. In many places a misstep would have meant instant death. Above the bluff we entered a belt of timber which quite surpassed anything we had ever seen, trees straight as masts from two to three feet in diameter, from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet to the limbs. In this great natural park we admiringly lingered, having our noon meal at an old camping spot. We emerged from this belt of timber reaching the "hog's back" about two o'clock. From here we got our first view of the valley. Also a good view of the peak which seemed as far away as ever. This "hog's back" is an elevated pathway between two deep ravines, at places but a few feet wide. Two hours easy marching through an almost level country brought us to "Prairie Camp" having made an ascent of 3000 feet that day. There we made an immense camp fire which burned all night and enjoyed a luxury of a boughry but mossy bed of ease. The branches of the trees there were covered with a growth of moss which makes a bed equal to the best advertised mattress. After feasting like kings and enjoying an evening of songs and repartee, we enjoyed the sweetest sleep of our lives.

Next morning we strolled around "Camp #4" enjoying emotions which only such surroundings could awaken. Again the order to march was given and we set out in the following order; "Umslopogas", "Pocohantas", "Queen Lil", "Crowfoot", Maumee", "Pauline Johnson", "Minniehaha", and "Oroohyatitsha". So far we had not seen even a squirrel or a bird, but now Umslopogas "smelt blood" and we soon had a brace of blue grouse. By 11 o'clock we had gained the ridge where we in turn, with a field glass, located the places of interest in the valley below. We were at an altitude of 7500 feet and in a wide, almost treeless, country which was a glorious eyelorama of nature's masterpieces. "Surely", said one, "this is paradise regained". Those who have an eye for the beautiful and can recognize the power of a "Supreme Being" in creation have here a feast of beauty and recognize in the result the hand that made it. It was spring like, the heather was in bloom, the bright green foliage like "Mayday", the sunny slopes and wooded hillsides, the gigantic peaks with Mt. Baker in the distance covered with perpetual snow. Nearby was Castle Mountain, with its sentinel ever on guard. Truly this was nature's art gallery, "Far from the maddening crowd".

We then descended several hundred feet and pitched camp in a little valley at the foot of Cheam Peak where we feasted on fried grouse and other delicacies. After dinner two of our braves with a worthy desire to win glory unto themselves in times of peace started for the peak carrying packs of dry wood up a dangerous steep slope of 1000 feet above the timber-line where they prepared to signal our friends below with a beacon when darkness came. This feat accomplished, they made the descent by moonlight to camp where they were greeted with echoing cheers and a supper of beans and bacon, rice, flapjacks, syrup, tea, etc. We slept late. It was Sunday morning and we rested, spending the day in worshipful contemplation of those "Everlasting Hills". An entire forget-fulness of what we had been, seemed to possess our minds. We lived camp life as if it were ours forever.

Monday morning we scanned the heavens above the towering peaks for weather indications, which, to our delight, continued good. Off for the peak, up the precipitous bed of a roaring mountain stream for several hundred feet, we reached a flat mostly covered with snow. We were then between Cheam and "Second Peak". To the East we looked down the most magnificent canyon we had ever seen; a vertical face of rock that baffles description. We then faced our last hard climb, a steep grassy slope of several hundred feet. The sun beamed down on the slope with intense heat, but we pressed forward until we reached the top where a short walk up an easy incline brought us to the peak. There we got a bird's eye view of the country. From an altitude of 8700 feet Chilliwack valley looked like an immense garden. Never had we so fully realized the wonderful possibilities of the Fraser Valley. We seemed to look right down on Agassiz and the Experimental Farm. We had a fine view of the St. Alice Hotel at Harrison Hot Springs, Mission City, The Gulf of Georgia, Vancouver Island range of mountains but what lies to the far North and the far South can only be seen and never described. After registering in the "Post Office", impelled by the majestic grandeur of our surroundings, we joined hands and, with tear-dimmed eyes, sang the doxology, leaving the place, thrilled with emotions we had never felt before, returning to camp with flowers and pieces of rock as souvenirs of our trip.

During the afternoon Umslopogas and Crowfoot left camp, returning in the evening with a nice fat groundhog which was dressed and roasted in true camp style on a "spit" while the rest of the tribe sat expectantly by. When our brave chief had carved and served his savory mess, the unanimous testimony (consult personally) was that, that particular delicate aroma will linger affectionately with us for the remainder of our lives, as a pleasing reminder of our camp life on Cheam. The happiest week of our existence.,

On Tuesday morning, with many regrets, we took down our tent, made up our packs, around which we stood, and with faltering voices sang "To Our Beautiful Father Above", etc., after which we reluctantly left to silence and solitude the place that we had learned to love. With many a backward glance at the camp, then in possession of the live birds which had been our constant guests and would eat from our hands. We crossed the Ridge and began the descent, having dinner at "Prairie Camp", and by six o'clock had reached "Forest Camp", having made a descent of 5000 feet that day. Soon a campfire cheered the place around which we all sat while Maumee made some of those cakes peculiar to the menu of camp life. Tika brewed the tea, and Umslopogas fried the bacon, after which we soon succumbed to that grateful lassitude which takes possession of animals when they are full and once more in the arms of Morpheus.

Wednesday morning, we get a view of the valley thru' the trees and home influences begin to draw us. For a week we had been cut off from all outside communications, no Post Office facilities, no telephone or telegraph to send kindly messages of "all's well" and we wondered how our dear ones had been and what in general had been the news. By noon we had reached the base feeling we had taken a degree, for in reality, not everybody can climb Cheam. Familiar sights and sounds in the Valley recalled us to consciousness of the fact that we were no longer the heroes and heroines which the names so proudly borne for a week suggested, but common white folk, who had to compete in the struggle for

existence. While our escape from even the slightest accident, and happy personnel of our party, and the ideal weather, contributed much to the pleasure of our trip, we were exhilarated physically, mentally and spiritually because of the wondrous beauty which our eyes had beheld.

