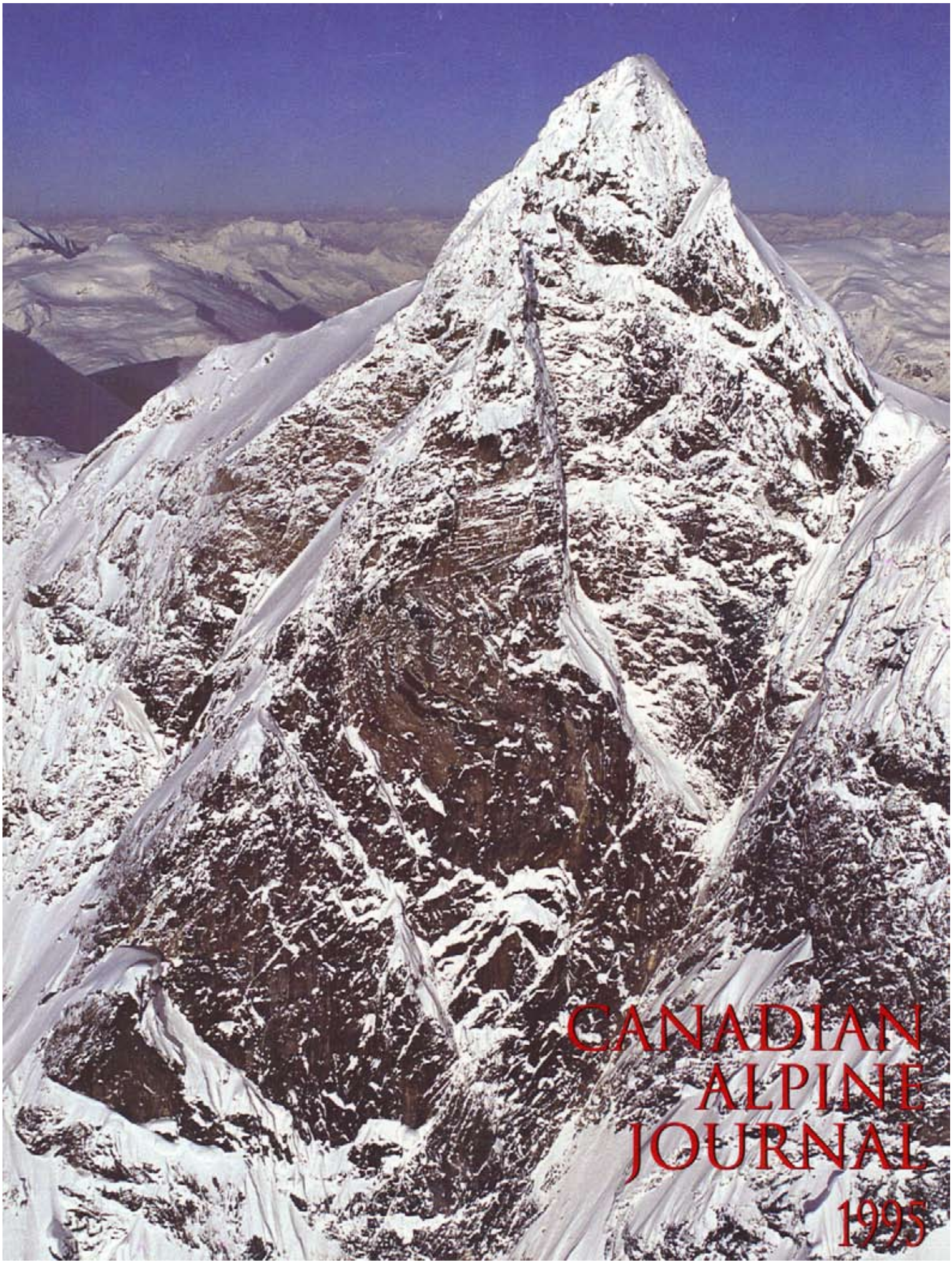

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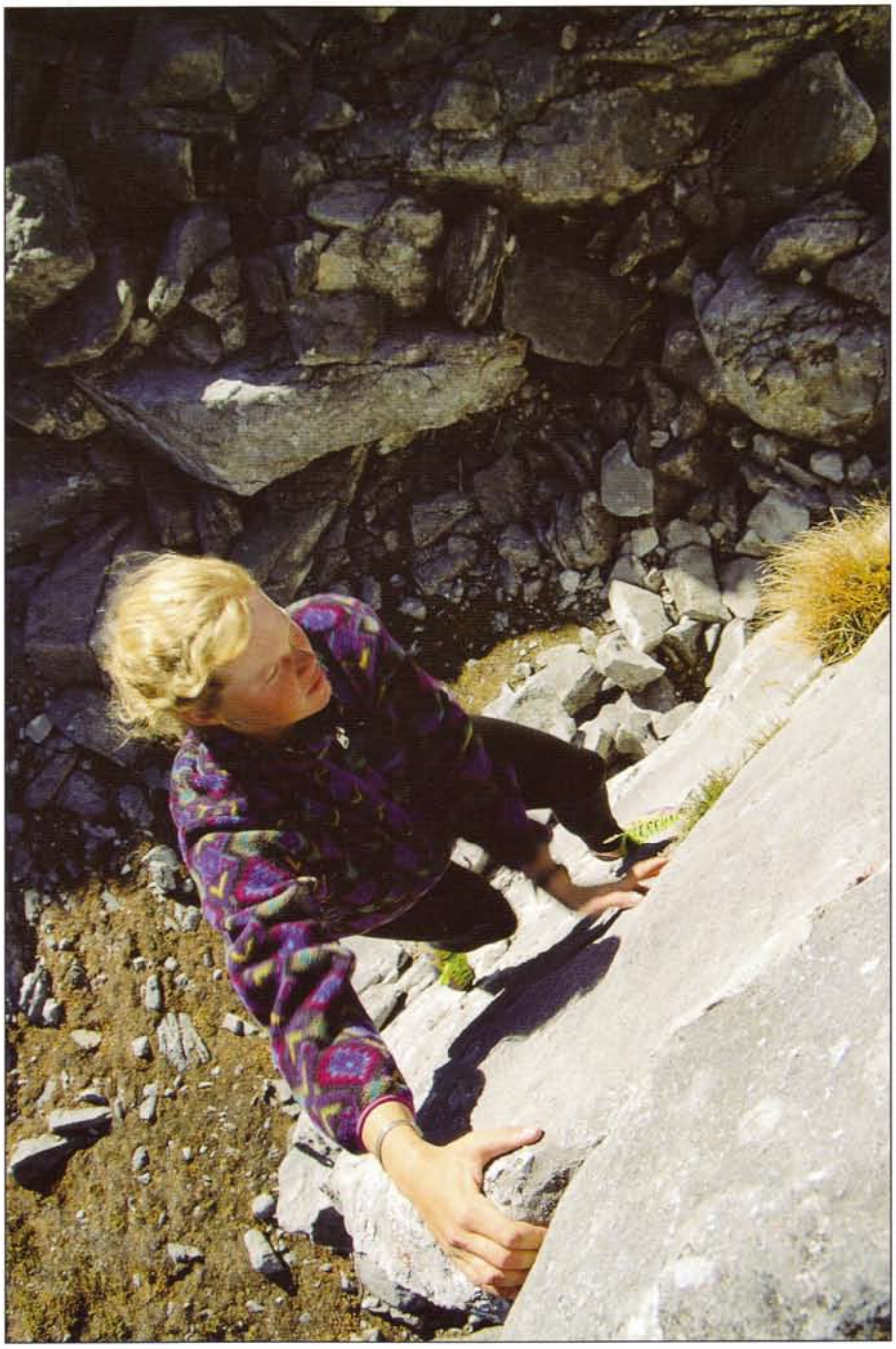

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The Canadian Alpine Journal

Volume 78, 1995

Published by The Alpine Club of Canada

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Design/Layout Digital Banff
Editorial Assistants Abbie Swanson, Erin Palmer

ISSN 0068-8207

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Editorial

There are moments of perfect joy in this game of ours; times of clarity of purpose, of simplicity; diamond days with sun and snow, baking warm rock; moments with decades of memory behind them. Last September, after week upon week of perfect conditions, rain stormed into our valley just long enough to take the polish off the summer. When the storm broke after a soggy week, it was hard to find anyone with the faith to rush out to the canyons, and I ended up heading out alone.

Walking from the parking lot, I started into an evening washed with a tide of memories. The past sometimes comes back with the gentlest of hints, and the prompt for my nostalgia that day was simply an empty parking lot. That was the way we always began only a few years ago: never a soul around; every adventure a quiet, solitary one.

Through the climbing that evening, the smells of the damp trees, the feel of the drying rock, the burble of the creek, brought many moments from the past back to me. I could reach for a hold and be overwhelmed by a flashback to a distant, similar reach, on granite two thousand miles away. A bird whispering in the wood would become a friend's voice happily calling off a belay. A hint of snow on the peak rimming the canyon became a hundred other peaks I've seen and walked upon. What stories this game has filled my life with; what friends and joys; what great tragedies and summits. There is little in my life that I can't tie to climbing; few dates that I don't address relative to the trips I've done, few challenges that I don't measure in comparison.

I left the canyon ten routes later, richer, fuller, as always a little happier within. Two days later, I packed and went to Nepal, and one month after, stood on a summit, just as I do in my dreams. There is one reason to live this climbing life, to write it, to breathe it. It is utterly simple: we love this, we truly do.

This year's Journal, as always, is filled with the memories of people who also love this life. Even in the stories of despair found within, in the tears over lost friends, and over dreams given up, there is still the love which drives us all.

Although we've shortened the CAJ by 16 pages this edition to keep the costs manageable, we have printed more material than ever before, and we received twice as many submissions from readers keen to share their adven¬tures; The love lives as strong as ever.

I'm very happy to announce that the ACC has instituted a small recogni¬tion of contributor's efforts through creating a "Best of the CAJ" award, given to the submission judged to be the best writing each year. Last year's award was proudly given to Jim Haberl, for his fine piece, "Dan, K2". As well, a $200 payment for the cover photo has been instituted. We hope these recognitions help to maintain the quality of submission we receive each year.

Geoff Powter

INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS

The Canadian Alpine Journal welcomes contributions from all interested readers, in either English or French. If possible, submit a 3.5" disk in a Macintosh or DOS for¬mat, with a hard copy included.

Submission deadline is January 15, 1996.

Photos are welcome, either as original slides, or prints from negatives. Include the negatives if you send prints. Clearly label and credit all photos.

Send all submissions to:
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Front Cover: Hallam Peak, Columbia Mountains, Scrip Range. Photo: Roger Laurilla

Inside Front: Sandi Spear at Chester Lake Boulders. Photo: Brad Wrobleski

Left: Eric Hoogstratten on Oh Le Tabernac, Alberta. Photo: Jeff Lakes

Back Cover: The south face of Dentiform Peak, Coast Mountains. Photo: Don Serl

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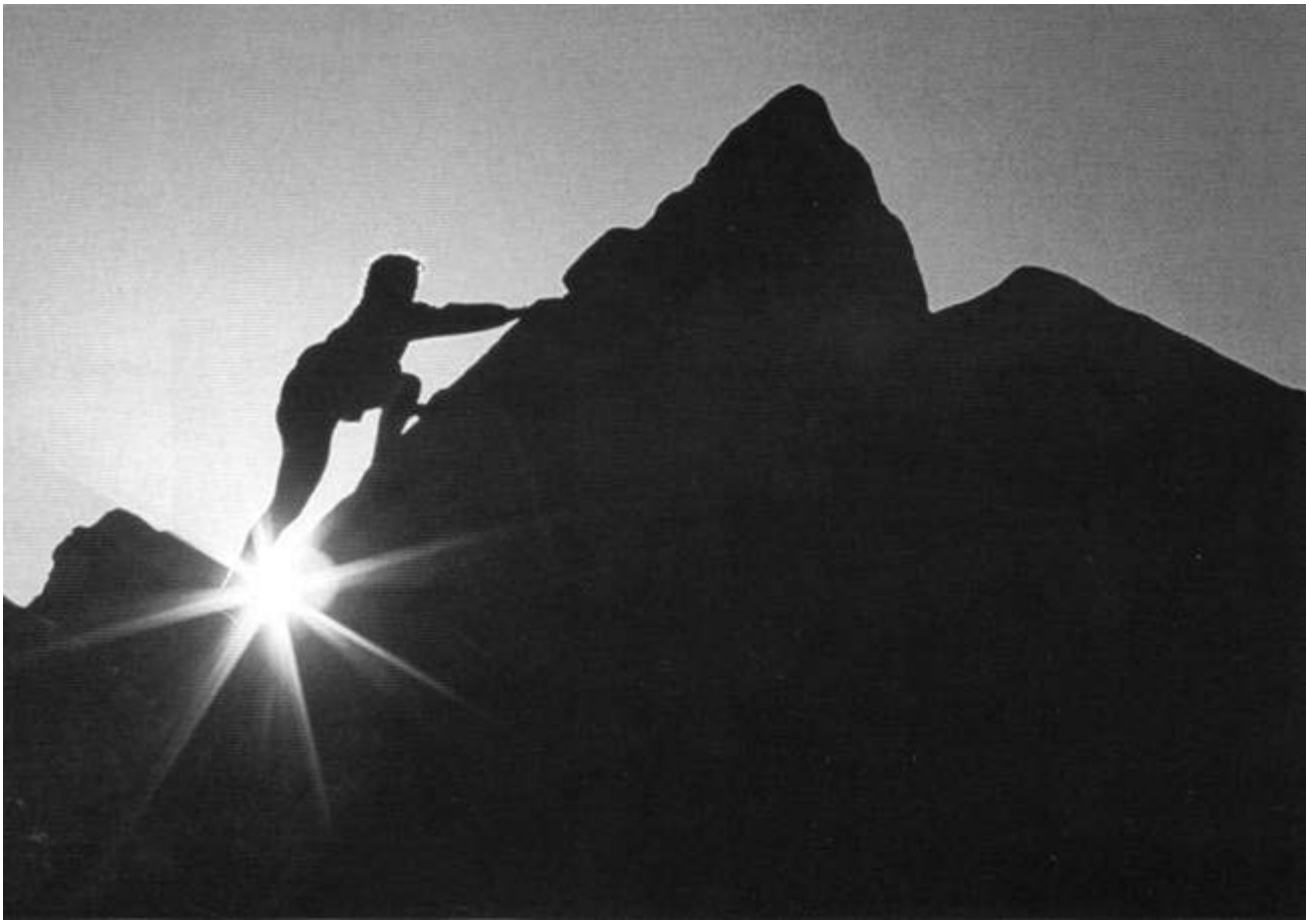
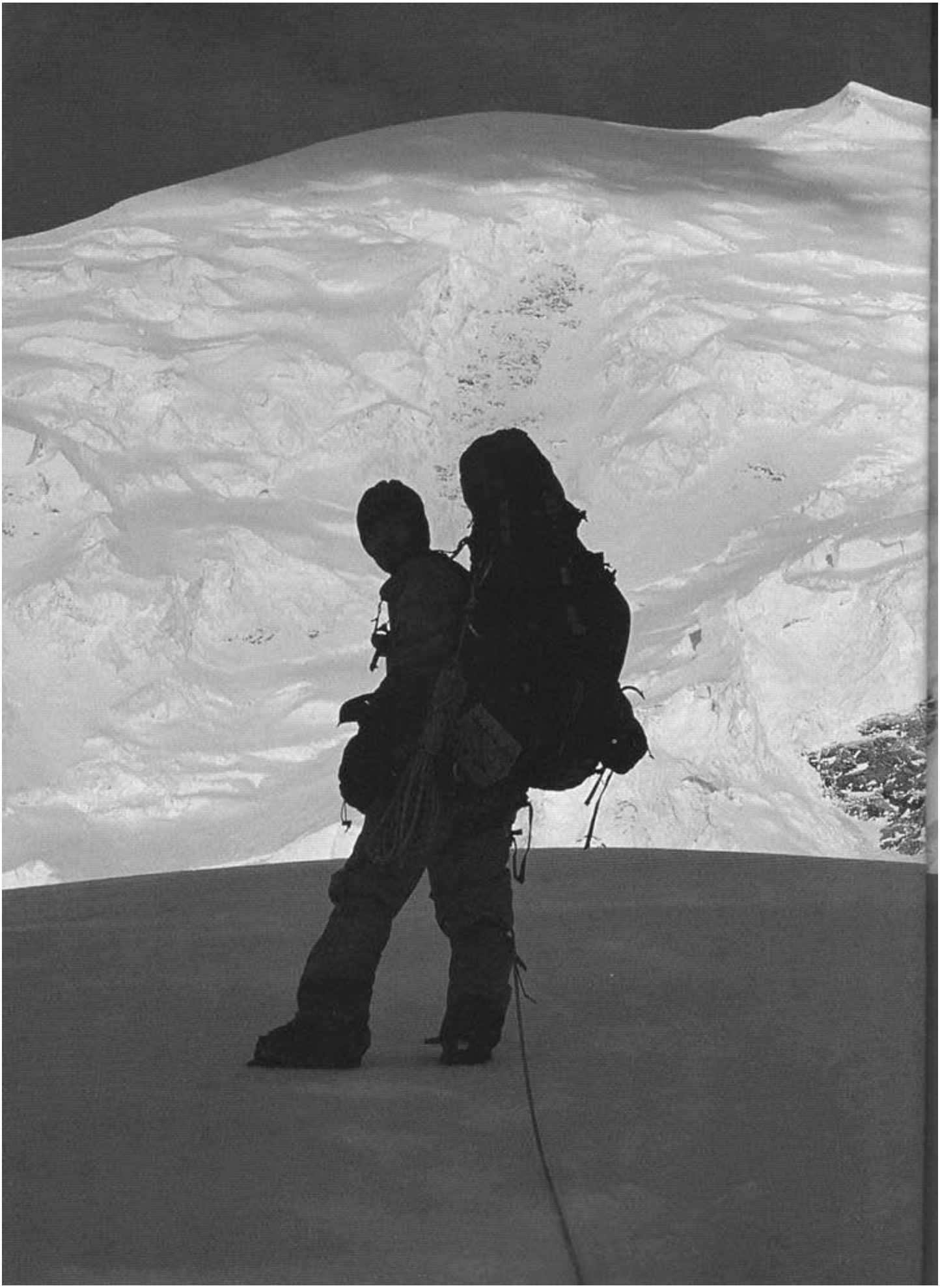


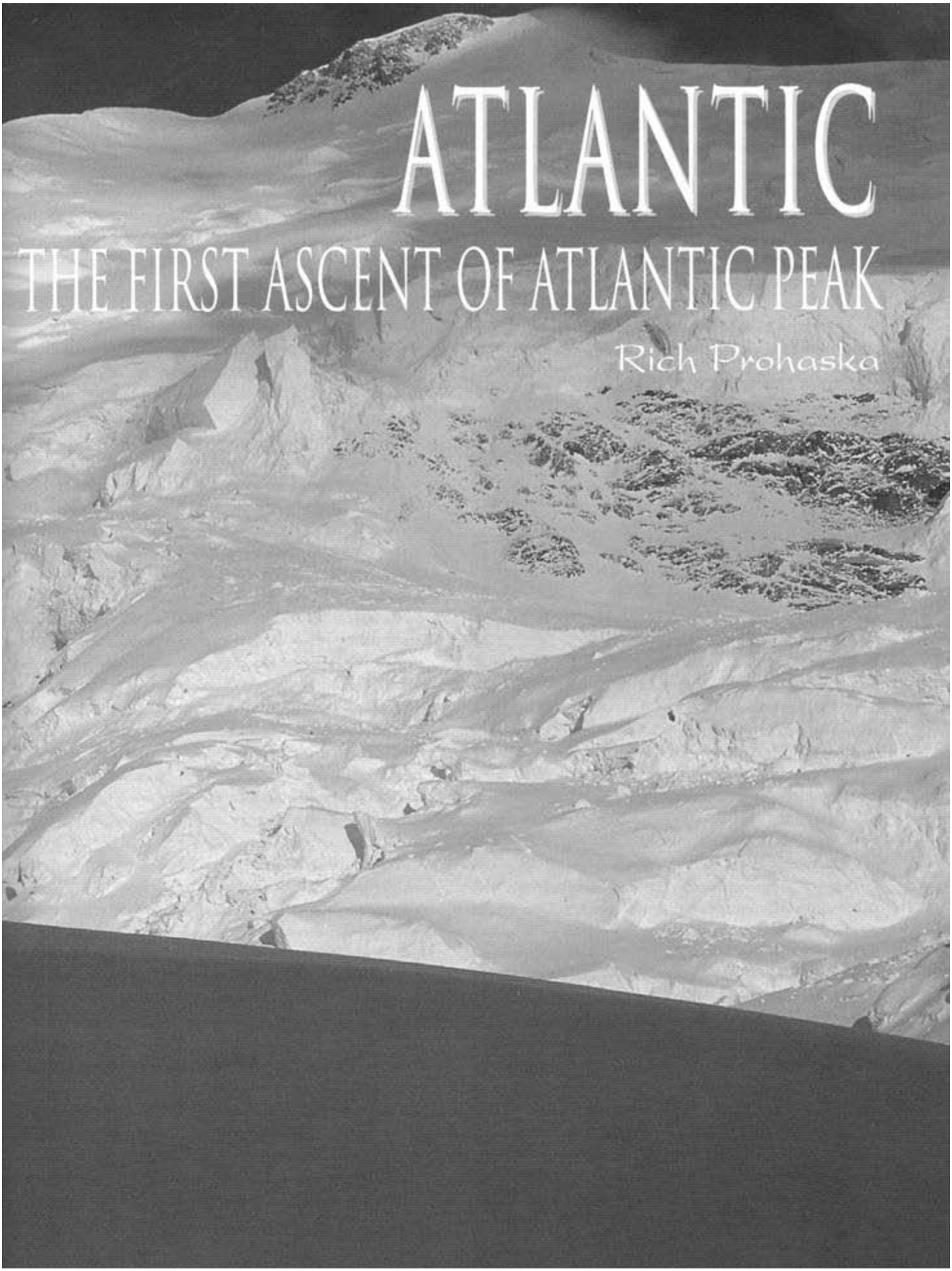
Photo: Brad Wrobleski

The 1995 *Canadian Alpine Journal* is dedicated to the memory of

H. Adams Carter

friend and mentor to the international
mountaineering community, who passed
away following completion of his 1995
American Alpine Journal.





ATLANTIC

THE FIRST ASCENT OF ATLANTIC PEAK

Rich Prohaska

Atlantic

By Rich Prohaska

On April 25, 1994, Johnny, Jia and I pulled out of Whistler — next stop Liard Hot Springs. And what great relaxation that proved to be after twenty hours of driving. The next day was the final stop at Whitehorse for last minute supplies.

A 150-kilometre drive out of Whitehorse brings one to Haines Junction, where mountains are even visible. We had to stay in the Junction area for the night to get to the warden's office in the morning. We drove to Kathleen Lake in hopes of catching a few trout, but the lake was more receptive to ice fishing than fly rods, so we spent our time haking instead. Later was a time to gaze into the foothills and wonder — wonder what was hidden behind the veil, what mystery it held — and wonder how the rock, ice, and weather would change us. Would we be different? Or would we come back the same as ever, just a couple of months older? Up north, in summer, the sun moves very, very slowly. It takes practically half the day to rise and the other to set again. No hurry for anything. Just time to sit and think, and think...

In the morning we went to visit the Wardens, who told us that we were required to watch the new "Kluane Safety Video." I sensed that it was produced for a metropolitan audience. We filled out the necessary documents and bid adieu. Off to Kluane Lake and the Arctic Institute of North America. Johnny and I were sporting our "Atlantic '94" shirts when we were greeted by Andy Williams, our pilot. He noticed our shirts and with a disappointed voice announced, "I'm afraid I don't have any good news for you guys."

"What do you mean?" we asked.

"The snow is very rough in there. I can't get you guys very close to it."

"Oh, that's okay. We'll just walk in."

"Ha, that's a new one."

New or not, we packed up our mountain of supplies and wondered how we would ever get them up to the glacier, which begins 35 kilometres up the Slims River. We had 45 kilograms of food, 10 kilograms of fuel, and 50 kilograms of miscellaneous gear each! For the first carry, I went rather light, to check out the trail. My pack weighed only 24 kilograms. The trail was flat and usually easy to follow, mostly on gravel riverbeds or sand/quicksand. The Slims River is apparently named in memory of the horse, Slim, who lost his life in the quicksand. Fortunately, the ground was still frozen about a foot down, so getting stuck neck-deep in the muck was virtually impossible. Five hours of walking brought us to a point where we were able to leave the dirt and start hauling sleds up the frozen river. That point was 17 kilometres from the trailhead, and exactly halfway to the glacier.

The following day was the same, except that I carried 32 kilograms of supplies, and I got my feet wet trying to get to the ice — 17 kilometres back to the van in sopping wet boots. Humm? All that walking had made us very sore so we took the next day off.

It was a good thing that we took a rest because the last load up was all food. We each had 46-kilogram packs. I'd never carried a pack with so much weight. The packs were too heavy to simply pick up and throw the straps over one's shoulders — a partner was needed. If no one was nearby, it was a Herculean effort to lift it up. After the pack was on for a short while the pain in my shoulders and hips grew, but the thought of dropping the pack to rest, only to have to lift it up again was too daunting. All that brought to mind the Sherpas in Nepal. Jia recalled how the porters carry a walking stick shaped like a "T." For a short rest, the porters would balance their loads on the stick and that would permit them to remove the head straps. We used our ski poles for our mini-rests.

May 2. The Slims River valley is one of the windiest places I have ever been; we spent five days walking in it, and every day we had strong winds. In the morning we awoke to the sound of the flapping tents, and nothing to look forward to but the nasty task of fording the river to reach the ice. The fast-flowing river was difficult to negotiate, so I carried light loads, but that meant several crossings of the current, with chunks of ice crashing into my shins. Sometime near noon we had the sleds loaded and we set out, eager to make some easy distance. Unfortunately, the ice was not quite as smooth as we had expected. I got my feet wet several times while attempting to cross the broken-up sections. After seven hours and just five kilometres we set up camp on the mud/sand of the Slims River.

May 3. My birthday. To celebrate (ha! ha!) we carried up the gravel flats and actually deposited a load on the glacier. We began to make another carry to the glacier, but after going halfway we were too tired and sore, so we abandoned the stuff and returned to Camp II. That night one of us set up the radio and asked for a radio check. No response. "Oh well," we thought. "I guess we are hidden behind a mountain." The glacier was most disappointing; the first two kilometres were completely covered with rocks, and where the rocks thinned out, the ice was very rough — no snow. We thought that since it was, after all, the Yukon, the glacier would have snow on it, but it had already melted, or perhaps it had all blown away.

The next five days were a mixture of bad and worse. The ice was too rough to haul the sleds, although we tried and did damage them. Making the carries was a lesson in patience. By and by we reached the snow and began our slug-like progress up the north arm of the Kaskawush Glacier. One day during lunch the sun baked us so much so that we had to shed most of our clothing. When we set out to ski, we wore only a thin layer of polypro. Ten minutes later the wind had picked up a bit so we put on our jackets. Five minutes after that, it was snowing and the cold wind had such force that we had to stop and take shelter for the remainder of the day.

On Day 13 we had our strongest day to date and advanced 11 kilometres, but then on Day 14 we made no movement due to a whiteout. During that day I became convinced that the most difficult part of a long trip is not the back, foot, or leg pain, but rather the challenge of dealing with the hunger. I discovered that hunger is similar to any kind of chronic pain, and found it to be very emotionally draining. It made me tired, anxious and exceptionally moody. During the first two weeks of the trip, about ninety per cent of my thoughts, both awake and asleep, were about food.

The next several days went by uneventfully, save for the crushing boredom and hunger. After fourteen days of scratching our way up the world's largest treadmill, Kaskawush, we were spit out into the great white ocean of snow and ice. The area was high (at 2500m), flat, and the mountains appeared to be growing. After being depressed and pessimistic for nearly the whole trip, my spirits began to rise. I could begin to imagine that we might one day get to see Mount Atlantic. Given our altitude, we thought that the radio would work well, but only occasionally did we get a

response to our call for a radio check.

On Day 17, as we approached the top of the Great White Ocean, we were given views of Mount Queen Mary and Mount Vancouver. Later, another peak showed its summit and it looked large. As we inched along, it grew slightly, and after several hours of trying to figure it out, I said, "Although I'm not sure, I'd say that's Logan. The main summit must be hidden behind the east peak." We all agreed and we were overjoyed with the view. It was more inspiring to see Logan from 60 kilometres away than to be on the thing. Ten kilometres later, the Logan massif began to dominate the entire south skyline.

In the early afternoons, the snow softened up and stuck to our skins. Travel was no longer possible, although we were psyched and ready to push on. We decided that to get more distance we would rise at 3 a.m. At that time in the morning there was just enough light to cook by. It took until 5:30 to cat and get out of the tents. After another hour of packing we were underway, encouraged by the ever-beautiful sunrise. Once on our way, we could ski for about an hour, rest for 15 minutes, and ski for another hour. By 1:00 p.m. the sun was very strong and the snow had softened so much that we were forced to stop.

We spent three full days walking beside Logan. During that time, as I endlessly placed one foot in front of the other, I imagined that we remained stationary while the earth turned below us. We would walk for two hours and not detect a change, so vast was the area. Even though I had been to Logan twice, only as I walked beside it, comparing its enormity relative to the huge St. Elias mountains, could I really comprehend how large Logan really is.

During the morning of the 19th day, as we skirted around another unnamed peak, a very large mountain came into view. It looked quite hazy and therefore far away, so we thought it had to be a major massif. Since most of the mountain was still hidden from view, it seemed mysterious. Only after some time and many kilometres did we proclaim, "Atlantic, Ho!" What a marvellous sight it was. After the weeks of pain and monotony, the views alone were enough to wipe those memories away. Suddenly the trip seemed worthwhile.

We skied downhill towards Atlantic; Logan was lost and a new mountain fed our hungry eyes. When our day was over, we set up camp in a jovial mood, often pausing to stare at the mountains. After our dinner of the usual meager rations, Jia and I fell asleep in the main tent and it was Johnny's turn to sleep solo in the small tent. Johnny wrote in his journal that night:

"After such distance covered, and with Atlantic just 20 kilometres away, it seems that little can stop us now."

At 7:30 a.m. Jia shook me awake and said, "Rich, wake up. Johnny's puking. Oh, I said, halt-dazed, trying to get back to sleep. A short time later Johnny was moaning and groaning with a severe stomach ache. I thought to myself, "I guess tomorrow will be a rest day. We're due one anyway. Atlantic isn't going anywhere." Johnny continued to writhe in agony for some time until he asked for a pain killer. Jia and I didn't know if it was wise to take drugs for gastrointestinal pain, so we stalled him while I did some reading on it. We tried to convince him that the pain was just due to some bad water he drank and that it would be gone in a couple of hours. Johnny didn't consider our advice prudent and insisted on a pain killer. Our first-aid manual indicated that an analgesic could, in fact, be administered for abdominal pain, so eventually, after we had stalled him as long as we could, we gave him a couple of pills.

Now I thought the pain would abate and I tried to sleep. About half an hour later, with no improvement, Johnny said, "Make the call!" Although both Jia and I knew what he meant, we looked at each other with wonder and confusion. We made no reply. He repeated the demand. We answered that contaminated water was the most likely cause and that it would pass in a few hours, and that maybe we should wait until morning to make such a dramatic decision. Johnny basically told us to shut up and get out the radio. At 8:30 we had the set ready to go and on the only channel we had — The Miners — we called out:

On the Great White Ocean, with Mount Logan behind. Photo: Rich Prohaska

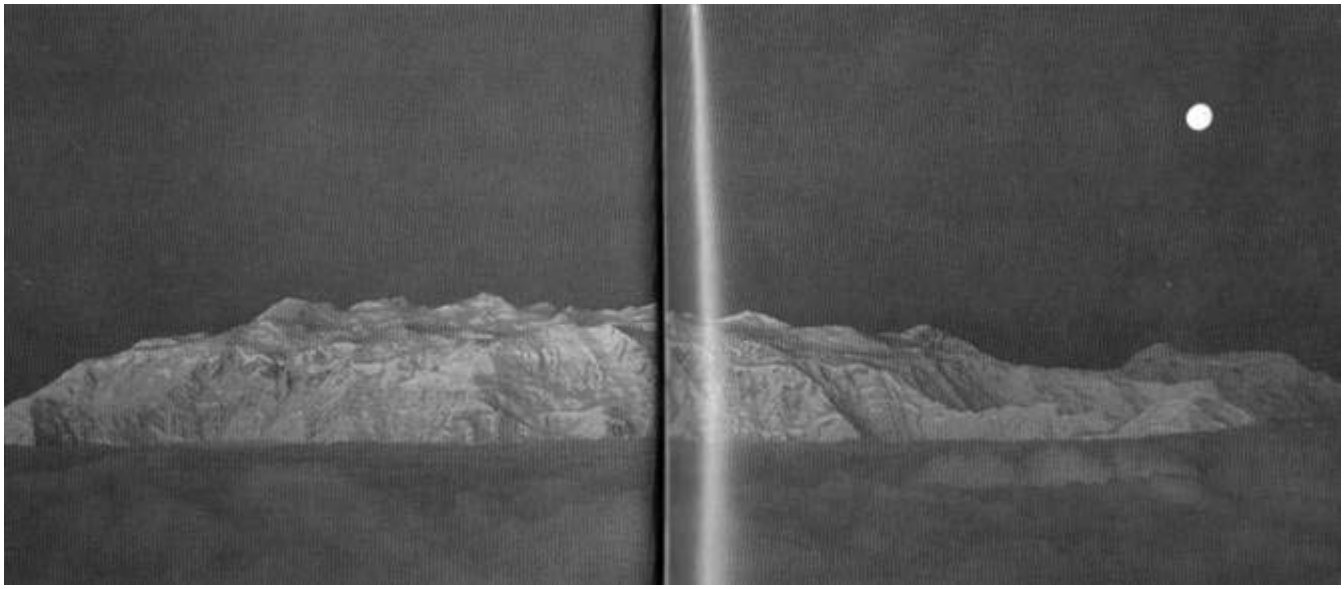
"Anybody with a telephone, do you copy?" Pause. No response.

Then we spoke again: "This is an emergency. Does anyone copy?"

My whole body convulsed when I said the word "emergency." This time we got a reply. In time we told him the five W's, and he in turn relayed the facts to somebody with a phone. We left the set turned on. About 15 minutes later word came back that Andy was on the way. Immediately the situation hit home, and Jia and I began to throw Johnny's stuff together, along with extra stuff that we could part with.

By 9:30 we were packed and we could hear the airplane overhead. Andy made a tight turn, a short gnarly landing, and taxied to within 50 metres of the tent. We speedily greeted Andy, updated him on Johnny's situation, and asked if he had flown anyone else into the area. He had, three days before. We tried to find out more about the other party, but he would not answer. All he said was, "Just don't you worry about them." Still confused, we bid farewell to Johnny and closed the door. Andy revved up the engine, and quickly floated up into the southeastern sky. Jia and I sat down and breathed a collective "Whoa! What the heck just happened here?" We had no answer, except that Johnny had just left us and we would be alone to continue the trip. Only when we had returned to civilization did we learn what had caused Johnny's pain. Like an abscessed tooth, appendicitis is a minor inconvenience when one is near a hospital, but when far from help, it can become an emergency. Johnny's appendix had burst, and without immediate medical treatment he would have faced dire consequences.

On the ice, all I could think about was how badly I felt for Johnny to have done all that labour to get to where we were, then, right within sight of our goal, to be plucked away to "another world." At the same time I felt jealous of Johnny, imagining the luxuries he would enjoy: running water, unlimited food, and being just a phone call away from anyone. And I thought about the hardships



Mount Logan with full moon at sunrise. Photo: Rich Prohaska.

ahead that I would have to endure: the risk of crossing crevasses with just one person to rescue the fallen other; the hundreds of hours of walking; staring down at the rope and getting tired of looking at the scenery which changes so slowly.

As we sat on the snow we realized that we wouldn't be able to sleep, so we decided that we could re-pack and go light and fast from that camp. We packed with uncoordinated effort and, very late at night, we fell asleep.

The morning of the 20th day was odd. Outside was no other tent; we cooked for two on our lone stove. When we roped up for the travel there was only one other on the rope, and only one other person to talk to. The skiing was very easy that morning — flat snow going down the Walsh glacier. As we made our way down the gentle slope, we scanned the snow for an old camp, tracks, or some other sign of human presence. After 10 kilometres and still no sign, the glacier became quite rough and we wondered if Andy had been able to fly right up the Dennis glacier, in which case, they would already be off the mountain. Then I thought that maybe he was bluffing and he really hadn't flown anyone in. On one of our breaks we used the binoculars and thoroughly checked the glacier ahead for a sign. The glacier looked flat and we were puzzled by the absence of any tracks. The glacier began to descend more steeply and we removed the skins and slid effortlessly down the grade. Although the glacier appeared to be flat, we skied rise after rise and much of the glacier was hidden from view. As we crested one such bump, a tent came into new.

Oh no, I thought. How are we going to approach people? We haven't seen a new face in 20 days and I'd like to talk; on the other hand, these are the people who, in full understanding that we had just walked over 250 kilometres during the last 20 days, had been so bold as to buy the one-hour flight and try to climb Atlantic before us; as if it were the only worthy objective in the range. But my fears were laid to rest simply because they were on the glacier and not climbing.

We happily greeted them, introduced ourselves and had some idle chitchat. They had moved their entire mountain of supplies down the Walsh to the bottom of Dennis where, upon inspection, they deemed the route too dangerous, and the glacier too time-consuming. when we saw them, they were in the process of hauling their supplies back up to the landing site. As we discussed the route, their comments made us more and more discouraged, so before long we said good-bye and continued on down to have a look at the mountain.

Back en route, we studied the nearby mountains, which were very beautiful and similar to the Rockies, except that none have been climbed. The next day we descended all the way down to below 2000 metres, where the Walsh and the Dennis come together. We forced our way across the lateral moraine in the wee hours of the morning. The snow was terrible. At 3:00 a.m. the snow had a crust that would hold our weight, but when the sun came up, it softened the crust so that it would no longer hold us and we sank into the nasty hoar frost that was several feet thick. It was the worst snow either of us had ever seen.

The Dennis Glacier was badly crevassed, but we had expected it to be even worse. It was cloudy for two days, but even in the flat light, probing when necessary, we reached the base of the southeast ridge. We cached our skis, radio, sled, extra food, and fuel, and with light loads of 25 kilograms, we began to climb. After 23 days of approach, we thought that climbing would be easy, but as usual, it took a lot of effort. It took us two days to crest the ridge where we got a view at the area we knew would be the crux of the route. We studied the route for about an hour: there was steep, mixed climbing to a fluted ridge which looked very scary. As the depth hoar was still with us, we deemed the ridge too difficult for us and with our tails between our legs, we ran away.

Down at the cache we packed again and sledded up toward the ugly icefall beneath Atlantic and Lucania. Now the weather began to change — it was odd and unsettled. Throughout the next three days the daytime conditions changed from 10°C with snow and wind, to intense sun at 20°C in just half an hour. It would stay warm long enough for us to shed layers of clothing; then suddenly, from out of nowhere, clouds would appear and we were chilled to the bone within minutes.

On Day 26 we fought our way up through the icefall with many detours, jumps and nerve-racking, crumbly snow bridges. After 600 metres, we found a spot that we could camp on. The following day was just as long. We struggled up another 600 metres through deep snow at 45°. That campsite was finally on the upper ridge, and at that elevation the view improved literally at each step. On the ridge at 3600 metres, the snow was much improved.

The night of May 24 was the first cold night — at -22°C it was cold enough to force me to zip up my sleeping bag instead of just using it as a blanket. Even though we were getting up later in the morning to feel the sun's rays, it had less power to warm us. It stayed cold all day and we had trouble keeping our feet warm, so we stopped for the day. After just 250 metres we set up the tent. We had some tea and went to sleep. At 10:00 a.m. we woke up sweating as it was 25°C inside the tent, although the outside temperature was still about -10°C.

The next morning we woke up at 4:30, looked outside to check the weather, and were greeted by a spectacular sight. Right outside our door was a superb view of Logan bathed in the red sunrise, with the full moon directly above it. We spent half an hour taking many photos of the splendour, and then went back to sleep to warm our frozen hands.

Later, when the sun had risen enough to warm the tent, we ate, packed, and started up a long 35°to 45° slope. The snow was excellent and we made fine progress. After climbing 300 metres, we were disappointed to find nothing flat to camp on. That area would have been a dangerous spot to be in with new snow, so we climbed up another 300 metres where we found a small site. Exhausted at 4480 metres, we crashed in our sleeping bags.

The following day remained clear and cold, offering yet more stunning scenery. Early in the day, while traversing a 40° slope, one of my crampons fell off. With difficulty, I managed to fasten it again and walked cautiously. That problem arose because I was wearing overboots and the padding did not allow for a very good purchase on the rand. Later, as I climbed a particularly steep section (about 70°), I became nervous about my crampons coming off again, but luckily they held. About 20 steps later on a flat area where we camped, one crampon did release. After just one hour we had reached a large, flat ridge leading to the summit.

Day 31. Summit day. We did not get up early, as it was too cold. When we did get up, we allowed ourselves the unbelievable luxury of pre-warming our boots on the stove. Starting off with warm feet — what happiness! Outside it was clear and cold, but down below, clouds choked the valleys. A short climb up the summit pyramid gave us more and more exposure; after an hour we reached the summit area. We walked along from bump to bump to determine exactly which point was highest. On the summit, as usual, we were happy, but not overjoyed. Normally, we do not offer any congratulations or even shake hands because we know that the climb is only half completed once on the summit. Atlantic was slightly different because of the scope of the trip. We had three goals to aim for: first, to reach the base of Atlantic, second to climb Atlantic, and third, to reach home. With phase two completed we shook hands and exchanged knowing smiles. The summit experience was nothing special, really. To me, it seemed like just another step along the road. Or perhaps a time for a quick sniff at the roses. It takes a long time for the feeling to enter my mind, and the joy only comes when I share time with someone who cares. Regardless, we spent over an hour on top, in the cold and the wind, and watched the clouds build and fill the area. We ate our food and took many photos from different vantage points, then raced down to camp.

At the camp we gathered our luggage and slipped down to 3860 metres and into half a metre of fresh snow. Snow was still falling the next morning, but we decided to continue on down, despite the avalanche hazard. Low on the ridge we started a few small point release slides so we could walk safely down the avalanche path. When we were approaching the icefall, we began to search for an alternate route to base camp. We remembered an arête that led onto the glacier above the icefall. On our way up we had deemed it too dangerous because of the hanging séracs above the face, but now that we had seen how bad the ice-fall was, we thought that with speed and luck we could pass the danger zone and be back to base camp in no time.

We knew a route could be found somewhere, but we had to locate the exact spot that would lead through the séracs and on to the arête. After two false starts, our route through the séracs involved 10 metres of 80° ice in which we happily placed screws. Lower, the ice became less steep, although unpredictable. Because we were climbing under hanging séracs, we quickly traversed to the ridge. We thought we could run down the ridge in short order, but that was not how it turned out. The snow on the ridge was not as hard as we had hoped, but was the same old depth hoar. I had plenty of time to watch Jia break trail. It was extremely difficult and time-consuming. He forced his way down the 45° slope that was so unconsolidated he had to plow his way through. I was so frightened that when occasionally one of his steps broke, I imagined him falling through the crust and sliding underneath like a waterslide.

After several hours of unspeakable frustration, Jia saw a rock band. To avoid difficult downclimbing and many rappels, we threw the dice and entered a gully. We had not heard any ice fall during the day, and since it was cloudy and snowy, we figured that the ice would remain frozen still. About 10 steps from the ridge the depth hoar ended and I was on perfect snow. With the front points biting nicely, I began to speed up as I became familiar with the conditions. Soon we were charging backward down the couloir. In minutes, it seemed that we had descended several hundred metres, when we were rudely stopped by another cliff band. We traversed to a safe area where the cliff was shortest and with one rappel we made it over to the area where Jia belayed me.

The last pitch was mixed rock and ice and I was concentrating on moving rapidly when Jia yelled, "Avalanche!" I hugged the rocks and prayed, "Please let it be snow." I did the best I could to protect my head and, in the building roar, braced myself for what would come. It was just snow and it wasn't very large either, although it filled my clothing and I was frozen instantly. I shook off the snow, removed my useless glasses, and checked that Jia was okay, then I took off again for shelter. One more rope length and a glissade over the bergschrund and we were back on the glacier. In a complete whiteout we somehow managed to find our camp and, once again exhausted, but happy to be safe, we slept.

After 20 days without a rest, we were looking forward to a day off. Unfortunately when we awoke the next morning it was clear and cold. We packed up and skied down the glacier toward the Walsh. Each step we made was another step closer to home; it was very easy to get motivated since we were in good shape, we had plenty of food and we would be out soon.

When we climbed back up to the Donjek area we became interested in a first ascent of one (or more) of them. We had the time and food, but we had to build the willingness. The Donjeks were only a short detour from our route and we were keen, so we left a cache and headed in. On the way into the area, we were finally rewarded with some bad weather which allowed us to rest for an entire day. One day of further of travel brought us to the base of Donjeks 2, 3, and 4. That night we packed for the climb and realized that we had forgotten most of our food back at the

cache. We had only two days' worth of food and it was a day's ski to the cache. We decided to go very quickly in the morning and push our luck.

In the morning, at about 1:30 we awoke to churning clouds and low pressure. After a very light breakfast, we raced the clouds. We were underway at 2:15. It wasn't really dark at that hour, just flat light. In the snow and building clouds, we sped for our narrow exit route — in a whiteout, it would have been virtually impossible to find, five kilometres distant. As we made it to the cache, the clouds began to break; we continued on and made it 23 kilometres closer to the highway. That left just 89 kilometres to go — it seemed so very close. We were anxious to get out, so we rose at midnight to a beautiful sunset. By 2:00 we were skiing in the flat light. The snow was smooth and slightly downhill. At 3:40 we were halted by the combination of fiat light and crevasses. Unwilling to ski blindly into a crevasse, we sat down, bundled up and ate a couple of the 20 or so chocolate bars that we each had. To top it all off, warm Kool-aid. What luxuries can be enjoyed at the end of a trip!

A half-hour later, the sun had swung around enough to highlight the crevasses. The glacier gradually became more steep to the point where we coasted effortlessly at 20 kilometres per hour. That bliss lasted for about four kilometres and at 7:30 a.m., after 22 kilometres, we reached our cache. On the lateral moraine we burned some garbage, extra stuff, and 10 litres of fuel. Then we ate all we could stuff down our mouths and set off again. At 11:00, on the rough ice, we set up camp after 38 kilometres downhill distance.

After eight kilometres the next day we came to the end of the easy ski/sled travel. From that point on, all of our belongings were on our backs. We first threw everything we could bear to part with into a crevasse. Still with more than 40 kilograms on our backs, we began the bone-crushing walk over the dry glacier and jumps over small crevasses. Eleven hours of torture led us off the Kaskawalsh Glacier. We were still awake at 9:00 p.m., our latest night in a very long time. That camp was special because of the free water, sand under the tent, and the bushes which surrounded us, quite a change from the ice and snow of the last 38 nights. We fell asleep that night looking forward with much trepidation to the next day's 27 kilometres.

Day 43. In the morning, it was a struggle to stand. My whole body ached, but after some Ibuprofen, and an hour of cooking and packing, things had begun to feel a bit better. Helping each other, we shouldered our loads. I felt like a misused yak as I made the first few steps. At the first river we came to we stopped and took the effort to remove our boots to keep them dry, but later, with about 10 kilometres to go, we just waded through many rivers, plastic boots and all. Sloshing forward, boots overflowing with water, we entered the mosquito zone. Frustration set in. The seven-centimetre, padded shoulder straps felt like piano wire cutting into flesh and bone. For some respite we could alternate the horror from our shoulders to our hips and back again. The falling rain was the icing on the cake.

The last 17 kilometres were familiar, and we could gauge our progress. Eventually, we made it to the old road and the last hill felt very long. But soon we got to the warden's cabin where we planned on catching a ride to the van, about 10 kilometres away. Unfortunately, the warden was absent and we were forced to walk down the dirt road three kilometres to the highway . We first dumped our packs and walked gleefully and almost without effort. At the highway was a travel info centre. It was closed and everybody was gone. On the side of the road we stood, waiting for a ride to the van. Before too long a couple from Kansas stopped and gave us a ride.

With all the work done and no more miles to go, we were left again to think about other adventures, other people, and other goals.

A Stikine Country Primer

1 · In The Country

By Markus Kellerhals

In the spring of 1993, a group of friends and I spent four weeks traversing on skis across the area of icefields that lies along the B.C.-Alaska border north of the Stikine River. At one point on the trip we looked across the Stikine to an equally spectacular area on the east side of the river. We resolved on the spot to go there the following year.

We made more definite plans over the winter. It appeared possible to traverse on skis from the Stikine River to the Iskut River, crossing a system of glaciers, through some very rugged looking areas. The planned route would give us lots of opportunity for climbing peaks along the way. We would ski near the high peaks of Mount Hickman and Ambition Mountain, as well as countless smaller, mostly unnamed peaks. Although previous mountaineering parties had visited the area and climbed most of the higher peaks, we could find no record of anyone having visited the area on skis.

At the end of April we drove north through B.C. to Telegraph Creek, where we would begin the trip with a short boat ride across the Stikine River. We were a group of six: Dave Williams, Brian and Betsy Waddington, Steve Sheffield and myself, all from Vancouver, and Peter Stone from Melbourne, Australia.

All of us felt that we should do the trip as much as possible under our own steam — that is, without the use of aircraft for access to the wilderness. However, the thought of carrying 20 days of food seemed a bit daunting so we decided that we would fly in one cache of food.

Landing with the food cache was an adventure in itself. The day after arriving at Telegraph Creek, I flew out with ten days of food and fuel loaded into a small ski-plane, piloted by Ron Jansen of TelAir. We reached the landing area after flying through a break in the clouds, but Ron was concerned about landing, since the flat lighting conditions made it hard to judge the height of the plane above the snow surface. We circled round and round until Ron was satisfied that landing would be safe.

Once down, we moved quickly to unload the plane and mark the cache location with bamboo wands. I took compass bearings off two nearby peaks partially obscured by cloud to determine our location. We took off at the last possible moment, as the clouds were billowing up to surround us.

We began our trip the next morning, on the banks of the Stikine River, a few kilometres downstream from Telegraph Creek, at the establishment of Bill and Ruth Sampson, local homesteaders and

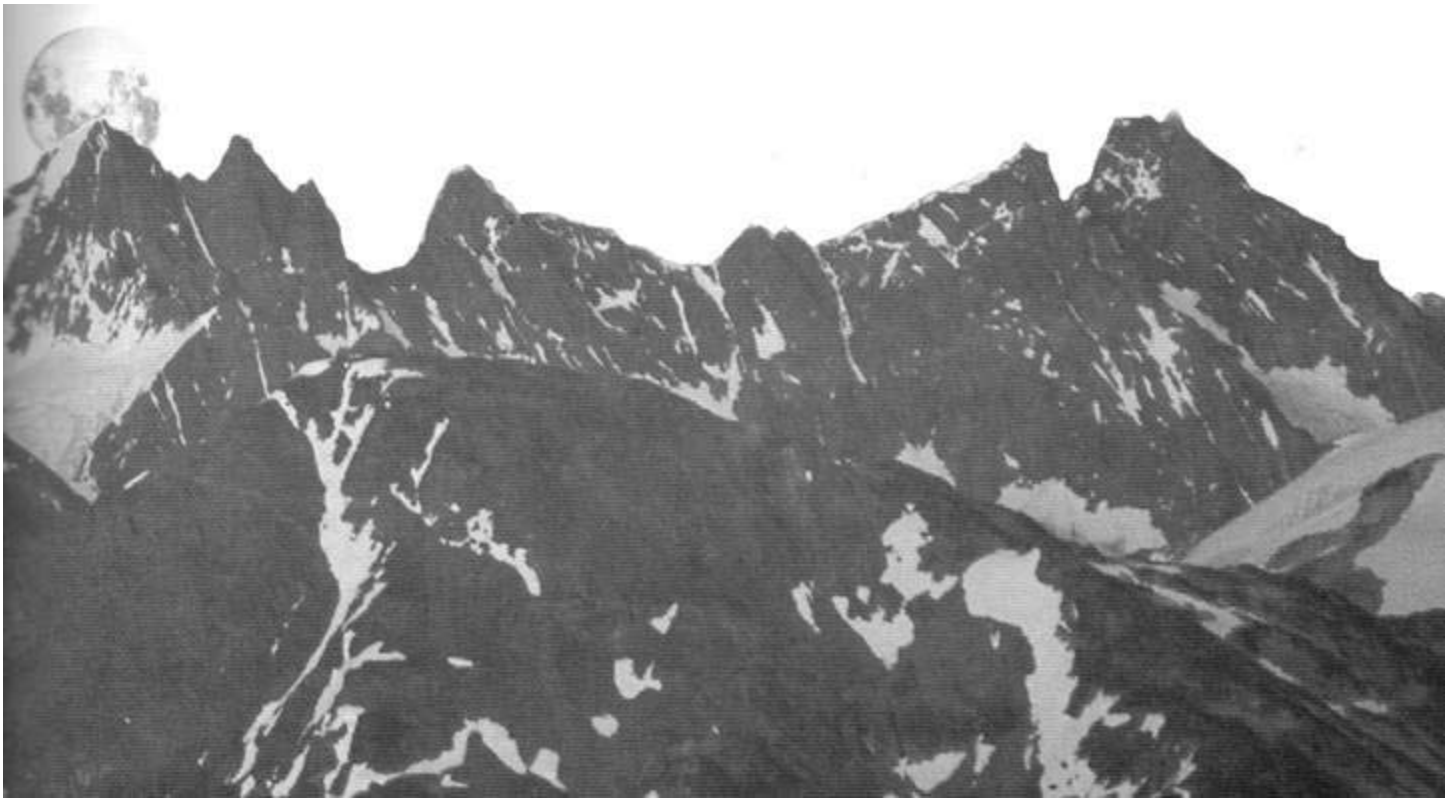


Photo: Steve Sheffield

trappers. Bill described the trapline trail that led from his place towards Yehiniko Lake. Following this trail saved us from having to do a great deal of arduous bush travel with our heavy packs.

The trail climbed steeply at first, bringing us quickly to the 3000-foot level where snow began. However, the following day, as we continued towards Yehiniko Lake, we traversed onto a south facing slope where the snow was rather sparse. Our packs were heavy enough that, rather than carry the skis, we just skied across the bare patches.

From Yehiniko Lake we skied up a snowy valley towards the first glacier along our route. Steve spotted a group of mountain goats on the valley slopes above us. As we watched the goats we realized that a grizzly bear was stalking the group. The goats were able to escape to the relative security of some steep crags. We moved on, glad to have been able to enjoy this spectacle from a safe distance.

We camped just below the first glacier in a gathering storm. The following day, the weather was still stormy. Since we had limited time to reach our food cache, we decided to cross the pass to the Scud Glacier, despite the weather.

The weather was even more vile than it had appeared from our tents. The wind was blowing snow around so much that our visibility was limited to a few metres. I stopped to adjust my skis below the pass. When I looked up again, the rest of the party had disappeared and the ski tracks were all but drifted in. I was cold, my pack felt unusually heavy and I greatly desired to be elsewhere. Oh well — no choice

now! I hurried to catch the others before all traces disappeared.

Conditions at the col were the height of misery. Visibility was essentially zero, since the blowing snow made it difficult to open our eyes and our glacier goggles were nearly opaque with the wet snow coating. We roped up to descend the other side, since in our blinded state it would have been very easy to ski into an open crevasse.

When we poked our heads out of the tents the next day, sunlight was streaming through shreds of clouds left from yesterday's storm, speckling the glacier with patches of light and shadow. We glimpsed peaks above us as the cloud continued to break. We

Crux of unnamed peak south of Valhalla. Photo: John Clarke.

quickly packed up and started down the glacier, moving rapidly across a hard crust. Before reaching the toe of the Scud Glacier, we turned up a tributary valley that led to the next pass towards Mount Hickman.

The climb up to the next pass was strenuous, but we were rewarded with continually expanding views of the group of peaks around the head of the Scud Glacier.

From the pass, we climbed a minor nearby summit (6600 feet).

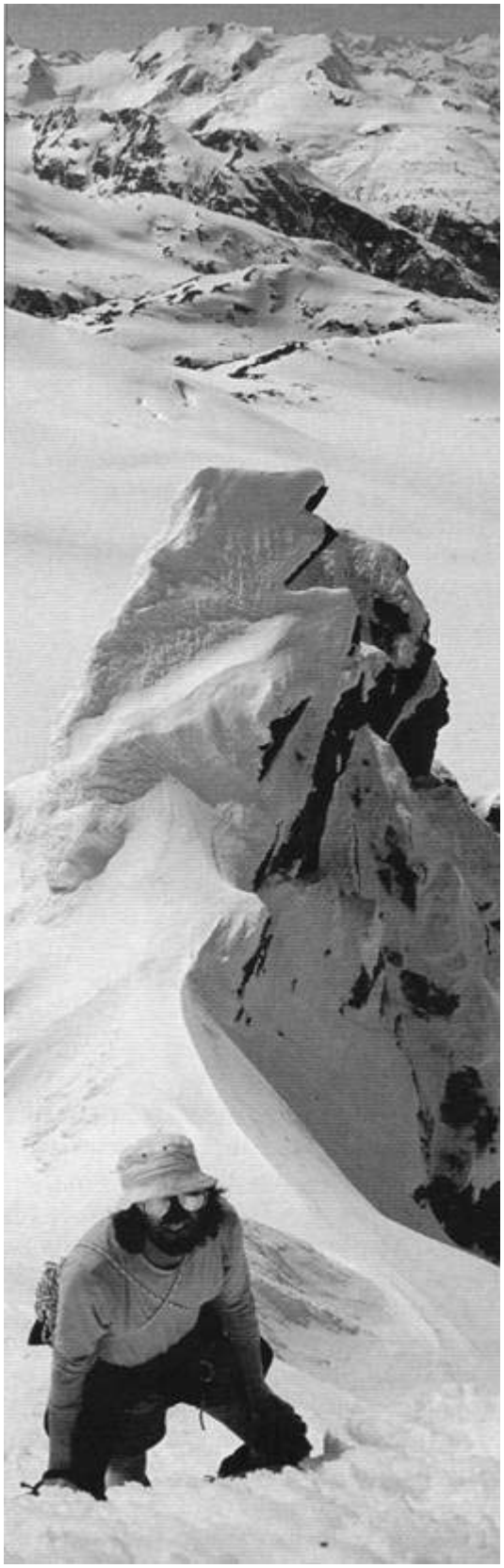
The next day we continued skiing south along the glacier leading to the pass west of Mount Hickman. Before reaching this pass another storm overtook us and we were stuck for two days in the tents.

When the weather cleared we continued to the glaciated 7100 foot pass west-southwest of Mount Hickman. This area was filled with attractive peaks and we would have liked to stick around. Unfortunately, yet another storm appeared to be moving in. We hurried up two small summits (7800 feet and 7900 feet, three kilometres west of Mount Hickman), then descended towards the ice plateau south of Mount Hickman, where the food cache was located. The final part of the descent was on a large lat¬eral moraine. Descending a small break through near vertical walls of cemented mud and boulders was easily the scariest moment of the trip.

The next day we skied towards our food cache in rapidly worsening weather.

Unfortunately, we skied several kilometres past the sup-posed location of the cache. We set up camp, then set out on a cache-finding excursion. After skiing several kilometres, the weather became so bad that we had our work cut out just to follow a compass bearing back to camp. That night, as I cooked up our last dinner, I was feeling rather guilty about the situation, since I was the one who had placed the cache. Stealing all the remaining chocolate and making a break for the Iskut River didn't seem to be a good option, so I knew I had better find the cache the following day.

We did indeed find the cache the next day. Betsy spotted it as we skied search patterns across the glacier. To my great relief, it was actually very close to the loca¬tion I had marked on the map. Amazing how that works! Weather was poor for the next two days — a good excuse for spending lots of time consuming the goodies from the cache.



On Peak 7900, south of Spahler Pass. Photo: Markus Kellerhals.

We did manage to climb most of the summits around the southern and eastern rim of the ice-field during this time. When conditions improved, most of us headed towards the lovely 8200-foot summit 10 kilometres south of Mount Hickman. We approached the mountain! from the east, but ended up cir-cling around to climb the steep snow face on the west side. As we neared the summit ridge, the vibrations of our footsteps released a huge cornice down the cast face. The resulting avalanche swept straight over a route we had considered on that side.

The following day it was time to continue on our traverse. Under perfectly sunny skies we dropped to the 4500-foot pass at the head of Sphaler Creek. Spring was definitely arriving at the lower elevations — the snow in the pass was bottomless slush. We hurried across and up to a scenic camp perched on the opposite slope.

Continuing the next day, we reached the large gentle icefield that we would follow for most of the remaining distance to the Iskut River. We climbed the 7100-foot, 7700-foot and 7900-foot peaks due south of Sphaler Pass.

Over the next four days we continued skiing southwest towards Hoodoo Mountain and the Iskut River, blessed by near-perfect weather. The area is a veritable feast of ski ascents. Regrettably, exhaustion forced us to leave a few of them unskied. We did climb Peak 7004 feet and a 7300-foot neighbour as well as four peaks between 7800 feet and 7000 feet northeast of the Porcupine Glacier. Two snow peaks southeast of Mount Pheno that we ascended on skis offered incredible views of the Stikine valley and 10,000 feet of relief to Kates Needle and the Devils Thumb on the other side. On our second to last day, we skied up Hoodoo Mountain, a young volcano that stands above the Iskut Kver.

The final glacier along our route, the Twin Glacier, descends towards the Iskut River in two great arms of ice split by a tree-covered nunatak. We were treated to the amazing juxtaposition of blue glacial ice descending into lush green coastal rainforest. The final few kilometres of the trip were through a tangled forest of very low cedar, cottonwood, alder and devil's club to the Iskut River. After three weeks on the icefields, the profusion of life in the valley seemed otherworldly.

The transition from wilderness back to civilization is always a bit sad, no matter how badly a shower is needed.

However, we were not given much time to contemplate such ideas. Shortly after reaching the banks of the Iskut, we were picked up by the hover¬craft that plies the Iskut River, bringing supplies to the nearby gold mine. Within twenty minutes we were at the mine. Shortly thereafter we were enjoying a visit to the mess hall. Though tired and smelly, we felt inspired after 20 days of incredible wilderness.

SUMMARY — Six of us spent 19 days traversing from the Stikine River downstream of Yehiniko Creek to the Iskut River at the confluence of Twin River, a distance of about 150 kilometres. We climbed 23 peaks en route, most of them likely unclimbed.

2 · A Trip To The Sawback Range

By Steve Sheffield

I was first exposed to the magic of the Stikine wilderness during two summers of mineral exploration. Failing to find the instant riches promoted by the Vancouver Stock Exchange, I left instead with a growing appreciation for the vulnerable beauty of the pristine areas we so casually found ourselves dropped into by helicopter on a daily basis. Massive icecaps, high tundra plateaus and wild river valleys untarnished by clearcuts and hydro dams, form the diverse beauty of the 50,000-kilometre Stikine River watershed.

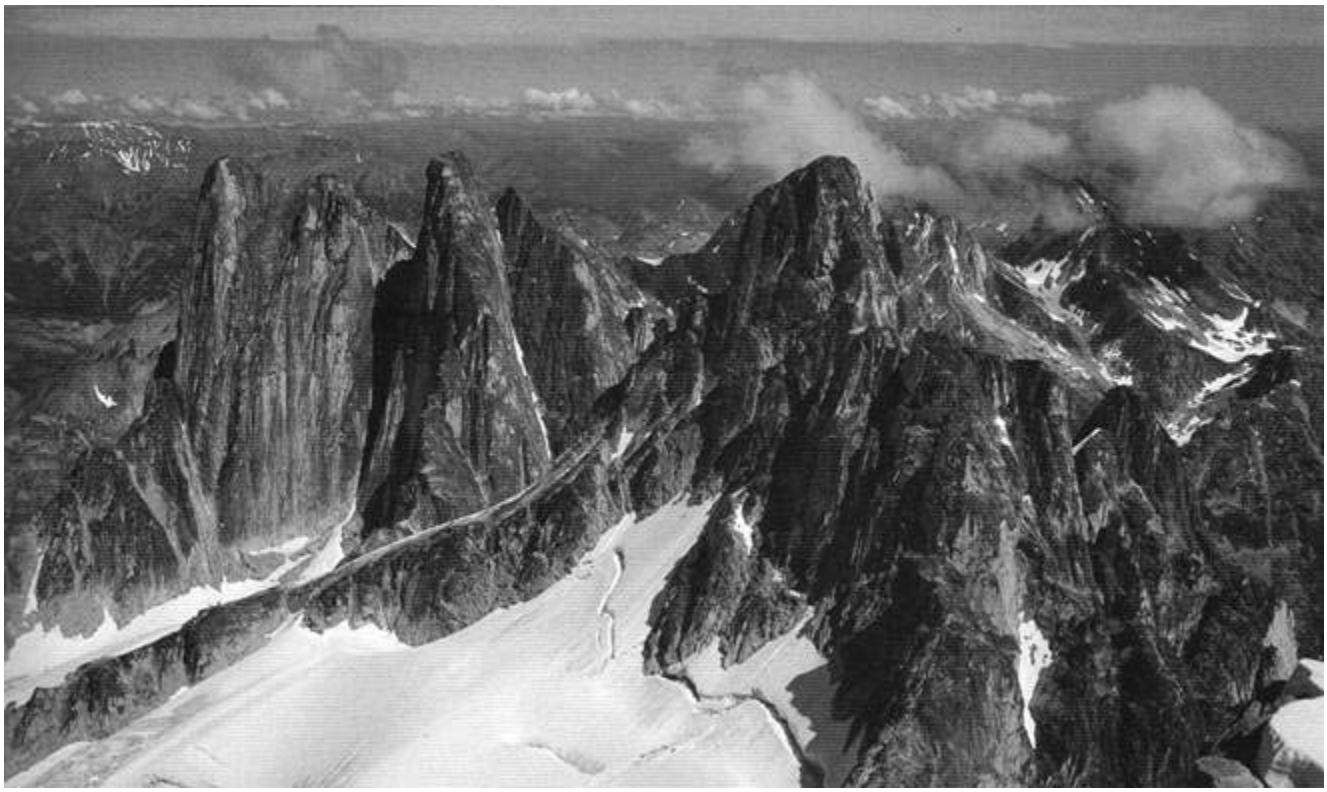
This is a raw, wild place where grizzly bears roam freely, stalking elusive goats on the steep mountainsides. In summer the bears descend to the valley bottoms to pursue a rich feast of spawning salmon which force their way through the glacial silt-laden waters into clear tributaries to spawn. Near the Iskut River, the largest tributary of the Stikine, a major alpine ridge provides evidence of this annual ritual, with large bear prints permanently embedded in the alpine soil from years of repeated use. To ensure the natural ways of the Stikine, continued protection of this vast wilderness heritage from destructive human exploitation is essential.

The region surrounding the Shutine River is one of the wildest areas in the Stikine watershed. Draining the heart of the Stikine Icecap eastward, this magnificent river valley is guarded at its confluence with the Stikine River by an impressive line of quartz monzonite towers known as the Sawback Range. This dominating group of peaks, running parallel to the Stikine River, is easily visible on the drive into Telegraph Creek, and by boat at points along the river. A spring ski trip in May up Yehiniko Creek on the opposite side of the Stikine provided tantalizing views of these steep towers. I could no longer put off a visit to this area and regarded Fred Beckey's well-timed attempts to lure me away to the Waddington Range with growing suspicion.

On July 20, 1994, John Clark, Dave Sarkany and myself were dropped off by riverboat at the mouth of Vekops Creek on the Stikine to start our journey. Travelling through open forest to gain the ridge north of Vekops Creek was surprisingly easy going, with the exception of heavy packs loaded with ropes and climbing gear. We were definitely going to carry our courage in our rucksacks on this trip. The views of the Stikine snaking away to the south were exceptional, and John was impressed with the lack of any signs of logging or other human activity.

The open alpine ridge leading north to Cinema Mountain gave us our first close look at the dramatic row of peaks separated from us by the upper headwaters of Vekops Creek. We were treated to clear, warm weather for our approach along the tarn-studded ridge top. After skirting Cinema Mountain, we descended to the low divide separating the upper headwaters of Vekops and Missusjay Creeks.

Our route led up to a flat glacier bordered by the steep walls of the surrounding peaks. We were trying to gain the next glacier north of our position, at the base of Valhalla Mountain, the highest of the



Unclimbed Peaks in the northern Sawbacks. Photo: Steve Sheffield.

Sawback summits. We intended to have a food drop placed on the icefield at the base of the mountain by Ron Janzen, our proven pilot who had supported two previous ski trips.

The plan was to climb Valhalla Mountain and other peaks in the immediate vicinity and thread a traverse through the range. This would allow us to attempt a number of peaks further north, and eventually backtrack through the upper headwaters of Missusjay Creek and back to Vekops Creek. We climbed to a col between two of the smaller, easier towers, intending to cross through onto the next glacier and skirt above the steep icefall below to our high base camp. Instead, we were confronted by a huge 'schrund and a compact group of incredibly-rugged towers, hidden almost completely from view until now.

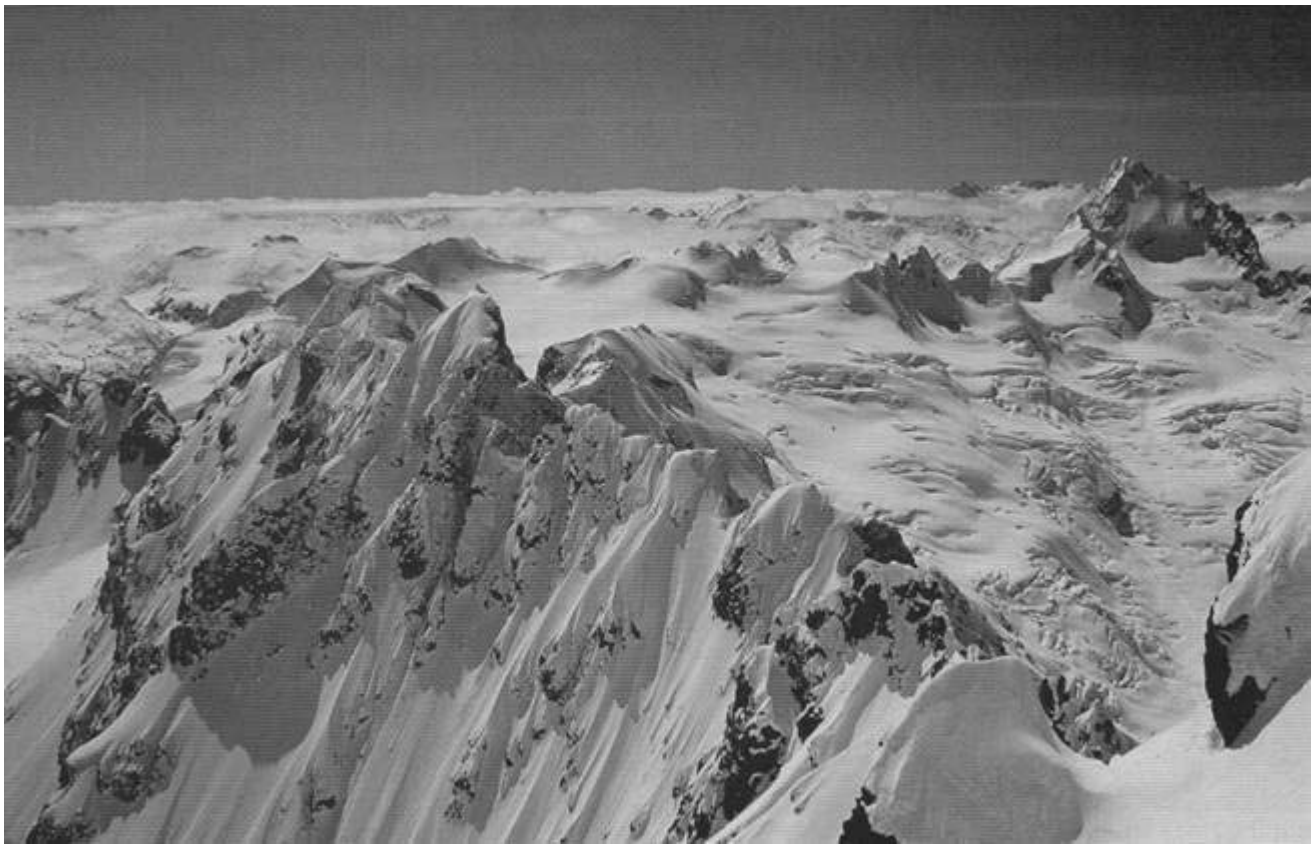
We were literally dumbfounded by the incredible technical challenges these peaks presented. Sweeping faces and ridges broken by vertical gaps were protected from easy access by slabby cirques and steep gullies. Our emotions were charged by the incredible work of nature in sculpturing these magnificent features. In the next instant we felt the cold reality of our carefully laid-out traverse plans dashed. While I was mumbling about our route possibilities on the steep snow flank of Valhalla Mountain, the only reasonable route we could see, Dave was quietly looking ahead at the situation. He pointed out that our food drop zone was also out of the question because of the steep dropping-off of the glacier and the difficult flying that would confront our pilot.

We climbed to the top of a nearby peak to discuss our options and to at least make an easy first accent to alleviate our sagging egos. The unmarked cairn greeting us did little to improve the situation, leaving us with the possibility that all the peaks that we had a reasonable chance of climbing had already been ascended. We agreed to retreat into the flat glacier bowl, camp in a small pass, and try to alert Ron when he arrived to drop our food at this location.

When Ron's floatplane didn't arrive in the early morning as expected, to avoid the potential afternoon cloud buildup common to the range in summer, I grew impatient. By early afternoon I decided to climb the 450-metre slope at the head of the glacier and check out a col beyond that John discovered studying air photos of the area. I must admit that I was fed up with airdrops and logistics, and simply wanted to climb in the mountains. It was healthier for me to burn off some energy rather than torment my partners with my impatience. I would have plenty of opportunity to do that in the ensuing two weeks. This "col" turned out to be a narrow, rotten gully dividing the sheer, impassable walls of granite on either side, and would provide the only alternative approach to Valhalla Mountain.

When the plane did arrive, John was able to alert Ron after a few high passes by running into the middle of the névé, waving his orange sleeping pad. Bombs away! As the specially-packed cardboard boxes crashed into the glacier right on target, I was high on one of the easier ridges, checking out the route possibilities for the days ahead and admiring the distant views of Kates Needle.

The next day Dave was not feeling well due to a lingering flu, so John and I set off rather late to climb up the loose gully I had assessed the day before and explore beyond. This 6900-foot col ,with an attractive blue pond set into the surrounding glacier ice, led us onto the upper reaches of the glacier, with Valhalla Mountain to the north and the pair of challenging peaks directly above. After crossing a large bergschrund in the upper glacier, we reached a higher col south of Valhalla Mountain. This provided access to the north sides of the unnamed peaks with the higher 7800-foot summit located further west of its lower, but sharper,



View from Peak 8200 to unclimbed Peak 8600. Photo: Markus Kellerhals.

neighbour incorrectly contoured on the map. We also had a good vantage point to review the remote divides between Triumph and Dirst Creeks. This region will provide great opportunities for those wanting serious adventure and willing to work hard to get there.

We chose the west ridge of the closer peak, believing we would have plenty of time to climb both. With great amusement I had John, the free spirit of Coast Range exploration, trussed up in rock shoes, harness and helmet for what was to be a beautiful climb on clean rock and a memorable day in the mountains for both of us. One excellent pitch on perfectly featured rock consumed all my rock protection. The fun was still to come when, on the final short but steep 5.8 crux dihedral leading directly to the summit block, I started to become unglued from the final layback. I placed a little too much emphasis on the horn at the top of the crack and it broke off, nearly sending me into flight and luckily missing John and the rope. Fortunately I had not removed my right hand from a solid ledge and swung out of the crack, hanging by one arm. With an adrenaline rush I managed to struggle to the top. At 8 p.m. we were on a summit block so compact there wasn't enough loose rock to build a cairn. With difficulty, we found a rappel anchor and, after a couple more rappels directly down the blank ridge crest, we descended, tired and happy, back to camp late in the evening under a full moon rising over the Stikine.

The next day Dave was feeling better so we climbed on the southwest face the 6800-foot tower north of camp and discovered that the cairn on the summit was placed by Chris M'Neill and Terry Rollerston in 1972. They apparently had poor weather and were only able to climb the lower peaks.

On July 25 we all attempted to climb the slightly higher 7800-foot peak west of the peak John and I had climbed two days earlier by retracing our steps up to the high col between the two summits. Unfortunately, a large gap in the ridge, combined with deteriorating weather, encouraged us to abandon our attempt from this side. Instead, we attempted the 7500-foot peak east of the 6900-foot col by the straight forward looking west ridge. This peak dominated our view from basecamp with its sheer facing walls. The lower ridge led to a short exposed gully and enjoyable solid third to fourth class rock. Like a mountain goat on familiar terrain, John dashed off ahead of us, while Dave and I put on our rock shoes. Dave led up a short, steep crack and landed us on the middle summit. Unfortunately, the higher summit was guarded by a massive notch and remains a challenging objective with a number of steep routes possible.

After a storm day, Dave and I climbed the last of the three smaller towers near camp and found a spoon in the cairn with Terry Rollerston's name scratched into it.

After adding our own names to this 22-year stainless steel veteran of the Sawback Range, we lazed about on the summit and fed a large furry packrat which was unfazed by our presence and willing to eat right out of our hands.

Two storm days kept us busy. Dave built a new tent platform on the moraine after we found ourselves tired of repeatedly being stranded on elevated pans of snow and having to reset the tent. Our rock kitchen had a high sloping wall, providing complete shelter from the wind and rain. John and I struggled with a crossword puzzle, feeling rather stupid after spending a long time trying to figure out the name of the ship involved in the Caine Mutiny.

On Saturday, July 30, the weather looked reasonable enough to make yet another trip back up the 1500-foot snow slope at the head of the glacier. We saw a lone wolf skillfully negotiate the steep snow to the col further southwest to gain the open spaces of the long ridge crest leading to Circle Mountain and beyond to Pendant Creek. We followed the fresh tracks and, after reaching the col, headed right to gain a notch leading to the moss-and lichen-covered southwest ridge of the 7800-foot peak that eluded us days earlier from the other side. One short pitch of enjoyable climbing and we were on the double summit gazing into the wild storm-laden clouds surrounding the high peaks further west.

We descended in a dramatic combination of wind, sun and snow to climb a smaller 7200-foot peak to the south. The long snow slope leading back to camp was beginning to suffer the effects of sun. Snow was melting down to the ice layer, and table sized blocks of granite, dislodged from the melting ice face high above, left huge gouges in the snow over our tracks. In the evening the local herd of goats, long aware of our presence, marched quickly and quietly through our camp determined to reach the alpine slopes beyond.

Rain and damp clouds the next day raised concern about our chances to climb Valhalla Peak — there were only three days left before we had to walk out to the Stikine River. Storms can easily last for a week in this country. A clearing evening and dropping temperature raised our hopes for an attempt the next morning. John had left a small gear stash at the col; when we returned we discovered a hungry rock creature had tried to make a meal out of his ancient leather crampon straps and the uppers of his rock shoes.