The mystic landscape

John F. Dormaar

When an Indian desired to know the future course of his life, or to receive knowledge, that would be of value to his tribe, he went off alone upon the plains, or to a remote region among the Rocky Mountains, to fast and pray, sometimes for many days, that he might receive a dream or vision.

McClintock, 1910

The Vision Quest, lasting up to four days, was a widespread phenomenon with the North American Aborigines. It was a central part of the initiation of young men into adulthood. It needed little else but yourself and an isolated setting. The isolated setting was often found on bare hill tops, buttes, or mountain ridges, some distance from camp. Some sites were established near a river or beside a lake. All sites had, therefore, excellent views of the surrounding landscape be it a mountain range, the plains, a river valley, or a lake.

Why should or would someone quest or 'cry' for a Vision? It was, and still is, done for the purpose of self-improvement, to learn about self and to ponder about the future course of life within the tribe. Upon return, the questor would discuss the interpretation of the Vision with the shaman or a wise elder as to its interpretation. The Vision could lead to new tribal songs, to the formation of medicine bundles, or even to the founding of Sacred Societies within the tribe.

Aborigines everywhere, including many of the pre-Christian, pre-agricultural groups in Europe, had and still have special relationships with the land. The land has a sacramental character. Land is resonant with presence. The isolated, and often elevated, site, therefore, belonged in a landscape that was understood. It helped the questor to relate to the whole landscape.

Sanford (1990) stressed that although the Aborigines were the first climbers of many of the mountains of the Rockies, they did not climb to be the first on the summits or to challenge themselves against increasingly difficult routes. Vision Quest sites, therefore, not only represented the physical challenge of the ascent, they also represented spiritual ascension. Sacred sites are not apart from, but are a part of, the total landscape. Thus, the questor can make these other parts of the landscape part of the Vision Quest site and experience.

There have been few comprehensive archaeological examinations of Vision Quest sites. 'Foot prints' of spiritual beings and the questors are not preserved in the archaeological record. The only archaeological evidence of a Vision Quest site usually constitutes a small anthropogenic stone structure.

The structures, if a structure was built, vary in shape and size depending upon the materials locally available. The most common ones are circular (about 1m diam.), oval or U-shaped (1 to 1 1/2m long axis) rock structures. They may consist of a single tier of rocks to several successive tiers. The rocks are loosely piled. The structures go under a number of names, such as vision quest site, dreambed, fasting bed, or prayer seat.

I have now found in my many ridge walks and mountain climbs in southwest Alberta and northwest Montana some seventy sites. As the list of rock features on elevated prominences within this magic landscape grew, a pattern started to emerge. A number of prominent, sacred features are present in this magic landscape, i.e. the Sweet Grass Hills (Kato-yi-six in Blackfoot), Chief Mountain (Nanaistuki in Blackfoot) and Crowsnest Mountain (Ma-sto-eeas in Blackfoot). Almost all Vision Quest sites examined to date look towards one of these sacred features. Other Vision Quest sites, closer to the Calgary region and farther north, similarly allowed the questor to focus on prominent features, such as Mount Muir and Mount Willingdon. I contend, therefore, that Vision Quest sites are deliberately chosen in relation to major sacred features visible in the landscape. That is, sacred summits visible in the distance are an integral part of the Vision Quest experience in this area.

If you, the reader, have ever come across isolated stone features in the shape of a circle, an oval, or a horseshoe, please send me a note. I have checked out, over the years, all information that came my way. I will pay your information the same respect. My address is John F. Dormaar, c/o Agriculture Canada Research Station, Lethbridge, Alberta T1J 4B1.

References:

McClintock,W. 1910. The OId North Trail of Life: Legends and religion of the Blackfeet Indians. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska. 539pp.

Sanford, R. W. 1990. The Canadian Alps. Volume 1: The History of Mountaineering in Canada. Altitude Publishing, Banff AB. 296 pp.

Derek Paul Boekwyt

Derek Paul Boekwyt, aged 23, was killed on February 26, 1992 by an avalanche near Field, BC, while climbing.

Derek's dedication and commitment toward a life in the mountains drew him toward a life of guiding. He was well on his way to becoming a certified guide when he was taken from us.

He will be remembered for his modesty and his unyielding love of the mountains, where he felt most alive and where his spirit would be rejuvenated. He believed strongly that mountaineering was a vehicle in which to discover the inner self and that by doing away with comfort zones and simplifying one's needs, one could discover the true meaning of life.

Derek will be dearly missed by his family and friends. His spirit will always be among the mountains he loved

CareL and Eltje Boekwyt

Niccy Code

On Oct. 27,1992, Niccy Code died suddenly. She slipped, unroped, and fell while instructing a mountain skills course at Leavenworth, Washington.

Words can be barren and simple. The frustration and shock of loss is never depictable. Someone's world has abruptly changed. With so many people affected. And sadness flows with the surges of tides. Again... once again, the climbers here and their families struggle with the difficulties of loss.

Niccy was nearing the end of thirty full years of age. The mountains had become her passion, caring for her spirit like a first love. It was more than eleven years ago when I remember her embracing the mountain sport and lifestyle with an almost awkward uncertainty-but absolute dedication. It didn't take her a second

thought to allow the beauty of the peaks to guide her, fulfill her, and in turn become the medium through which she would soon guide others.

The mountain community of friends in Banff and Canmore is a close one. Niccy was accepted and played more than her part in creating the relaxed atmosphere of friendship amongst her mates. Her recent home was with Barb Clemes and Joe Buszowski. Barb, who with Joe received word of Niccy's death in Switzerland, had adopted Niccy as 'family'. In the same predicament being "so far from all of our siblings and parents" the couple had invited Niccy to their new home nearly three years ago.