We crossed over to the shoulder leading onto the steep, sunlit flank of the 800-foot snow apron which narrowed and steepened into a small gap separating the twin summits of Valhalla Peak. Soft snow allowed for deep buckets on the steep slope, eliminating the need for a rope. The small notch offered the option of a short, sun-exposed rock climb on the clean, well-featured rock of the north peak, or a shady climb up the rotten, ice-filled dike breaking the monolithic vertical walls that protected the south summit.

In the face of a bone-chilling wind, we chose the more pleasant option of the north peak, hoping that this was the higher of the two summits. Unfortunately, the five-foot shortfall in height would force us to tackle the unpleasant ice-choked gully that taunted us from across the gap. Slow, careful climbing on a mix of ice and dark, unstable rock, with friends jammed behind loose blocks, finally led three happy climbers to the highest point of the range. The blank walls of the towers further north are sure to inspire future exploratory rock climbers.

A jammed rappel rope reminded us that we were not getting off this mountain easily. Dave managed to free up the rope in a final effort before having to face reclimbing the entire pitch.

We rappelled the steep top section of the snow slope because snow conditions were sloppy and we were tired. After endless downclimbing on the snow face, three tired bodies slowly worked their way back to camp in the glow of a burning sunset, a fitting end to our time in the mountains.

After a leisurely start to our hike out, we took a refreshing swim in a large tarn on the ridge before retreating to our tents to get away from the masses of black flies and mosquitoes. The next day we left the Sawbacks behind us and descended into the forest towards the Stikine River. The heat and persistent attacks from blackflies were topped off with multiple hornet stings through devil's club and bear droppings to our camp at Vekops Creek. We soaked our battered feet in the cool water of the creek and Dave, who had managed to stay on the slopes directly above, soon joined us for a long bath in the frigid waters.

The Stikine gave us a farewell sample of its fickle temperament with an evening storm which kicked up clouds of silt before exploding into a fury of lightning, thunder and pounding rain. We welcomed the storm from the safety of our riverside vantage. The rain cooled the air and drove the blackflies into retreat. The next day Frances Gleason arrived to greet us in his new jetboat for our return trip to Telegraph Creek. As he shared his knowledge of local river history, we picked out the eagles perched along the river and waved to the Tahltan natives busy cleaning freshly caught salmon.

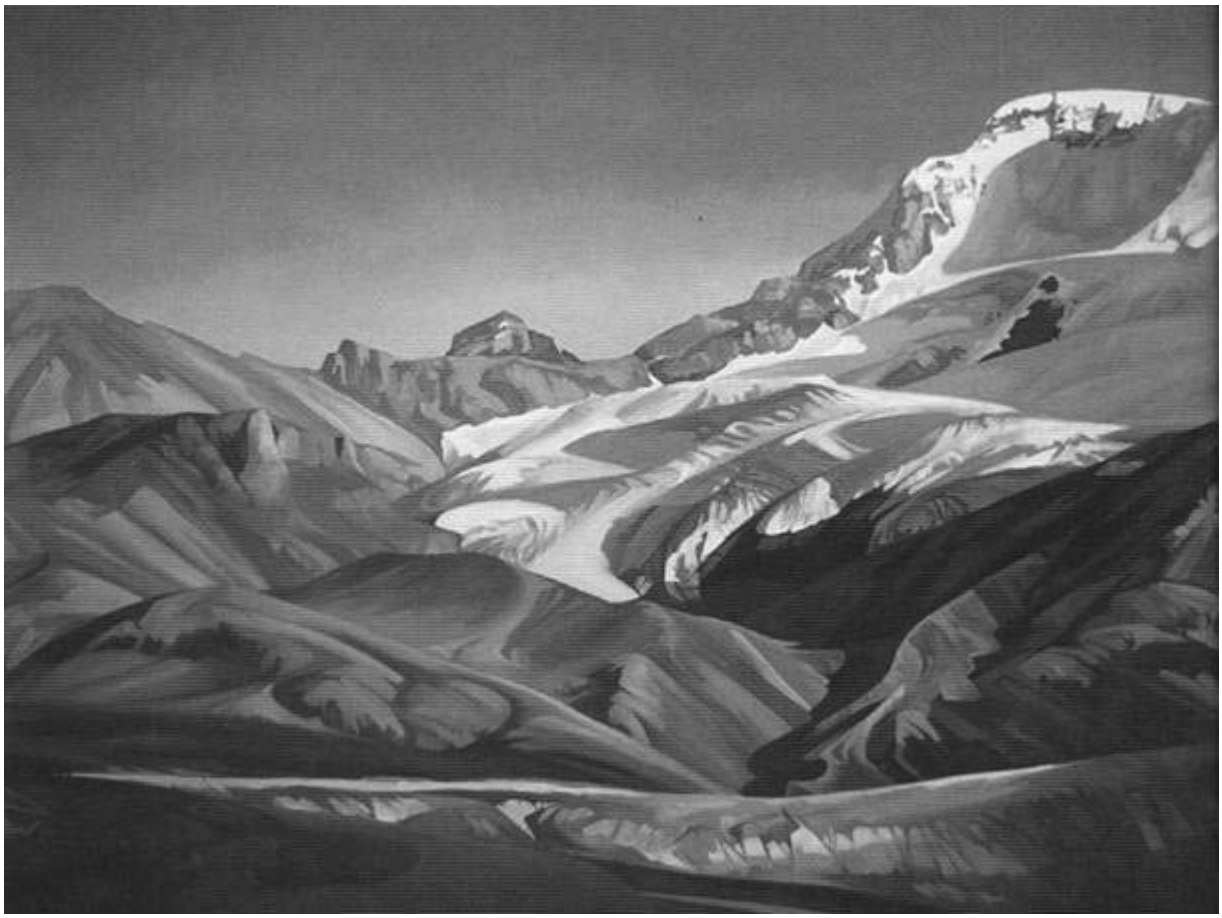
Somewhere To Nowhere

By Alice Saltiel-Marshall

TWO YEARS AGO, when my level of fitness and interest in mountaineering were negligible, a fantasy was born in the back of my brain and in the very depths of my soul. Someday, I would climb Mount Athabasca, with whose Face of God I was, and still very much am, smitten.

"Someday" arrived a great deal sooner than I ever dreamed possible. On July 25, 1994 an exceptional dawn broke over the entire Columbia Icefield area. With wildly intense emotion, I set out with my dear husband Bill, "Mr. Mike" my guide, his lady Rhonda, and in my heart, the spirit of my good friend Zelda. The realization of so many firsts — wearing a harness, being a team roped together, and crossing glacier crevasses, translated to sheer, pure energy. The ascent seemed effortless, to be on the Silverhorn, divine. On the actual summit, I was deeply moved and for once speechless. That I was exhausted and desperately wished to be carried for the last couple of hours of descent wanes. Eternal is the memory of the momentous achievement, an experience that I rank as high as giving birth.

The elevation gain was 1525 metres; twelve hours later we arrived back where we had begun. When I looked up at Athabasca and noticed that the mountain appeared utterly unchanged, I was gripped by the sense of how I would never be the same. For me it follows then, that to only paint these glorious Rocky Mountains is quite simply no longer enough.



Somewhere to Anywhere. Oil on canvas, two panels, 4 feet by 12 feet

The glacial ice, a silent, living force, proudly reveals deeply sculptured, cerulean-pigmented crevasses. Presiding over all is commanding Mount Athabasca, Godlike. Somewhere becoming Anywhere. Mount Andromeda, the towering fortress. Both soundlessly communicating immortality. In radiant sunshine the imposing walls of rock unmistakably glow, the snow and ice prism-like, alive, illuminated with reflected light. Conversely and often suddenly, ominous, foreboding clouds gloomily suspend themselves, all but obliterating the sublime. Duality at its finest, beauty and bleakness, peaceful and raging take me to the Ice.

Rambles With Fred

-Macabre-

By Steve Must

As the Pacific Northwest summer struggled to show its face at the end of May, Fred Beckey directed my attention to the eastern edge of the North Cascades. Mark Maffe was likewise drawn into the fray as Fred spoke in vague terms about big, clean, untouched granite. We initially scouted out an impressive wall near the Chilliwack River valley, but it looked like a serious and demanding project. As I asked Fred about the slings and bolt stations a few pitches off the ground, he began to rave about a great climb that he hadn't finished over in the Pasayten.

The following weekend found us dining in Keremeos. We hiked up Wall Creek to the meadowed basin on the southwest side of Grimface and the Matriarch Ridge. As a cold June storm swirled around our objective, we decided to leave the climbing gear and return with fair weather. Mark's enthusiasm and load-carrying abilities were appreciated, but he had pressing business in Asia and could not return.

In 1991, Fred and Rob Harris had Attempted a route on the south rib of Macabre. The peak lies on the massive expanse of granite between Grimface and Matriarch, just north of the border in the Cathedral Lakes region. The rib runs the entire length of the peak, disrupted near the summit by two large roofs. The route starts right of the buttress toe and follows moderate cracks, a painful off-width and a thin lieback for about five pitches. Fred and Rob had reached the first overhang before retreating.

Three years later, Fred and I passed the first overhang before retreating. Fred was convinced that the second roof would require hours of drilling. Our campaign was plagued by foul weather and time constraints. We became regulars at the K-Cafe. We terminated our pit -stops in Hedley after Fred had to bang his coffee cup on the table and severely lecture the waitress in order to get a refill. I didn't tell him that I had drunk his second cup while he was on the phone. Back up the Ashnola only to find cold, wet weather.

Our latter trip up Wall Creek was insured by the addition of the Whistler trio, John, Jia and Rich. We met at the Husky station in Chilliwack, and after Fred had stopped to admire the decor at Burger King, we returned to Macabre. The Canadians were in fit shape from their recent epic approach into the St. Elias Range. Fully laden, they hiked the 11 or 12 kilometres in rubber sandals. Jia joined Fred and I while Rich and Johnny climbed a new route

on Matriarch.

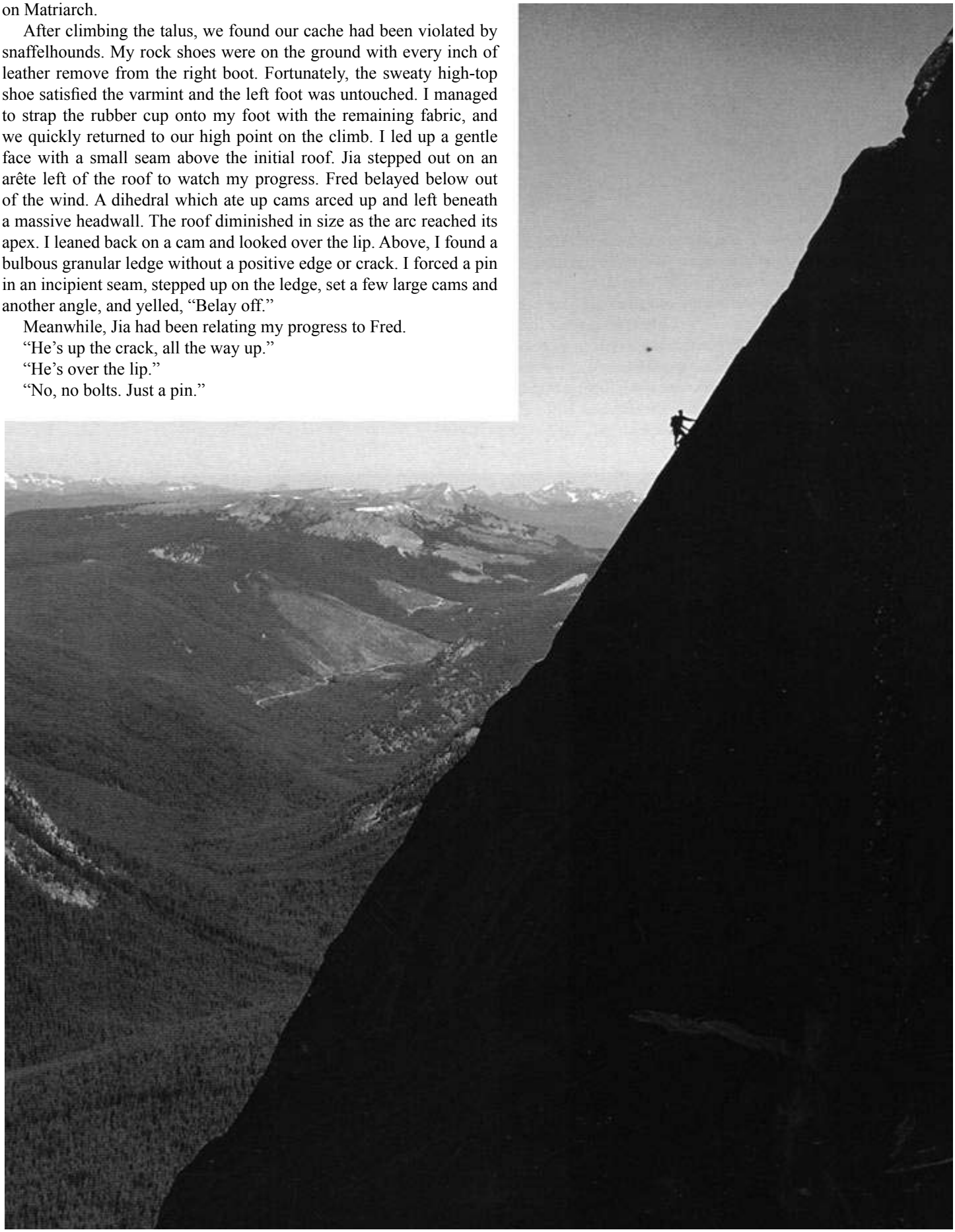
After climbing the talus, we found our cache had been violated by snaffelhounds. My rock shoes were on the ground with every inch of leather remove from the right boot. Fortunately, the sweaty high-top shoe satisfied the varmint and the left foot was untouched. I managed to strap the rubber cup onto my foot with the remaining fabric, and we quickly returned to our high point on the climb. I led up a gentle face with a small seam above the initial roof. Jia stepped out on an arête left of the roof to watch my progress. Fred belayed below out of the wind. A dihedral which ate up cams arced up and left beneath a massive headwall. The roof diminished in size as the arc reached its apex. I leaned back on a cam and looked over the lip. Above, I found a bulbous granular ledge without a positive edge or crack. I forced a pin in an incipient seam, stepped up on the ledge, set a few large cams and another angle, and yelled, "Belay off."

Meanwhile, Jia had been relating my progress to Fred.

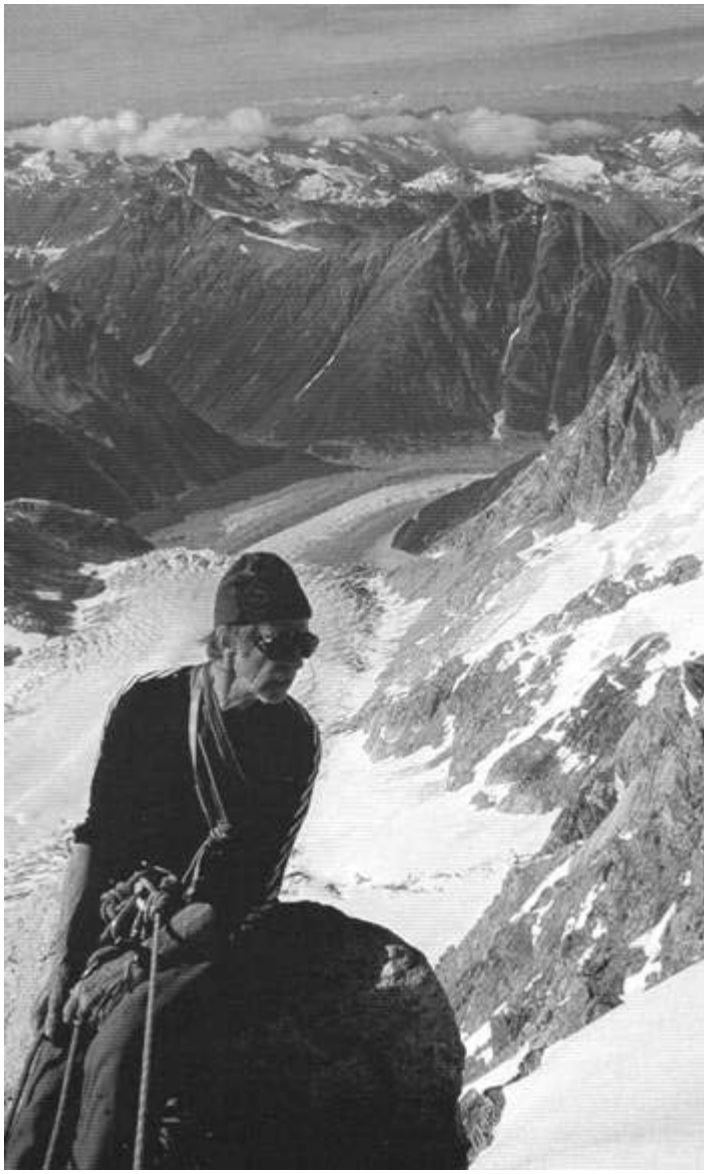
"He's up the crack, all the way up."

"He's over the lip."

"No, no bolts. Just a pin."



Jia Condon on the south ridge, Macabre. Photo: John Chilton



Fred Beckey on summit of "Eagle Head." Photo: John Chilton.

"No, no bolts."

"He's off belay. No, no bolts."

"He says its solid."

"A few cams, no bolts. No, no bolts!"

The route actually had four more interesting and enjoyable pitches to the summit. We could see John and Rich across the ridge and also a party on the summit of Grimface. Cathedral finally appeared to the south. Fred looked forward to his last hike down Wall Creek. The Canadians remained behind and repeated the south rib with a direct start.

We returned to Seattle under clear skies. As I caught sight of Slesse towering over Chilliwack in the rear view mirror, Fred was animated as he described the other routes that still need to be done in the Northwest.

AN ACCOUNT OF FIRST ASCENTS IN THE CATHEDRAL RANGE

South Pillar, Macabre Tower; 5.9, A2

Southwest Buttress, Mount Matriarch; 5.7

Photo: Steve Must.

Between Brilliance And Madness

By John Chilton

Huh, what?"

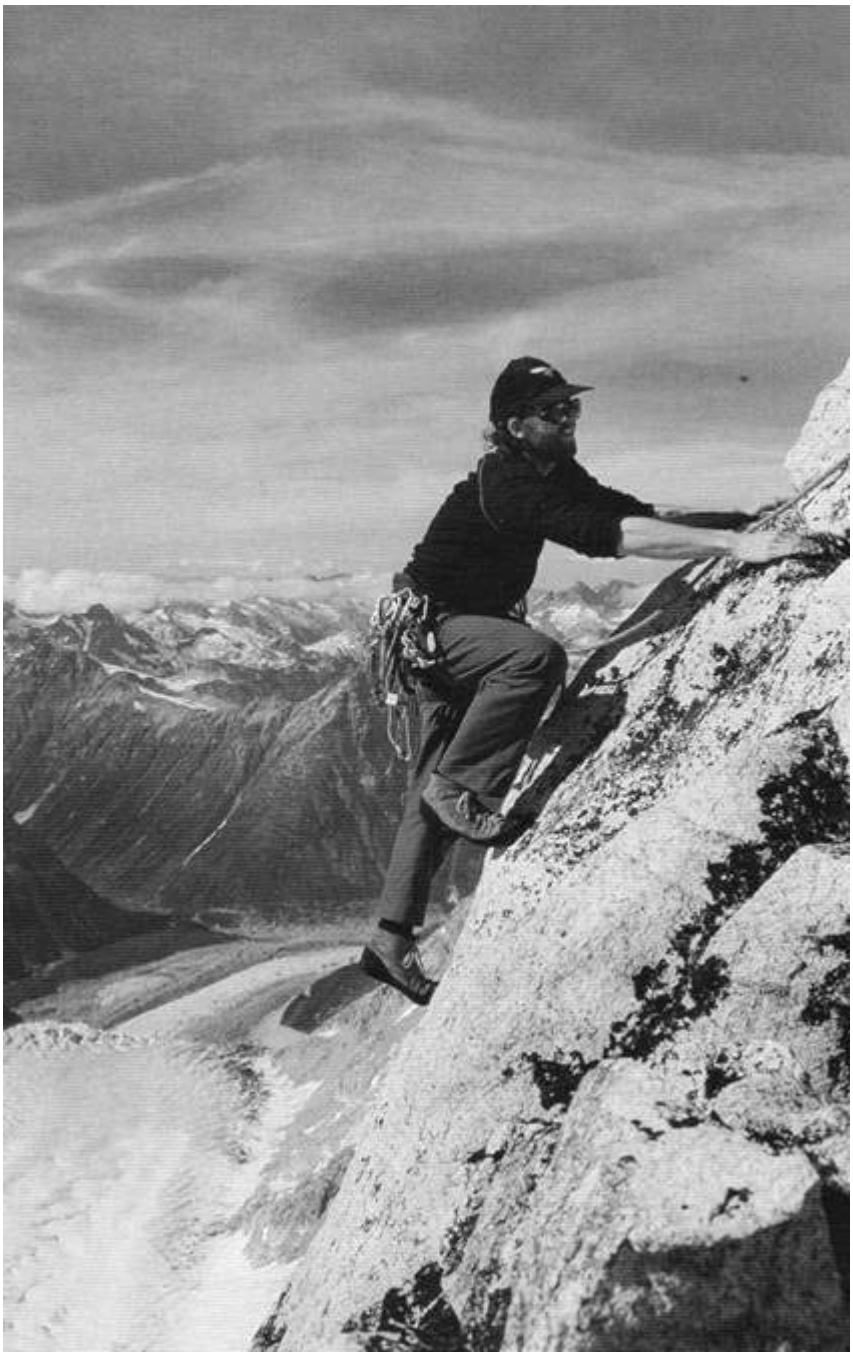
"Yes, Fred. I said, yes, I'd love to check out a new route with you in the Cathedrals."

After climbing Mount Logan in the spring of 1993, Jia Condon, Rich Prohaska and I had been lucky enough to run into Fred Beckey out on the vast expanse of the Hubbard Glacier. As the plane taking Fred back to Kluane Lake disappeared in the distance, I thought the next time I would encounter Fred's words would be in an old Canadian Alpine Journal or guidebook, seeking information to help me follow his adventurous footsteps, or to get me up one of the many classic climbs he has pioneered throughout North America and the world. Little did I know that in July of 1994 the irrepressible legend would be calling to invite Jia, Rich, and I to join him and Steve Must on a weekend trip to the Cathedral Range in British Columbia's Coast Mountains.

When we met Fred and Steve at the Burger King in Chilliwack, we watched with wonder as Fred climbed up on the netting of the children's play area and tried to remove the "No Climbing" sign. We were still laughing and joking about the sanity of everyone involved in this little adventure as we made a respectful line behind Fred for the six-hour approach up Wall Creek. With our first glimpse of Cathedral Ridge, we all agreed that Fred's sanity was firmly in place. The ridge is an amazing, bizarre collection of arid, alpine rock, hosting numerous possibilities to the summits of Mount Matriarch, Macabre Tower, and Grimface, on solid, blocky granite. Fred's chosen route — the south pillar of Macabre Tower — is definitely the jewel of this area. Jia won the paper, rock, scissors game to help Fred and Steve finish this route, and Rich and I decided on the southwest buttress of Matriarch. While far less imposing and dramatic than the south pillar, it proved to be a fine climb, giving us six consistent pitches of 5.7 on good rock.

The next day Fred and Steve had to return to Seattle, so the three of us did a repeat on the south pillar, adding a direct start. After 10 pitches of fabulous climbing (5.9 with minimal aid) directly up the rib of the pillar, we sat on the summit in warm sunshine looking out at huge expanses of forest untouched by clearcutting, and agreed that this route deserves select status. "Huh, what?"

"I said, lemme call you back, Fred." "Yeah. Okay. Jesus Christ,



Steve Must on south face, “Eagle Head.” Photo: John Chilton.

I got this thing I wanna go do up on the Lillooet Glacier for a couple of days and then we’ll be ready to go to Waddington.”

Does this guy ever rest? It seems impossible to keep him out of the mountains for any longer than it takes to plan the next trip. I had barely unpacked from the Cathedrals, and here was an opportunity to drop my societal responsibilities and return to the mountains with Fred and Steve. Within minutes I was back on the phone, and within a week I was looking at the Waddington Range through the window of Mike King’s helicopter.

These are mountains of the grandest scale. Unfriendly glaciers, suspended by nature’s magic, hang threateningly from vertical walls or push their way effortlessly through solid granite on an unrelenting dance with gravity. The thunder of rock and icefall assaults the ears almost constantly. Walls, spires, and ridges of impeccable rock, thousands of feet high, assault the mind.

Our objective was the east ridge of Stiletto Peak — two distinct, steep buttresses, connected by several hundred metres of narrow, low-angled ridge. The first five pitches of the lower buttress had been done by Jim Nelson and Heather Paxson in 1987, and now Fred had lured Steve and I here with promise of good climbing. “Good” just doesn’t quite express it. Beautiful hand cracks and 60-grit friction leading to hideous-looking off-widths that became gems of delight as hidden, inner seams gave possibilities beyond imagination. The great protection and perfect belays allowed us to reach our bivi site on the narrow ridge, six pitches up, almost too soon, leaving us the entire evening to ponder the ominous vertical buttress looming above. But again the rock relented, giving us four pitches of magnificent 5.9 to 5.10 freeclimbing, with two moves of aid just below the summit. We rappelled the route back to the Tellot Glacier in time to join Fred for dinner.

With our objective complete and the high pressure holding, we began to prod Fred’s mind for information. He didn’t give it up easily, but when we asked the right questions, he’d get that crazed look somewhere between brilliance and madness. “Hey Fred, what about the east face of Serra One?” His eyes twinkled “Nope. Nope. Don’t think anybody’s climbed that.” Four pitches of steep climbing on the great rock so characteristic of this range. Jams, laybacks, flakes, friction, hand traverses. Not a move below 5.6 nor above 5.8. Awesome!

Our raves of fine climbing finally convinced Fred to join us for a route. There seemed to be some discrepancies on our map, so we’re not really sure if we climbed a Tellot spire or Eagle Head Peak (the map said Tellot; Fred said Eagle — I’d be inclined to go with Fred). Regardless, this south face rewarded us with four pitches of great climbing (5.10 one move of aid) leading to an outstandingly-tiny summit overlooking the Radiant Glacier. After eight perfect days, the coastal clouds began to roll in, so we moved our camp from high on the Tellot Glacier to the Plummer hut.

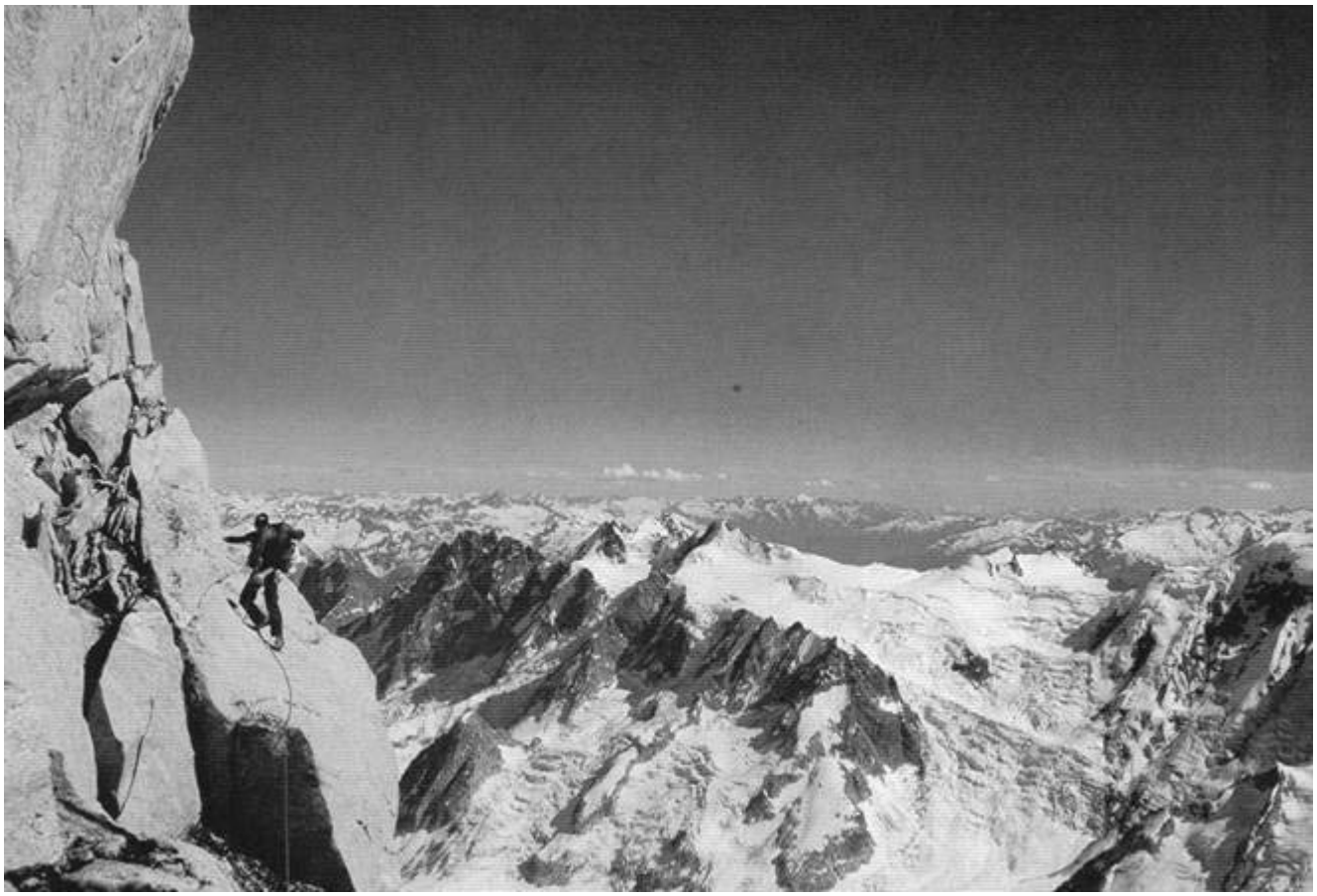
Hopes of climbing Mount Waddington were dashed, as we spent the next six days trying to see out from the inside of a ping pong ball. We lay around the hut clinging to the spires of sanity as Fred moaned about young women. Occasionally he graced us with some of the rich climbing history that he has been such a big part of. Like the time in 1943 when he and his brother, as teenagers, made the second ascent of Waddington via a new route, walking all the way. Or his first ascent in 1947 of the classic west ridge on Claw Peak which begins literally off the porch of Plummer hut. When an avalanche struck on the Serra I couloir, killing two climbers, only the rope hanging up on a sérac saved Fred and his partner from the hand of cold, white death.

It seems strange that I should meet Fred at this point in my life, just when I’ve begun to have doubts about giving so much of my time and energy to the mountains. He has made no compromises.; he has found his destiny. He is as lost without the mountains as most would be without air or water. He has proven that it’s possible

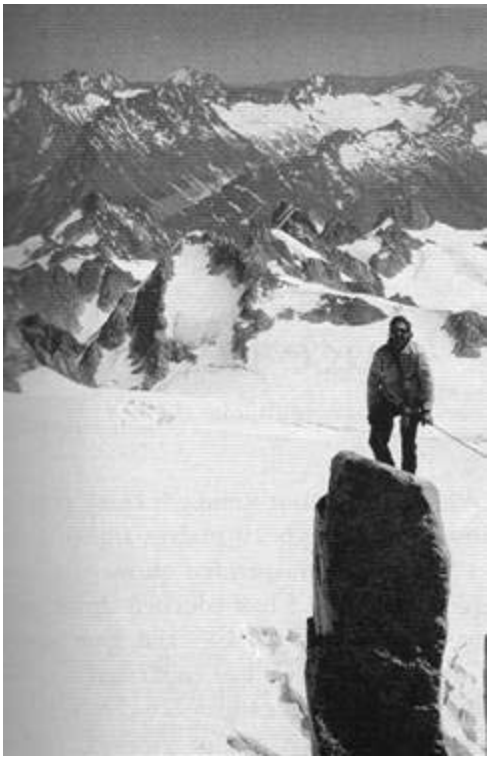
to spend your life on the fringes of this mad society and pursue your dreams. Of all the things I learned from Fred this summer, perhaps the most important of all is why I go to the mountains — because I love it.

AN ACCOUNT OF FIRST ASCENTS IN THE WADDINGTON RANGE

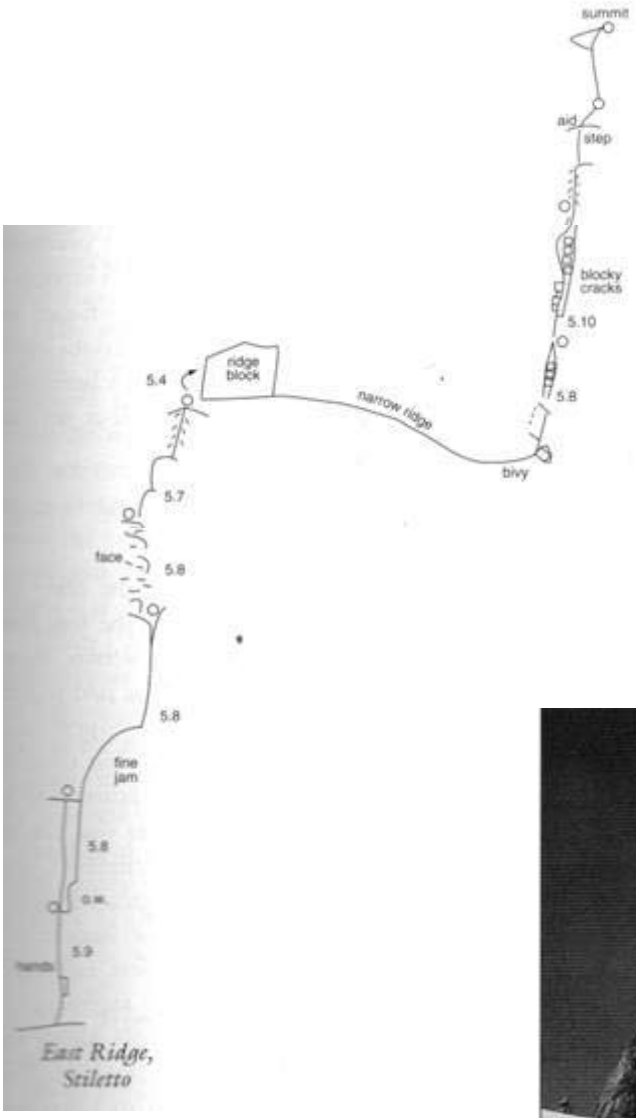
East ridge, Stiletto Peak; 5.10, A1
East face, Serra I; 5.8
South face, "Eagle Head"; 5. 10, A1



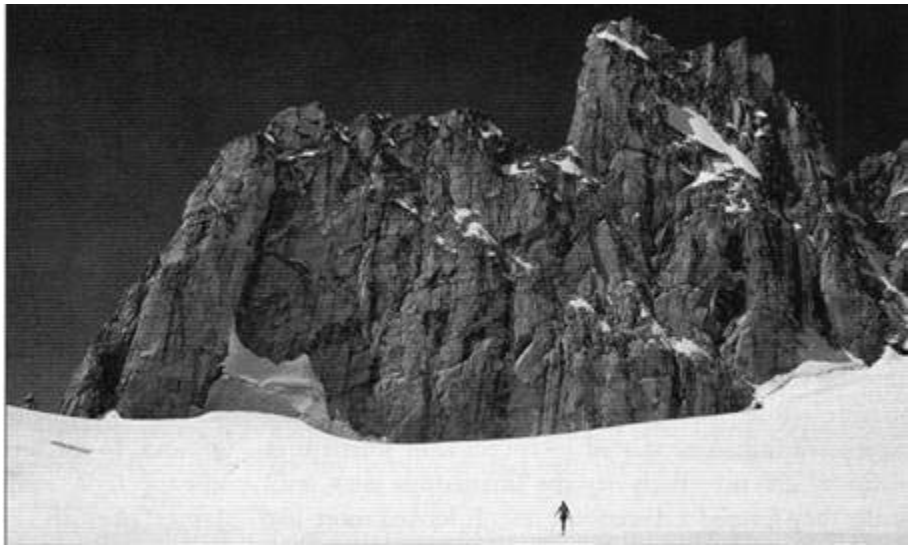
Steve Must on east ridge, Stiletto. Photo: John Chilton.



Steve Must on Stiletto Peak. Photo: John Chilton.



East Ridge, Stiletto



East ridge of Stiletto climbs the left skyline. Photo: John Chilton.

Sea Of Vapours

Bruce Hendricks

adventure logically implies risk, but why go forth,
adventure, at all? because that is the nature of
reality...
for a living organism, what will be is never fully
predictable, to be is to become, to become means to
venture forth into an emergent world.
the world of living creatures provides complete
safety
only in looking backwards.
Jasper Hunt, Adventure Education

"I am haunted by waters."

Flooded by thought and emotion, I slowly close the book and set it down on the sun warmed table. The words form the closing sentence in Norman Maclean's powerful story "A River Runs Through It," but they also provide a starting point for an internal journey. As I stare out the cabin window, reflections of late afternoon light dance on the water of East Rosebud Lake, phantoms in ever-changing abstract shapes. I feel ripples of confusion, intensity and sorrow. Something significant is churning inside me — something that promises insight — so I settle in to wait, to give it and me needed space and time. Seldom these days do I find myself in a place, geographically or personally, where dreams, memories, and reflections are nurtured. Savoring the time and expansiveness this place provides, I watch the sometimes gentle, sometimes angry, play of wind across the dark surface of the water. The onset of internal breezes blows me back to another place of waters, the Sea of Vapours. There, too, I confronted a tumultuous inner world, trying to sort out questions of importance, responsibility and wisdom. These two places, East Rosebud Lake and Sea of Vapours, are connected by a friend, a labored journey of growth, and water — the stuff of life.

Memories

It took just over a week for Sea of Vapours to form. It was February, 1993. No one had seen it form in previous years and it seems likely it will never appear again. Seeping from a rock gash, droplets of water, slowed for a time by the grip of winter, created a thin ribbon of opaque white. What began as a steep and exposed expanse of limestone started to collect faint smatterings of frothy gray ice. Each day the smatterings grew until finally they formed a discernible line. It looked more like a streak of icy mist than a frozen waterfall. Two thousand feet up the north face of Mount Rundle it clung precariously to an indistinct trough 20 metres right of the Terminator, a huge icicle suspended above the Bow Valley. The Terminator itself had touched down only once — during the winter of 1984 — and four ascents over several short weeks that year had confirmed it as one of the most difficult and most aesthetic ice climbs in the Canadian Rockies. In contrast, Sea of Vapours, like its lunar namesake, had seen no visitors. As a line of ascent it looked improbable from the Trans-Canada Highway. Precisely because of this it was alluring; it promised adventure. It did not disappoint. That small stretch of topography was to deliver an intensity of experience and challenge which would expand my perspectives about what was possible in climbing. It would also precipitate an exhausting, sometimes disheartening look at my own overly-frenetic life.

Encounters

It was curiosity, a desire for intensity and the offer of a friend that set me adrift on Sea of Vapours the first time. Originally the plan was to go as a party of two, myself and Ken Wylie. At about the same time Ken had to drop out, I discovered Barry Blanchard had arranged to go give things a look with James Blench, and that they had invited Joe Josephson to join them. Barry, James and Joe are about as strong an ice climbing team as you can put together in these parts. If it could be climbed, they would get up it. Depression and self-pity ground away in my stomach as I began to understand how important it was for me to be the first to explore this new, ephemeral ground. In the midst of my self-indulgent suffering, Joe unexpectedly rang to say he couldn't join Barry and James after all. He suggested I take his place. First ascents can be delicate and political affairs so I was hesitant to invite myself to someone else's party, but I was also restless to rub my nose in the adventure plastered to that north-facing wall.