Barb and Joe saw the day-to-day Niccy. Her gathering of a mountain of notes of mountains. Sharing lengthy conversations about climbing; about guiding and the dreaded guide's exams; and of course about the people involved, their relationships, and so much of all that kind o' stuff:

Yes - we were a family away from home. We'd squabble and moan about each other's clothes on the floor; wear each other's Hanwag touring boots by mistake; eat each other's food (on purpose!); and blame each other for missing gear (I groaned so much about the guides in the house losing all my Munterbiners that she bought me a special one which had my name engraved on it!)
We'd talk about how far we were from our families, but how we just couldn't return to Toronto. And about Andrea's sisterly tricks for picking up men... and about our moms and how they'd given us earrings and silk scarves and tried to make us wear the stuff and how it would work!
Like sisters we would crowd around topo maps planning ski trips... her showing Joe and I dream lines through guarded and seldom-visited terrain. We all felt her love and enthusiasm for skiing: for crashing through the trees, for sloggin' up for one more run-pushing it till late-then to be out again early the next day.
We also saw her energy for protecting the places she loved. Not everyone could know she would sit up till one in the morning typically at the last minute before a big trip - finishing a letter to Ralph Klein or some other politician...
We talked of friends who had died in the mountains, and about others — Mona, Mary, Meagan, Colleen — and of how much these women had inspired Niccy...
We'd talk about men, and of love... and we would laugh and cry and dream together...

Many would come to appreciate Niccy as both a friend and as a co-worker. She was introduced to the mountains through a three-month Mountain Skills semester at Yamnuska Inc and would later return as a teacher for the same company. Her first instructors would become her mentors, and thus early on she realized the importance of role models. To Dave Stark, one co-worker at Yamnuska, she was inspirational in her drive and complete commitment. She was easily motivated both creatively and actively. Dave remembers "living, laughing and playing with the 'trickster'"; and how she had impressed him on their first trip together to Aster Lake in the Rockies. Playing a waiting game, tent-bound in a storm, it seems that she lived up to her reputation for humor - always joking, laughing, trying to out-gross each other and playing dice games until 2 am. Writing of the attempt on Mt. Joffre, Dave had dropped off into slumber only to be woken two and a half hours later by a jab in the ribs. It was Niccy, of course, looking out, ever-seriously, into the black of the storm in the direction of Joffre.

Mona Kronberg, who met Niccy in '81 while working at Camp Chief Hector, watched Niccy grow in confidence and in

her abilities. She also watched her inspire others—with both her skills and her leadership. Niccy helped initiate Mona's debutante wilderness trips and, combined with later epics, shared experiences that make friendships last forever.

Niccy's motivating of herself and others was her own reward. It almost sounds corny in today's world of materialistic and monetary needs, but her friends and co-workers would attest to her giving it all to her students: the logistics, the experience, the intra-group relating. And, until she would gain the comfort of experience, she would often return home exhausted. Always squeezing in enough volunteer and recreational trips in a year to test the budget, Niccy was never too far into the 'green'. Barb still laughs remembering sitting around the kitchen table one day in March when Niccy suddenly let out a whoop! She couldn't believe it, she'd made it big time... she had finally earned 10,000 dollars in one year.

Well, they all laughed, but it was true. Albeit there were strains of financial insecurity at times (inspired by her Dad, she was squeezing a correspondence business course in between all those trips!), but Nic was rich.

Yes, rich. Rich in the magic of moments and experience: from the days of discovery to the beginnings on Patrol at Marmot Basin... and with Meagan Routley giving the ol' boys at Whistler a hard time.

.. ..unraveling the basics of snow observations under the stern eyes of the 'boxheads' at Rogers Pass: and skiing the best snow of her life with her roomie and pal Mary Clayton, and friend Sylvain - rippin' it up through all the secret glades.

... .with me or Mona or others on many climbing and skiing trips, burrowing into the snow 'like huskies', or blitzing on 5,000km road trips chasing each other's cars like squirrels from the City of Rocks, Idaho to the Valley in California, or to wherever...

... .with Barb in the Bugaboos. Two women on the Becky-Chouinard. Stress, fun, and mutual trust on the big walls...

... .and her laughing at herself and us: those nervy tricks. One couldn't possibly recount them all. Dedicated to the teasing of friends the tricks are lost in the translation. But one several loved (and fell for) involved a Belgian prince (a real figure in the climbing world), several other foreigners, the dastardly Meagan, and a well-knit conspiracy!

Ya, Nic was often 'going for it', driving herself onward. To me Nic was on a bit of a flight, sometimes movin' on as if she wasn't quite there yet. Besides some of the usual difficulties of youth, this gave her a quality that was so basically and beautifully human. I'd sometimes tease her about it: egging her on in jest, or writing little mocking limericks in her 'famous' book of notes, and sometimes trying to tactfully redirect her with a few 'why's' and 'what the hell for's' about it all. But being similar to Niccy in many ways, I knew and could sense when she felt the exhilaration when she was almost there - in life, in laughter, in love.

Incredibly sadly, it is right along this same avenue of worth in Niccy's life that also lies the tragedy. It was a Mountain Skills Semester that 11 years before had brought a score of dreams and a new motivation in life for our friend. And last fall during this same course, returned as an instructor, Niccy climbed her last route.

There is always an emotional hole when a friend, a soulmate, dies. For me it is a hole that never fills. It leaves a space that tells us that person meant something to us, and a space that is best filled with a few thoughts of others...

....of the students, who Niccy may have touched;

... .of James, who guided her spirit in the beginning - and in the end;

.. ..and, of course, of the Code family;

Thoughts from all her friends.

Meanwhile as I write here in a mountain lodge under the shadow of the Adamant Range, the snow still falls and the mountains still stand. The air is cold, quiet and with an oblivious touch that carries away our inconsequential breath.

We move around — in our pleasure— on our skis, on our feet. And hope we leave no mark on this earth's wearied skin. While we wait the snow falls and falls. Softens the harshest lines and dampens the quietest sounds. It is a silence that is for the snowflakes alone.

Colin Zacharias

Roger Neave

Roger Neave died suddenly at his home in Cedar, BC on 17 November 1991: he was 85 years old and was an active climber to the end. Roger's wife of over 50 years, Frances, died in 1990. He is survived by four children (Dennis, Marjorie, Gerald and Vivian), twelve grandchildren and one great-grandchild. He will be sorely missed by them and his many friends across the country who had the privilege of working or climbing with him. Roger devoted himself generously to the many interests that claimed him during his lifetime, but his greatest contribution was to Canadian mountaineering and to the Alpine Club of Canada.

Roger was born near Macclesfield, in England in 1906. He had four brothers and one sister. Two of his brothers, Ferris and Hugh, climbed extensively with him in Canada and made their own significant contribution to Canadian mountaineering. Both predeceased him. Roger came to Canada in 1928, joining his brother Ferris, who at the time was a freshwater biologist with the University of Manitoba. For most of his professional life Roger worked as a civil engineer with the Imperial Oil Company in Sarnia. While in Winnipeg, both brothers were initiated into climbing by Alex McCoubrey, then of the Engineering Department of the Canadian Pacific Railway in Winnipeg and later a president of the Alpine Club.

The initiation grew into a full-blown passion - the mountains of Canada were for Roger a life-long love. Over the years he made some 35 first ascents: the first was in 1929 in the Mt. Toby area of the Purcells with Ferris and McCoubrey. The last was on a 5000 m. peak in the Champara Range of the Cordillera Blanca in Peru with Hugh.

In the 49 years between those events, and after, Roger climbed extensively in the Rockies (including the first ascent of the Molar Tower by Mt. Hector in 1933) and all the major ranges in British Columbia. He made four expeditions into the Premier Group of the Cariboo Range, three into the Stikine Icecap, one to the Yukon, and attended numerous Club Camps. His overseas climbing included two expeditions to the Cordillera Blanca (four first ascents), Africa (Mt. Kilimanjaro), Guatemala, the Alps, and the English Lake District. Roger also led three treks to Nepal, the last being in 1988. He remained an active climber and skier to the end of his life. In 1991, when he was 84, he joined an expedition to the headwaters of the Elaho River in the Coast Range. That year he climbed Mt. Arrowsmith on Vancouver Island for the 20th time. From that perch he was seen gazing wistfully at Mt. Waddington. It was from that same place that in 1925 the Mundays had first sighted that hitherto undetected giant of the Coast Range.

Perhaps Roger was harking back to 1934 when he, Ferris and two others made an epic attempt on Mt. Waddington. They drove from Winnipeg to Tatlayoko Lake in the Chilcotin, no mean feat in those days. They rowed their 275kg of gear down the lake, then, with the help of horses, progressed to the eastern entrance of the Homathko Canyon, a fierce gorge that cuts through the heart of the Coast Mountains to Bute Inlet. As the highest mountain wholly within British Columbia (4016m), Mt. Waddington had attracted widespread attention on its discovery. By 1934 ten expeditions had failed in their attempts to climb the main summit tower. All those parties followed the Mundays who approached it via the Franklin Glacier on its southwest side. Roger and Ferris suspected the rock strata on the summit tower would favor an approach from the east. They spent three weeks relaying loads down the Homathko, crossing turbulent creeks (one crossing took two days) and climbing high to avoid vertical canyon walls. They eventually reached the Tiedemann Glacier and pioneered what is now the "tourist" route to Spearman col - a major achievement in those days and still one fraught with objective hazards. The fine weather they had up to that point disappeared. After waiting out a storm for two days, they were forced by short supplies to make their attempt. They climbed in blizzard conditions, hacking hand and foot holds out of the ice, and were within 150m of the summit when they had to make the difficult decision to retreat. They spent the night in a bergschrund, then were compelled to return to base camp quickly, as they were out of food. The return trip was an epic of equal proportions, exacerbated by their lack of provender. Climbers familiar with the Coast Mountains will recognize the irony of the fact that the sun shone relentlessly during their retreat. Two peaks in the Waddington massif that lie to the east of Mt. Grenville have been named Mt. Roger and Mt. Ferris: a fitting memorial to their attempt.

Roger's love of the mountains led him to devote much of his time to Alpine Club affairs and in recognition of his leadership he was awarded the Silver Rope. He was a frequent leader at Club camps, and when he was elected to the Board of Management, he brought to it his practical common sense, as well as an instinct of what was appropriate. He led a spirited campaign to keep the old clubhouse on Sulphur Mountain, in Banff, and vigorously opposed the move to Canmore: many consider his position the correct one in retrospect. After he retired in 1968 he spent two summers supervising the Banff clubhouse operation. In 1967, while he was President, the Club sponsored and organized the Yukon-Alpine Centennial Expedition. Roger was on the Board when the idea germinated; he gave this imaginative and ambitious project his wholehearted support. His close friend and climbing companion, David Fisher, was the expedition organizer, and they worked closely and in harmony with countless others to put over 250 climbers into one of the most remote and spectacular wilderness areas on the continent. Roger attended the General Mountaineering Camp that year on the Steele Glacier and made two of the many first ascents recorded by that expedition. The success of the whole venture was in part due to Roger's steady leadership.

Apart from climbing, Roger had a myriad of interests. He was a competent canoeist, a pianist, a weaver, a fine badminton player, an apiarist, and an excellent carpenter: he built several houses. In Sarnia he was deeply involved in figure skating, organizing carnivals and judging events. During the war, Roger contributed by helping Rex Gibson train troops in mountaineering skills. He must have been an admirable instructor as his technical skills on ice and rock were of a high caliber.