After much internal debate, and with some anxiety, I gave Barry a call.

"Yeah, that'd be cool if you want join us," Barry said with complete sincerity. The stage was set.

Our approach up Mount Rundle's lower slopes was a joy. The morning sky was clear and the surface hoar sparkled and crunched underfoot. James and I discussed avalanche research while Barry plowed an ascending trench through the depth hoar. After two hours of steady work we rounded a rock rib high on the approach. The climb came suddenly into view, suspended alarmingly above us. Soloing up the approach ice, the climb above leaned out further and further over our heads until its weight was oppressive. It was an intimidating place.

While I flaked out the rope and Barry racked up James matter-of-factly commented, "Y'know, since this is the first ice climb of the season for me, I think I'll let you guys do the leading."

Your first climb of the season? I thought to myself. You're insane!

Barry tied in and led the first pitch, a deceptive pillar which turned out to be a full grade harder than I expected. After he established the belay, I asked him about the looks of the second pitch, the pitch I had asked to lead, and the one which from the ground appeared to form the crux. There was a long, silent pause before he finally shouted down, "I can't lie — it doesn't look too good."

When James and I arrived at the belay I immediately understood what Barry meant. I was both surprised and worried — scared would be more truthful. White, frothy ice lay splattered to the right with numerous patches of dark rock leering through. Unlikely as it appeared, the anemic ice was the only line I could discern, everything else being bare, featureless limestone. Below the smatterings of ice, the undercut rock gave an exaggerated feeling of exposure. Up above, several rock overhangs dripped with delicate opaque icicles. The angle was consistent — 80 to 90 degrees. Despite no apparent protection the pitch appeared climbable; what

I could see of it anyway — more than half of it was hidden. This is the next step, I thought to myself. It was obviously one step beyond anything I had yet climbed. After a hurried exchange of gear and some nervous mutterings, I began climbing. One exhausting hour later, I was a mere 10 metres out from the belay; every move was agonizingly slow and meticulously deliberate. Nowhere was there ice thicker than a stack of four quarters; everywhere it was not only thin but bad. Even gentle taps with my tools produced miniature dinner plates which, after being cleared away, left my picks in contact with the rock.

Now two thirds of the way up the pitch with tools hooking and wobbling in shallow, shattered placements, I am inundated by strange sensations: excitement, joy, peace-fulness. They are strange because they do not fit here. It seems bizarre that now, of all times, I should turn calmly reflective, but it is a welcome change. The angle is unrelenting, the protection abysmal, the climbing tremendously technical. I have a good pin just even with the belay, then a decorative pin driven into an iced up crack, next a Camalot that I can yank out with my hand and finally, a tied-off, bleached white icicle three inches in diameter. Except for the first pin, I know that none of these pieces will hold even body weight. There isn't enough ice to get a screw started, let alone turn it in far enough to tie off. I am certain that if I fall off this thin veneer of ice I will die.

Certain. Emotionally, I am drained to the point of exhaustion. The danger is too great. I pledge to lower off the pitch as soon as I locate good pro. A diligent search turns up no gear at all so I continue up into the unknown. Safety here lies in a paradoxical combination of boldness and great care. Two hours and 40 tense metres above the now invisible belay there is no stance in sight. The bolt kit lies somewhere distant, enjoying the warmth of Barry's living room. I begin to consider what to do if I run out of rope having found no protection and no belay. I am resolved to focus, to climb carefully and not to fall. My actions here matter; there is no mistaking this fact.

"Breathe — breathe — relax — focus," I say out loud to myself.

Long bursts of exhaled air turn to white, drifting clouds before my face. There is no let-up. The rest of the pitch, including the section hidden from below, now becomes visible; it is more of the same. My calves ache from the strain of not being able to use the crampon's secondary front points — the ice is too thin for them to come into play. Wrists throb from the stress of constantly chipping tools into the fragile, frozen, mist. My head is tight with the tension of prolonged focus. Despite the intensity, or perhaps because of it, I am starting to gain confidence; I am settling in to a rhythm that is familiar and effective. My attitude has evolved over the course of the pitch. Things will turn out all right. I am confident now that I will deal effectively with whatever comes my way.

Not long after my change of attitude I notice several flakes of rock off to the left which look good for gear. I chip a small nick in the ice then delicately rest my pick in the manufactured hole. I use the heel of my hand to stabilize the tool's shaft against the ice, preventing the head from flopping over sideways and levering out the pick. Repeating this delicate sequence, I scratch my way over to the margin of the ice. Unbelievably, one crack offers a perfect spot for a number four stopper. It's a taunting mind game to avoid rushing when security is so close at hand. Placing the nut takes forever. Finally I drop the rope into the biner and the gate clicks shut with an unmistakable sound of security. Yes, yes, yes! I've got a piece of gear in, a real piece of gear! Relief, joy, satisfaction, hope. Hoots and shouts of encouragement waft up from the long-forgotten belay below; I am not alone after all. As it turns out, I have found not just a single placement but pro for an entire anchor, a bomber belay. The future will reveal it is the only anchor within twenty meters.

From the airiness of the hanging stance I gaze out across the wall. The pressure is off for the moment. I have time to reflect. The two pitches we've completed feel like twenty on a big wall. The exposure is outrageous. I stare down the pitch like a drunk. It's hard to believe I climbed that. The anxiety, arousal, and adrenaline slowly begin to subside, replaced sporadically by feelings of relief and accomplishment. Having earned every inch, I am filled with satisfaction. Rudely, in the midst of the wind-down, it dawns on me that the climb does not end with this pitch. Halting, I turn my attention to the wall above. It appears to continue in much the same fashion as the previous ropelength, steep and thin with a sustained vertical curtain twenty meters above. Gear? Who knows? Nothing obvious at any rate. Thickness? Not very, but enough. I contemplate venturing off on this next lead, having just finished one of the most difficult stretches of climbing I have ever encountered. It's clear that if this route gets finished it will be among the most difficult ice climbs in the Rockies, a definite accomplishment. But now that I am here, it is equally clear that regardless of whether or not I climb this route first (or ever finish it for that matter), the experience of being here is intrinsically valuable, rich with an uncertainty and challenge that yields deep significance. Below, at the first belay, I wondered whether the climbing was possible. Now I know. While on the lead I wondered whether the degree of risk and danger was justifiable. I answered that question once when I decided to lower off. When retreat was not possible, the question, out of necessity, disappeared. Over the next several days it will not leave me alone. I am realizing the most significant aspect of this delicate, labored dance is that it pushes me to determine what is important, to exercise judgments, and to make choices which have consequences I must live with. It helps me to grow.

Barry and James follow one at a time. Barry weaves his way carefully through the lower bulges and begins working up the runnel above, his tools regularly bouncing off rock beneath the thinly overlaid ice. When he gets within earshot he looks up and pauses.

"Fuck, man, how did you hold it together up here?" Then, before I can respond he retorts, "I know how you held it together." He knows all right. He's been here before. "Because you had to hold it together," he says without speaking.

Pulling in the rope I wonder, would I come back up here again knowing what I know now? By the time James arrives at the belay the day has atrophied. It is clear we won't be finishing the route today. We are too short on both time and emotional energy. As we rap off I privately agonize over whether or not to come back. On the drive home my thoughts about returning become clear: I think I'll leave this one for somebody else to finish; it's just too dangerous.

Interlude

Upon my return home I find it difficult to fall asleep, I have recurring nightmares, and I often wake up in the night unable to get back to sleep before daybreak. I am haunted by the thin line I walked on the second pitch; I am even more troubled by my

growing desire to return. My resolve not to go back, once firm, is eroding. I think long and hard about whether I am foolish or gripped by some sort of addiction or possessed by a dysfunctional drive that I cannot control. I think of at least one friend who, in the past, told me I was obsessed.

Before allowing myself to seriously consider the possibility of returning, I am compelled to wrestle. I am revisited by the inescapable question of whether or not the risk and danger of this climb are justifiable. One thing is clear, I don't want to die or get hurt. It is preeminently important to return from the mountains for my sons, for my wife and for myself. In the past year three friends have lost their lives climbing. Nothing they accomplished in the years before their death could make up for their loss — not fame, not a new technical standard, not a bold new route — nothing. I had sobbed with grief and sorrow and I had thought about what made them valuable to me. It had nothing to do with what they had climbed.

Still, safety is a relative term — it does not mean avoiding all danger, that is impossible. It means wisely preparing, assessing and acting. Having learned much about the fragile gift of life through climbing it is clear to me that risk (usually personal rather than physical risk) is closely linked to meaning. To unequivocally equate safety with meaning, desirability, or quality contradicts the voice of individuals and cultures that have discovered life's most important gifts and lessons come at a dear price. That which is valuable is seldom cheap.

Death and injury are not the only risks I fear. Perhaps more frightening is the risk of appearing reckless or, conversely, cowardly in the eyes of peers. There is no winning here — if I make a choice based on pleasing others I will lose. I must do what I think is right and let others sort out their own opinions.

Choosing not to return entails losses of its own. It means relinquishing a unique opportunity to push technically and psychologically—giving up on a challenge that demands my best efforts. It also means sacrificing experiences of uncertainty, passion and focus which offset cultural norms of routine, coolness and frenzy. Then there is walking away from a significant first ascent. Though I wish it were not true, ambition and accomplishment are influential factors.

All of these thoughts are part of a larger balancing act with one single question acting as the fulcrum of the scales: Can a second trip be made safer? Attitude, judgment, skill and equipment provide tools to decrease the risk and danger but, and it is a big but, they must be wielded in a manner that realistically tips the outcome scale toward a happy ending. It is an exceedingly difficult choice to make, but three days after returning from Sea of Vapours, I decide to go back.

The Return

Preparing for the return trip is a completely different experience. There is none of the naive excitement and optimism of the first tour. The demands and consequences are much clearer. Much time and energy has been poured into reevaluating all aspects of the climb. I have brought half the number of ice screws Barry, James and I had, three times the amount of rock pro and I have included a bolt kit. Most of our short slings are load limiters to minimize the impact force on gear, our start time is earlier by several hours to give us more daylight climbing time, and we have the significant advantage of knowing what to expect on the second pitch. There is a fixed anchor at the top from our previous retreat and I have hand picked

Photo: Joe Josephson

specific gear for better protection.

Far more important for safety than any choice of gear is the fact that I have partnered up with Joe. We have climbed together for over five years now and during that time we have developed a valuable friendship. A Montana native, Joe grew up in the small town of Big Timber, and spent his summers on the shores of East Rosebud lake. He understands water, especially the frozen kind. He has a forthright, no bullshit approach to things and is a person of little pretense. He possesses a self confidence which is honest and gracious. Joe is a person of character. He is also the strongest ice climber I have climbed with. His climbing accomplishments in the Canadian Rockies are impressive: a plethora of new waterfall ice routes encompassing all difficulties, the second ascent of several multi-day alpine desperates and first solo ascents of routes like the Grand Central Couloir on Mount Kitchener. His friendship and his ability combine to make him my strongest climbing partner.

Joe has agreed to lead the thin second pitch, the Vapours, this time. Once was enough for me. I know since I was able to climb the pitch it is within Joe's ability too. I have a great deal of trust and confidence in both his skill and his judgment. I have recounted the climbing in intricate detail, suggested where additional protection might be found, and assembled a rack suitable for an El Cap nail up. None of this alone will get Joe up the pitch but it helps me feel better. I am worried about subjecting a close friend to the very real potential for harm. I feel strangely but strongly responsible. Rationally, I realize that Joe is making his own choices. Still, I can't shake the anxious feelings; I know what will happen if Joe falls on that pitch.

A few minutes before four a.m. Joe pulls into the driveway piloting his rusty, dented Subaru, one of its headlights blinking at the stars. It's still dark out and it will remain that way until eight o'clock. We silently load gear to the monotonous buzz of street lights. As I pull the passenger door shut, it releases an arthritic groan.

Turning onto the Trans-Canada, the drive to Banff begins, west across the night-blanketed prairie. We are alone on the road and alone with our thoughts. Attempts at conversation are strained. At 5:30 we roll through the silent streets of Banff, driving between hotels filled with sleeping tourists from around the world. As we pull to a stop in the parking area the dying headlights leave us for a moment in total darkness. It is one of those paradoxical moments when you want to turn back and you want to go on, when you're looking for reasons to justify either course of action. Though we are tense, we are also focused; we have come to climb. We unload our packs and lace up our boots. Even though it is still two hours before dawn, the temperature in the valley is surprisingly warm. Perhaps too warm. Each of us thinks privately about the effects this may have on the climb. It's time to get going. We must start psyching up and talking seems a good way to start, even if it's expressing apprehension.

The waterfalls of Mount Rundle
From left to right: The Terminator, Replicant, & Sea of Vapours.
Photo: Bruce Hendricks.

"Wow, this is really warm" Joe comments, "I wonder if the thinnest sections of ice are still there?"

"That north wall is a freezer," I reply. "I'm sure the temps up there will be a whole lot colder. It may even work to our advantage if it softens up the ice." I am doing my best to be optimistic.

On the approach we come upon a clearing in the trees where our route leaves the riverside trail. From here it is possible to get a good look at the Vapours. The skies are barely showing a touch of muted light and the view of the route is such that you can make of it whatever you want — it might be there or it might not. Either way, dull, grainy lighting makes the route look ominous, as if it is about to fall over on us from a great height. It seems impossible that it could be warm up there. More uncertainty. We put our heads down and begin moving silently up through the juniper bushes, rock steps and depth hoar. As we gain height our view of the line disappears and it isn't until the beginning of the traverse which leads back to the base of the approach ice that we see the smear again. This time it is life size. The ice knocked off from our previous attempt makes the route look splotchier than ever. Though this is my second visit the sight is no less impressive. Quiet for a moment, we soon begin to talk about the features on the route. Our activity is having a positive impact on our attitude.

Gearing up at the foot of the approach ice, I ask Joe the obvious question, "So, now that you've seen it for yourself what do you think?'

"I'm scared shitless, man!" he replies without hesitation.

I appreciate Joe's honesty. I offer a vague and stupid response which is supposed to mean, "Yeah, me too."

It's good to have the approach ice to solo. It allows us to move, climb and begin developing a rhythm. Within a few minutes we are at the base of the initial pitch. Joe sets up the belay and I launch up the pillar. It is just as strenuous as I had remembered. Topping out, I clip into the belay and set up some aiders to stand in, figuring I'm going to be here a while. While Joe follows the first pitch I stare across at the Vapours. Flashbacks wash over me in waves of mixed emotion and memory; I am glad to have someone else leading it this time.

Joe doesn't spend any time dicking around. He grabs the rack and gets ready to set off straight away; he who hesitates is lost.

"The solid pin placement is right around that little corner," I say pointing directly across from the belay. "Good luck, mate." Joe gingerly works his way down from the belay, then across the traverse before finally starting to gain height.

Watching Joe slow-dance delicately through splatterings and anemic curtains of ice, I worry more than when I was on the pitch myself. At least when I was leading I was in control, I could do something. Now that I am the observer, all I can do is watch and hold the rope, neither of which is likely to do much good. Having completely lost track of time I glance down at my watch. "Guess how long you've been out there" I ask Joe who is still within ten metres of the belay.

Balancing on his points and searching for a patch of non-aerated ice he good naturedly hazards a guess. "About an hour."

"Sixty-five minutes," I respond. I unwind a bit. If Joe can play twenty questions he's doing all right. His climbing sure looks solid. I offer encouragement until he is lost from view, remembering back to how distant and alone I felt out there. I wonder if his experience is similar. I wonder if it is as meaningful to him. I ask for updates every time he puts in gear. His voice and the rope are our only connection now. The rock rack is paying off, especially the pins. Though not what could be called good pro (by normal standards it's pathetic), it is, at least, better than before. Joe has five placements, some of them made up of two pieces. At least two of them are actually reliable. When combined with Joe's ability the protection is good enough. After two and a half hours I hear a hoot from the belay above. Yes, he's done it!!

I follow the pitch on Jumars hoping to gain some time, time enough to finish the route. At the belay I congratulate Joe with hearty slaps on the back. I am ecstatic. Joe is satisfied, relieved, happy and drained. I know how he feels. We talk about our perceptions of the pitch's difficulty and our sensations while leading it. For both of us it has been one step beyond.

While I re-rack I glance up at the next lead, the one I had studied and wondered about while belaying Barry and James. I had climbed five or six meters of this pitch last time around. I had thought then that there was a good belay spot just up above. I was wrong. As a result I had been forced to downclimb back to the number four stopper and arrange a belay there. It was an exciting way to end the lead. As I start out now I notice the ice is softer than it was on our last attempt; the warmer temperatures have made a

difference. With a dull, soft thud the first two teeth of my pick sink and stick into the ice. Movement here feels more secure than down below — the ice shatters less and it is growing subtly thicker. Joe has gotten us over the hump, I think to myself; I hope the rest of the climbing is less demanding. More wrist flicking brings me to substantially thicker ice. I wiggle a good Tricam into the rock and relax even more. The vertical curtain I have been apprehensive about is turning out to be thick enough for decent placements or hollow enough to hook through. The waves return; peacefulness, joy, satisfaction, confidence. Above the steep section I get in more gear — a Friend equalized with a stopper. With the exception of the first pitch we have yet to place an ice screw; the ice is still thin enough that even short screws would have to be tied off with the threads sticking out, threads sharp enough to cut the tie-off sling. The white, icy line continues above, twisting and turning, a steep thread of ice imitating the shape of the rock beneath. There are always sections of the ice that lie hidden, there is always an element of uncertainty. I am wary of relaxing too much lest I suffer an unexpected and severe spanking. Beneath a large rock overhang on the left I arrange our third hanging belay. It is well protected from falling debris and hung off of good gear, a pin, a stopper, both my tools and, at last, two ice screws. The views are incredible! This is fabulous!

When Joe arrives beneath the roof his feet are killing him. In trying to accommodate footwear to his bunions, Joe has already lost one pair of plastic boots to a well meaning technician who overheated the plastic, then accidentally pushed the stretching ball through the side-wall of the shell. The pair of boots he is wearing now haven't been stretched and his bunions are trying to push their way out to freedom. Joe is also emotionally and physically spent. The combination of leading the second pitch and following the other two has exacted a heavy toll. It is a rare day when Joe runs out of energy before me. I volunteer to lead the next pitch, which will likely be the last one.

Ready to climb, I reach across to unclip from the anchor. I have already undipped my tools and placed them in the ice in front of me—temporarily. With a slight brush from my arm the axe drops noiselessly into space. It cartwheels down in slow motion, bouncing once before burying itself in the snow at the bottom of the first pitch. I stare at Joe in disbelief. It is the first time I have ever dropped a tool and I've chosen a poor place to start. Though we both have third tools, mine isn't the kind I would willingly use on difficult terrain unless forced to do so. Without skipping a beat Joe offers, "Would you like to try one of my tools?" Red-faced, I gratefully accept.

A beautiful mushroom-festooned column breaches the right side of the roof and leads on to steep, smooth ice above. I place two ice screws, one below the overhang and one above. I can now see the top, a cave-like wound in the rock from which all the droplets seep. It is amazing they actually make it down the face as far as they do, forming climbable ice from such a tiny fountainhead. The smooth, upper ice offers no opportunity for stemming so, arms flaming, I race to reach a break in the angle. Poetically, just as the steepness backs off, the ice grows thin again. This thing never quits! Thankfully, it is not so thin as on the second or third pitches. Several more metres and the climbing is over. After all the energy I have invested in this experience it seems strange to be near the end, even a bit sad. The descent awaits, so I begin searching for an anchor. After several attempts I locate a pocket in the rock that has thicker ice, thick enough to build an Abalakov. Building this last station and beginning the rap off using natural gear is a crowning touch. We have placed no bolts on the route and it is fulfilling to have gotten by without them. Though it has pushed us hard we have managed to find what we needed.

Our descent, including the retrieval of my wayward axe, goes without a hitch. We are back at the car just after dark.

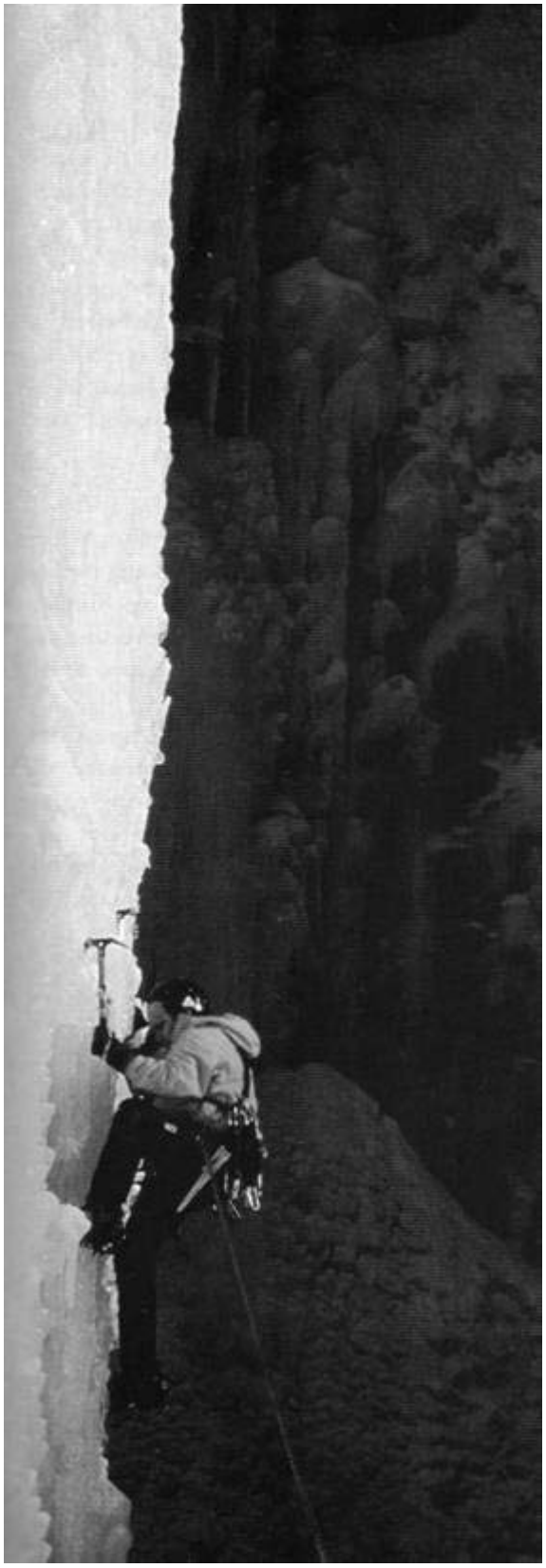
It has been almost two years since Sea of Vapours; I have had time to think. It was worth returning. It was reasonable and justifiable — for Joe and me, at that time, given those conditions. The experiences surrounding Sea of Vapours have proved valuable. Some of that value and learning I have been able to communicate to others, some of it I have not, some of it I have not tried to.

Outside the cabin the wind is dying down and the surface of East Rosebud Lake has grown placid. I have been lost in the fogginess of late afternoon thought for some time. The hot sunshine outside and the flies buzzing around the window make it hard to believe I have been high up on an ice-streaked north wall in the ranges of my mind. Slowly, but clearly, the words of a poem come to mind, "The peacefulness is richer, it holds a smoother texture when it follows the intensity." It is time to take a walk, identify some more wildflowers and play trucks with my sons Kern and Logan out in the dirt pile. Though time, place, and experience differ, I am certain I understand what Norman Maclean meant when he penned those closing words.

"I am haunted by waters."

Thanks to Karl Klassen, who edited my initial drafts, helping me weave intense but fragmented thoughts into a story .

Jo Jo following pitch 3. Photo: Bruce Hendricks.



Joe Josephson on Pillier des Putains, Waterton National
Photo: Brad Wrobleski

When The Mercury Drops. ..

Frosted air tears at my lungs
drying my throat and numbing lips.
Ice stiffens the very fabric
of the clothes donned for protection.
Digital clumsiness, coordination sapping
distant toes no longer felt; Stumps.
Exhalation clouding my vision, steamed goggles.
The wooden man becomes blind.
I pathetically swing my arms and stomp the feet
in vain attempt to kick-start circulation
in arterial pathways long since shut down,
preserving life at the expense of extremities.
From this inhospitable position I hear a voice...
and reply, “OK. Climbing.”

Dave Pegler

Treasured Days With Randy Stoltmann

John Clarke

It has been ten days since Randy died in an avalanche while descending a peak in the Kitimat Ranges and it happened so suddenly that I still cannot understand it or even get that terrible fact to sink in. One minute we were building a cairn, joking around, enjoying the peak, and then in a few minutes the young man who had kept us laughing during the whole traverse was gone. We were most of the way along a ski traverse that had started in Mussel Inlet, following the snowy ridges west of the Kowesas River. The trip was to end with a boat pickup in Gardner Canal. Besides Randy and I were Bryan Evans, Jessica Shintani and Dave Lammers.

Widely known in B.C. as a writer, climber and a powerful voice for wilderness protection, Randy had been excited about this trip all winter, as it would take him into his favorite kind of wilderness — the gentle rounded summits of the outer coast that are laden with snow. What made this trip appeal to him even more were the pristine coastal valleys that lined our ski route on both sides.

Photo: John Clarke

While tent-bound for five days early in the traverse, we joked about the fact that we were seven days from Mussel Inlet and had only moved nine kilometers. We talked about giant trees (where they can still be found) and our years in the Coast Range and dreamed about future trips we would do together.

Randy was always ahead of the rest of us. We would ski up to a rocky perch to find Randy doing his favorite thing — gazing down into the sandbars, forests and waterfalls of a pristine coastal valley, so overwhelmed by the wonder of it all that he himself appeared to be part of the magic of the place.

On May 18th, he wrote in his diary: "great views of Kowesas River Valley and mountains all around! distant roar of rivers, two ravens soaring, playing on the air currents". Later that day he wrote about the view from the summit of Mt. Marmor, the highest peak in the range. "View dominated by the East Khutze Valley. Sandbar over a vertical mile below, and the great roar of falling water rising out of the depths of the rainforest, 70 km to the west, range follows range, snow peaks fading to soft dark ridges and the final golden glimmer of the open Pacific Ocean. Mountains on the edge of the continent, nurtured by the sea, four very happy days!"

Photo: John Clarke

Everything Randy said, did and wrote all pointed to one thing — his powerful affection for wild landscapes. It saturated his writing, guided his actions and was the main reason for the effectiveness of his environmental work. His biggest impact was communicating this affection for wilderness with his research and his books. Through his example he showed us the way and the best tribute we can pay him now is to maintain his vision of preserving wild places as a celebration of his life.

What I will never forget is breaking camp on the morning of the accident. I walked up onto a knoll to get a photograph and remember looking back at Randy, giddy with excitement at the prospects of the day, having the time of his life, like a kid on his first day at the beach. We'll always remember him the way he was that morning.

To his family — you have a lot to be proud of and have our deepest sympathies. We miss him terribly.

Three Memories Of Simon Parboosingh

A Letter To Friends

It still seems to be a time of settling into the news and the reality of it all. My first thought when I heard Simon was dead was to think desperately, trying to recall every detail of the last time I saw him — to preserve it forever in my mind. I spent some time rooting through old letters and junk that I have looking for pictures and hoping that I still have an old Christmas card from him stashed away somewhere. I have great memories of my time with Simon. I remember an amazingly gifted person who gave to other people more than he took. I remember a boy who grew into a man but never lost all the best things about being a boy. I remember a person with boundless enthusiasm and remarkable integrity. I remember a rare man who allowed people to see everything inside of him — not just what he wanted people to see, but everything.

I remember a very good friend, but I also remember Simon being a human being. I have memories of him being stupid, naive, jealous, petty — but these memories are just as dear to me. I know Simon wasn't perfect, and I don't want to remember him that way. I remember Simon as a guy who saw me at my best and at my worst, a guy who recognized that I have faults and shortcomings — that they are a part of what makes me what I am — but never held them against me. Memories now seem like the most important thing. They seem like all we have left.

The summer is gone. Midday sometimes pretends it doesn't know it, but the changing colors know it, the cold wind knows it, the creeping darkness on both sides of the day knows it. More and more I feel a need to cling to something slipping away and it is accelerated by the knowledge that it's going fast. It was a beautiful summer — very full but we were never ready for it to end. It's autumn now.

Thanks for your letters. I think I know what you are saying about the confusion, the emotions we seem slave to. The hurt, loss, regret, self-pity, resentment. They rear their ugly heads at the worst times when you don't think you can deal with it. When you try to let it all out it doesn't come, and then it does when it's the last thing you want.

Thanks for your words and stories about Simon. I do value the memories that other people have of him, it's just that they are not mine. Everybody will have their own way of remembering Simon; I have mine. What I think is more universal are the feelings that we all have about the loss of what was special to us. I've felt that acute stab of sadness; I know that a lot of people have. I've felt the unrealness of it, the disbelief, and the cold slap in the face when it comes around. I know that frustration, the "Argh!" It doesn't take away any of the pain, but somehow there is comfort in being with people who share the same feelings about our loss. It feels right that it is the feelings and not the memories that bind us. It feels right to me, anyway.

Christmas came and went. I thought a lot about Simon's family. He couldn't get to Ottawa to see them last year, so it was going to happen this year... The tears are not as close to the surface as they were a couple of months ago, but I miss his energy, I hate all the things that were left undone and unsaid, and I fear I've only begun to realize the permanence of the loss. I feel sorrow, a dull, aching regret. The days are so short.

There is a picture of Simon in my living room and another by my desk. The letters and cards are packed away, but I still think of him almost every day. I've always known that nothing in life lasts forever, but now I am thinking that some things — the important things do. Simon is gone. Everything that he will ever accomplish he already has, everything we will ever do together, we have already done, every laugh of his that I will ever hear I have heard. But there is still some part of him that lives. It is in me, and I can see it in other people. I'm not talking about memories of a person — those fade or become exaggerated in time. But a person's influence remains. All we are is a sum of the experiences in our lives; those experiences, and what we think of them, form what we are. In that way we all form each other. We take what we see as the best in those around us and try to make that ourselves. We take what we see as weaknesses in others and learn from that too. Simon was a big part of our lives, and all of us are what we are in part because of the kind of person that Simon was.

It's evening. It's later than I thought; still light out. It hasn't occurred to me in some time, but now that I think about it, I can tell what's happening: things change imperceptibly day by day, but taken together there is a noticeable difference. Spring is out there; light is making progress on the darkness and the night is beginning to seem less black.

Take care of yourselves; you are very important to me.

Keith Haberl

ANTHONY NIELSON

For those of us who knew Simon, it seems very unfair that he should have died in a climbing accident. He was an extremely cautious individual in all facets of life. I had never known Simon to speed in his car, let alone take risks in the mountains. His death seems to be simply a random act of fate, and

consequently makes it harder to accept.

Reflecting upon it strikes a blow to the perception that if we are cautious the mountains will be a safer place for us. Sadly, this seems not to be the case. At the same time, however, being in the mountains is where I came to know Simon and those experiences and memories seem to make it worthwhile. Simon is gone, but all of us are richer to have known him, if only for such a short time.

Simon was an outstanding rock climber, but I think he will be remembered more for his outstanding personality than his many climbing achievements. Simon had amazing energy and enthusiasm for life. He lived his life at a fast pace, never dwelling on setbacks or misfortune. He had his share of flaws and problems, as we all have, but they never slowed him down. He gave 100% to everything he did and radiated positive energy to all he met. Everyone liked Simon because he was simply a great person to be with.

Thinking about Simon's life reminds me of the fast pace of one of his greatest heroes. Simon loved the Herge character TinTin. He named routes after his escapades, always seemed to be wearing TinTin shirts, and if you were lucky, he would share some of his prized TinTin books with you. On my bookshelf at home sits his tattered and yellowed edition of TinTin in Tibet. In the story, amongst other misadventures, TinTin is plummets down a mountain in an avalanche. He regains consciousness when a yak pulls on his scarf. I like to think that something similar happened on Mount Athabasca and Simon got up, dusted himself off, and went on to other adventures in the next world. Simon will be sadly missed in ours.

LESLIE DEMARSH

Simon was like being out on a great, sunny day. You enjoy, knowing it could pass, but when the weather turns, you wish you'd paid a bit more attention to how exquisitely the rock warmed, the way the clouds drifted, the feel of the air.

At Simon's funeral, I realized I had known him as long as anyone. He really was a kid just starting out. I remember, as most, his unsuppressed keenness and pure spirit. Simon didn't seem capable of being unkind or cynical. Ever. He touched me. Simon blushed and apologized after swearing when he came off a climb. He listened carefully when someone asked him a question. Always he was determined about his climbing. Simon was adorable when we teased him about his "cheesecake" career when he was chosen for the cover of Cinemascope. He was a great rope gun and never lost patience belaying. After spending an hour trying to help my son with his eighth grade physics model, Simon was touchingly humble. He spent last Thanksgiving with us and, as always, was unassumingly appreciative of the leftovers to take home.

The last time I saw Simon was passing in the boot room and his eyes shone with his enthusiastic "yeah" when I asked if he could manage the youth Christmas ski camp again this year.

I still feel my first reaction to the accident. Oh, God, not Simon.

Les Visiteurs

Story & Photos By Brad Wrobleski

Epics have a way of making mere acquaintances the best of friends...

It was in the early hours of a late April day when the phone rang, waking me from a deep comfortable sleep. I rolled over and picked it up. "Hello," I said with the raspy, Tom Waits voice of semi unconsciousness. "Allo Brad," came the reply. The voice on the other end as very female, and very French. It was Dominique the 'Grande Fromage' of a French climbing magazine. A friend of mine had said she might call.

"Would you be interested in taking photos of French climbers?" she asked.

"You want rock photos," I replied, assuming the shoot was scheduled for summer.

"No. Ice. You do climb ice don't you?" she asked.

"Ahhhhh, yeah." I replied shocked by her answer. "Ice?" I thought. It's the end of April and it's been warm for three weeks. Very warm. Calgarians are already sporting shorts and T-shirts in outdoor cafes. Hell, I knew people who have already tied on sticky rubber and been up rock. Ice climbing?

"Christophe and Richard are at the clubhouse in Canmore. I will send you a contract. Merci Brad." Click.

I sat on the edge of the bed, phone in hand — a warm breeze blowing through the window. Ice? Where am I gong to find good quality, blue pillars of photogenic ice? I called Joe and got the poop: a few short routes with long approaches, Professors, a couple near Robson and possibly a few up on the Banff-Jasper Highway.

The first 'crux' of the assignment turned out to be just finding the French climbers. The Clubhouse had never heard of them. I called Lake Louise, and Jasper and Waterton, and when that didn't work Dominique suggested I call the RCMP — after all she was the one footing the bill for these guys. After two days of phone calls, faxes to France and more phone calls they called me. They were at the Clubhouse. They had been out training — warming up for the photo shoot.

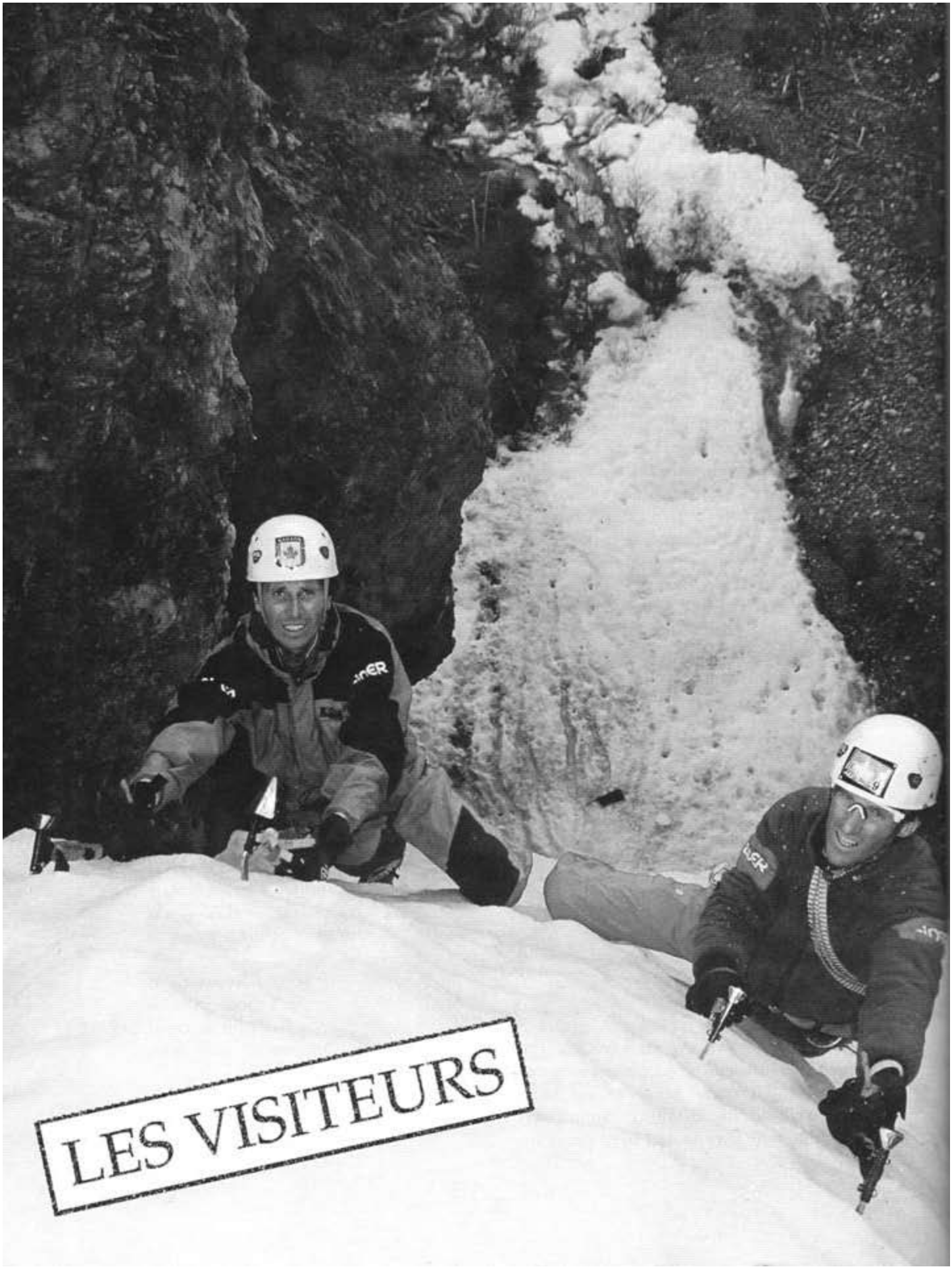
"What routes are up?" I asked Christophe, keen to find out what, if anything, was left.

"We climb... yesterday...a very nice route called... how you say... Acid Howl," said Christophe.

"Oh' I said, stunned by the fact that they climbed this 320m grade 6+ route as a warm-up. If I was going to photograph these guys, I better start doing pull ups.

After loading the car with film, cameras and copious amounts of climbing gear, I headed west to fulfill my contract. At the Clubhouse I finally came face to face with the elusive Frenchmen.

I enter the kitchen and see three people hunched over a table of wine and fine food. I recognize one of them: it's Andrew Brash, a Canadian climber I had met last year. It was good to see him again; I like his demented sense of humour and easy-going style. Sitting across from him are the two I assume to be Christophe and Richard. Andrew introduces me. I shake Christophe's outstretched hand. He is tall and solidly built, reminding me more of a 'made for movies' type than a hot ice climber. He smiles a wide, self-assured grin. Then I meet Richard. He is shorter, stockier, not as powerful-looking, but his eyes contain a deep intensity. During the intro Andrew mentions Richard's last name: Ouiary. The name conjures


LES VISITEURS

up memories of a newspiece I had read in Vertical. "Ouiary," I think to myself. "The guy who climbed Weeping Pillar, Ice Nine and Polar Circus in seven and a half hours — alone." Remembering this, I find myself shaking his hand for a few seconds longer than is customary.