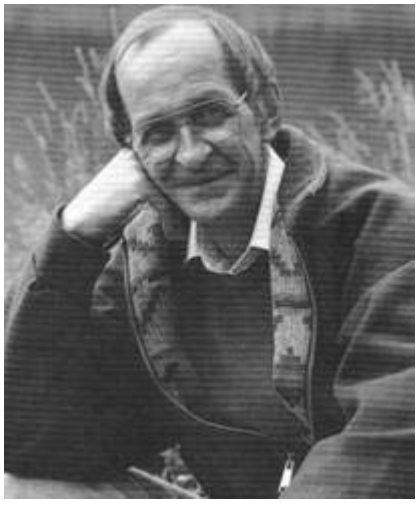
When a person is in the forefront of any calling or profession for over five decades, he acquires an almost mythical quality. Roger was too pragmatic and down-to-earth to encourage such impressions. He was a small, wiry man of surprising strength. Whenever he put on his boots and donned his parka and pack, he acquired an extra dimension; his face would light up, and his enthusiasm would infect even the most reluctant. Alex McCoubrey described Roger and Ferris in this way in 1929:

"While on the summit, in an absent-minded moment, I suggested that we traverse the peak by descending on the west side and then working our way around and over the approach arête, back to camp. The suggestion was hailed with wild enthusiasm by my companions. I have since learned caution in proposing fancy routes to my friends. The more impossible-looking the route, the greater enthusiasm it provokes in them, and one cannot keep one's self-respect by withdrawing the suggestion."

Roger retained this quality until the end. He never lost that boyish enthusiasm. On one trip with Hugh in the Stikine Icecap in 1981 -he was then 75 years old - the two brothers and the rest of the party engaged in a snowball fight on the glacier that lasted an hour. Roger and Hugh enjoyed it the most, laughing and behaving as if they were 60 years younger. Roger's death is a sad, yet major, milestone in the annals of Canadian mountaineering. His passing is a great loss to the Alpine Club of Canada, as well as to his family and the many people who had the privilege of being his friend.

Ralph Hutchinson

Jon Whyte



Jon Whyte was born in Banff, Alberta, on the Ides of March, 1941. The scion of

one of Banff s bedrock pioneer families, Jon remained in Banff until 1956 when he moved with his mother to Medicine Hat. After receiving a B.A. and an M.A. in Medieval English at the University of Alberta, Jon then advanced to Stanford University in California. While at Stanford, he pursued a second Masters degree, this time in Communications. As part of his course work for this degree Jon completed a short biographical film on the early horse packer and guide Jimmy Simpson, a film that would later become a local classic in that genre. In 1968, Jon returned to Banff permanently where he was able to apply his considerable mental prowess to the writing of poetry and prose that reflected a profound appreciation for life in the Canadian Rockies.

As the manager of Banff s famous Book and Art Den, Jon took it upon himself to react productively to the paucity of good natural and human history writing in Western Canada. Over the next twenty-four years Jon wrote or contributed to more than twenty books on the Rockies. His best-known works include, The fells of brightness: some fittes and starts, (1983), The fells of brightness: Wenkchemna, (1985), Indians in the Rockies, (1985) and his little gem, Tommy and Lawrence: The Ways and the Trails of Lake O'Hara, (1983). One of the finest of his mountaineering poems, "The Agony of Mrs. Stone", was written about the death of Winthrop Stone on Mt. Eon in July of 1921. Those who have been fortunate enough to have heard Jon recite this poem will remember his considerable skills of oratory. Jon Whyte could tell you stories that were fifty years old and give them the urgency and the drama that made them seem they happened only yesterday.

As the Curator of Heritage Homes at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, an institution founded by his aunt, Jon also committed himself to the encouragement of other local writers in their efforts to come to grips with the history and culture of the Rockies. The mountain writers that he influenced included Brian Patton, Bart Robinson, Sid Marty, Peter Christensen and many, many others. But Jon did not confine his interest in art to the Rockies. Over the twelve years that Jon worked at the Whyte, he held court over an entire generation of visiting Canadian and foreign artists, writers, musicians and thinkers. He also knew many of the world's most active mountaineers and guides. Using the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies as a vehicle, he was able to elevate the culture of Banff from that of a transient tourist town to a cosmopolitan center for landscape and art appreciation.

Jon's association with the Alpine Club of Canada was also a long one. His involvement with the Banff International Festival of Mountain Films spans the entire sixteen year the life of that festival. Most writers and historically-minded mountaineers, however, will remember Jon as a reliable and inexhaustible source of information. It seemed that everyone would come to him before bothering to go to the Archives for assistance they needed on historical fact. As climber Chic Scott said after his death, "everybody will have to do their own research from now on."

Though Jon Whyte could not be strictly defined as a mountaineer, he was one of Canada's greatest modern contributors to the understanding of mountain landscape and the appreciation of mountain culture. He was also one of the area's fiercest and most uncompromising advocates of landscape preservation and protection. In his passing, Jon Whyte leaves a big hole in the mountain community, one that might take many people to collectively fill.

It is hoped by Jon's friends that his spirit will be able to wander freely over the Castleguard Meadows near the Columbia Icefield, a place he loved dearly and visited before he died. His great love of these meadows was a seed first planted in him by a poem written by Jim Deegan and John Porter entitled "Castleguard Plateaus", published in 1977 in a book he encouraged called Timberline Tales. It is by his wish, that I quote the last two stanzas.

Upon my death, my soul, I pray,
shall range from crag to crag,
from turquoise lakes and on to wide meadows,
shall call the wild.

In the high reaches of the Rockies
you may find me,
until the Creator calls
each to his reward.
In the Castleguard -
steps to infinity.

R.W. Sandford

Other Passings

Gerald A. Birks
Roger Clapp
Lutz Dannenbaum
Fred Maurice
Daniel A. Reid

Selected Alpine Climbs In the Canadian Rockies

By Sean Dougherty, Rocky Mountain Books, Calgary, 1991 320 pages, softcover, many B&W photos $19.95 ISBN 0-921102-14-3

Editor's note: Given the importance of the Rocky Mountains to Canadian climbing, a new guidebook to that range is de facto the most important climbing-related publication likely to be reviewed in this journal. In an effort to give the subject its due I have therefore decided to publish two separate reviews.

Selected Alpine Climbs in the Canadian Rockies is a book written for mountain lovers. Mountain lovers whose consummate passion for the hills will have their hearts racing after viewing only the first of many spectacular photos within the covers of the book. Although written by an "extreme" climber, it contains a wide-enough variety of difficult and easy climbs to appeal not only to adrenaline junkies, but to those who like their mountaineering at a much more sublime level as well.

Mr. Dougherty has put two years into its writing, and has given careful attention to such relevant information to the visitor as car rental, accommodations, eateries and even pubs, mentioning many business establishments by name. Of perhaps even greater relevance to both locals and visitors alike is the careful attention given to describing approaches and descents, which, as most of us know, can often be the most aggravating and/or harrowing part of a climb. This attention is facilitated by the use of both topos, in the case of approaches to huts, and road access maps, as in the case of the Bush River access to Mt. Bryce. With the changeable nature of things, it is hard to say how long these maps will remain accurate, but they will definitely save the mountaineer a lot of time and frustration in the meantime.

Dougherty has attempted to select, from the many hundreds of mountains in the Rockies, a list of the classics - those peaks that, over the years, because of their beauty, difficulty or setting have become greatly regarded, and thus (in some, but not all cases) often-climbed favorites. In this endeavour I feel that, with a couple of exceptions, he has succeeded quite well. One has to realize that when one compiles any list of "greatest hits", one will never be able to include all of everybody's favorites. Personally, I can't figure out why he completely ignored the Wapta Icefields with such classics as Mt. St. Nicholas, Mt. Collie and Mt. Baker; but as I said, it is impossible for the guidebook writer to satisfy everyone, and I'm sure that each reader will have his own pet criticism in that respect.

The photos range from fair to spectacular, and for those with the yen and energy to seek out new routes, some of them will definitely serve as new-route prospecting guides.

Credit must also be given to the publishers who, without having constructed a $20 plus guide book built to withstand an avalanche, have nevertheless constructed a book that is both small enough (13 x 18cm) and tough enough to endure many trips in the top flap of one's pack.

Sean Dougherty has produced a fine and useful book that is, according to the publisher, seventy years overdue. If this book does not make you want to "put on your boots and go", maybe you should take up golf.

Clive Cutler

There has been a recognised need for this book for many years, a need that has increased through the eighties as the Rockies has really come of age as a climbing area.

The Rockies provide unique alpine challenges - there is nowhere else in the world that has the mix of reasonable remoteness, scale, rock and weather that can be found here - and the opening section on "Climbing in the Canadian Rockies" provides a good description of the unusual attributes of this fine area. (Dave Cheesmond, who was the driving force behind much of the recent hard climbing, is quoted as saying that if you can climb here you can climb anywhere.) It also, rightly, points out that to attempt any of the harder routes one must ingest a diet of local limestone beforehand. The introduction also includes vital observations on Rockies grading (essential reading if you're new to the area) and informative passages on route approach, "Travel Info" and even "Officialese".

The layout, which runs from to south to north along the continental divide, is logical. The book is well written (except for some of the wisecracks, which get repetitious) and the photos are excellent, with the routes clearly marked in red. Good closeups are used on particularly large features like the Emperor Face of Mt. Robson. Titles are highlighted well and there are convenient summary boxes for each area. It's a nice production.

My major complaint is that there are not enough sketch maps —the visiting climber will have difficulty with the location of some of the peaks. The four sketch maps included are certainly useful but do not cover the whole area. The overview is fine, but enlargements for each of the five major areas would have been much better than the three focused on the Columbia Icefields. Also, the main Icefields map gives a misleading impression of the Woolley shoulder, Cromwell is not marked, the area is too large, and North is off to the left— enough to paralyse the neurons of the most experienced orienteer. There are two larger-scale maps but there is no cross referencing, no mention of the maps in the contents, and North is off to the right on one of them.

Minor inconsistencies and omissions can be found fairly easily. I won't bore you with all the details here because they're not that important - suffice it to say that there are historical events that haven't been researched and a couple of climbs that should probably have been included. There is inconsistency, too, in the data provided on the lengths of the climbs.

Some indication of how far one needs to travel before encountering a particular feature is always useful in route finding but this priority information is missing in many cases.

Mr. Dougherty also missed the ideal opportunity to improve on the Roman numeral overall grading. This time-required system could be greatly improved with a plus or minus suffix, particularly on the numerous grade IVs. Consider Mt. Temple: The E ridge, the N Face (Greenwood/Locke), and the NE Buttress (Greenwood/Jones), are all classified as grade IV. While the YDS grades (5.7, 5.8/A2 and 5.8/ Al respectively) add a bit of information about technical difficulty, they tell nothing about overall seriousness. By grading the E ridge as IV-, the NE buttress as IV, and the N face as IV+ a clearer definition of the overall difficulty could be conveyed without losing the information that each climb requires a long day. (By way of comparison, only the N face rates a IV in the old ACC guide.)

The non-local, who will most likely be inspired to select dream routes, must

also realise that the route descriptions, although given care, are not perfect. Even on the much-travelled Greenwood/ Locke the description is confusing in the third paragraph, and omits the righthand variation - the only sensible way to go whenever the corner crack is wet (which is often). My point here is not to quibble over descriptions, but rather to underscore the relatively unexplored nature of the Rockies and the reliance that the climber must have on his own route finding abilities. (At the end of the seventies most of the 'grand cours' in this book were unclimbed or had received only one ascent, and even now, of the nine grade VIs listed the only one to have received repeat ascents is the N face of Alberta — and you can count those on one hand. This is generally wild and untravelled country.)