The visit is short. We chat about routes, plans and pleasantries and decide to meet tomorrow, early, to return to Acid Howl.

The next morning is clear, bright and warm, and before 7 a.m. I am sitting in the back of a domestic car that sports a Budget sticker on the bumper. We are going fast. High speed. The dotted yellow line whips by to the beat of blaring Van Halen, Richard's favorite band. We pass cars as if they are parked, weaving in and out.

As I whiteknuckle the arm rest, I wonder if these guys climb like they drive .

It's a quick trip. We slog up the trail through blackened remains of a burned forest and begin the pound up to the base of the route. Andrew and I wait half-way up, to get a few distance shots but the opportunity never comes. After checking the condition of the first pitch, a free-hanging pillar, they decide it's too dangerous. It's been warm and the pillar is now rotten; they wrap a rope around the base and give it a sharp tug. With a loud crack it detaches, falls sideways, hits the slope and explodes into a thousand little pillars. They climbed it only two days ago and now it is gone for the season. I'm bummed. There goes one of the few choices. At this point I realize taking photos is going to be the easy part. Finding something to shoot is going to be the challenge.

We ski back to the car, pile in and head west. Richard turns up the music, puts the pedal to the floor and steers us toward Field. If there is any ice left in the Rockies it will be in the sunless, polar pit of Field, B.C. When we drop into the narrow Field valley there is ice, lots of ice. It's not blue and thick -more white and narrowing — but it is ice. As we stop and look at each route we notice the big, filled bowls above and the avalanche signs on neighboring peaks. Too dangerous. Our hopes fade. Merde.

The next day is a day to regroup, and we start the day after that in the Lake Louise Alpine Centre having breakfast. Up till now my assignment has been a blur of high speed driving and failed attempts at finding ice. There hasn't been much chance to talk, especially with Van Halen stealing the show, so it is good to just sit and talk and eat. Putting sound effects to everything he does, Richard is a never ending comedy show. Stirring his coffee, he spins the spoon furiously as he lowers it into the mug, making motor boat noises as he goes. Blthhhhhhhhhhhh. It shouldn't be funny but it is. Halfway through breakfast Richard looks Andrew in the eye, cold and serious. He puts down his fork and says in a slow French, Eastwood drawl. "Hey, you say something about me." An inside joke I don't totally understand but find funny anyway. Christophe responds with something in French and then we all laugh. The entire breakfast goes on like this; jokes, silliness and laughter. I was having so much fun I forgot I was working. These guys are a little crazy but I start to like them.

After breakfast we head north. Echo Madness is a line I know little about, tucked deep into the back of the Stutfield glacier cirque. From the highway it looks okay. We leave the car, drop onto the floodplain and begin the long ski in. These crazy Frenchmen are definitely French. They dress in bright colours and when they move they travel light and fast. After a couple of kilometres, they are well ahead of Andrew and me. I am amazed at how fast these guys go, especially since they smoke. After three hours we get to the base.

I climb with Christophe and hang down from the top to take shots. Richard follows on lead and Andrew belays. The shot I want is with a wide-angle lens and Richard needs to be near the top, so until he gets there I just hang and wait and watch.

A few metres off the deck he looks up and smiles. "Hey, you say something about me?" he jokes and then continues upward. He climbs well — fast and solid. He places each tool with a quick, power-fill flick of the wrist. Each pick going in with one hit: accurate and secure. When he gets higher he begins to ham it up for the camera. He swings his tools round and round like a cowboy with a lasso, making the whirring noise as he goes. After a couple of rotations he swings the tool into the ice with the wrist flick. The pick sticks with a thud, like the sound a knife makes being flicked into a tree. Richard accentuates the sound. "Brrrrrrrr."

All along the B.J. we look in earnest to find good ice. Each route we were hoping was 'in' is not; each one has succumbed to the early spring warmth: Curtain Call,! Weeping Pillar, Uli's Revenge, Transparent Fool and on and on. They are all rotten drapes of sun-pitted snow; each is in horrifically dangerous condition, and then we see Riptide.

The only thing I know about this route is what the old guidebook said, "five-pitch horror sporting sustained technical climbing on thin and otherwise unprotectable climbing."

The only thing Richard and Christophe know about the route is its reputation as a major test-piece. In France it is well known, and well respected. It was first climbed in 1987 and to this day has seen only a half dozen ascents. With binoculars we look at the route from the highway — the ice looks not-too-bad. Then we I examine the approach — it doesn't look too good. Slide activity. With the Van Halen turned down we continue the drive south, discussing the possibilities of Riptide. By the time we get to Banff the plan is set: in a couple of days the four of us will return and have a look — rub our noses in it.

I head back to Calgary, the rest stay in Canmore. I spend the time thinking and packing. In less than a week, as soon as the assignment is over, I will be flying to Mexico with my girlfriend. My plan is to propose to her. So then why am I going to Riptide now? Especially at the end of April. For the photos? Because I'm on an assignment? No. There must be more to it than that. The route looked okay. The book calls it a "horror," but the few people who have done it since say it isn't so bad. So what am I worried about?

If it was December it would have been dark when we parked the car on the highway across from the route, but it's April, it's 7:30 and bright enough to read the disclaimer sticker on my ice-screws. We split the gear between us. No one talks, each is quietly thinking about what lies ahead. Each one of us is thinking about the "five-pitch horror."

Ten minutes into the ski approach we cross the river over gravel beds and the remaining winter ice. At the mouth of the drainage leading to base of the route we find snow. The top layer is hard sun-crust, underneath its crystals. I don't like it. I look up at the sun. In a few hours it will be high in the sky warming the crust back into mush. Hmmm. We keep skiing. Halfway up we encounter old slide debris. The conditions suck. I let everyone know my concern. Andrew understands; he doesn't like it either. Richard and Christophe don't give it much thought; they just brush it off. This startles me. "What? Why don't they see it?", I ask myself. Do they see it and just not care? Shaken, I cautiously continue up behind them questioning them and myself for being here.

Within half an hour we cross two more piles of avalanche debris. My nerves are raw. The French continue up. Andrew and I stay behind.

"Andrew this sucks. This really sucks!"

He agrees but doesn't know what to do.

"What do you think we should do?" he asks.

I'm stressed! I'm torn! I don't know. My gut says go home, but my feeling of obligation says to go on, go ahead and check it out. Being here now is okay but being here in five hours is when it will get really stupid. Go? Stay? Alpinism — the game of decisions. Let's see, it's warm during the day, but cold at night. The route doesn't see any sun. There are no bowls above...

After much deliberation we agree that if we continue up then we don't come back until after dark. The slopes will be most dangerous in the afternoon so we must come back across only when it gets cold again.

Cautiously we continue up.

After another hour we are at the base. The route is all there but it is not the solid blue of winter we had hoped for; it's more an opaque smear, slightly azure with the consistency of crumbly cheese. We gear up. I will climb with Christophe, Andrew with Richard. Christophe moves across to the base of the ice. He climbs slowly. The ice is inconsistent — either very thin, only a few centimeters thick, or very technical — mushrooms, icicles and bulges. None of it looks easy. None of it is cruisable; it takes time, control and concentration to climb and Christophe is doing just fine.

I second the pitch. It's funky — technical, with small overhangs that take contortion moves and weird tool placements to get through. At the top of the pitch Christophe ties me off and I lean into photo position.

It's the first time I have seen the slayer of Acid Howl climb difficult ice. I have climbed with many good climbers and he is one of the best. He is an ice climber and this is his medium. Halfway up the pitch he reaches a mess of mushrooms, small icicles. He hooks his left tool through a small hole in the chandelier curtain. He crosses his right arm over left and plants the pick into solid ice, making the noise as he goes. Brrrrrrr. Then, careful not to place too much weight on his tools, he walks his feet up a series of mushroomed ledges like a rock climber, never kicking in front points — the ice is too brittle. When high enough he place his left axe higher into better ice. Flow.

"Ice," yells Christophe from behind me. I turn to look. Above us part of a long pillar has broken off and is falling toward us. It impacts on the bulge above, exploding a few metres before it hits where we are standing. It bounces over us at the last moment before plummeting down past Richard.

I move up to the belay next to Christophe. Richard finishes the pitch, ties into the same spot and brings up Andrew. Christophe begins the second pitch. The ice is similar to the first pitch but steeper, with a unique, overhanging half-circle groove near the top. Christophe is 20 metres out when the pillar releases another bombardment of ice and we are all forced to duck for cover. Rock, then more ice, careens down the left side of the route out of harm's way but close enough to send a chill up my back. Christophe finishes the pitch in good time — he doesn't like the deteriorating conditions either. I second the pillar faster than I have ever climbed before, all the time keeping one eye on the looming chunk of melting ice above. The next belay is a mixture of bolts and old pins. Again I hang over the edge clicking shots of Richard as he nears the crux, the top. Melting ice is dripping from the bolts. I try to get the best shots possible but all I can think of is the warming pillar above. Christophe watches it intensely.

Once we are all at the belay Christophe moves out from the fall-line of the pillar and begins pitch three. Richard, Andrew and I are tied to the belay. Christophe is moving fast, 30 metres up, almost in line with the pillar when it gives a loud crack, releasing a slab of ice bigger than we thought possible. It falls, hits a ledge and breaks into several large chunks. Unable to determine where they are going to hit, we huddle together, tightly, as low as possible. Each one of us hoping he is low enough to avoid a hit. Wthhhhhhhh, Wthhhhhhhhhhhh, Wthhhhhhhhhhhhh. They whiz by with the sphincter-loosening whine of a large object going 9.8 metres per second.

"Oh, shit" someone says.

One, two, three, four, five pieces fly by on all sides. Richard lets out a deep, gutteral moan. He's been hit. I look up into his face. It's squeezed with pain. It softens, his eyes glaze over and he goes limp, his body turning outward, his feet slide off the belay ledge dangling in the air. His eyes close. I move down to him. Ice on his collar and scraped skin tell me he had been hit in the back of the neck. Andrew yells something up to Christophe. I try to get close to Richard, but we are all tied tight to the almost hanging belay and it is difficult to reach him. I put my ear in front of his nose and mouth and watch his chest — he is not breathing. I slide my gloveless hand down his collar to his neck. I can't feel a pulse. I try again. Nothing. I try again — nothing. There has to be a pulse, I say thinking aloud. Airway blocked? I check. No. What? Dead? No. He can't be dead. I keep looking, trying to understand, trying to help.

Andrew yells out to Christophe high out on lead.

"Help him," Christophe yells down.

CPR isn't possible- the stance too awkward. I grab his head and try to tilt it upright but when I let go it just flops sideways like some ragdoll. I lift again and hold it upright. Then, as if it isn't time, life returns to Richard Ouiary. His limp body tightens, his chest rises with a deep breath and then his eyes open. He looks up at us. Then up at Christophe. He coughs a couple of times. Then, like nothing has happened, he says,

"Let's finish the route."

Richard and Christophe completed the last pitches. It had been too much for Andrew and I, so we rapped off and waited at the base to agonize over the grim descent back to the car. Then, just before all of us headed down the snow slope to the car, it began to rain. The snow became fully isothermic. As the last person got off the main snowcone at the base, the entire thing slid to the ground. I went quickly ahead, wanting desperately to get out of there. Just before I disappeared into the relative safety of the trees I turned to see Richard standing at the base of a slope similar to the one that had just slid. It was I then that I understood: they don't get it; they don't understand how bad this is. After we were all back at the car Christophe asked me how I can ski snow like that. I said I couldn't,

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that I had taken my skis off and walked. He said he had never seen snow conditions like that before.

Reflections

It's just over a year since Riptide. I have given it much thought. I think a lot about that day. After Riptide many people criticized us for being there, people I respect. Climbing is about risk and managing that risk to the best of your ability. Success is surviving. Everyone has a place where they draw the line, some a more 'out there' than others. The French drew their line a lot farther out than me. So why was I there? A friend of mine summed it up best when he wrote:

"Though I wished it were not true, ambition and achievement were influential factors."

I also felt an obligation to fulfill my contract.

Climbing is also about learning and I feel fortunate to reap the benefits of that very valuable lesson.

I also learned not to trust someone just because they are experienced and well trained. Richard and Christophe are guides and guide examiners but they didn't know about these Rockies; follow your own judgment.

In late August of '94 I received a fax from France. Richard was dead. He had been killed by rockfall while protecting two clients during an approach. He had been hit in the back of the neck.

I will never forget those crazy Frenchmen. I will always remember their style, their incredible skill and the way they made me laugh. The time I spent with them was short, but the fun and friendship I gained will last a lifetime. I think of Richard every time I'm up there on some route and the ice is a bit funky. I think of him whenever I get a good placement. I think of him, his competence and his half-insane way of life.

Roots

On Top Of The World A Woman's Place

Pearl Ann Reichwein

In a 1912 guidebook to the Selkirk Mountains, the founding mother of the Alpine Club of Canada mused, "No man (and the word includes woman) can climb above these forests and over these glaciers, measuring these peaks with their own footsteps, without becoming thrall to the snowy Selkirks." Who would expect women to be tracking across glaciers, awakened to the beauty of mountain summits in 1912? Yet the deliberate inclusion of women in this statement made by club co-founder Elizabeth Parker only hints at the history of female alpinists in Canada.

Elizabeth Parker was a Canadian literary romantic who sensed a deep personal resonance in the mountains when she first visited the Selkirks and Rockies in the late 19th century. As the literary editor of the Winnipeg Free Press, the nationalist-minded Parker insisted that Canada should have its own distinct alpine club to promote the Canadian "mountain heritage." She took for granted it should admit women as well as men, unlike the British Alpine Club of the time. Joining forces with topographic-surveyor Arthur Wheeler, she organized the inaugural meeting of the ACC in March 1906 and became the first Club secretary. Her daughter Jean was appointed ACC librarian and the Club headquarters were based for years in Parker's family home at 160 Furby Street, Winnipeg. Far from being an anomaly, the Parkers were the harbingers of a long history of women in the Alpine Club of Canada.

Since formation of the ACC in 1906, the Club's membership rolls have recorded the names of hundreds of women members. Female alpinists appear in old photo albums and archival film footage of club camps, and some of them wrote about their experiences in private journals, letters, and published accounts. Names and pictures evoke an image of the women of the Alpine Club, but some bigger questions remain: How did women participate in the ACC, and what did they experience in the mountain environment that was distinct to women?

During an era of active social reform and rapid modernization, the turn-of-the-century Alpine Club was one of many organizations wherein the new and expanding roles of Canadian women became evident. Like their male counterparts, the women of the ACC tended to be well-educated, Protestant, middle- and upper-class urban Anglos from western Canada and the northeastern United States. They were "joiners" who believed in organized activity and belonged to several associations, such as the National Council of Women, St. John's Ambulance, the S.P.C.A, the Royal Geographic Society, and the Girl Guides, as well as various alpine clubs.

During the first 50 years of the Club's history, women persistently made up a large proportion of the ACC membership. In 1907, women made up 31.3 percent of the 201 members. By 1917, women comprised over 40 percent of the total, narrowing the gender ratio to two women to every three men. This pattern persisted through to 1956. Statistical samples of the ACC "Redbook" membership lists published for 1922, 1930, 1939, 1946, and 1956 indicate a strong persistence of this gender distribution within the Club, even through the social and economic changes and two World Wars that marked the Club's first 50 years of operation. From 1922, the number of women members grew and remained on average near 41 percent of the entire club membership well into the post-World War II era. Today, female representation has dropped somewhat to 30 percent of the total membership, or at least 1586 of the 5298 members, according to the 1994 ACC membership data base.

Historically, the majority of ACC women were single, although on average roughly a third were listed as "Mrs." in the membership samples from 1907 to 1956. Although it is difficult to determine a specific picture of their employment, it is clear from Club records that many of these women worked professionally outside the home. College and school teachers, office workers, nurses, occupational therapists, missionaries, doctors, social workers, and artists were among the women of the Alpine Club — along with mothers and women who worked in the home — thus reflecting the expanding occupational horizons of women in Canada.

As Mary E. Crawford wrote in the 1909 CAJ, mountaineering offered women a healthy "therapeutic value" for the quick "rejuvenation of worn out nerves, tired brains and flabby muscles."

As she showed, the sport offered particular benefits to professional women: "For the teacher new lights have been thrown upon history, literature, geography or mathematics. The artist and writer have found a mighty inspiration. The student of natural history has fresh specimens to classify. The nurse... has a fund of thrilling anecdotes to give out of her own experiences." She heartily encouraged women to take up the sport.

The first Alpine Club women were, on the whole, characteristic of the forward-thinking, twentieth-century "New Woman" who was aware of, and increasingly participated in, politics and social reform movements such as women's suffrage, nature conservation, and the Social Gospel with its emphasis on public welfare activism. Seeking health and fitness through sport was one facet of the expanding range of activities outside the private domestic sphere of women's lives. Even more so than the outrageous turn-of-the-century bicycle craze, alpinism offered women a metaphysical vehicle for a whole new freedom of experience through a sport accentuated by close contact with nature.

The 1909 Lake O'Hara Alpine Club of Canada Camp. Photo: ACC Collection, Whyte Museum.

Women climbing in the 19th century were hampered by long skirts and uncomfortable garments that were ill-suited to the physical demands of mountaineering. In 1907, the ACC banned impractical women's clothing, stating that "no lady climbing, who wears skirts, will be allowed to take a place on a rope, as they are a distinct source of danger to the entire party'." Largely due to Elizabeth Parker, women were sensibly advised to adopt "knickerbockers or bloomers with puttees or gaiters," a sweater, heavy woollen socks, and Swiss-nailed, leather boots; in other words, "what applies to one sex applies to the other in all matters of clothing for actual climbing." However, less restrictive sport clothing for climbing before World War I did not carry over to the more socially decorous world of the ACC camp-fires, as Vancouver school teacher and McGill graduate Kate McQueen observed of the 1914 camp in the upper Yoho Valley: "Of course, around the camp fire, you wore your skirt. And in those early camps, the women were not smoking. There wasn't anything unseemly going on."

Yet female alpinists could not entirely escape the demands of propriety that led women like West Coast climbers Emmie Milledge Brooks and Phyllis James Munday to conceal bloomers or pants under their skirts until they left the city of Vancouver and — caching the skirts under a log — disappeared into the woods for the day. Nonetheless, climbing was a sport wherein women could free themselves, virtually if not entirely, from the rigid gender constraints regarding a woman's place in society. Like the frontier prairie West, the mountains offered women a liberating environment for achievement and freedom of expression that was uncommon back in town. A feeling of empowerment could result, as Munday recalled of her girlhood climbs: "Going up Grouse Mountain, I thought I'd conquered the world."

The ACC attracted a group of men and women interested in a full range of mountain pursuits, from tooth-and-nail mountaineering to gentle rambling. The Club's outdoorswomen were climbers, trekkers, skiers, hikers, and nature lovers. The annual summer camps benefited from a women's committee that ran the ever-popular tea tent, a gathering place where climbers conversed while drying off by the woodstove. While the tea tent offered a gentile lady's touch to the camp, women were not relegated to domestic camp activities — they enjoyed sport and the outdoors too much to stay on the sidelines.

In 1925 a member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, who had never before climbed with women, praised the ACC's female climbers for "their speed, their endurance, their nerve, their steadiness in their steps on fairly steep ice slopes, and their independence of help." Far from being shrinking violets, the ACC women were dexterous climbers who thrived on challenging outdoor adventures. Most ACC women climbed with guides, but it is often overlooked that the majority of men during the Club's early period did the same.

The ACC badge for climbing proficiency was initially awarded to women who had made at least one "qualifying climb" per season during at least three separate seasons of mountaineering in any of the world's alpine regions, as compared to the four seasons required for men. By 1922, the requirements were uniform for both men and women, and entailed four season's worth of climbing experience exclusively in Canada. Thus, as mountaineering grew in popularity, women moved toward parity with men as concerned the general standards of climbing in the Alpine Club.

A small nucleus of highly skilled women guided and led climbs. Emmie Brooks ranked with the best B.C. rock climbers, and led the first all-female ascent on Mt. Garibaldi in 1932. In 1940, Polly Prescott's "manless" climbs led the ACC executive to approve the principle that the Club's Silver Rope Award for guiding should be open to women on the same basis as for men. Phyl Munday also received the award in recognition of her ability to lead and her

outstanding skill as a mountaineer.

"Manless" climbs with exclusively female climbing teams enabled women to lead and make decisions without the socialized habit of deferring to male leadership. The comraderie that sprang up on these trips was inspired by an impish sense of independence that is still echoed in the CAJ. The spirit of Leanne Allison's 1994 article "Tobacco Road" holds a lot in common with Emmie Brooks's proud 1932 account of women climbers triumphantly breaking out cigarettes, drinking the whiskey from the first aid kit, and singing each other to sleep while on climbs in Garibaldi Park.

As exemplified by the Parkers, the ACC women were Club organizers as well as mountaineers. A quick glance at the roster of national ACC leaders fails to impart a full historical picture of female leadership within the Club, because women most often served as leaders at the local level of the ACC regional sections. Following in the tradition of Elizabeth Parker, an overwhelming number of women served as secretaries to the local sections. Miss E. Valens, Miss M.D. Fleming, Miss M.E. Nickell, and Miss A.C. Dalgleish, for example, served repeatedly as local secretaries through the 1930s, most often working with male chairmen.

Following World War I, women emerged as ACC section chairs. The first female chair was Dr. Cora Best, an internationally-renowned conservationist and adventurer. In 1922, Best founded the Minneapolis section of the ACC and served as its chair through 1926 with Mrs. M.J. Nero as her secretary. In 1932, the "chairman" of the Calgary section was teacher and school principal Miss Margaret C. Wylie, a graduate of t

he University of Toronto who held an M.A. from Columbia University. From 1938 to 1939, West Coast painter Dorothy Gladys Bell — married to Dr. Fred Bell, a past ACC Eastern vice president and national president — was the first "lady" chairman of the Vancouver section. In the 1950s, Vassar graduates Lillian Gest and Polly Prescott each stood as the ACC American vice president. During the 1930s, Phyl Munday organized Club photo competitions and cross-Canada exhibits as Honourary Photographic Secretary, and from 1953 to 1969 made her mark as the editor of the Canadian Alpine Journal. Stripping back the predominantly male national level of ACC executives, it becomes clear that women were not only active in the mass membership of the club, but also contributed considerable skills to its leadership.

While women were actively involved in club affairs, married women still had to attend to the demands of the home. Combining motherhood and mountaineering posed its own rewards and responsibilities. When she became a mother in 1921, it seemed natural to an exceptional mountaineer like Phyl Munday to raise her baby in the outdoors. "Our daughter Edith grew up, right from the start, in the mountains. We had her on the top of Crown (1503 m) when she was eleven weeks old...we carried her in a hammock strung around Don's shoulder...and she used to hum with the rhythm of him walking," Munday described. Later that summer, little Edith went with her parents to the B.C. Mountaineering Club camp in the Selkirks beyond the CPR's Glacier House resort. According to Phyl, "the people there wouldn't believe there was a baby at camp up the valley." The Mundays were completely at home in the mountains. To such an intrepid mountaineering couple, the mountains could be a family environment. On their longer explorations of the Mount Waddington area, Edith was left behind and Phyl carried her daughter's photo inside a diary. With her mother and aunt — Phyl's sister Betty — as role models, Edith Munday also became a climber.

For many ACC members, climbing was a tradition that ran in the family. The Mundays, however, were an exceptional case when it came to integrating children with mountaineering. Until the 1930s, children were officially prohibited from attending the annual ACC camps. No doubt some mothers (and fathers) felt climbing might present too great a risk to themselves and their young children, while others found the Club regulations prevented them from bringing their children to camp. Nonetheless, avoiding objective dangers was not always a top priority for women with children. Phyl Munday played a critical role in the exploration of the Mount Waddington district of the B.C. coastal mountains starting in 1925 when her daughter was a small girl. She described her many journeys into the area as an all-consuming quest for knowledge. Waddington became a passion for Munday, who climbed with her husband Don. His understanding and shared commitment was a great asset to Phyl's lifelong pursuit of climbing.

Lillian Gest and Caroline Hinman on top of Mount Temple, 1932. Photo: Whyte Museum.

Having ascended about 100 peaks in her lifetime — a third of which were first ascents and many of which were first female ascents — Phyllis, in every way, climbed as an equal among her peers. She possessed a great strength that exceeded that of her husband. As Don commented on their climbing partnership,

"she and I formed a climbing unit something more than the sum of our worth apart." In her later years, Phyl Munday reflected on women in mountaineering, saying, "If a person enjoys it, and you are strong enough, and well enough to do it, and you can hold your own with a party...then there is no reason in the world why a woman can't do it."

Women were active participants in the Canadian alpine movement from the time of its origin in the late 19th century. Collectively, women played many roles in the development of the Alpine Club of Canada. Alpinism, particularly during the first 50 years of the Club's history, had a distinct signification for women. Wilderness afforded liberty. In the mountains, farther removed from the gender limitations of respectable middle-class urban life, the women of the ACC could experiment with their own identities. Climbing nurtured a personal strength that was both physical and mental — a strength that put women on top of the world and opened up new possibilities for their sense of place. During the 20th century, that strength lifted women beyond the snow-covered mountain summits to other distant horizons.

This article is dedicated with loving admiration to my mother, R. Reichwein.

Pearl Ann Reichwein is a writer in Banff, who is completing a Carleton University Ph.D. dissertation on the history of the ACC in Canada's mountain parks.

ACC Gender Distribution and Female Marital Status. Statistics by P. A. Reichwein

Year	1907	1922	1930	1939	1946	1956
Total Membership	201	599	652	510	472	871
Total Women	63	245	273	211	198	321
Total Men	137	354	379	297	274	550
% Female	31	40	41	41	42	36
% Male	68	59	58	58	58	63
Total Women Married	16	87	96	62	63	146
Total Women Single	47	158	177	148	135	175
% Women Married	25	35	35	29	31	45
% Women Single	74	64	64	70	68	54

High Camp - A Lighter Side Of The Game

My Hardest Climb

Sharon Wood

For a climber, life in its more joyous moments consists of crystal-clear purpose, adrenalin, creativity and mastery. Yet my life as a climber is now experienced in rare, fragmented moments; the family thing prevails. In just less than seven years I have equipped my self with house, husband, a cat and two kids. Still, last summer I experienced some of those joyous moments where I least expected them to happen.

I am a stranger in a strange land for two weeks each summer when I visit the Stethem cottage in Ontario. West met east when I married a Stethem, but I have yet to marry Cottage country. The man I married is the boy who grew up here and again becomes the boy when he returns here. The place is riddled with tradition, ritual and history, and cottage country and the people born into it is a culture unto itself. As a westerner, the precious mementos of my ancestors are long lost to the patrons of the Salvation Army Stores, and life moves on; change the only constant. But as an easterner, all my husband's ghosts, effects and habits remain intact; their fragile survival vigilantly guarded from blundering intruders such as my western self.

The Stethem property was bought as farm land and a cottage was placed there in the 20s. I am the newest thing in 43 years. Everything here is old; nothing changes or is replaced without pain, mourning and loss. There is a boat, the last of the Stethem fleet: an old cedar-strip Peterborough, 'nothing-of-its-kind-is-built-any-more'; it is a collector's item. It lives in an ancient ice-ravaged port-side-listing boat house. Every summer the boat is tenderly anointed with varnish and gently lowered into the healing waters of Devil Lake. The old Johnson 15-horsepower motor is greased, oiled, soothed and wheeled down the same path it's been wheeled down since before I was born. Every summer on about the same day, others on the lake have ears attuned to the very distinct whine of that motor, waiting for that sound. Tension is broken when they hear that sound, and they crane their necks to see that boat fulfill their picture of what was and always will be Devil Lake.

When the menfolk are doing menfolk things, my role — in the tradition of my mother-in-law and her mother-in-law before her — is the care and feeding of my children. My duties also include the protection of all the old things from the children, and the children from all the old things. I have learned that if my attentions should stray to anything else but the minding of the children, they instantly gravitate to the bluffs that drop off into the lake. Awful visions of drowning children stir us into panic, in a drill that has happened since time began there: divide, seek and find before impending irreparable damage occurs. This is stressful and confining. I do not come by this role naturally.

Two weeks is a long time in a place like this, feeling like I am merely vessel to bring forth the new generation to come and fulfill its destiny at Devil Lake. In this part of the tradition I feel as important as a piece of lint. Time has not been enough to wean my ego of the accustomed strokes of recognition and significance. The boat is my only source of solace and empowerment; it is my challenge, my escape; escape from imminent suffocation and lintness. Once safe passage is secured through the spider webs, I go to the boat. My resistance and selective memory about the cottage thing necessitate an annual boat driving lesson. I watch the husband perform the careful,

loving ritual of preparing the boat for motor propelled movement, I then get him to undo everything and watch me. I seal the gas tank, pump it up, put it in neutral, double check to make sure it is in neutral, choke it, give it one pull, put the choke in and give it one mighty satisfying heave. I am rewarded with power. I tentatively guide it out of the port-side-listing ancient boat house. The boat moves surprisingly fast through the water. The children remain under Granny's watchful care as I undergo my first voyage every year, but she does not watch; I should not be doing this thing.

It can take days before all parties are satisfied that the cottage will remain safe if we leave for a few hours. This year it takes three days before it is time go to the Island Beach, a four-minute ride from the cottage. We are leaving, this is good. Chris successfully fulfills his role as man, protector, and head of the family by safely depositing Granny, my friend Marni, our children and myself on the beach. He moves the boat out to anchor 30 feet from shore to protect its precious hull from the sandy surface of the lake.

Hours roll by and suddenly I realize my family must be fed. I suggest I take the boat to go get dinner on and come back to pick them all up. Everyone is remarkably content; what a wonderful thing it would be to just slipaway and get things ready all by my lonesome. Family dynamics, such as they are though, make potentially simple communication very complicated and frustrating. Food is such an issue in our family. Driven, panicked by the threat of the destruction hunger and diabetic blood sugar levels can wreak, I just leave and swim out to the boat: I win. As I pull up the anchor I am feeling harried and distracted, my children are mourning the loss of their mother, Granny is questioning my ability to handle matters, Chris's blood sugar is dropping. I seal the gas tank, pump it up, I pause to respond to yet more from the beach. I pull the choke and pull the cord, push the choke in and give another pull, noting resistance and no results. I begin pulling repeatedly and Chris yells at me to throttle it right up. I hastily do so, but I hate being told what to do. Humiliated by my failure, I dearly want to get the hell out of there and be alone. I put both hands on the pull cord and give it one mighty heave. In the instant I realize I have not shifted into neutral, the pull cord returns home — fast, very fast — and as the motor screams into full throttle, I am pitched out of the boat.

In the past, when I have teetered on moments of imminent destruction, I have come to notice a familiar pattern of reactions. It is fascinating how the mind stretches its capacity to take in all, and slows the passage of time. This is what I notice: the high-pitched whining of a racing, fully-throttled motor; me catapulting in an aerial forward-roll, up and over the side of the boat; the muffled whining of the motor as I become immersed in the healing waters of Devil Lake. I see the propeller whirling by, just above my face, as the hull of the boat passes over me; I have the visceral sensation of adrenalin surging through me, and the gifted urgency to respond, bringing my head out of the water just as the boat passes; the power of the imagination to visualize the boat in many pieces — it is heading right for the very big rocks on shore. Granny's high pitched cries are overridden by peals of laughter from my two boys.

Meanwhile, back at the beach, Granny bolts for the water; she will save the boat. Marni tackles Granny and the two of them grapple for control in three feet of water. Now Chris will save the boat; the white knight charges forth.

Rational powers kick in; I anticipate ensuing scenarios and solutions: do I leave tonight in shame never to return, known from this moment to eternity as the menace of Devil Lake, destroyer of the boat? A fraction of a second has passed since first considering this passage. The motor slams over to the starboard side of the stern forcing the boat into tight circles fifteen feet from shore. I am in the eye of the circle.

One fear: the wrath of Stethem. One crystal clear purpose: stop the damn boat. Landlubber I may be, but I know I have the internal equipment to handle this. However long my resources have been in storage, they're working for me now and boy does this ever feel good! This is what climbers are really good at, not reacting, but responding to the moment.

Watchfully, I ponder my strategy as the boat circles me. I see my opportunity and the climb begins. I push off and deadpoint the side gunnel, which is about four feet out of the water — now the boys really have something to watch. Over the period of two, three circles I struggle to mantle up into the boat, but the centrifugal force is such that though my upper body is in the boat, and the rest is still up and out. Chris joins the rodeo by lunging for a hold (a cleat) at the bow of the boat. This is where his climb begins but also ends, as he experiences physics at its best: the bulk of his six-foot-two-inch body is being dragged through the water in circles at a great rate of knots, and he simply can't hang on. I slowly inch the heavier half of my body into the boat and slap down like a floundering fish on the floor boards. The boat jerks crazily over its own wake, pitching me from gunnel to gunnel. Staying as low as possible, my mostly naked wet body squeaks and lurches along and over the two scats that lay between me and the motor. Sprawled on my stomach I stretch with all my might for the throttle and in a split second it is over.

Still and very silent, I stay there on the bottom of the boat. I feel very embarrassed and confused; I feel good at this moment and I don't want anyone to know. I am basking in the glory of pure visceral response, that familiar feeling of being so close to losing everything and then gaining it all back with a bonus. But everyone on shore will only think I am absolutely nuts.

In the end, it turns out that Granny did not care a wit about the boat; she cared about my safety and she really does love me, and I her. Cottage country and I have reached a deeper level of understanding — I would be the first to admit I have an attitude problem. My husband? Well, the boat was not damaged. My youngest son now admonishes me to stay in the boat upon starting it. Me, I can start the boat in my sleep now. No more driving lessons for me. And hey, I made history at Devil Lake.

What To Do?

Vic Bell

We pound up the trail at 5 a.m. and my hangover is brutal. My brain is a soggy couloir subject to periodic rockfall. Legions of demented pikas gnaw at the slings and rope. Another false summit is passed, and above us, cliff and buttress vanish in swirling, black cloud. There is no escape. Two hours later, in brilliant sunshine, we reach the start of the climb.

"I'll try it again!"

"Yeah yeah, I gotcha!"

Boredom reigns. I'm belaying, tucked into a little alcove, only half out of the fall line of scuds, and perilously close to this truly disgusting, green slime that oozes down the wall behind me in great, pendulous orbs. He's hacking about up there, going up, backing off, going up, backing off. We got a glimpse of this move

from below. An inside corner, vertical, and capped by a small overhang. To get into the slot above, he'll be leaning back, and far out to the side. The friction is fierce. He's placed protection carefully, so as to artistically form the rope into an immense mark of Zorro. Severely afflicted with belayer's brain, I'm nodding like a senator, and my drool has almost seeped through my beard to reach my shirt.

The real world comes back with a leap and a bound. I look down the gully to observe what I take to be a marmot tearing up towards me. Then I see. The adrenaline jolts like a brick on my sternum. It's not a marmot. It's a big, bloody wolverine. The monster is racing up the rock: eyeballs, fur, claws and teeth. I just have time to grab my pack as a shield before it's on top of me.

"Slack! I'm going for it!"

"You've got all the slack you need, idiot. I don't know where the bloody rope is anymore!"

"Watch out, I could lose it here!"

"Lose it? I'm fighting a god-damn wolverine!"

But, of course, he can't see; he's behind an edge up there. The pack is punched into my face by this unholy power. I hear growling and panting and the scrape of claw on stone. The beast is climbing on. I feel the rope moving across my thighs.

"Slack! Slack for god's sake!"

The wolverine is standing on the upper horizontal of the mark of Zorro. It makes an impressive mantle onto a ledge above. Re-establishing a hold on both rope and back passage, I contemplate various courses of action: what to do? The tail of the wolverine vanishes behind the edge. It's following the rope.

"Slack! Come on, I'm almost there!"

What to do? My partner seems somewhat annoyed already. He's halfway into the crux move. Should I tell him to look out for the wolverine? He will not be amused.

The quotation, "leadership often consists of presiding over events completely beyond your control, with a certain amount of dignity and grace," jumps into my head. All right, let's see some grace. To follow this route in the style of the first ascent party, the next people up here will have to share the crux with a wolverine.

"Aaaaaa! There's a thing on my neck!"

So much for grace. So much for dignity.

What to do? They never taught this in Ropework 2. His top piece of protection comes sliding down. He's kicked it out in the heat of battle.

Maybe if I give the rope a great, bleeding yank, it will pluck him right off the overhang. They'll both come flying over that lip there, and if his chockcraft is up to the mark, he'll be left dangling in mid-air. The shock of the fall will make the wolverine lose its grip and it will come crashing down. Here. Hmmm — Alternatively, he could end up spinning around, upside down on the rope, with the wolverine still fastened to his neck. I get out the camera.

"Aaaaaa!"

What to do? What to do? It does sound like he's in pain. Thrashing and scratching noises continue up above. A rock whops off my helmet. This guy is the original clubfoot. Every belay is ground zero.

"Holler when you knock something loose, you bastard!"

"Rock!"

It's no rock. It's the wolverine, running headfirst down the cliff! Death incarnate, the thing springs, claws extended, jaws agape. I go over backwards into the slime. There's nothing but fur in my field of vision. I thought I was at the top of the food chain. Wrong. Another false summit.

"Off belay! I'm up!"

...I'm tucked into a little alcove removing a belay. There's green slime on my back. Drool has indeed, seeped through my beard to reach my shirt.

The Inner Ranges - Thoughts About The Mountain World

A Climb With Culbert Revisited

Paul Adam

One moment it seemed like only yesterday, the next it seemed like centuries ago. I was going to climb Ledge again. Was it really two hundred and forty-one months ago I had sat on the top with Dick Culbert, that demigod of the Coast Range and the only superstar in any sport whom I had hero-worshipped, and for that matter still do. It had been my first real climb. This time, I was going back in the role of Dick Culbert, teacher to a beginning climber. Actually, Tami Knight and I were playing the Culbert role together while Lois Andrews, on a true alpine climb for the first time, was playing the role of the young Paul Adam.

The three of us make our way alone up the steep gulley on the north side of Gunsight Gap, unlike the mini-horde who ascended the south side all those years before. As we do, I realize that 20 years ago I was not quite 14 — was I that young when I started climbing? Am I that old now? Have two decades really passed? Has my memory of the climb been changed by nostalgia? Or has my increased knowledge of Coast Range lore changed my perception of the climb? Or will this climb give me a different perception? Will it change my perception of Culbert?

As we sat at the top of the second pitch, Fred Douglas and Paul Starr appeared on the top of Ledgette, having completed the second ascent of the West Buttress. Dick yelled to them for a detailed route description "for the new edition of the guide." They hollered back, "Three pitches, short ones. A 5.5 chimney, a rotten 5.6 overhang, and a 5.4 traverse on poor rock." Dick must have had a tape recorder along because when the guide came out five years later, the route description was a verbatim transcript of the conversation.

At Gunsight Gap, we decide to climb the West Buttress. Lois belays Tami up the first pitch. The first 20 metres go smoothly until she reaches the base of the chimney. Here she is forced to take her pack off and leave it to be hauled later. Then she starts up again. Lois and I are unable to see her, but we can hear her grunting, groaning, and swearing away. Finally she calls for Lois to come up. Lois moves up steadily and quickly; then I follow.

At mid-pitch, I reach Tami's pack. She lowers a haul line for it and mine, and up they go. Then I start up the chimney and quickly find out the reason for Tami's noises — the entry to the chimney is awkward and the protection, in that Culbertesque term is "difficult to arrange."

The upper part of the chimney is better described as an extra wide off-width, in need of a Number 20 Friend for good protection. As a substitute, I use my chest. Only the slightest inhalation or exhalation is needed to take the protection on or off. At the top, I wonder how Starr and Douglas, who were a good deal burlier than I am, had managed. And 5.5! It has to be at least 5.7. Typical of the Culbert gang to always rate things on the low side. I suspect on the Smoke Bluffs they would have called it 4th Class. My respect for their ability increases. From there, a long, second pitch takes us around on to the south side and up to the summit. It is mid-fifth, as they say, meaning about 5.4. At the top, we try to figure out where the overhang and traverse went. We decide that they went straight up from the top of the first pitch. We won't discuss their sanity. Lazier and saner, we had taken the obvious route.

From here (the top of the window) there is one awkward move with a long reach — Culbert Guide

I remind Tami of Culbert's route description as we stand at a rap station looking down what looks like an absolutely hideous rappel. I get the honour of leading. I rappel to a point where I can throw the rope over the pinnacle that is the "awkward move." The ropes split the pinnacle and one catches on the rocks below. After fiddling with the ropes for a time, I eventually arrive at the top of the window, 10 minutes after starting down and 20 years after my previous visit.

We climbed up the steep snow gulley beside Tombstone Tower to the window and looked at its north arête. Dick told about, the first ascent, and how the north arête is nowhere near as hairy. It looked like it would be an extremely difficult climb, but if Culbert said it's reasonable, then it must be reasonable. The pitch from the window had some snow on it and was hard. The difficulty eased a bit toward the top. Easy 5th, according to Dick.

Lois is followed by Tami, whose arrival is punctuated by heavy sarcasm, "Just one long, awkward move." She turns her attention to Tombstone. "Heinous. That's 5.8? Right. Well, I guess it is a Culbert and the boys' 5.8. And no bloody protection."

Dick said the pitch off the chockstone was stiff 4th Class. Immediately ahead of me in the climbing rotation was a girl who was about to turn thirteen; she managed the traverse out to the upward route without a problem. At a difficult move a metre or so up from there she must have looked down, because she froze — for about ten minutes she wouldn't move, finally Dick talked her up. I followed. The traverse was moderately difficult, but nothing on the pitch was as difficult as the first one. from the belay, we wandered to the top.

On top of the chockstone, we talk about rappelling to the first pitch and descending the gully. I tell Tami it is a full rope length to the base. Later I realize pitches in those days were 120 feet of Goldline, not the 50m of kermantle they are today. In addition, the gully is steep and looks horrible today, so we would probably be quicker going up to the top and down the ledge, especially as the next pitch is only stiff 4th Class. Twenty years later the pitch goes smoothly, but it seems harder than 4th Class. At the belay, I ask Tami's opinion. "A steady mid-fifth." I agree, but protest, "Culbert said a stiff 4." She looks at me sarcastically and says, "And in mountain boots." Come to think of it, that was what I had climbed it in. I realize how young and impressionable I must have been; of course, I was in the tow of God.

IT WAS TWENTY YEAR AGO TODAY,
SERGEANT PEPPER TAUGHT
THE BAND TO PLAY.
LENNON & MCCARTNEY

We were ready to descend when Dick said, "Now how the hell do we get to the ledge?" (Later I would realize this was a favourite expression of his.) Of course, he found the ledge without a problem. He said the ledge was only 2nd Class, but since it was exposed, slanted outward, and covered in gravel, he would rig a handline across it for us beginners. I wasn't scared, but it felt a good deal harder than 2nd Class. It took a long time to cross it. Once on the shoulder, we quickly pranced down the soft snow slopes to the basin to the south. A couple of us triggered a wet snow avalanche in the process of taking a shortcut. It knocked us off our feet and carried us to the bottom of the slope quickly, I was impressed with its speed and power even though it was only mid-calf deep. Dick wasn't impressed at all, and told us so at the bottom. The way he said it told me that I had learned a lesson that I would never forget. Quickly we made our way out of the basin and to Utopia Lake, then home.

We make our way to the summit where we coil the ropes and take off our rock boots. After a swig of water, we go to look for the ledge. My memory serves me correctly and we find it straight away. This time Culbert's assessment of it as 2nd Class seems correct, but for some reason I feel gripped. I decide it is caused by a lack of naivety this time. The descent from the shoulder seems scarier and steeper this time too, probably for the same reason. The walk under the South Face is broken by, "5.6, A2? Huh! Figures. Starr and Douglas, of course." The slog up to the shoulder of Sky Pilot and the descent into Shannon Creek doesn't seem as long as the descent to Utopia.

As we are descending, I realize that my perception of the climb is coloured by both reality and nostalgia. At 14, I had breezed along naively, believing everything Dick told me as gospel. At 34 and experienced, I know that Dick's perception of reality, along with his cadre's, while honest in belief, bore no resemblance to reality. They were climbers ahead of their time, operating in isolation and not knowing or understanding how good they were. While my ascents of Ledge occurred decades apart, and my role is different, my respect for my teachers hasn't lessened. Rather, it has grown as I begin to understand their accomplishments.

Now I realize how much influence Dick and his gang had on my entire outlook towards mountaineering. Fairley said of Culbert, "His enthusiasm, personality, and style set the tone for the Vancouver climbing community." I am lucky enough to have learned to climb from Dick and his friends, and time has told me the truth of Fairley's statement. Although I would do a handful of other climbs with Dick before he retired, his influence was such that the Culbert outlook on mountaineering had already been ingrained in me by the time we got back to camp. My return has re-ingrained that outlook into me. Twenty years later, I am still impressionable.

It had been an enjoyable and challenging climb for my introduction to alpinism. I would always remember the difference between it and rock climbing. Although technically it was not as difficult as my first rock climbs, it was a good deal scarier and more challenging mentally. At camp, Dick told us we had done a true Coast Range

climb.

At camp, Tami and I compliment Lois on her climbing and tell her that our route was a classic piece of Coast Range alpinism. Steep snow; steep, less-than-solid rock with exposure; a hairy rappel; route finding; and easy ground with a high danger factor that demands attention all the time. A great introduction for a first alpine adventure. I would recommend it to anyone as an introductory alpine climb, which is probably the exact reason Dick had me do a similar trip at the same point in my career. We ask Lois for her opinion of the day, "I preferred the rock to the snow. But more than that, it makes me realize that the climbing at Squamish is sissy stuff by comparison."

Maybe I managed to transfer the Culbert mentality to another generation. I hope so. But I guess we will have to wait 20 years for Lois to revisit Ledge. Meanwhile, I thank my lucky stars that it was Dick Culbert who introduced me to the mountains and mountaineering; not everyone is so lucky.

Paradise And Providence

Graeme Pole

A golden eagle dropped away from the ridge, talons bared, head turned quickly to identify the intruder, its rest spoiled. I can still see the pattern in its feathers: salt-and-pepper and barn-board brown, the blend from dark to light between the underside of its wings and its stocky legs. The eagle is a creature whose purpose is manifest in every cell of its being.

I AM COMPELLED TO ACKNOWLEDGE
A LONG-HELD BUT TOTALLY UNQUANTIFIABLE
IMPRESSION AS LEGITIMATE:
ON A TYPICAL SUMMIT DAY IN THE ROCKIES,
YOU CANNOT SEE AS FAR
AS YOU COULD SEE A DECADE AGO.

The great bird banked east over the cirque, and then south, accelerating with a slight downward trend along Helena Ridge. It covered the two kilometres to the south summit in perhaps 15 seconds — a mere moment in its monumental migratory journey from Bering to the Baja — before it disappeared into the Bow Valley.

The Bow Valley, where on this late-September morning from on high I saw smog collected like pus in a hollow wound. An exaggerated product of thermal inversion perhaps, but a certain sign that the precursor of industry — its foul breath — is reaching toward the heartland of Banff National Park. This was long before almost anyone would seriously admit the presence of any industry, other than "harmless" hotels, ski hills, a railway and a highway.

I am compelled to acknowledge a long-held but totally unquantifiable impression as legitimate: on a typical summit day in the Rockies, you cannot see as far as you could see a decade ago. If you read the mountaineering accounts from the turn of the 20th century, particularly the occasional, firesmoke-free descriptions of summit views, you must acknowledge that either eyesight was a lot better then, or the impression of degenerating air quality confirms a century-long trend. The eagle is still soaring over the Bow Valley, but I can no longer see it.

I leave bootprints in the screes of Helena Ridge, aware of my part in adding to a path that mere weather will no longer erode and erase. I have an appetite for these places, for encountering eagles briefly on their lofty home ground. But I wonder: What will survive my appetite and ambition, and the ambitions of others? What are we leaving alone?

In its pure sense, we define wilderness by not going there. Collectively, as a travel-hungry, curious, and adventure-mad culture, we no longer honour that definition of wilderness anywhere in the world, nor the reality it represents. But who could love mountains, rivers, or the ocean coast, and live without at least once being close to an eagle, both raptor and human unaware? Who would not want to be blessed with such a glimpse of Eden? Wilderness provides and evokes such wonder, but what do we provide in return?

We normally think of providence as beyond our control. However, we who have a passion for wild places also have a part in providence, in literally providing for the future of wilderness, and by effect, for the quality and continuance of the life it embodies. The experience of a mountaineer a decade or a century hence will be as much the product of our actions and choices today, both in and out of the mountains, as it will be of any other circumstance, cause, or effect. The existence or extirpation of species that inhabit mountains likewise is contingent upon us. We carry more than a pack on our mountain travels. We carry obligation and responsibility, whether or not we care to.

Obligation and responsibility -these are not the offensive urban concepts that we seek to escape in mountaineering — they are the same words masking an inverse code. They offer us points of contact with the land, through which our exertions create a tangible reality of cause and effect. There are lessons on the ridgetops, and there is hope. That hope rests in the choices we must now make about which landscapes we will leave alone, about which reality we will promote.

For unless we act in a manner that sincerely supports the perpetuation of some wild places, we will eventually witness the clouding of all valleys and plateaus with the breath of industry, with the litter of our trespassing. We make of the earth what the earth will become. And, to the detriment of all living things, it is likely that much of what we are presently making will never be undone.

The smog that blotted Mount Joffre in the distant view from Helena Ridge, that conspired to pluck the bivouac stars one-by-one, I helped create when I drove to the trailhead. The lesson is manifest before me, but I grapple with the learning. For now, I appease my guilt with the sincere wish that I could hang my ambition and desire on the wings of a single eagle, and let them be carried forever away.

Most Expensive Whipper Of The Year

The spidery Dante II robot toppled after breaking one of its eight legs while climbing the slope inside a volcanic crater in Alaska.

NASA scientists considered abandoning the $1.7-million US robot explorer earlier this week. Now they plan to have a helicopter lift the 770-kg robot out of Mount Spurr, 130 km west of Anchorage.

Clouds foiled the first attempt by Dante's creators — scientists from Pittsburgh's Carnegie Mellon University — to pluck the robot from inside the 3,350-m snow-covered, active volcano.

Dante walked into the volcano on July 29, navigating snow, rock and mud to reach the crater floor and relay data and video

pictures back to Anchorage. NASA hopes to use such robots to explore other planets.

Predecessor Dante I failed in its attempt to descend into Antarctica's Mount Erebus two years ago, when the robot's fibre-optic command cord froze.

Calgary Herald August 23, 1994

Access & Organizations

The Canadian Himalayan Foundation

Bill Durtler

What is the Canadian Himalayan Foundation ?

The CHF is a federally chartered not-for-profit organization, founded in 1977 for the purpose of promoting and assisting Canadians undertaking mountaineering within Canada and to the other ranges of the world; promoting scientific study and conservation in the mountain environment; and furthering the publication and distribution of information on the mountain ranges of the world.

What has the Canadian Himalayan Foundation supported recently?

Since 1978, the CHF has assisted fifty two expeditions to mountain regions all over the world and fourteen scientific or cultural projects. The assistance has been as diverse as donations to major Himalayan expeditions, to a substantial donation towards the rebuilding of the Tengboche Monastery in Nepal, to a donation towards capturing historical information and photographs on CD-ROM and publishing a climbers map of Mt. Logan. Highlights among the recent expedition recipients include Jim Elzinga's attempt of Nuptse in 1989, James Blench's ascent of Shivling in 1991, Barry Blanchard's attempt on K2 in 1993, Jim Haberl's oxygen-free ascent of K2 in 1993. In Canada, the CHF has contributed towards several historic expeditions on Mt. Logan, including the South Face expeditions and the first all-woman's ascent of the East Ridge in 1993, and John Dunn has received assistance for each of his three mammoth Arctic treks. The CHF may not have been the major sponsor of the 1994 Emerge Everest Expedition, but it was the CHF's Gamow Bag, on loan from the Nepal equipment cache, that was used in the successful evacuation of John Mclsaac after his oxygen-free summit bid.

What types of endeavours does the Canadian Himalayan Foundation support?

While the CHF will support almost all mountain-related activities, its aim is to support those that might have a significant impact on Canada's status in the mountain community. It attempts to strike a balance between cultural, scientific and climbing activities. For expeditions, it has a preference for smaller, light weight expeditions, and welcomes the opportunity to help climbers who have not yet made a name for themselves. It does not support commercial ventures.

Peak 43. Nepal. Photo: Geoff Powter.

What assistance can the Canadian Himalayan Foundation offer your expedition ?

The income of the CHF is raised entirely by volunteers and is derived from donations, for which tax receipts are available on request, and profits from Casinos, which we organize. There are four types of assistance offered by the CHF: full support, where the CHF actively participates in fund-raising on behalf of the expedition and where the finances of the expedition must also be controlled by the CHF; financial assistance in the form of a cash grant; use of equipment from its caches in Calgary or Nepal; or endorsement of the expedition for the purposes of acquiring climbing permits. Less tangible support is in the form of information about mountain areas, expedition techniques, etc.

What does the Canadian Himalayan Foundation expect in return?

As a condition for support, the CHF requires a written report on return from the expedition, updates on the condition of the caches if used, and mention of CHF support in any publications, as well as copies of any scientific publications. The CHF also expects that expeditions which use the caches leave them in a condition that will allow the next trip to use them by cleaning and properly storing the equipment, making repairs where needed, and donating any surplus equipment at the end of the trip.

How do you apply for assistance from the Canadian Himalayan Foundation?

The CHF is run by a board of nine directors who meet regularly in Calgary to review applications for assistance. In order to qualify for assistance, you need to become a member of the CHF, for which a lifetime membership costs S20.

You can obtain a copy of the CHF support policy and an application form by writing to the Canadian Himalayan Foundation, c/o 1414 Kensington Road N.W., Calgary, Alberta, T2N 3P9.

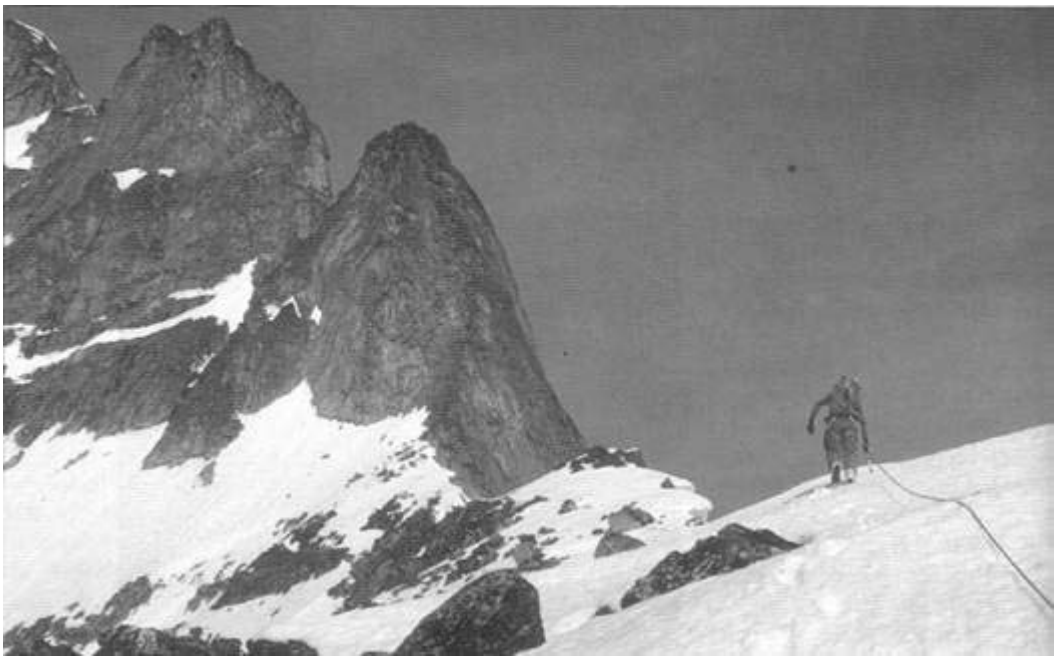
The North

South East Alaska: The Devils Thumb

Eric Trouillet

May 7th 1993. We've been skiing for a day and a half. Finally we've reached a col where I'm sitting on my pulk, not believing my compass and map. I swear and curse from frustration. I've just discovered that we are not on the Patterson Glacier. We're on the wrong glacier, too far south by a good five miles.

Yesterday morning we got a phone call at our hotel in Petersburg. The weather was apparently worse than marginal, but we could still manage to fly within a small window, so we loaded the helicopter with all of our gear and took off. The pilot seemed to know where the Patterson Glacier was. He landed at cloud level (1220m) on the only possible spot on this broken-up glacier: right between two intimidating crevasses. The left skid released a big chunk of ice that fell into a dark hole, leaving the helicopter in precarious balance. A few seconds later he took off empty and disappeared, suddenly leaving us behind in a hostile world.



The author approaching the east ridge of the Devils Thumb. Photo: Bob Enagonio.

Without a word, we scrambled for our harnesses and rope, but by the time we were ready to move the visibility had gone. Where to? With compass and map ready to take a bearing we started off awkwardly with our heavy loads, tip-toeing through the crevassed land. We were both roped, each pulling a pulk, carrying a heavy pack and not moving fast at all. Dragging all this weight in deep snow made the trail-breaking horrendous. After half a hour of sweating, we decided to change methods. We left the pulks behind and broke trail with packs only, the leader spreading his tracks wide apart and the second breaking trail off to one side, with his ski flattening the rib in between the leader's tracks. We ended up with a wide, flat one-foot-deep trench which made a perfect rail for our pulks. The temperature was high, snowing wet and heavy flakes. Visibility was only a few hundred feet and our progress was slow, aiming more or less where we should be going.

During these hauls all I could think about was my orienteering capacities. I'd done this millions of times: magnetic north verses true north verses geographic north; should I add the declination or subtract it to my reading off the map? My answers seemed logical, but nothing really matched. Bob was more confident of our position. The important thing was that we were getting closer to our base camp.

That evening, as we built a wall around the tent under uninterrupted snowfall, I couldn't help thinking about last year's fiasco. In May 1992, four of us were attempting a ski traverse just a couple of hundred miles north of our present location. We got caught and had to sit out the storm of the century — over two metres of snow accumulation in just four days. We were forced to retreat, not trusting our chances of finding food caches under that much snow in this part of the country; 10 days out with no food at the end would have been lethal! We returned to civilization enormously disappointed. Now this trip in the same coastal range was off to a poor start as well.

However, the next day the weather cleared. It was warm enough to dry our gear out from the first day's soak. We set effusing the same travelling techniques we had before, but the overnight snowfall didn't help our situation. After a close lecture in reality by the compass, we had to acknowledge that the angle of our glacier definitely didn't match the one on our maps. One last desperate thought: could it be a mapping error from the U.S. Geological Survey?

Near the end of the day we finally reached the high point of the glacier. I sat down on my sled, took the map out and decided not to go any further unless I located our position with certainty. The altimeter read 1550 m; about 160 m higher than we should be.

Looking back down our glacier straight to the ocean we could see an island. There weren't a whole lot around here, so I pulled out the connecting maps and spot McDonalds Island, took a bearing, reversed it on the map and there we were: on a glacier five miles south of where we should have been! The surroundings now made sense. There was Twin Peaks to our north. A feeling of relief erased my doubts about my orienteering skills, but quickly anger took over. The pilot had screwed up! That should teach us never to trust anyone but yourself for navigation, no matter how confident another person seems to be about their own backyard. Bob grabbed the map, refusing to believe it himself. Worst of all, to meet the Leconte Glacier (east from our present location and rising north towards our future base camp), we would have to deal with a steep headwall. This could be a dead end!

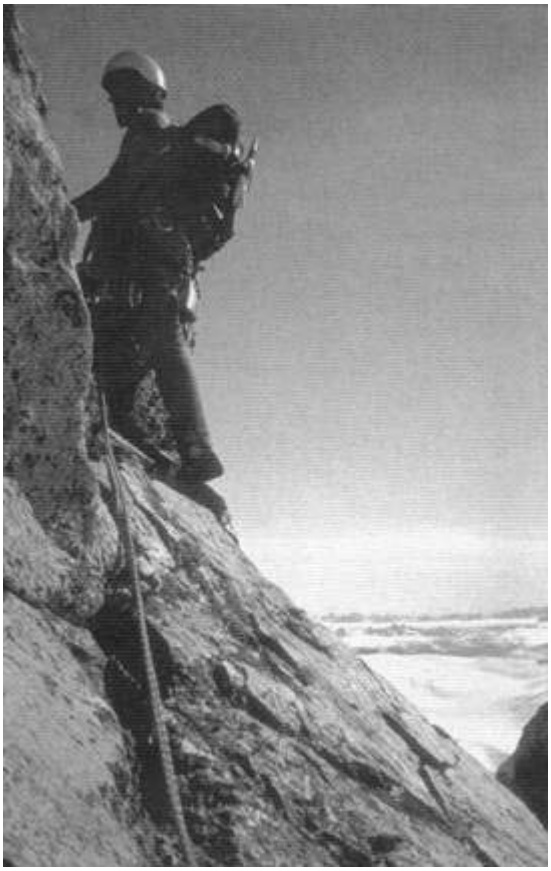
Wiping away bad thoughts, we sought a flat campsite as close as possible to the

head-wall in order to attack it right away the following morning. Of course, the next day was spent in the tent waiting out another storm. When it finally cleared, we headed off, roped together and loaded with heavy packs, leaving behind the tent and pulks for a later haul. We started weaving dangerously around large, open crevasses in a chaotic icefield. We left behind colourful wands marking our route in case bad weather rolled in and returned to our campsite for a last load. We retreated part way back to aim more towards the right shoulder of our unnamed glacier, hoping the cliff band wasn't too steep. We found an enormous avalanche path leading straight down to the Leconte Glacier. Great, but still some work to do: 23 hours later we slid in our bivy sacs to catch a couple hours of sleep before the snow started getting too heavy from the heat of the rising sun.

The following few days were spent skiing a long approach towards our base camp. On the way, we met the Patterson Glacier where we should have arrived; we were two days late, but still going. However the weather reached a high pressure and was holding. Our strategy for efficient glacier travel in this heat was to leave very early in the morning to take advantage of the hard snow, stop around noon for a few hours when the sun was too hot and continue later in the day when the snow started to harden again. Our long lunch breaks are spent sleeping, eating and making plans to climb a few of the surrounding unclimbed peaks on our way back out in a few weeks. We soon spotted the magnificent Devils Thumb and saw it getting bigger and bigger as we got closer and closer. The climbing conditions looked good, and the weather was still wonderful as we reached an intermediate base camp right on the U.S.-Canada border on the Leconte Glacier, just west of Mount Gilroy (1620m). From this point we could see the impressive Thumb as well as Burketts Needle (another climb we've put on our hit list) a little further north.

The forecast was optimistic, so we decided to go for Kates Needle as a warm up climb. We left with three days of food and climbing gear. It took us a day to get there and we found a great camping spot on a col at the base of Kate's west ridge at 2220m. We took time to cruise around the north side of the peak and found a classic line on the unclimbed north face. We were both super keen for an attempt the next day. The only problem was the descent. We'd need the skis for the approach and we couldn't leave them at the base of the face; it would take too long to retrieve them by foot in thigh-deep slush. So, we decided to climb with them on the outside of the packs.

Up the next day at our usual time — three a.m. The temperature was unexpectedly warm. We reached the base of the face quickly and started climbing roped up. Bob broke trail in knee deep snow. After some hard work he told me he was worried about the unstable conditions. For the last two hours avalanches had been sweeping the north face to our right. Reality struck and the fear of dying under piles of wet snow finally bent us to retreat. We hurried back to camp and arrived at nine a.m. There was still barely enough time to attempt the west ridge and we couldn't wait another day; we'd be short on food. So off we went, trying to make time, blasting up to the first summit where, again, we thought we have to retreat, this time because of an unstable summit cornice. After some hesitation, we decided to continue and hope for the best. We were fortunate: cornices like this one would have collapsed back home in the dry snow of the Canadian Rockies, but the coastal range snow seemed more solid. On the summit, we took a few pictures of the Devils Thumb and Burkett, and admired the size of the surrounding glaciers. What a beautiful, wild, powerful place.



Bob Enagonio on Devils Thumb. Photo: Eric Trouillet.

The descent presented potential for action. We tried to avoid going onto the summit cornice again and searched for a possible rappel-downclimb down the flutes of the north face to then traverse back onto the ridge. We failed to find a route down, so we had to gather our courage to deal with reversing the ascent route. The cornice proved okay, but the ridge was now facing the sun, and the steep snow was unstable. It took a few snow bollards and borderline down-climbing before we reached safety at our skis. We'd been dealing with avalanche danger all day, and now as we relaxed, our stress metamorphosed into fatigue. The rest of the descent presented some well-earned spring snow conditions. Back at the tent, Bob and I realized how tired we really were; happy, but wasted. The following day we found ourselves back at the pulks ready to organize a day's haul to base camp at the end of the east ridge of Devils Thumb. The weather was still unbelievable and our spirits were flying. We had high hopes for success on the primary goal of this trip.

On the way to the base of the east ridge we left a food cache behind, thus avoiding carrying big loads of food we wouldn't really need. We'd just pick this load up on our way to climb Burketts Needle after we dealt with the Devils Thumb. Of course this cache was marked precisely on the map so we could still find it in a storm.

We found ourselves a great spot to set a solid camp at the base of our climb. Bob and I spent some time analyzing the route with the binoculars, naming different features on the ridge. From what we could see, we'd have to climb two buttresses first, then deal with a few gendarmes and we'd be on the final summit ridge — a very long way. We couldn't locate the summit from our perspective, but I was sure it was there! We packed up, putting a light but sufficient rack together. Bob and I had been waiting to climb the Devils Thumb for over a year and we were thrilled. The weather seemed marginal now but it should still be okay.

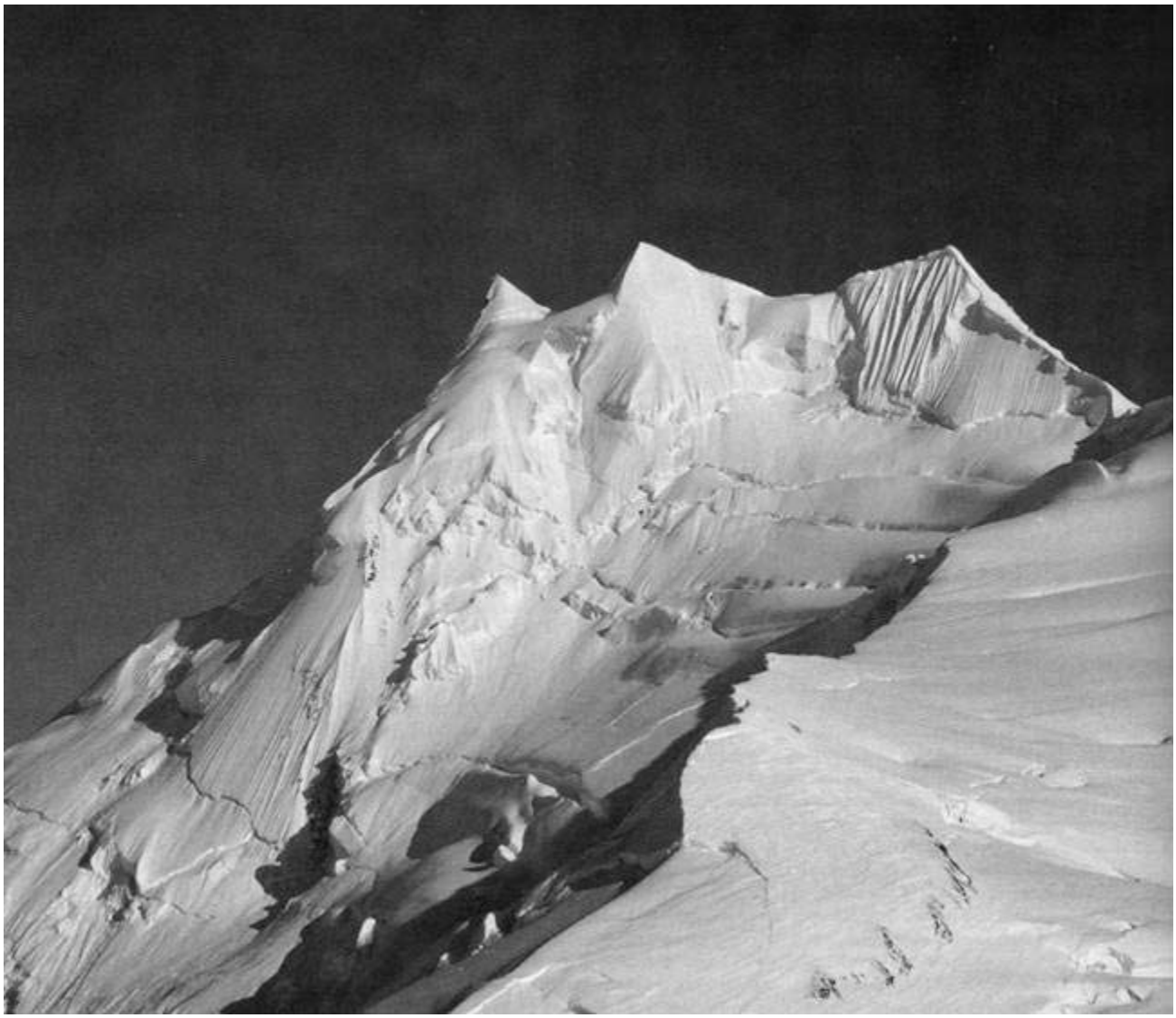
At three a.m. the following morning we were up, but the conditions had worsened.

Disappointed, we stayed in bed for a while and decided to pick up an extra dinner at our food cache. On our way back, however, the weather cleared, and as soon as we reached the camp at 9 a.m. we decided to go for the climb. Relieved that the sun was back to give us a hand, we skiied as far as we could, reaching the ridge early and starting to solo the lower-grade portion. At the first buttress we swapped our double boots for rock shoes and started swinging leads on easy, solid granite pitches. Our feet were shocked, not being used to thin, cold shoes. But as the day crept along, we got warmer. As I started off leading the first pitch of the second buttress, snowfall surprised us. It soon became obvious that we had to get down fast. We arrived back at camp, tired, at about 7:30 p.m. It was now snowing heavily and the wind had picked up.

Two days later we decided to give it another go, but at 3 a.m. it was storming out there; back in bed again. However, the clouds broke up a few hours later. It was a consistent weather pattern: storm at night, clearing in the morning and for the rest of the day. Counting on this analysis, the next day, when the outside conditions were bad again, we had breakfast early anyway and left for the climb hoping for a clearing in the weather. We were right. Back on the ridge, repeating the first buttress in no time, a short rap to reach the base of the second buttress and we were back in business. Unfortunately we lost a bit of time finding our way up the buttress. We tried contouring a gendarme and just ended up back on the ridge we shouldn't have left in the first place. So far, the climb went nicely straight on the ridge. From the top of the second buttress we could now appreciate the beauty of the knife-edge ridge we were climbing over great exposure on both sides. At this point we needed to rappel down of the end of the second buttress to continue onto the summit ridge. A storm rolled in again. We pushed on cautiously only to give up and start a long downclimb down the southeast snow slopes that form the first ascent route. The climbing was great on the beautiful granite, and we were disappointed to give up again because of weather. We were starting to run out of time.

A few days later, the storm still hadn't given up. We'd now given up on the idea of climbing other peaks, like the south face on Burkett's Needle we'd been looking at. We needed three days to get to our pick-up. We decided to give the Devils Thumb one more try, and that meant cutting our return trip to two days. So the last day we got up at 3 am. It's socked in again: no visibility. A quick discussion brought up a few facts: this was our last chance; Bob underlined that we'd climbed in stormy conditions in our Canadian Rockies before. So, we went for it.

A few hundred feet higher we broke through a sea of clouds. We stopped to



The unclimbed north face of Kates Needle. Photo: Bob Enagonio.

take pictures of this magical scenery at this magical moment. We spent the rest of the day above the clouds, enjoying great climbing. We bypassed the previously climbed lower buttresses to gain our highest point and continue from there. The storm had left some snow behind, but the ridge was clean. We had to stay on the knife-edge arête to the summit. What a climb! We encountered some hard climbing: 5.7, 5.8 and one pitch with a few 5.9 moves to avoid snow patches. The exposure was unbelievable: over 6,000 feet down the vertical north face and 3,000 feet down the south face. Lots of air! It was the most impressive ridge I'd ever climbed. At last, we reached the summit and sat in awe of our wonderful view. We took more pictures, but none could bring out the indescribable scenery below us. What a wild place to be. A climb with tremendous character. Fred Beckey described it being the hardest climb he had ever done... 47 years later it wasn't any easier. And it wasn't even over! Now the descent. We down-climbed the ridge as fast as we could until it got too steep, and then started rappelling down the south face diagonally towards the ridge. As Bob rapped from a big boulder, it started moving down towards him and stopped. Recovering from this emotional horror, we continued down in the dark, down-climbing the steep snowface until we reached the camp, wasted again after a 25-hour day. We made dinner at 4:00 in the morning, slept for a little while, but had to get up and pack for our escape back to civilization via an exit at the Shakes Lake.

We finished with a sprint, and in the end the Coast Range still had a problem in store for us. We had visualized a rappel into a boat from the glacier. To our surprise the lake was still frozen at the end of May. However we couldn't reach the ice on the lake to ski across and meet our boat. Falling séracs had created a water barrier binding us to the glacier. Travel around the lake was out of the question, cliff bands made us call in our last resort, the helicopter. It was only on the ferry heading home that I could breathe easy enough to realize our success.

Kluane National Park Reserve Climbing Summary 1994

During the 1994 climbing season there were 35 expeditions into the Icefields Ranges, five of which had multiple objectives, bringing a total of 140 climbers to the park.

As always, most parties gravitated towards Mount Logan, with 22 expeditions (85 people on four routes). Forty people summitted, primarily by the King Trench or East Ridge, with unsuccessful attempts on the Hummingbird and Independence Ridges.

Other mountains climbed included McArthur Peak, Mount Kennedy, Mount Hubbard, Mount Badham, Mount Donjek, Atlantic Peak (of Mount Lucania) and Pinnacle Peak.

There were no significant accidents during the expeditions, and the National Park had no search and rescue operations this season.

Andrew Lawrence, Park Warden

Mount Blackburn Note

Leon Blumer

"Regarding Mount Blackburn," Peter Green's article (CAJ, 1994, page 72) brought back memories from the 50s, but force me to add a bit more information about an area that seems to have been passed by.

Dora Keen really did not make the first ascent. Evidently she and George Handy, whom she later married, and who was guide and chief packer, made a lower summit. On her death in 1962, I believe, George Handy admitted to Vin Hoeman (who was compiling a guide book on Alaskan ascents) that they did not make the summit. Who has continued the guide book work, I don't know, because Vin was killed in an avalanche in the Himalayas.

It seems therefore that our party of 1958 (American Alpine Journal, 1959, page 237) actually made the first ascent, not the second, and thus the Japanese party of 1962 the second. Ours was a mixed Australian, Austrian German, and American party, and consisted of myself (leader), Hans Gmoser, Adolf Bitterlich, as well as Bruce Gilbert and Dick Wahlstrom of Washington State. We climbed the north ridge from a snow cave at about 3200m on May 30, 1958.

I had been on Keith Hart's 1955 reconnaissance expedition ("University Peak," CAJ, 1956) but we failed at 3350m, because of a large sérac straddling the ridge. We had no pitons, and climbed in Korean boots with ten point crampons. The mountain had not been touched for 43 years. No wonder Peter Green couldn't get much information from the Park authorities. Despite contrary statements, the height has always been 5036m (approximately).

I was dumbfounded to hear about our first ascent from Vin Hoeman while climbing Mount Athabasca in 1966. He and his Alaskan friend climbed by us at an incredible rate, and the story of Blackburn was revealed to me as we were about to exchange names and notes, and he realized who I was: he had been trying to contact me for two years.

The only other party I know of in the area was Allain Massin's party (CAJ, 1993, page 74). They were hit by storms and deep snow. The country can be overwhelming at times. Although not very important in the annals of Alaskan mountaineering, I owe it to my companions to try and set the record straight. We did cheat a little by landing on the Nabesna at 2135m. Peter Green's party may be purists, but in these days of immediate gratification, I find it refreshing to read of people willing to fulfill a dream with courage, tenacity and integrity. It is a pity those who claimed to have made the first ascent did not have that integrity.

Beggars On Baffin

Bill Durtler

As a mountaineer and a traveler, like many of my friends I have aspired to go to the exotic places in the world. Places like the Himalaya, the Andes and the mountains of Africa and Europe offer not only climbing but also the opportunity to sample different cultures, yet I have also always been drawn to the mountains of the Canadian Arctic, and especially to the rock climbing potential of the Cirque of the Unclimbables and Baffin Island. While various plans to climb in the Cirque had never materialized, a number of factors conspired last year to finally get me up to Baffin. My climbing partner Rob Driscoll was working up in Iqaluit, and the fact that my wife Debi was seven months pregnant was a driving factor as well. This was going to be the last mountaineering trip for me as a non-parent, and I wanted to be somewhere remote! On the dissuading side, some Canmore friends had been up there the previous year and had had nothing but driving rain; they warned me not to go, but I figured they attracted misery, and that we would be guaranteed good weather.

By late spring the plans were made: I would meet Rob in Iqaluit at the end of July, and we would spend two weeks

climbing the granite peaks of Auyuittuq Park. Since the cost of groceries is rather prohibitive in Iqaluit, we agreed that I would be responsible for the food. Those who know me know that I am somewhat of a procrastinator, but I proudly managed to do the menu planning an entire week before departure. With menu in hand, I went off to Safeway and started loading the cart with what would have been a decent food supply. As I walked through the aisles, the cart became fuller and heavier, and my back got sore just thinking about carrying half of it. So, I made the executive decision to go a bit leaner than first calculated. Instead of three bags of instant oatmeal each for breakfast, we could have one. Using a similar approach for lunch and supper made the cart look a lot more reasonable, though it probably didn't do much for the Safeway clerk who would have to put everything back in the proper place from the pile I left on the floor.

When I got home I weighed everything just to double-check that we would have enough, and at 60 pounds for two people for two weeks I felt confident I had made the right choice. The title of this article might be a hint I was wrong.

At last, the day of departure arrived, and after one last, quick stop at the MEC to pick up a bug shirt (indispensable on Baffin, I was told) Debi dropped me off at the Calgary airport and waddled back to the car. As I sat in the NWTAir 737 combi at take-off, I must admit that I had second thoughts about leaving a seven-months-pregnant wife behind while I went to play. But, climbing is like life, and sometimes, once you're committed to doing something, it's harder to turn back than to continue. I would see more truth in this on Baffin in another context.

The trip to Iqaluit was pleasant but uneventful; when I arrived at the airport the weather was warm and sunny. Thinking that things were looking good, I took a taxi ($2.50 anywhere in town) to the hospital and met up with Dr. Rob. Later that day, we went to pick up Mike White and his wife Rose from the airport. While they were planning on mostly hiking, they were bringing some climbing gear along, too, and it would be great to have the "Jannu Locomotive" along for the company.