This is a good book. It could stand some fine tuning for the next edition, but overall it is the right size, the right length, is well published and well bound. If you are alpine climbing in the Rockies, especially as a visitor, this is the book to get.

Trevor Jones

The World of Lake Louise– A Guide for Hikers

Don Beers, Highline Publishing,

240 pages, soft cover, 90 color photographs,

101 black & white photographs, 9 contour maps, 64 hike descriptions.

$24.95 (hardcover), $19.95 (paper) ISBN xxx

Overview

This book is the definitive guide to the Lake Louise area for a hiker who wants more than just an aerobic workout. The author has collected into one volume information on history, geology, flora and fauna, and mixed it with his hike descriptions in an easy-to-read, interesting style.

Hikes

The hikes are grouped - Lake Louise, Paradise Valley, Moraine Lake, Skoki, Baker Creek, Castle Junction and Boom Lake. I've hiked only a quarter of the ones described (over about 15 years) and the descriptions in the book mirror my memories. Detail is rich and the pictures show you what you'll see when you get there (if you have Beers' luck with the weather gods). The guide tells you what to expect in the way of difficulties and scenery, and provides enough detail to keep you from getting lost.

Natural History

The book provides answers to all the standard questions. What made these mountains? What kind of rock is that? Why is the lake that blue color? What kinds of trees are these? Is that a deer or an elk or a moose? Where do we find the bears? Are they dangerous? How far up the tree should we climb to be safe?

History

Explorations by white men, surveys, railroad building, early tourists, mountaineering, the Swiss guides, the ACC, skiing, chalet building, the National Park and the Park Service, wartime internment camps, bear stories, people stories... And why Lake Agnes is named after two women named Agnes.

Pictures

This book is worth buying for the pictures alone. The color photographs, most by the author, will make any visiting photographer jealous of the opportunities denied him by the limitation of a two week vacation. I'd like to stand on the Saddleback some autumn morning when the larches are golden and the summit snowfield on Temple shines against a deep blue sky. I might never be so lucky, but at least now I know what I'm missing.

Many pictures accompany the hike descriptions. Historical photos, from various archives, go along with the historical stories. There are even bear pictures, one taken from a tree, to illustrate a classic bear story.

Place Names

I'm interested in names, and I like to know what they mean. Don Beers provides a gazetteer of place names that tells who this mountain was named for, by whom, and sometimes why. Many of the names have stories - some heroic, some humorous. I enjoyed them all.

Criticisms

Although by no means a coffee-table book, it's a bit too big and much too pretty to be taken along on hikes. Perhaps an inexpensive version could be printed, without pictures and history and stories, as a pocket companion for hikers.

The only error I found was the altitude of Mount St. Piran (given on p49 as 9150ft [2789m]). The photo on p48 shows it as lower than Fairview (9001ft [2744m]) and my topo sheet puts it between 8600 and 8700ft [2620 and 2650m]. Picky, picky, picky.

Summary

I really enjoyed reading the book, and recommend it to any hiker planning to visit the Lake Louise region, or to anyone just interested in this very scenic and historic bit of Canada.

David Brown

Towards the Unknown Mountains

by Rob Wood, Ptarmigan Press 1991 124 pages, hardcover, some photographs $34.95 ISBN 0-919537-18-9

Rob Wood has set out, as he says in his foreword, not to catalogue his achievements, but to suggest through his experiences "the presence in the natural world of... a unifying and connecting principle." From a youthful initiation in England through adventures on the big walls of El Capitan and Asgard and the awe-inspiring frozen waterfalls and shattered faces of the Rockies to his 'taking root' on the Coast of BC with concomitant sorties to Waddington, Colonel Foster, and the sea, he displays and writes of a remarkably questing spirit.

Plainly he is concerned (and to judge from his descriptions of his early days, has always been concerned) with grander issues than the climb at hand. Again and again phrases such as: "the emphasis was not so much on who had done the hardest climbs ... as living the outdoor life to the fullest", or "what climbing is really all about is freedom", or "it is the commitment to the true self of the environment... that generates the self-reliance, self-confidence and self-sufficiency necessary for safety and self-discovery" display a mind at work on the problems of life. Whether you agree with his conclusions or not (and I have to say here that in the most part I do not- how long ago did you cease believing that the Club of Rome's dire predictions had any credence, or that the future of the planet lies in self-sufficient villages?), his book is worth the read. It'll make you think, and that is never a bad thing.

And whether you feel the urge to be at one with the wilds to the extent that the author does or not, there could be few mountaineers who do not empathize with the concluding words of the book, Thoreau's dictum that "in wilderness is the preservation of the Earth." Certainly Mr. Wood does more than empathize - he lives the life and, to paraphrase Doug Scott in the foreword, there could be few things more satisfying than savoring a great climb in good company, arguing about such things!

Don Serl

Eiger Dreams: Ventures Among Men and Mountains

by Jon Krakauer
Lyons and Burford
$17.95

For frequent readers of mountaineering literature, it hardly needs to be said that great climbers don't necessarily make great writers. In the truly amateur tradition, magazine articles and books about climbing are often aimed at a specific audience. Readers are often interested in other aspects of the climb separate from the narrative such as the technical route details and accompanying photographs. Indeed, the number of true "mountaineering writers" is fairly small; most authors are climbers (or photographers) first and writers second.

Eiger Dreams is an anthology of magazine article written by Seattle resident Jon Krakauer. These stories originally appeared in magazines as diverse as Outside, New Age Journal, and Smithsonian, which are more in the mainstream of general interest publications. The audience here is the casual outdoors person whose palms sweat at the thought of anything much harder than an exposed Class III ridge ramble, but who knows enough to tell you which country the Eiger is in, or that Denali is the informal name for Mt. McKinley.