As Rob and I finished our last minute gear sort that evening, we agreed that our packs were heavy enough with all the climbing and camping gear, and that the food I had brought would be skimpy but adequate. After a good night's sleep, we went back to the airport and met our fellow travelers: friends of Rob's who lived and worked in Iqaluit and hadn't been to the park. They would be hiking up with us and then heading back out a bit earlier, and showed their dedication to the expedition by helping us get our bags to the Firstair check-in. The weigh-in for the flight to Pangnirtung showed that Rob and I each had over 50 kg, and that didn't include carry-on. The decision to go light on food looked better all the time.

When we arrived in Pang, we were told that we had missed the early tide and would have to wait until 9 o'clock for a boat ride to the start of the trail. Fortunately, we had two things to keep us busy. We spent the better part of the day in the Parks visitor centre, poring over the old climber's reports to get a better idea of the climbing that had been done. This proved to be a frustrating experience, since the peak names have not been standardized, and the climbing reports were barely organized by date, let alone by location. We ended up jotting down descriptions of routes we would potentially be interested in, and thinking that it would be a worthwhile project to put together a guide book for the area.

The second thing was that we had the good fortune to witness part of the Pang folk festival. In addition to giving us a musical interlude, it brought the whole town down to the stage, so there was lots of opportunity to take pictures and get a feel for how people live in Pang. Who says you have to go to Nepal to get culture?

At 9:30 that evening we loaded up the boat and to the diminishing strains of a native folk group, we headed up the inlet. Arriving an hour or so later at the Overlord staging area, we set up camp for the night. The last thing we noticed before drifting off was the increased cloud cover.

Predictably for Baffin, the next morning was overcast with a stiff headwind. As it always seems in these accounts, it took us three wet and windy days to get to the Thor cabin. Already, we realized that our plans would have to change a bit to accommodate the mountain meteorological conditions. We had originally intended to run up to Asgard (in two or three days, hah!) and climb the Scott route, and then spend the next ten days bagging new lines. But now the soggy reality hit home and we decided that if we were to get up anything we would have to climb when the weather permitted, not necessarily when we wanted to. So, we spent the next couple of days hanging around the Thor cabin, learning to play bridge, and learning the dreamy new lingo from California hardmen Brad and Chris, who had just spent two weeks on a new A5 aid climb on the northwest face of Asgard.

The weather improved from out-and-out miserable to unsettled, and Mike, Rose, Rob and I decided to get used to the local conditions by climbing the back side of Thor. We thought the three-pitch 5.7 north ridge would be a good choice, but after fording the Owl River and climbing up the Forkbeard Glacier, we decided that the ridge looked too iced up. Since the weather was again deteriorating, the easy 5th-class south ridge would be a better bet.

We circled the east face of Thor and made our way up to the obvious notch in the ridge. As we were roping up we ran into (more accurately, were run over by) Claude Bérubé and Francois-Guy Thivierge, who had put a route up the southwest face to the notch a few days earlier and were returning to finish the climb to the summit. As they disappeared in the distance, Mike and Rose set off behind them, while Rob and I tried a different route. The conditions were icy, and since they didn't have much gear, Mike and Rose turned back. Rob and I continued on, but found that all the cracks were iced up, and the slabs were often covered in verglas. After we each had taken a lead fall, we got the hang of it a bit, and managed to reach the summit, having roped most of the pitches. If this was 5.2, what would the harder stuff be like? The climb took sixteen hours return, while we had estimated it would take ten; the lack of vegetation seems to distort the scale, making things look a lot smaller than they are.

By this time our rations were starting to get a bit thin, and we let our friends know — and anybody else who would listen — that we would be happy to lighten their loads if they had too much food. Chris and Brad obliged immediately by giving us two huge bags of leftover cashews and pistachios. For the next couple of days, most of our meals were supplemented with nuts.

After a rest day, we moved camp to Summit cabin. It snowed that night, and we found journal entries from the friends who had been in the park a year earlier describing how bad the rain was. This raised our spirits a bit: at least we had made it up something; they never even saw the summits! We had one more day of bridge lessons, and then the weather broke. We

woke up to completely calm, crystal-clear skies. Immediately, our optimism returned from a lengthy hibernation, and we started making plans, plans, and more plans. Yet, as the weather gods would have it, we managed to get half way around Asgard to check things out before the next storm came in. On the way we met a Swiss party that had just retreated from another northwest face aid route and had some food to spare. We offered to take some gear out for them in return for a couple of boxes of couscous, but then had to make it back to camp by map and compass. Asgard was not to be for us that year.

We decided to head back towards Overlord. We had spotted a number of possible unclimbed lines that looked good, and had tentatively arranged to climb one of them with Brad and Chris if we got together. We had also looked at the northeast ridge of Mount Menhir. This is the unofficial name for the prominent triangular peak directly behind the Thor shelter (GR LJ9483 on Map 261). Before we climbed Thor we had already made half-hearted attempt on the route with the hikers that were with us, and we thought that the ridge would make a good, moderate rock climb that we could attempt in iffy weather.

On August 10, we got up early and checked the weather. It was windy and overcast, but there was no precipitation, so we decided to go for it and were on our way by six o'clock. We followed the broad grassy gully up to the broken slabs below the notch. From the top of these slabs, we followed an obvious snow gully to what looked like a notch from below. The only difficulty was a large chockstone in the gully, which we climbed on the left using a few moves of aid, but it took us four hours to get that far. Again, we had been deceived by the lack of scale.

The "notch" was in fact the snout of a snow bowl that is bounded by a large rock cirque. When we got there it also appeared that the "ridge" we wanted to climb was really an optical illusion: it's just the rounded corner between the northeast and southeast faces. Still hoping to get an enjoyable rock climb in, we moved up to the base of a red rock buttress near the left edge of the northeast face and roped up. I led up the rock in my plastic boots, but when I reached the stance, the rock had run out. It looked like we could get back on to rock higher up by climbing a snowy chute, which Rob started up. The snow runnel out to be a couple of inches deep on top of ice, and he did a great job on the lead. After I came up to the belay, we realized that there would be more of this, so we put our crampons on and resigned ourselves to a mixed climb.

Nearing the top of the south ridge of Thor. Photo: Bill Durtler.

The weather continued to be reasonable: windy with a few flurries. The next six pitches moved up and left and were mostly mixed climbing on icy slabs and corners. Protection was hard to find at times, and we had a few sporty fifty foot runouts on tied-off knife blades, but the climbing would not have been harder than 5.7 under more benign conditions. Several pitches were significantly longer than fifty metres because belays couldn't be found, so that the second would have to simul-climb a ways to allow the leader to reach a stance. This was mostly a mind game, and once you resigned yourself to it, it became enjoyable in a dangerous sort of way.

At the top of the eighth pitch, we stopped to dress a bit more warmly and have our first real bite to eat. By this time it was almost six o'clock and we were at the elevation of the summit of Thor. Our belay spot was a good ledge perched right on the edge of the vertical southeast face, and the exposure was incredible. We could barely make out the red dot that was the roof of the Thor shelter, six thousand feet below us in the swirling mist.

While we could not have much further to go, we would almost certainly get benighted if we continued, and my gloves were soaking wet and turning to ice as the temperature dropped. Above us was a fairly continuous overhanging cliff band that had only a small break in it. While it was not clear whether it would go, we finally decided that, while we might have a miserable night out, we wouldn't die or lose limbs, so I led up and right to a corner below the break in the overhanging wall. Rob did a splendid job of struggling through the overhang, with crampons scraping almost ineffectively on the rock walls, and hands trying to find a solid hold in the snow-covered rock above. With the help of a well-placed knee and a good deal of grunting he worked his way up and over. The rope fed out quickly once he managed the roof, and that section turned out to be the crux of the route. When it was my turn I used the same grovel technique that had been so successful for Rob. I think that it would have gone at 5.8 or 5.9 in dry conditions, but it gave us a good workout.

From Rob's stance it was a short easy pitch to the summit, which we reached at 8:30. We found a small cairn as testimonial to the only previous recorded climb, an Italian route up the south ridge. The summit is very exposed and drops off steeply in all directions, and since the weather was still marginal, we didn't stay around for long. While there may have been a more direct way off, we decided to rappel the route since it was getting dark quickly, and we at least knew what to look for. Considering the high winds, it was surprising all the rappels went easily, and we managed to find anchors all the way down (although we used up half the rack in the process).

By the time we reached the snow bowl it had been dark for several hours, but, being above the Arctic Circle, there was still enough of a hint of light that we could get to the bottom of the snow gully. It was two a.m., we had been up for 21 hours, and the slabs would be treacherous in the dark, so we ended up having a two-hour bivy to wait for the light to come back.

We reached our camp at six o'clock in the morning, had a quick brew and flaked out for a well-earned rest. When we got up later that afternoon, we went to the shelter to find that all the friends we had met or made over the course of the trip had taken pity on us and had left us all kinds of food. While we greatly appreciated the thought and the calories, we ended up having to carry almost as much food back out as we had carried in. Oh, well, beggars can't be choosers!

In our two weeks in the park, we had three climbable days, and none of those were perfect. Having made it up two good climbs was therefore reasonably successful,

and I certainly will go back up some time. There's lots of rock in them thar hills, boys. The indispensable bug shirt had repelled at least two mosquitos, but since the weather will be perfect next time, I'll be sure to take it along again.

Beggars Can't Be Choosers. Left side of northeast face of Mount Menhir, 10 pitches of mixed ice and rock from top of snow bowl, with climbing to 5.8 or 5.9, and ice to 60°

F.A.: Rob Driscoll and Bill Durtler, August 10, 1994.

Valkyrie

Chris Breemer

"This must be a curse. The gods must have put a curse on us," Brad said as he simultaneously massaged his feet and searched for pain killers. Entombed in my sleeping bag, I tried to ignore both Brad and my own agonizing feet.

Three days had passed since we descended the north wall of Mount Asgard's North Tower, and then, instead of celebrating our ascent, we festered inside our rancid tent nursing two cases of trench foot.

It had been only three weeks since we crammed into a helicopter, flew up the Weasel valley, and got dropped off at the base of Mount Asgard. Stepping out of the helicopter, we plunged into hip-deep snow and stared in awe at the enormous north and west faces of Mount Asgard. Soaring over a thousand metres above the Turner Glacier, the orange and brown granite revealed several promising crack systems, none more obvious than the system used by Charlie Porter during his remarkable ascent in 1975.

Slogging back and forth across the Turner Glacier, we moved all of our gear to a base camp site directly below the North Tower. Situated almost directly below the vague buttress dividing the north and west faces, our base camp offered an excellent view of a faint, yet nearly continuous, crack system on the buttress.

Blessed by calm, blue skies, we climbed 300 m of ice leading up to the base of the rock wall. There we traversed another 300 m across the icefields before stopping at a prominent pedestal that marked the base of our chosen route. Our new vantage point revealed that the crack system was even better than it had appeared from below. Sharp, clean cracks followed the prow of the buttress as far as we could see. Leaving a small amount of gear hanging from a pin, we rappelled and fixed ropes toward the glacier below. Intent on making an alpine-style ascent of the wall, we carried only four 60-m ropes for both climbing and hauling. The small amount of rope forced us to pull our ropes on the easier sections of our descent, only to relead them later.

After a night of midnight sun, we reascended our ropes and reled the remaining pitches to regain the base of the rock wall. With a pile of equipment at our feet, we disconnected ourselves from the horizontal world and hoped that our five haul bags held all the food, gear, and clothes that we'd need on an Arctic big wall. We were finally in our realm; we had left the crevasses, the ice, and the avalanches below. We had returned to our roots, granite walls offering thousands of feet of avid climbing. We had arrived in an Arctic Yosemite.

The morning of July 12 found us making quick progress up clean, sweeping cracks These cracks took gear so well that I wondered if Chouinard had used them as a mold when he developed Stoppers. Consumed by the perfect cracks, we vainly tried to ignore the sudden disappearance of our clear, blue skies, and the equally sudden appearance of a churning mass of cloud. Winds erratically and violently flung snow in every direction; my aiders began standing straight up, and my haul line tugged on me like a leash. We needed to find an anchor and erect our two-man portaledge.

A small snow-covered ledge appeared, offering a good anchor and a relatively comfortable location to hang our portaledge. Crawling inside, we burrowed into our sleeping bags, turned on the cassette player, and slept. Five days later we crawled out.

During that time, it had stormed nearly continuously. The few brief breaks in the weather had given us ample time to advance our route two pitches farther, and helped us avoid portaledge claustrophobia. The breaks also gave us the opportunity to realize the true seriousness of our undertaking. Ice filled the bottom of our sleeping bags and caked the sides of our rain fly, many of our water bottles froze, and perhaps most troubling was the condition of the slopes below. The icefield that stood between us and our glacier base camp was dangerously loaded with snow, making a descent of the icefield suicide.

Within a few hours of packing away our portaledge camp, grey mists returned, flowing down the Turner Glacier and engulfing us again. Above, Brad methodically nailed a series of thin flakes. Below, Noel Craine, Paul Pritchard, Steve Quinlan, and Jordi Tosas skied across the Turner Glacier. They had just finished the first ascent of "Hyperborea," a beautiful route about 250 m to our right. As they effortlessly glided across the glacier, I could only wonder what strange force motivated us to toil on this wall. Of all the terrain on earth, why did we choose to cross this bit of it? Why did we feel compelled to play games on some of the most treacherous bits of this planet's surface? I hoped I'd find the answer on the summit, but I knew I wouldn't. I knew I'd freeze, suffer, and hate this route, come down, and do it again.

Storms returned that night, reducing our view to the few square metres of fabric that surrounded us. Snow and ice pelted our ledge and occasionally revealed that our base camp tent was nearly buried. Another foot of snow was all it would take for our base camp to disappear forever. The thought of us aimlessly wandering across the Turner Glacier in search of a buried tent did wonders for motivation.

Warming temperatures slowed the snowfall, but accelerated the rock and icefall. The terrifying, whirling sound of the missiles made it apparent that our location was less than enviable, but climbing conditions were horrendous, so we elected to remain where we were; a decision we soon regretted. A rock ripped through our rain fly, sliced Brad's forehead, and imbedded itself in his sleeping pad. With the warning well-taken, we crawled into the storm, preferring to climb in the miserable weather rather than waiting to receive a second direct hit by another rock.

Twenty-five metres higher, we reassembled our camp underneath a two-metre overhang. The roof offered shelter from the storm, enticing us to continue climbing despite the continuous snowfall. Everything from Lost Arrow pitons to a 2 5-cm tube fit under the roof, allowing me to traverse 15 m to the left before I saw a corner appear which I used to turn the roof. Without the protection of the roof, snow quickly built up on me and my gear, reducing cams to inoperable hunks of aluminum alloy, and fingers to numb, awkward stumps.

Anxious to escape the cold, I began drilling holes for a belay. Silence and grey surrounded me. Only the metallic crack of the drill bit biting the rock punctured the awesome silence. Tying the haul line into two quarter-inch (6 mm) bolts, I leaned back and cautiously began a freehanging rappel

back to our portaledge. A homogenous world of grey and white slipped past until I cleared the lip of the roof and saw Brad's smiling face.

Lying behind the confines of our rain fly, we lost track of time. All that was important was the weather. If the weather was decent, we climbed. An hour was enough. Twenty-four hours wasn't too much. The same held for sleeping. The clock, the little piece of machinery that exerts so much control over our lives in the middle latitudes, lost control. We embraced the Inuit belief that "time is infinite." Our bodies and the clouds defined the day.

Continuing in light snowfall, we progressed up a series of overhanging corners until we reached the point that we no longer had enough ropes to return to our roof camp. Once we dragged our gear to our high point, we entered an area of the wall that was a mystery from below. The obvious crack systems ended. Above were only vague discontinuous cracks and grooves.

Facing the daunting prospect of drilling a bolt ladder up 30 m of blank rock, Brad hung from his jumars and violently kicked himself away from the wall. At the apex of his arc, he spied a thin, straight-in crack, eight metres to the right. A small roof led Brad to the base of the straight-in crack where he craned his neck back and simply said "Dreamy!" Fifty metres later he had completed the pitch dubbed "Shield Revisited." Reminiscent of the spectacular cracks on El Capitan's Shield route, the solitary crack exclusively accepted blades, Beaks, and Lost Arrows.

Clean, thin cracks continued for another 60 metres before ending at a nearly blank stretch of grey rock. There we were appalled to discover that the same edges that made Asgard's rock so hookable, had badly damaged the second of our two lead ropes. We were 850 metres above the Turner Glacier with two bad lead ropes and more than 200 m to the summit. Given the circumstances, we did what any rational climber would do; we flipped the rope around, putting the damaged end closest to the belayer, and continued climbing. Although exhausted from 20 hours of climbing, the weather was still holding, so Brad set off to cross the grey rock and reach what appeared to be the base of the summit cracks.

Slotting nuts and TCUs under an arching, expanding flake, Brad was an automaton. The nut slipped behind the flake, Brad jerked violently on it, the rock reverberated loudly, I cringed, and Brad moved up. The process was repeated over and over until the flake ended and a tiny groove begrudgingly accepted RURPs and Beaks.

What followed were seven hours of terror and chaos. Ice rained down exploding around us, yet we were helpless to move. Brad's gear shifted, the rock shattered, and drill bits broke. Like a TV football commentator, I tried to give Brad a running description of the approaching icefall, "No worries. It's all to your left," "Uh, you might get hit," or "Duck! You're going to get nailed!"

The ice continued to fall, the cracks disappeared, and the hooks came out. Natural hook edges continually appeared, luring Brad increasingly farther from his last decent protection. Hooks slipped and creaked. I shivered, shat, and belayed, and Brad stretched for his next hook placement. The hook wasn't right. Brad slid it back and forth in search of the edge that would hold.

I tried to watch the misery above, but my eyes kept closing, my body slumped backward, and I'd wake up. Blankly staring at the rock, I heard the distinct horrifying sound of rock breaking and gear scraping. Looking up I expected to see Brad sailing towards me, but instead he was hanging by his hands on the hook above him. The hook he had been standing on blew, leaving him hanging on the one he had been fumbling with. Cursing and screaming at the heavens, Brad cautiously crept up his aiders, climbed up three more hook placements, and reached a good crack. Ten hours after embarking on the pitch, Brad yelled down, "Off belay!" having created the A4+ crux of the route.

A night in the portaledge and a pot of Top Ramen supplied us with the energy we needed for a summit push. There appeared to be only about 100 m of rock between us and the summit, a distance we hoped to cover in a day. Leaving our portaledge camp intact, we carried the clothes on our backs and our climbing gear.

The crack systems that looked so obvious from below turned out to be short and shallow, leaving us with no idea where to go, except up. We didn't know if one crack would lead to another, or end in a sea of blank rock. We just kept going up, linking cracks with pendulums and traverses.

Behind us, a few solitary clouds rushed down the valley, chased by a towering wall of grey. The wall oozed towards us, slowly enveloping the surrounding peaks and eclipsing the sun. Awaiting the tempest, we were left to wonder if we had made a mistake leaving our bivouac gear below. Should we continue up into the unknown, or retreat to the relative security of our portaledge? It was a question we each asked ourselves, but didn't need to discuss. We'd been on this wall for eleven days, and no longer needed to speak to communicate. We had only a handful of nuts and a bit of tea left, enough for one more small meal, but certainly not enough to wait out another storm. It was now or never. We both knew it and kept on climbing.

The clouds swallowed us, returning us to the same grey world that we had become so familiar with. Rain poured down muffling the sound of iron clashing with rock, and we soon discovered that our route was perfect, at least in the mind of Comici, who fancied the perfect line to be that which followed the path a drop of water would take. Water gushed down the rock, forcing itself down our sleeves and through our hoods.

Belaying Brad, I repeatedly counted to 100 in an effort to determine the onset of hypothermia, but I never reached 100. Instead, I would forget what number I was on and resume counting from one. Before I realized the seriousness of the situation, Brad finished the pitch. Anxious to generate some body heat, I jumared as quickly as possible, ripping nuts and pins out of the seams and haphazardly clipping them anywhere. I consciously tried to ignore my wretched condition. Only the metre of rock in front of me and the blob of metal in it mattered.

Suddenly there was no more gear to remove. There was only the anchor in front of me, and Brad by my side. We were finished with Asgard's vertical plains. Above us was a short section of 4th Class rock leading to the gentle snow dome that forms Asgard's summit. It was such a short bit of climbing, but one we didn't consider worth pursuing, given our poor condition. We had completed one of the most beautiful walls in the world and considered our lives more important than a trip to the true summit.

With nothing more than an exchange of smiles and a quick congratulations, we connected our ropes to our rappel devices and began our journey back to California.

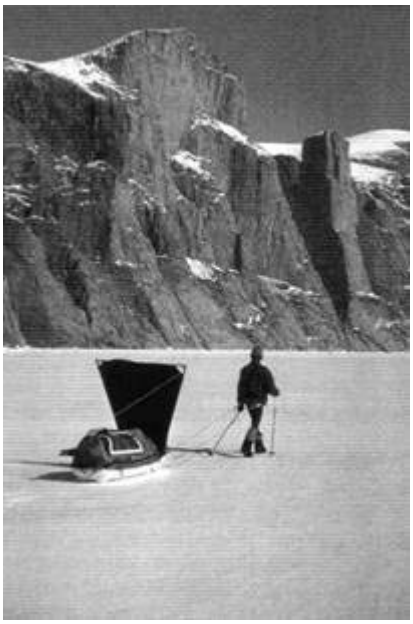
Mount Asgard (Baffin Island), Valkyrie, VI, A4+. F.A.: Chris Breemer and Brad Jarrett, 1994.

Northeastern Baffin Island

Sandy Briggs

The northeast coast of Baffin Island is a stunning landscape of mountains, glaciers and steep-walled fiords seldom visited by mountaineers, though well-known to its Inuit inhabitants. Our Baffin Traverse '94 expedition passed through this breathtaking region in the spring of 1994 as part of a longer journey. Between April 29 and June 7 we skied, hauling sleds, from Pond Inlet to Clyde River. Our party of five included John Dunn, Mike Sharp, Bob Saunders, Graeme Magor and Sandy Briggs.

Though not a mountaineering expedition, we did ascend three straightforward ski peaks near the glacier confluence at N72° 15.5' W76° 19.11, southeast of Pond Inlet.



Graeme Magor sledding Gibbs Fiord. Photo: S. Briggs

Two days later on May 8 we ascended the high snow dome Qiajivik Peak 6440 at 72°10.8'N, 75°55.7'W (George Van B. Cochran, CAJ, 58, 1975, p. 95) and a western satellite, near the head of the MacCulloch glacier.

The weather was clear, sunny and windless, so that we lingered to enjoy the spectacular views over a frozen Baffin Bay and the fiords (North Arm and Coutts Inlet) to the south.

The Empire Kicks Back

Bob Koen

We weren't lost. Not really.

I knew exactly where we were.

Sort of.

We had crossed quite a few rock ribs while traversing this section on the way up, and now they kept reappearing out of the gloom just when they should. Even though visibility was near zero in the storm, I knew that the next rock rib would be the one that we had come up. The last rib had dropped away to the southeast, so the next one would probably descend due east, or at least close enough to east to be sure of depositing us on the col. From there we could follow a compass bearing down onto the plateau, pick up our wand trail and we would be back in the tents in an hour or two.

But where was the next rock rib? This snow slope seemed to be a lot longer than I had remembered, and steeper too. At one point Tony slipped and skidded down a little way, but then he arrested himself. No harm done. The wind was getting even stronger, and Andy was showing signs of frostbite on his cheeks. Where was that rock rib?

At first it was just a hint of darker grey in an otherwise whitish-grey world. But as we got closer we could tell that it was definitely the rib we wanted, and soon we were picking our way through the rocks across to the other side. All doubts disappeared as we quickly descended on the snow beside the rib. We were descending due east and the slope was gradually flattening out, just as it should. Couldn't be far till we picked up the first wand. It was about this point that we started talking about making another attempt on the summit, just as soon as the storm cleared.

Then we came to a sérac barrier. There had been no sérac barrier on the way up, and none of us remembered seeing one nearby. There had been a crevasse field that we had crossed, placing our final wand at the uphill end just before starting the long trudge up to the col. Surely the crevasse field was a pretty big target for us to hit in the whiteout. It was probably over to the right somewhere, so we started angling in that direction.

After about another hour the slope started steepening dramatically uphill to the right. So this must be the slopes of the 5200-m bump above the tents. Well, that was fine, but why hadn't we found any wands yet? We spread out sideways to our direction of travel. We had four people with two 50-m ropes and a space of about 50m between ropes, so we were covering 150m across the plateau with a possibility of seeing a wand maybe 25m to the side, giving us 200m of width to our search. The uphill person was defining the line of travel by contouring the slope at the point where the terrain was steep enough that the tents could not possibly be on steeper terrain. We didn't think that the tents were more than 200 metres out onto the plateau. The altimeter showed that we were at just about the same altitude as the tents, but there was no telling how much the barometric pressure had changed since the storm moved in.

We carried on this way for at least another hour and never found any wands. Occasionally we would see a dark shape in the gloom and get excited, but it always turned out to be a crevasse, not the tents. Once it turned out to be a sérac just at the opposite edge of the plateau, where it tumbled away several thousand metres to the Hubbard glacier.

Then the slope started to drop away in front of us, almost unnoticeable at first. The altimeter was going down, so we must be also. Ten metres, 20m, then Andy saw another vague dark shape in the mist. He started whooping and hollering; he had found a wand. I was the farthest away. By the time I got to the wand the others had gone out one rope length to try to find the next wand. There wasn't one. What they found instead was the tents. We had found the very last wand in the trail. With the snow walls around the tents we could have easily gone by without seeing them.

It had taken us thirteen days to climb the east ridge of Logan and make a summit attempt. The summit day had started out fine. When we arrived at the col between the east summit of Logan and the 5200-m bump above camp the views of Mount Saint Elias, the Hummingbird Ridge and the main summit of Logan were outstanding. So we decided to go for the main summit rather than the east summit, which was the logical end to the east ridge climb. Although slightly lower, the east summit has the advantage of being two kilometres closer to the tents. We climbed to within 200m of the east summit and then traversed the south slopes of the east summit, managing to reach the col at 5700m between the main summit and the east summit before being

rejected by the storm.

The storm had built remarkably fast. At first it was just a little greyness in the air, then a cloud cap started building over the summit. Within an hour we were in a whiteout, but without wind. The whiteout had lifted just long enough to allow us to get our bearings and locate the col between the two summits. By the time we got to the col the wind had built from nothing to an indisputable force. We weren't going any higher, that was for certain; so we began the long descent.

The storm disappeared just as quickly as it arrived. The next day was brilliant, but we were much too thrashed to make another attempt that soon. So we rested, rehydrated, and planned to go for it again the next day, but only to the east summit. Might as well be mature about this, we reasoned. No sense in getting too worn out over a warm-up climb.

It was not to be. The next day the storm was back in full force, and the day after that was just as bad. We were now five days into our five days of food and fuel that we had brought on our alpine style push from the 4000-m camp. We were still a couple of kilometres out onto the plateau with (you guessed it) no wands to help us find our way back to the point where the east ridge joins the plateau. Day six of our five-day push dawned poorly, but almost immediately cleared off. We still had a little bit of food and fuel left, enough to make us still consider going for it. In the end we decided to be mature. We packed up and descended, all the way to the 3000-m level. It was a good decision. The wind came up that afternoon, much earlier in the day than we would have arrived on the summit if we had gone for it. That night was the windiest of the entire trip.

So much for the warm-up climb. The real prize was still waiting for us.

The south face of Mount McArthur rises directly above the landing area on the upper Hubbard glacier. It is a magnificent alpine face several kilometres wide rising over 2000m. There are at least six distinct buttresses that culminate in a long, long summit ridge sprouting twin peaks. Four of the six main buttresses had been climbed, three to the real summit. The easternmost buttress of the east peak had been climbed only as far as the summit ridge. The east summit of Mount McArthur, at 4308m, remained unclimbed.

The central buttress, rising directly to the east summit, looked to be an involved proposition with lots of high-angle rockclimbing in the lower part. The other buttress appeared to be more reasonable. We had been able to study it at length during our 19 days on Logan. It seemed that we could connect a series of snow gullies on the west side of the lower half of the buttress to reach a lower-angle snow arête leading to the summit ridge. We knew that the snow arête would be straightforward. The only unknown was what lay on the east side of the lower half of the buttress. From Logan we only had an oblique view of the west side of the buttress. We finally got a good look at the east side of the buttress when we arrived back at the landing area. What had been hidden from us all that time was a long couloir shooting straight up the east side of the buttress and connecting directly to the base of the upper snow arête. It was a superhighway.

We got away from base camp at 2:30 a.m. and began climbing the couloir at four o'clock. We had hoped for a much earlier start, but the snow didn't freeze solid enough to walk on any earlier. We found excellent snow in the couloir as we climbed up and over a series of avalanche runnels. Some were deep enough that we had interesting climbing to get down into them and back out the other side. In other places we were bridging upwards with crampons on opposite walls of the runnel. Interesting as it was, it was not a place we wanted to be in for long. We wanted to be up and out of the couloir before the sun came around and caused a few more avalanches to pour down it.

We climbed as quickly as we could. We could tell we were making progress by watching the nearby landmarks fall away below us as we climbed higher. However, the top of the gully didn't seem to be getting that much closer. The sun eventually rose and not much later the top of the couloir was bathed in light. Soon we had to abandon the shadows at the sides of the gully and carry on in the full glare of the sun. It got hot. We kept climbing. By the time the sun was fully upon us we had climbed above the zone of the big avalanche runnels. They just stopped. We must have reached an altitude where the snow hadn't been getting soft and slushy enough to avalanche in that fashion.

After seven hours in the couloir we finally pulled out onto the upper snow arête. We were exhausted, but very happy to be on terrain that was low in objective hazards. We camped at a relatively flat spot on the arête a little bit higher. It was one of the most sublime campsites I have ever been at. We were perched in a truly glorious spot about 1500 m above the Hubbard Glacier with a spectacular view of Mounts Vancouver, Hubsew, and Logan arrayed before us. We could see all of the east ridge of Logan and most of the summit plateau. Directly above us was one of those rare, ultra-classic snow arêtes that is not difficult to climb but is simply pleasurable instead.

We spent the afternoon resting and drinking endless amounts of water and tea. We decided to name the climb "The Empire Kicks Back" in honor of our diverse group. We were composed of one native son of Canada, a Canadian of Scottish origin, a Kiwi of Scottish origin, and an Aussie. The couloir became the "Kick Back Couloir" and we were camping on the "Empire Arête."

The weather stayed fine overnight and the morning brought the kind of a dawn that only ever seems to happen in the high mountains. The kind of dawn that seems to be a reward for lots of exertion and not a little bit of patience. Soon we were moving up the arête. The snow was just about perfect and the light was incredible. The arête was a razor sharp divide between light and dark, but not a straight razor. It curved upwards in a majestic sweep to the summit ridge with dark blues and blacks in the shadows to the left and the brilliant white snow glistening on the crest of the ridge. A couple of hours of straightforward cruising brought us to a mild sting in the tail. A short bit of Grade 2 ice led to the final obstacle. It wasn't a cornice really, just a bit of very steep snow and then we pulled over onto the summit ridge of McArthur.

A couple of hours of straightforward snow climbing brought us to the top. The views in all directions were terrific, but only for a short time before the afternoon cloud buildup obscured everything. We rested and relaxed and enjoyed our only summit in a month of climbing. Andy had a snow bath. Not only was it a first ascent but it was also a first naked ascent.

Soon we had to leave. We spent the remainder of the afternoon descending the east ridge before being stopped by poor visibility. The next morning we continued down to the 3600-m level where we dropped back onto the south face and descended another endless couloir back to the glacier.

We descended about a third of the east

ridge of McArthur but we all agreed that it would make an excellent objective. It is long, not steep overall but with lots of shorter challenges, and has intricate route-finding. I suspect it is similar in character to the west ridge of Mount Hunter in the Alaska range.

Mount McArthur east peak via, the "Kickback Couloir" and "Empire Arête" Bob Koen (Canada), Graham Rowbotham (Canada), Tony Hunter (Australia), and Andy Scrace (New Zealand). June 15-17, 1994.

The Canadian Army On Mount Logan

Hugh McReynolds

With regards to "Adventures in the St. Elias" by John Chilton (CAJ 77, 1994, page 68). His article refers to the "disgusting garbage" found at Camp One on the East Ridge and directs a salvo at the Canadian Army Team.

I was the leader of the 1992 military team which ascended the East Ridge route. On our team there were several climbers who had attempted the Ridge in '88 and '90. Climbers who had been on Logan in '90 were surprised to see the snow level in '92. What had mostly been rock and ice up to 3800m was now buried in snow. As we ascended, we marked caches of food, fuel and garbage for our descent. After reaching the summit on June 1, we began our descent taking out fixed lines and recovering food, fuel and garbage.

During the planning of the '92 trip, I read several back issues of the CAJ and AAJ. In several articles there are comments about previous teams leaving fixed lines and abandoned equipment. We emphasized to our team not to leave any equipment behind. When I received the article, I wrote a letter to Mr. Chilton asking what was found and where. I have still not heard any response in regards to my letter. [Mr. Chilton states that he has not received a letter from Mr. McReynolds—editor]

I spoke to members who had been on the route in 1990. They mentioned finding fuel cans and garbage at several of the camps. As I read Mr. Chilton's comments about huge crevasses and ice, I realized that 1993 may have been similar to 1990 when there was little precipitation. The results are a dog's back yard in spring. I hope my team did not miss any garbage and apologize if anything was missed. Mr. Chilton's article has sparked my interest so much by his allegations that I plan to return to the East Ridge to enjoy its beauty and pick up anything my group may have left behind.

The West Coast

On Wobbly Legs

John Baldwin

We skimmed along the underside of the clouds as we flew out and around Cape Caution on our way to Rivers Inlet. Here, the feet of the Coast Mountains sink deep into the ocean. Surf pounded on the beaches and ragged islands below. Turning the corner into Rivers Inlet we dodged squalls up the long arm of water back into the mountains at the head of Owikeno Lake to reach our starting point at the end of the logging roads on the Machmell River.

Next morning Steve Ludwig, Helen Sovdat, Stan Sovdat and I staggered into the undergrowth, heading up Pashleth Creek. For much of its length Pashleth Creek forms a deep canyon cut through volcanic rock surrounded by rainforest. Thick moss and tiny streams of clear water covered the forest floor. The new growth of spring had not yet begun and an avalanche path up the valley was reminiscent of an alpine meadow. Portions of the canyon rim are ringed by a game trail offering occasional glimpses of tributary waterfalls cascading into the canyon. It is a beautiful setting, but we were not equipped to enjoy our walk up the valley. Our objective was an unsupported ski traverse of the Ha-iltzuk Icefield to Knight Inlet, and our packs bulged with skis and a two-week supply of food. Wobbling along, we must have looked like newborn fawns as we staggered through the undergrowth on well-worn bear trails, stopping frequently to rest our packs on fallen logs.

The morning of our third day found us still walking inside the oldest trim line of the Pashleth Glacier. The thought of yet another day to reach the glacier was not encouraging. Patchy snow and bush made travel slow, but higher up we broke out onto a large outwash plain several kilometres below the glacier snout. The river was low and we crossed easily between sandbars to the south side where aching joints and a thick bed of moss enticed us to camp early. We lay on the moss watching the afternoon sun on the volcanic columns across the valley. Surprisingly there was very little snow for this time of year, but with the glacier now close by, the skis no longer seemed superfluous. We saw goats clambering about on cliffs overlooking the valley, and just before supper we watched a grizzly sow and cub feeding on horsetails growing near the edge of the outwash plain.

Finally, on the fourth day we climbed jubilantly up onto the snout of the Pashleth Glacier and, still on bare ice, we transferred most of the weight out of our packs onto lightweight toboggans made from plastic Krazy Karpets. The mossy valley was quickly left behind as we travelled further that afternoon than the previous three days combined, to a camp at the head of the Pashleth Glacier.

The mountains had remained buried in clouds on the first three days of our trip, but our climb onto the main icefield coincided with the beginning of a stretch of clear weather. We eagerly dumped our loads on the crest of the divide at the head of the Pashleth Glacier and set off for Mount Somolenko, the highest and most attractive summit in the area south of Silverthrone Mountain. This was one of those mountains I had always wanted to climb. I had spent four nights camped on the névé below the peak in 1984 without ever seeing the summit. Now under clear skies the summit was an enjoyable snow climb via its north ridge and offered tremendous views of the entire icefield. The Pashleth Glacier wound out of sight towards the dark blue chasm of the Machmell River where we had come from, and to the south and west the myriad lobes of the Silverthrone Glacier glistened to our distant exit at Klinaklini Peak. In the afternoon an ascent of Ardern offered contrasting views into the deep tributaries of the Kingcome River, and a climb back to camp over the wide dome southeast of Kinch gave an incredible ski run in powder snow on its north side.

We took advantage of a frozen crust the next day and clattered off down the gentle

Crossing cirque west of Klinaklini Peak. Photo: J. Baldwin.

Silverthrone Glacier. The toboggans swung widely on our turns and Steve began to experiment with "power-assisted 360s" before we decided it was easier to strap the toboggans to our packs. We continued hauling the toboggans on the névé below to a camp above the Satsalla Glacier. Here an easy side trip to the 2315m summit on the divide between the Satsalla and Kingcome River offered incredible views of the Satsalla Glacier spilling off the main icefield and winding out of sight into a 2000-m-deep trench lined with granite cliffs.

Our route to Knight Inlet left the main icefield the next day and rather than follow the usual route east down the Hamatsa Glacier we used the continuing good weather to contour around the head of the Satsalla Glacier and cross the rugged mountains to the east. This was one of the most scenic parts of the trip. To avoid a band of cliffs west of Peak 7533, we climbed high onto the summit's west ridge. We were now able to look back at the main icefalls of the Satsalla Glacier and follow the sinuous moraines deep into the valley. This is surely one of the wildest valleys on the coast! Several traverses and kick turns cleaned off all the mushy snow from the steep basin beyond. From the next col to the south we dropped east to near the head of the Tumult Glacier after an airy but easy ski ascent of Peak 8000. Huge bands of clouds to the northwest held off throughout the day, but reminded us that our good weather would not last forever.

The snow froze up hard again overnight and we set off down the Tumult Glacier the next morning, making long radius turns around a few minor crevasses. There is no question that the best skiing on a traverse is on the side trips, but these cruising runs down the large valley glaciers are what make it feel like you're really travelling on skis. At 1675m we turned up the south branch of the Tumult Glacier to the broad pass at its head overlooking the meanders of the lower Satsalla River in its deep coastal valley. Our pace slowed in the afternoon heat and, after an easy ski ascent of Peak 7700, we had a long run in the glistening corn snow.

Two steep cirques separated us from the end of our traverse at Klinaklini Peak, and for the roller coaster ride across these we waited till the next morning in the hopes of more stable snow. Cloudy skies overnight thwarted our plans, and we still found ourselves descending the steep slopes into the first basin in wet, mushy snow. After the long climb to the ridge separating the two valleys, we traversed high into the next basin, sending off large sloughs of wet snow which careened into crevasses. Our last camp was made on the shoulder beyond, and in the late afternoon Helen and I skied along its narrow crest and kicked steps up the final slope of Klinaklini Peak. This is definitely a summit worth climbing, making a splendid finish to our traverse. We could see back to most of the Ha-iltzuk Icefield (including much of our route), north to the Monarch Icefield and across the broad Klinaklini valley to the entire Waddington Range. Black clouds on the horizon signaled the end of our good weather as we cranked a few telemarks back to camp.

Clouds and drizzle followed us down the ridge east to the main Klinaklini valley on our last day. Skis took us well into the lichen-draped forest and lower down we returned to the welcome greens of the forest floor. We picked up the logging roads below, and active logging above the main valley saved us a long walk into camp. After much-appreciated food, showers, and a night in the bunkhouse, we flew back to Campbell River, our Krazy Karpets rolled up for another year.

Mount Munday

Margaret Brown

Wading through the fresh August slush and falling into countless holes on the Waddington Glacier did not discourage us; it just wetted our appetite for a return engagement, this time on skis.