While experienced climbers might think that writing for a general audience would mean wading through rudimentary descriptions of "protection" and "belay stance", Krakauer plays down the technical aspects and writes more about the sport's far more interesting demimonde. Although it's evident from the preface that Krakauer is an experienced climber in his own right, his writing on the sport owes as much to social commentators such as George Plimpton as it does to Reinhold Messner. He ain't no wimp, but he ain't Peter Croft either.

And who is? The beauty of Eiger Dreams is that when he's off on his own, Krakauer gets scared shitless just like the rest of us (cf. "The Devil's Thumb") and is not afraid to say so. In stories which recount personal epics, Krakauer's narrative is so well-paced and realistic that I wonder if he flips out his notebook and starts scribbling away madly in mid-belay. The range of characters, conditions, and emotions recorded in the immensely entertaining "Club Denali" resemble '70s style New Journalism pioneered by writers like Tom Wolfe.

His stories on the climbing scene are as sure-footed as a Destivelle toehold. Whether writing about campground enmity between various Euro-climbers in Chamonix or profiling the antics of the notorious Burgess brothers, he brings a refreshing "everyman" candour to the mountaineering experience. Here's a guy who knows he's not a member of the hardcore elite (but who once had those 'Eiger Dreams' all the same) but can recognize arrogance and attitude as easily as the profile of the Matterhorn. Still, open-minded insiders can read Krakauer and get a good laugh from his pointed commentary or person foibles.

Perhaps my only quibble with this collection is that I've been a fan of Krakauer for several years now and have read most of this stuff before. This is the weakness of any anthology, but it would have been a nice touch if there had been one or two stories written exclusively for this book.

In the preface, there is an acknowledged debt repaid to David Roberts, another writer whose writing skill surpasses his numerous climbing accomplishments. In examining the quixotic reasons why men climb, Krakauer's style closely resembles Robert's own ponderings. Neither writer succumbs to cheap sensationalism, macho posturing, or self-indulgent philosophizing. They are aware that in the grand scheme of things, climbing really doesn't matter a damn. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, it is perhaps a fitting tribute that many readers routinely confuse articles written by these two, since they often write for the same publications.

The best way to sum up my feelings about Krakauer and Eiger Dreams is to say that after I've read one of these stories I think, "God, I'd buy that guy a beer any day."

The Sixteenth Annual Banff International Festival of Mountain Films

It was, as usual, another unusual autumn in Banff. The sixteenth annual festival of mountain films attracted 4,500 people to the Rockies last November to watch French film makers walk away with prizes in the most prestigious film categories. It wasn't the dominance of the French films, however, that affected many of the film-goers. It seemed, from this festival at least, that environmental and social issues are beginning to impinge directly into what was once a very comfortable weekend watching climbers risk their lives on dangerous but clearly very beautiful mountains. Take, for example, the film Matterhorn My Love, an incisive film about the tourism rape of the Matterhorn and the lovely town that once flourished discreetly in the shadow of that famous peak. Winner of the prestigious award for the Best Film on Mountain Environment, this film was so hauntingly symbolic of what was happening in the festival venue of Banff and in nearby Canmore that it was almost painful to watch.

Another film shown at the festival on the growth of skiing in Japan was an Orwellian nightmare of over population and wholesale destruction of mountain landscape that viewers could barely watch without gasping. Stealing Altitude, which won the prize for the Best Film on Mountain Sports had equally troubling overtones. Poignantly produced on a shoestring budget by John Stan and Roger Teich, the short but spell-binding film introduced the audience to the clandestine and highly illegal sport of parachute jumping from sky-scrapers in Los Angeles. Though utterly deserving of the award, the film called into question exactly where the spirit of climbing and mountaineering were going in this increasingly crowded and materialistic world.

The Best Film on Climbing was the slick, extreme-climbing drama Totem, in which the audience was introduced to an interesting pair of very committed climbers and a photographer who dogged their every forward advance up a perpendicular volcanic dyke in the American Southwest so that he could shoot more advertising pictures. Pretty slick production, and entertaining too. But nowhere in it was there even a hint of anything but the basest reasons for making a climbing film. It was as much a film about advertising invading our last sanctuaries as it was about the spirit of adventure.

The Grand Prize of the Festival went to Chasseurs de Tenebres, an elegantly produced French film about swallows' nest hunters in the Andaman Islands on the coast of Thailand. Though this beautiful film portrayed some very interesting climbing techniques, it, too, was troubling in that once again we saw human beings invading yet another last natural refuge in order to make money from nature.

Though messages about the spiritual nature of mountains and mountaineers may have been obscured in many of the festival's films, they, nonetheless, stood out in bold relief in the many engaging live

programs the festival offered. There were very interesting and highly-controversial seminars on the moral dilemma of guide books, the directions mountain films should take in the future and on the ethics and practice of eco-tourism.

The special guest at the 1991 Banff Festival of Mountain Films was the highly accomplished Australian/American climber, Greg Child. This highly-respected but unassuming mountaineer not only graced the festival with a dramatic, moving and highly articulate presentation on his Himalayan climbing career, he also contributed significantly to the judging of more than 120 films and videos from ten countries that were entered into the festival.

The very prestigious Bill March Summit of Excellence Award, sponsored by the One Step Beyond Adventure Group, was presented to Calgary climber Don Forest. The legendary Forest started climbing when he was forty-one and has since climbed every 11,000 foot [3353m] peak in the Rockies. In 1991, at the age of 71, he reached the west summit of Mt. Logan, the highest mountain in Canada. Lots of authentic mountain spirit in this man. This award is a fitting tribute to one of Canada's finest gentlemen climbers.

The best films and videos of the Banff Festival will tour to nearly forty centers in three countries. The Seventeenth Annual Festival will be held November 6th to 8th, 1992.

R.W. Sandford

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