Ian and I recruited reinforcements from our ACC section, namely, Barb Brooks, Claire Ebendinger, Rob MacDonald, Rick Eppler, Grahame Maddocks, Doug Hurrell, Rudy Brugger and Doug Thorburn. For $150 return, we flew from Campbell River to a logging camp at the junction of Scar Creek and the Homathko River.

Swallowing our environmental scruples, gladly accepted the generous offer from the logging company of the use of their crummies to drive ourselves as far as we could up the logging roads in the Coola Creek Valley, proceeded up the steep and sometimes washedd-out grades we began to wonder if this generous offer was not perhaps a ploy on the part of the company to make a quick end of us given the condition of the brakes and transmission. We did manage to gain 1000m and left the vehicles just a short distance below the snow to await our return.

This was actually our third trip to the area, giving us some idea of a preferable route: slogging up from the Scar Creek side was too steep; climbing up on the ridge from the snout of Waddington Glacier was almost impossible and risky because of the junk crashing down from the lateral moraine; and climbing up the bare lower

Mount Agur from Mount Munday. Photo: Margaret Brown.

Pashleth Gacier from the shoulder of Somolenko. Photo: J. Baldwin.

icefall was also unappealing. The least difficult, but tiring, way was to gain the ridge just before Scar Mountain and go up and over the summit. We spent our first night camped on the summit looking down on the icefall and up the length of the glacier towards Mount Munday. The next camp was a few hundred feet below Martello Mountain. The skiing was pretty straightforward except for a tumble into a monstrous tree hole coming down off the summit of Scar Mountain.

Our route wound behind Martello Mountain on the upper Bert Glacier and then back onto the Waddington Glacier below Mount Agur. We chose this route because our summer trip suggested fewer crevasse problems in this area. As well, with the route following the ridge beside towering pillars of granite, we thought we would have a better chance of finding our way home if a series of blizzards buried our wands and we had to travel in a whiteout.

Our final camp was at Mystery Pass, the col between Mount Munday and Mount Agur. This site provided a great view of Mount Waddington and the peaks across the Franklin Glacier, as well as a front-and-centre placement for watching the storms which blasted in from the west. Because we were so close to the peaks, we were able to take advantage of the small windows of good weather between the frequent storms. Several of the party climbed Mount Agur during a late afternoon window. Everyone managed to climb Mount Munday. The weather deteriorated to a full scale blizzard making the final traverse to the highest part of Mount Munday even more of an epic.

The last day at the pass was perfect and enticed many of us up again to the summit plateau of Mount Munday. From there, at 3300m we had a glorious descent, telemarking the whole way (except to pick up our gear from the pass) down to 1500m. This area is a paradise for skiing if you have the patience for the weather.

The Scar Mountain route is quite reasonable, but as with lots of these adventures in the Coastal Range, it requires lots of energy.

Hidden Faces Up Beece Creek

Don Serl

I've been out across the Chilcotin highway must be 20 times now, and whenever it's been clear, I've gawked through the breaks in the forest way off southward from the flats above Hanceville to a group of high, snow-cirqued peaks. For years I had failed to pin them down, but I knew they were east of Taseko Lakes, and several recent trips into the Tchaikazan got me close enough to start putting a few clues together. Finally last year, when Dave and Gord and I headed into the Tchak', the weather and lighting were perfect, and a bunch of stuff was revealed. Including (and this was so obvious I don't know why it took so long for me to pick up on it) the presence of a couple of great-looking couloirs on the north side of Taseko Mountain, the highest peak in the area. Meanwhile, the map revealed a really big face on a peak to the east. The bait was set.

So off we went. This time there were four of us, with Graham Rowbotham squaring the group out. We drove as far as the legendary Beece Creek ford, and stopped for a look-see. The rancher below had asked pointedly, "Do you have a winch?" when I had asked about the ford, and wading the rushing, knee-deep torrent on slimy cobbles convinced me. We parked, packed, and walked.

A couple hours up the road we broke left into untracked country. A further two-and-a-half hours of undulating travel through superb alpine terrain brought us to a pleasant camping site on the drainage below the peak. The following morning consisted of an hour to gain the glacier, an hour to its back, and an hour to get suited up and belay over the schrund. We then climbed unroped up the left branch of the main couloir, roping up again for the final three pitches because of increasing rockfall and a short, loose, awkward rock finish. The clouds slowly raised as we lounged on top, revealing stunning views of the Falls River peaks to the west, the swampy depths of the Lord River trench to their left, and the Lillooet Icefields beyond. Camp was easily regained via the gentle westerly slopes.

After a leisurely late start on day three, we spent another wonderful half-day wandering further southeastward through exceedingly friendly uplands, country which made me want to keep right on going, all the way to the Fraser. Only the steep descent into the objective valley marred the pleasure. The three-kilometre wide north face of the peak at the head of the valley, despite its upper reaches being initially obscured by cloud, was eventually revealed as home to something like 10 separate ice lines, from a couple of deep, dark, rock-stained couloirs at the eastern end, through three or four independent sub-faces rising out of an icefall-guarded upper basin, to a further group of broader couloirs towards the western side of the massif. One of the central sub-faces in particular seemed especially attractive, catching both early and late light, (and it was this main uplift of 2,400 feet that had caught my eye on the map) but the icefall guarding the basin looked very difficult, and much debate ensued as to which line to go after. The final decision really didn't get made until we stood on the glacier below in the cloud-domed, blustery chill of the next morning. Then discretion took the better part of valour, and we opted for the line to the right rather than risk failure amongst the serried crevasses.

The route was straightforward — too easy really. Only the insecurity of the fresh surface snow contradicted single-tooling, or even flat-footing. Getting oft", on the other hand, was easily the crux of the entire trip. We wandered down to the

Beece Peak with the ascent couloir at far right. Photo: Don Serl.

northwestern extremity of the summit plateau, then set off down a goat track descending the ridge to the north. Almost immediately we had the rope on, as most of the terrain was outsloping, loose, exposed, and skiffed with snow. A couple hours of pretty tense moving together on long ropes was consumed before we reached the security of the col, muttering mixed imprecations and amazement at our guides.

We lazed about on the Saturday, debating whether to do another route on the face, or make a long dash for Mount Vic, or hightail it for the Tchaikazan, or what. Eventually we chose the Tchaik, the second half of our original plan, and regained the truck with the third day of fabulous trekking on the trip. The finishing touch was spewing a bow-wave over the hood of the Toyota while crossing and recrossing the ford after watching a mere Ford ease through. It's amazing what six days in the hills (not to mention those first couple beers in the belly) will do for the attitude. And the Tchaikazan? Well, that's another story, which will have to wait for another year.

Taseko Mountain, north couloir. 1400 feet, 50 to 60°; three hours.

F.A.: Gord Betenia, Graham Rowbotham. Don Serl, and Dave Sulina; August 24, 1994.

"Beece Peak", Discretion Couloir. 1200 feet, mostly 45 degrees, with a short finishing section of maybe 55°; two hours. The peak lies 3.5 km southeast of Taseko Mountain, and 8.5 km west of Mount Vic. It is contoured above 9800 feet; a pair of Vertechs put it at 9860. If this figure is accurate, it'll just join Taseko and Vic in the 3000-m club. Given its prominence at the head of the creek of the same name, "Beece Peak" seems appropriate. F.A.: party as above; August 26, 1994.

Sunny Knob

Don Serl

Jim Elzinga and I, together with Jim Brennan and Harry Kettman, flew to Sunny Knob (the set of benches across the Teidemann Glacier from Rainy Knob) on the morning of July 22, 1994, to be joined by Michael Down and Greg Foweraker at dusk. Apart from enjoying what must be the finest camping in the range (and the hottest weather I've ever encountered in the high mountains), we managed to climb a fair number of routes over the subsequent two weeks, details of which follow.

Jim E. and I attempted the south ridge on Asperity, leaving camp at one a.m. because of the heat, but abandoned our efforts at the first notch in the ridge about 400m up, which was also the point reached by Michael Down and Bruce Kay in a previous attempt some years ago. Meanwhile, Jim B. and Harry hot-footed it straight out of the back of camp, daytripping the 1500m ridge leading to Serra II that the ubiquitous Mr. Kay had climbed in 1992 with Paul Berntsen. Jim and Harry eventually reached the ultimate crest on the ridge, but bailed rather than continuing across to the summit of Serra II in a vain attempt to regain camp that night. The night was short and warm, and we saw them back into camp none the worse for wear in the morning.

That evening Jim and I walked up into the Stiletto Glacier cirque and camped just southwest of Dentiform, while Michael and Greg explored the approaches to the Serra cirque. Funky weather the following day limited our activity to trudging up to the Stiletto-Serra col; Harry and Jim joined us in the evening. On Tuesday, the four of us climbed Dentiform via a gully from the west, a scramble up the divide, and the five or six pitches of wonderful knurled granite on the south buttress. Unfortunately, I clobbered Mr. E with a rock high on the route, but the resulting broken bone in the back of his hand seemed not to bother him much till the trip was over. Still, that evening we went down, while Harry and Jim stayed up, climbing the impressive southwest buttress on the southern sub-peak of Stiletto and attempting the west face of Stiletto. Their successful route, "Sundog", involved about a thousand feet of scrambling (to about 5.7), six pitches of easy 5.10, a 5.11a pitch, and another few hundred feet of scrambling. They down-climbed and rapped the route.

While all this was happening, Jim E. and I set off one evening to try to daytrip Waddington, reckoning on following the

Mounts Combatant, Tiedemann, Asperity & the Serras. Photo: Don Serl.

The Stiletto cirque. Photo: Don Serl.

tracks of previous parties through the night. Limited visibility tricked us into following old tracks into mounds of avalanche debris in the upper Bravo cirque, and both spooked and unable to find the correct route at the 'srhrund below the Bravo Headwall, we turned back. This was just as well, as poor weather set in for the next three days.

In the meantime, Mike and Greg had climbed Carl's Couloir on the eastern flank of Asperity, and had settled into the comfy bivy on the rocks at its top. Séracs barred them from their primary objective, so they climbed the pillar rising from the bottom of the defile between Serra IV and Serra V to the crest of the south ridge of Serra IV. This entailed just over a dozen pitches, with much hard 5.10.

After a couple of enjoyable, sociable, weather days, Greg and Harry, ever the keeners, flew out of camp headed back up to the Stiletto cirque. They managed six pitches (5.10, lotsa wide cracks) on the west face of the pointed tower south of Dentiform, but eventually abandoned the route because of loose rock.

Our final day dawned perfectly, and Jim and I set off up-glacier for the Tiedemann Tower. A sketchy, belayed dihedral at the very base opened onto rubble-covered ramps. The rock improved as we gained height, and we scrambled up and left about 400m encountering a bit of stiff mid-5th to crack systems shooting up just left of a rotten, brown chimney. Two fine pitches up the cracks put us on a pedestal below the crux, at which point Greg and Jim B. caught us up. Big Jim did a fine job with the sloping jams splitting the wall to the left and, after nearly launching himself together with the loose finishing block, soon was ensconsed above. Another four or five moderate pitches passed quickly (although Jim B. and Greg were quicker yet, and soon were way above us!) and finally we were able to move together up ramps and grooves to the top. The raps were not without incident, but we reached the snow by dark and had a fine, headlamp-lit trudge back to camp, where Michael had an amazing mid-night snack waiting for us. The following morning Mike King whisked us back to civilization and a superb summer holiday came to an end.

Plans Go Awry In Paradise

Tanya Behrisch

My final week of summer work was a combination of tying up loose ends of projects I had begun and preparing for the two and a half weeks during which David and I would hike into the Kitlope River valley together. The B.C. government's announcement to designate the Kitlope as B.C.'s newest park just days before our departure to Bella Coola made my anticipation all the greater.

We planned to fly from Bella Coola to the head of Cascade Inlet with kayaks. The kayaks would remain hidden in the delta for the duration of our traverse which would take us to the headwaters of the Tezwa and Kitlope River valleys, while we completed a horseshoe traverse around the Nascall River valley. The traverse would take us 11 days with good weather. Upon returning to the delta, we planned to spend three to four days kayaking back to Bella Coola via the Dean Channel.

When I think back to the perfection of our previous year's traverse from Toba Inlet to Powell Lake (see CAJ, 77, 1994), with endless sunshine and lack of mishaps, this trip was the antithesis. I knew it when I busted the compass on the first day in the woods.

August 19. We reached Bella Coola after having spent the night in a lumber yard outside of Tatla Lake. It was raining hard and the wind was gusty. Instead of flying to Cascade Inlet today, our pilot advised us to wait until tomorrow morning before the winds got going. We wandered through Bella Coola, and I was amazed by the juxtaposition of Norwegian heritage and native culture. We slept in the back of our truck, next to a stream where two young boys and their dog came to fish at twilight.

The next morning we flew to the head of Cascade Inlet. Our pilot followed the inlets like a map to the end of a maze, where we landed in the verdant delta. We repacked everything that we didn't need for the traverse into the kayaks, dragging them under the wild rose bushes, and started our hike into the woods. Ten minutes into the hike, I busted our compass by twisting the declination screw too far. Gut feeling told me this was the beginning of a hilarious caper. We camped in the rain at only 300m, next to a lily pad pond. We spent the next three days in the tent, the rain heavy and constant. Spending all day in bed was like another honeymoon.

It continued to rain. After three days of much deliberation, we decided it was silly to wait for the weather to clear and that we should get on with another trip, a kayak trip. We packed up and headed down. In a way, I was relieved that the rain continued, so that we felt justified in our decision to turn back. And that was the end of our traverse.

Today is August 23, 1994. I am sipping on a pear cider and thinking about vine maple and devil's club and how they look under water. David is taking photographs somewhere. What is this place? How long has it been this way? This delta, so primal — purple flowers and reeds, soft to walk on with bare feet. Streams reaching into the sea where land is water and it's like nothing I've been in before. How could this be in the 20th century? I walked up to my waist in a tidal stream today, an easy alternative to crawling through the bush. Tomorrow we kayak down Cascade Inlet.

August 24. This morning we woke up to see a huge bear looking at us from across the stream. He must have been six feet tall. He wandered along the stream as we packed up, me being too frightened to appreciate his presence. I jumped into my

boat and was joined by David once the bear re-emerged. Safely in our kayaks, we watched him walk, solitary and ponderous, swaying from side to side as he moved slowly toward the woods. David said he looked lonely. I think maybe he was.

We saw lots of pictographs. I could almost predict where we would see them once I realized that the artists always selected large, dry overhangs under which to paint. We were never told about their existence, so it was remarkable when we first realized what we were looking at. The sun came out and we camped in the woods, a day's paddle from Dean Channel.

August 25. We rose early to avoid the thermal winds and paddled south into Eucott Bay where the map indicates natural hot springs. We saw more pictographs, reminding me of Inuit masks. One peculiar design, which we saw several times, consisted of seven red dots in a line, and an eighth separate dot, higher than the other seven. I thought it might have something to do with family generations. The water in Dean Channel was so inviting. I kept dipping my hand in just to touch it. We found the hot springs located at the far end of Eucott Bay. Seals lingered all around as we entered the shallow bay, their breath following us everywhere.

The hot springs well up from under a huge boulder. I climbed down into the cavern to find torn clothing and garbage. It felt evil, like corpses and murder under there. I climbed back out into the sunlight, where we lunched and swam. As I sunned myself on a rock, I heard a bustling in the bushes. Standing up, I saw a small bear quickly approaching us. We jumped into the boats and followed the little fellow as he wandered along the shoreline, munching on berries and rose hips. He was so sweet, plopping himself down to pop rosehips into his mouth. He eventually went into the woods and we headed towards the opposite shore.

I sipped on cider again, while our clothes hung to dry on bushes. We had set up camp between two salmon spawning streams. While David and I discussed what to have for dinner, a thrashing sound came from one of the streams. A salmon was caught in the reeds. Dave grabbed it with his hands and we bonked it with an empty cider bottle. And there was dinner! I love cleaning fish and was surprised to find eggs inside — just like huckleberries. I cut the fish into quarters and fried everything up in margarine, garlic salt and lemon pepper. The first bite was the best tasting meat I had ever had. We ate the whole thing with our fingers, fish juice and flavourful oil running everywhere. Eggs fruity and delicious. We cleaned up, constantly checking for bears, both of us a bit paranoid, but full and happy. Where were the bears anyway? This seemed like an ideal spot for some serious salmon snacking. We decided after dinner to climb the 1370m peak above us over the next three to four days.

Damp hiking back to Eucott Bay. Photo: David Williams.

August 26. We packed up and headed to the end of Eucott Bay on foot. The woods were easy for the first 300m, monster cedars with the odd Douglas fir cluster. A stunning view of the bay lay below. I thought of the seals, who had it to themselves once again. The rest of the day was treacherous. We climbed only 820m, yet it took us the entire day to reach our camp spot. Dave kept saying, "Only half an hour before we're out of the bush." I stopped believing him after four hours.

The bush is so thick, it literally rips your arms and legs. I stopped feeling and caring, forcing myself up through roots and branches. I look like I've been in a fight. I ate blueberries to keep me going, which Dave said made for inefficient hiking. I explained that it was far more efficient than taking off my pack to get a drink every time I was thirsty, which was about every 30 seconds. We camped next to a glacial pond.

I chopped off all of David's hair with his Swiss Army knife. He hopes a small animal will use it to make a nest. I like to think of those cuttings still up there, weathered, matted, shed like any other fur.

Today is August 27, my birthday. As I am always the first to wake on this day, I awoke at 5:30 a.m. to see a peach sun rise. Then I went back to sleep. I woke again to my sweetie's smile and beautiful card. We climbed up the south ridge to 1250m to have lunch and were joined by 4000 bugs who lunched on us. We left our packs behind and descended 275m to hike along the southeast ridge to a 1120m peaklet. It was so hot that I lost my energy within an hour, struggling to follow David. It was a scramble to the peak, which was yet unclimbed as far as we knew. We saw weather off to the southwest, and great view of Dean Channel and King Island Mountains. I went to bed while the sun was still up, dehydrated and tired. Shortly afterwards, David announced the arrival of a mamma bear and two cubs, who were metres away from where I lay. I crawled out to see them barreling down the hill we had climbed earlier. It was cute but I was definitely tired of bears.

August 28. Weather has moved in again. We quickly popped up a 1370m peak, bathed in bug juice and headed back down to the bay. We had a fairly easy downclimb, but felt cumbersome compared to the flying bears who covered the same ground last night in mere minutes. It was overcast and hot when we reached Eucott Bay. We sat on our kayaks and ate tinned peaches and nectar. Gorgeous. After camp was set up, a boat entered the bay and headed towards the hot springs. A young bear emerged to our left, on the other side of the spawning stream. I was told to "stay calm," but was already nervous. The bear lumbered around in the tall grass and ate a dead salmon. Then he looked at us for what seemed like forever. My stomach was feeling strange. I washed our dishes and packed everything away in the kayaks that was remotely connected to food, except the pot and its lid, which I kept out to bang together. The bear approached us slowly. This is fucking freak-out time.

I think, "John Clarke must have seen a million bears and he's still alive." David pours fuel on a piece of wood and lights it; the flames billow. I bang the pot and lid together with mounting hysteria. The bear hardly notices. He crosses the stream and is now ten feet away. He is slowly walking towards our spot. David tells me to light the bear on fire if he attacks or to hack at him with my ice axe. Pondering the unlikelihood of either reaction, we stand there frozen, while the bear continues to wander around

our camp.

It becomes dark and our visitor vanishes into the woods. I go to bed with a lighter in one hand and a fuel bottle in the other. My dreams are fearful. I dream I am inside a blue tomb with murder in every chamber except one, where a friend dwells. I run down a long arcade. People walk, and vines curl around wrought iron — a strange contrast to bears in spawning streams. Maybe the hot springs were still having an effect on me.

August 29. Awake at 5:30 a.m. to a muggy morning. The bay is thick with mist and light rain. Remembering the night before, I want to leave pronto. Dave calmly informs me that the bear is right beside the tent, and that perhaps we should get moving. I need no convincing. We are glad to leave the bear-infested estuary. We will never camp between two salmon spawning streams again. Crazy.

We kayaked across Dean Channel for breakfast, then rounded Edward Point, where the stunted trees looked like a miniature landscape from the water. We saw otters before we crossed from Labouchere Point to Kwaspala Point and camped on a tiny island between Croyden and Jacobsen Bays. No bears here. Sunny and windy. I washed all my clothes which dried quickly in the wind. It felt good to have clean stuff again. Dave set up camp and got dinner going, and suggested I should take care of business before playing. I told him he should take advantage of the sun while we had it. A small disagreement. Fishing boats off in the distance. Kayaked 27 km today!

August 30. Felt safe waking up on the island. We took our time paddling along the coast from Croyden Bay to Menzies Point because we knew that when we crossed the mouth of the South Bentick Arm, we would leave the wilderness behind. I could see small logging patches off in the distance. I savoured the paddle. Made the crossing to Tallheo Point where we lunched on the rocks. We waited a bit too long to get back in our boats and once we were out on the water, the wind grew fierce, forming metre-high waves topped with white caps. I did not feel secure enough to go around Flagpole Point, so we headed back towards a semi-protected beach. The chop was unpredictable and my arms were pumping so hard that Dave couldn't keep up with me. I get strong when I'm scared.

We reached the beach safely and fell asleep together in a heap of driftwood. Awoke to the chirping of a squirrel. Neither of us were hungry for dinner, so we gathered wood for a fire and set up camp. Nice to see rough water from safety. Distant drones of boat engines across the channel told us we were essentially back to civilization. We sat by the fire, reading and catching up on our diaries. August 31. Overcast. The closer we get to Bella Coola, the more signs of destruction and litter we see, things we wouldn't have noticed two weeks earlier. It is such a relief to enter the harbour, packed with native fishing boats and smelling of creosote.

There is a funeral in town, and most of the local native population is in attendance. We get caught in a funeral procession on our way out of town and pick up a hitchhiker once we reach Hagensborg. He gives us plums and tells us about the rock carvings that we must see before leaving Bella Coola. They are amazing and mysterious. They look more Polynesian than North American. He tells us about the migratory tribe that carved them.

September 1. Big, hearty breakfast at Graham's Inn, a belated birthday treat from David. Enjoyed the drive through Chilcotin Country, reading Paul St. Pierre along the way. The trip has been pretty amazing. Nothing like we planned, but great nevertheless. We grow each time we discover a new place together. I think of the feelings and things I have experienced on this trip. I have a healthy fear of bears and a renewed respect for mother nature. I am in awe of the art work we caught glimpses of in the channels. I have seen deltas like nothing I have ever imagined, overflowing with life and beauty and strangeness. Places where no humans belong.

Mount Ross New Route

The right skyline arête on Mount Ross is a striking feature when viewed from Pemberton Meadows, so when visiting British climber Simon Greening and I climbed it on a warm, late August day, we were pleased to be the first ones to do this route. Although far from a classic (it contained some loose and mossy rock), we enjoyed climbing the route that looks straight down at our residence and neighbouring farms of the Pemberton valley. It is not often that one can ride one's bicycle over to the approach of a new route on a 2135m peak! The arête took seven pitches, with one hard pitch and one pitch requiring a point of aid due to the slippery and mossy nature of the only available crack. Perhaps the most difficult part is the arduous gully starting at the valley floor and rising 1525+ m to the base of the climb. This feature alone could keep most other parties from another ascent.

Mount Ross (2135m) north arête, Coast Range, Pemberton, British Columbia F.A.: Jim Miller and Simon Greening

Jim Miller

Jump Across Creek

John Clarke

In late June we drove out onto the Chilcotin Plateau, bound for Bella Coola. The road drops way down soon after leaving Williams Lake, crosses the Fraser River, and then climbs back up the other side. At the top of this hill you feel freedom and pure space as the road emerges onto the broad, high plateau. It was a sunny Chilcotin morning as Bill Noble, his wife Saskia, Steve Sheffield and I drove west to traverse a small range of rugged peaks northwest of Bella Coola.

Photographing the petroglyphs was our first priority after the Beaver airplane dropped us off at the mouth of Jump Across Creek in Dean Channel. We had grand views of the channel as we climbed up the easy, forested ridge. Bill was lugging a five-kilogram video camera because he wanted to get some Coast Range footage, and Steve was packing the massive tripod

Bill Noble and Scott Wittemore on peaks west of Jump Across Creek. Photo: John Clarke.

to keep the camera steady.

We reached the general location of our first airdrop (which included tents) at 10 p.m. but could not find it anywhere. The whole area was riddled with hummocks and hollows which in the semi-dark and drizzle all looked alike. Desperation! Huddled together to ward off the cold we spent a long miserable night. At 4:30 a.m. it was light enough to do a search. In less than half an hour we had food, shelter and sleep. We ate, dozed and fiddled away the day in blissful ignorance of the fact that this trip was over! The descending cloud ceiling was the beginning of the end. I remember thinking "this is giving the place a nice coasty look for the video footage."

Well, it got coasty all right — 10 days of storm with each day worse than the last! Fine droplets of rain driving against the fly sheets for the first five days made us pine for any brief break in the weather to dash off to the next food cache. A patch of blue at 11:18 one morning made the troops get motivated! The blue just wasn't enough for the dash to the airdrop, but it allowed for a walk to a viewpoint above Dean Channel. The inlet was spread like a map at our feet, mottled with cloud shadows and stained with the milky glacial waters of Jump Across Creek. Supper was a major lentil event with everyone fully distended (and venting).

Storm routine: lie around, talk to tent partner, doze, read, lunch, go for a little walk, back to the bag, go for a pee, back to the bag. The next day the trip to the next airdrop was a must — we had only one more dinner. Atrophy and quiet fog had completely set in. Steve and I were missing women and sounded pretty pathetic talking about it. Bored and comfortable!

In filtered, flat light we left our camp on the heather, plodding off into the clouds in search of food. The next cache was on a col at the head of a long, wet glacier. We slogged up to the socked-in névé, and after doing a few figure eights in the fog, we finally lucked into the airdrop.

Five more long, miserable days of storm were tempered by visits from the neighbours who came over for meals and hot drinks. It was very cozy with the four of us crammed into one tent, while outside the fog was so thick we could not see the rocks on the nearby col. A lull one afternoon sent us all out onto the snow running around like fools shouting our heads off in celebration. Twenty minutes later, back in the bags, we decided we were going to dissolve into boneless creatures who wouldn't care if it ever cleared. Steve lurched out of sleep one afternoon and said, "John, there's something on my leg. Oh, it's okay, it's my other leg," and dropped off again.

The end of the food supply was in sight and we had to discuss options. We had none. We weren't expected there, but with luck we could hail a boat or a plane from the mouth of Jump Across Creek. Saskia was pregnant and had a very good appetite. Our last supper was split in two so we'd have something to eat on the walk back to the beach. That night, boiled, dried black beans and macaroni produced a dark, runny preparation. Hunger must be the best sauce, as everyone kept it down.

Finally, after 10 days of storm we compassed down the glacier, hiked over ridges, and dropped 1500 metres down to the mouth of Jump Across Creek. Once at the beach we hailed a prawn boat by piling green boughs on a fire. A skiff was lowered and Joe Snyder came ashore and told us he might be able to get word to Wilderness Airlines in a day or two. Then he rowed back to the boat and returned with prawns, a loaf of bread, four Cokes, and 12 huge, frozen bran muffins. The first four muffins were eaten frozen and then we had a prawn roast on the fire.

All next day we scanned the horizon for boats and planes and we discovered how deserted these inlets can be. Joe came back and dropped off more prawns, muffins and some date squares that his mom had made. He had told the fish guides in the Dean River our situation and said they would be trying to get a call out to Wilderness Air. Next morning, Wayne Sissons came in the Beaver. It was a semi-desperate effort, wading with packs over our heads and keeping the airplane away from the rocks in wind and waves.

After a trip to the Sawback Range in Stikine Country, Bill Noble and I drove back to Bella Coola to have another go at the Jump Across Creek traverse. We were joined by Scott Whittemore of Bella Coola, and this time he would carry the massive tripod. Early in the traverse the weather was so fine that Bill was filming up on the peaks until almost sunset. Again we started at the mouth of Jump Across Creek, traversed the divide west of the creek through to the flat névé south of Mount Saunders. The route then followed ridges south to the old Tallheo cannery buildings on North Bentinck Arm, four kilometres west of the mouth of the Bella Coola River. We traveled the central glacial section on the east side of the divide, weaving our way through gaps and crevasses.

We made side trips to the many little peaks above the route. One of our camps was on the 1615-m bench one kilometre southeast of the highest peak of the range (2250m). The tent site was enclosed by broken glaciers and wild terrain, giving the place a very primitive atmosphere. The highest peak was climbed on steep snow and rock up the southeast side. The non-glacial ridges at the beginning and the end of this traverse have the most wonderful ridge-walking, with views of deep valleys, inlets, lakes, and goats sunning themselves on the rocks. The whole route is scenic and may become a Bella Coola classic someday.

The Ski Traverse

John Clarke

It was a perfect May afternoon on the flat, green delta at the mouth of the Mussel River in the complex network of fiords between Bella Coola and Kitimat on the B.C. Coast. I had just been dropped there after placing a line of airdrops for a ski traverse of the snowy ridges between here and Gardner Canal. Randy, Bryan, Jessica and Dave were staying at the native reserve in Kitimat and would arrive in John Kelson's boat tomorrow, "Mussel Inlet? That's where we send all our problem bears from around here," Jessica was told in Kitimat. Well, I only saw tracks in the sand, but Jessica was anxious to get going the next morning to see how I was doing. Meanwhile, I wandered all around the delta photographing the explosion of greenery that draped every surface of this quiet fiord. I spent the following morning getting to know the place, watching birds and keeping clear of the geese who seemed to like their privacy. A 600-m glacier — polished wall goes up from the river mouth with tiny hanging gardens on every ledge. A beautiful, peaceful place. In the afternoon, a big commotion among the geese signalled the arrival of the boat. I went down to the beach in time to see my partners, in bright, wet rainslickers unloading the packs onto the sand — the trip we'd dreamt about all winter had begun.

In the bright morning sunshine we bushwhacked up the Mussel River, a bit disappointed that even in this remote place, all the huge spruce had been logged out years ago. We did, however, see a cedar tree that

had had a strip of bark neatly removed by natives about 100 years ago. At only 250m, we saw the first alpine bog and tarn. It was a hot summer day and Randy, bent over in the bush, looked down through the foliage at his feet and said, "Why am I wearing ski boots?" His question was answered when our snow camp at 1280m on the open ridge above was pounded by a five-day storm. Complete bed rest — but we weren't tired. We were all cocooned in our bags while Scottish conditions raged outside.

On day three, Jessica passed the pot lid filled with freshly made fudge over to our tent with instructions to "eat it all now as I need the lid back soon." Randy and I did our best. On May 14, we skied north under a watery sky and camped on the edge of a flat névé east of the Mussel River valley. Next day we continued in fog, skiing just west of the 1675-m dome at the extreme source of the Kowesas River. Our sleeping bags needed sunshine. We needed sunshine. The next cache of food was at Marmor Peak, a long way off, with some rugged ground in between and we needed to see to get there. We continued groping through fog, covering as little as four kilometres in a day and navigating with glimpses of the route through brief holes in the stubborn clouds. On the night that it finally cleared, our camp was on top of the 1650-m "peak" at the head of the East Khutze River.

Next morning we used the much-needed visibility to negotiate the most abrupt gap of the whole traverse, and the gentle glaciers and ridges beyond got us to the food cache east of Mount Marmor. This was a fantastically situated campsite and it was so close to Mount Marmor that we waited for evening light to go up the peak. From the top we saw one of the most marvellous views we'd ever seen, and out west the sun glinted on the open Pacific.

On May 22 we had a long, lazy morning breaking camp, skied out onto the névé of the glacier at the head of Cole Creek, and dumped our packs on the snow. We were going to make one of the few side trips from the main route and our objective was the prominent 1850-m peak five kilometres south of the east end of Europa Lake. Dave stayed with the packs and Brian, Jessica, Randy and I skied up toward the cloudy peak in flat light.

The route had an odd bit of geography, because the south ridge ended and joined the east snowface. The cornice that hung from the ridge maintained itself out onto the snowface, creating the odd arrangement (for a short distance) of a long snow slope with a cornice in the middle of it.

When we arrived at the point where the ridge joined the snowface, we were confronted with a steep 15-m slope exposed to the cornice below. We kicked steps up this, carrying the skis, then continued to the summit on easier slopes above. Randy and I were on the summit for a while, hoping for any clearing that would reveal the grand view there must be from this remote peak. We built a cairn, and started down just as Brian and Jessica were arriving. They said they would not be staying long since it was cold and windy and there was still no view. Randy was in a great mood, looking forward to the 670-m run back to the packs. This was going to be a real treat as most of the traverse so far had been the standard "mule trip."

Randy was skiing ahead and I arrived at the top of the steep bit just in time to see him sliding down and out of my view on the convex slope. I was immediately alarmed as the cornice was right below him. I kicked steps down to the lip of the cornice and saw that not only had he gone over, but that the slope below had slid and the avalanche had gone some distance and over a 300-m cliff. My mind was desperately searching for any other possibility besides what had obviously happened. Scanning the avalanche rubble, I saw a ski pole near the edge of a cliff. My raging mind was trying to find some way that this was not happening.

In a few minutes Brian and Jessica arrived from the peak and after getting no response from a Pieps search, we had to accept that Randy had definitely gone over the cliff. We went back to Dave, told him what had happened and activated the E.L.T. Then we skied down the glacier and into a tributary that would take us to the base of the cliff. On rounding the corner into this valley we were appalled at the size and steepness of the cliff. Searching around at the base we found his smashed Pieps and camera, but were puzzled as to why we could not find Randy, as the wall was so steep and the moat so small.

At 11 p.m. a Buffalo airplane from Comox search and rescue flew past in response to the E.L.T. signal and we spoke to the crew on our hand-held radio. We told them what had happened and asked them to send in the Labrador helicopter in the morning. All night, a million things raced through our heads, the biggest of which was Randy's family. I was driven mad by how small was the original surface slide that had started the whole thing. After dark I went outside and sat on a rock near the tent. There was no beauty to the mountains that night.

In the morning the Labrador arrived, hovered next to the face and confirmed our worst fears. A few days later Tim Auger and Mark Ledwidge came out to the coast from Banff and recovered Randy's body from the cliff using a longline from a helicopter.

Vancouver Island Ice Climbing

Eleven interesting ice climbs were done on the east side of Mount Washington ski area by Jan Neuspiel, Allan Massin and Rob Wood.

Access by Sunrise Lift, and drop down the back side, following the bottom of the cliff bands to the right. The first climbs, reached in 15 minutes from the ski area, are 1 and 2 pitch, WI2 and 3, with only 10-minute walks between climbs. The next series of climbs are also 1 and 2 pitch, but are WI4 and 5 with some 5.7 rock. All rappels are from trees. Fine views are afforded of the Strait of Georgia.

Also in Strathcona Provincial Park on Highway 28 at the Elk River trailhead are several 12m WI3 and 4 climbs.

Another area where ice often forms is Boston Lake, located 2.5 km west of Forbidden Plateau Ski Area. Climbs range from 1 to 2 pitch, WI3 and 4.

Allain Massin

Purple People Eaters

Drew Brayshaw

Looking through Fairley's guide in the dead of winter, February, rain pouring in a steady grey stream from the dirty clouds above. I keep returning to that one page in the Coquihalla section, Ricker's words echoing through my head: "...excellent rock... lots of new route potential... five to eight pitches... east-northeast face is one and a half kilometers long... little bush... one hour up from the road..." I can close the book, close my eyes, but the words and the vision of a grey wall rising in the distant sky are still there.

Summer. In the rain-soaked, bush-choked, bug-infested jungle of the north Island, or while smashing up chunks of till to an industrial soundtrack in an underground lab in Victoria — far from the mountains of my hope — the image

and the words are still there, counterpoint to the wall of noise and mindless labour. On sunny evenings, crimping uselessly on some slick sloper at Fleming, or going up and coming down at Tolmie, with Baker and the Olympics floating out of a sea of haze, the vision gives me something to reach for beyond the next hold, the words a goal beyond a simple pump before dinner. In the evening, when it costs less, I call the mainland. My friends are still off having fun: at Skaha, in the Rockies, paddling in Bowron, or clipping bolts somewhere in America. I groan and disconnect the phone, but falling into sleep the domes are bulging up into my dreams.

Fall. Leaves on campus have begun to drop, but golden days and starry evenings say that a weekend in the mountains can still be had in the heat of an Indian summer before the snow falls. Everyone is back, and when I show them the words, a few are more than willing to pass up another weekend slotting chocks and fingerlocking at Squamish for a trip to the high country. Of course, the usual stuff happens: Andy has to jam when his wife and children need him and the car at home. Ann-Marie manages to snag her mom's machine and she and I, along with rope-gun Dave, head off one Friday afternoon. In the Valley, we stop at Save-On for some supplies and someone has a brain wave. Another incoherent phone rant later and our meeting with John is arranged — not that he needed much persuading; he's glad for any escape from hurling hay bales in Kamloops. That night, we camp before the tollbooths at the start of the Needle Trail. High spirits — no one can sleep, especially with the trucks grinding by barely a hundred meters away. There's a running battle of evilness: beard-pulls, nipple-tweaks, crushed fingers and full-on steamrollers. Dave wins, of course; evil comes more easily to him.

Rising early next morning, we're through the tollbooths and to the Coldwater turnoff where we loiter about warming up in the sun. The Blue Beast appears snorting diesel fumes, and we do a frantic dance to slow it down. Luckily, John figures out that the capering purple figures are the people he's supposed to meet — a tender reunion, then off up the road. Useless hills are passed by as the roads become rougher. Around a bend, we see big walls awaiting us. Stop! Stop! Where's my camera? Back in the cars, we follow the roads as far as they go — past some old folks in a pick-up camper doing the wilderness camping thing. Good — maybe they'll keep bandits from pillaging our cars while we're off pillaging the cliffs. Eventually the road ends. We scope the cliff, eyeing lines. Rack up. Gentle disrespect for my decision to take a pack. "Dude, you're not going to climb with that thing, are you? I guess you'll have to, because I'm not carrying it." Alpine style is being replaced by cragging style: "If you plan for a bivy, you'll end up bivying. There's no way we'll be out after dark, man. This thing's a cakewalk!"

Away from the cars. An hour of rambling through the ubiquitous dew-soaked blueberry bushes. Ropes become caught on snags. Shoes fill with needles and leaves. Into a boulder field; pause for a break. John displays his secret weapons: a "brick" of Black Cats. Explosions echo back from far cols and steep walls. Gummy bears are eaten.

Up again. Base of the rock. We realize that the "obvious" lines we have seen from the car are all choss — it's the bushes that make them visible. We wander left over the slabs, onto a perfect sidewalk ledge. Above looms an overhanging black dihedral/roof. My search for an easy crack line further on is quashed. "We've got to go up here; it looks hard, and people only repeat hard routes. The easy stuff is insignificant." The decision is made to take the dihedral, and worry about what comes after when we hit the top.

Dave and Ann-Marie head off, straight up the slabs to the mid point of the dihedral. Dave runs it out (he has to) — 40m of continuous 5.8 slab. He reaches the dihedral, whams in pro, and sets a belay. AMC follows as John leads off on the indirect direct start, under-clinging and slabclimbing from the lowest end of the dihedral. He gets to the others as they begin pitch two. Following, I discover that while our route has pro, it also has seepage. A few wet spots make the 5.7 traversing interesting. John cruises off onto the second pitch — more of the same over increasing exposure as the slabs drop away below. He vanishes at the far lip of the dihedral. A faint cry of "Off belay!" Again, I follow, smearing slabs and underclinging the dihedral, with my helmet bumping along on the roof. More 5.7, traversing down around wet spots and back up to the crack. Around the corner and a contorted move as I pass Ann-Marie belaying in a vertical corner from a hanging stance. John has used our 10-m extra rope length to reach a comfy ledge at the top of the corner. Actually, the whole corner so far has been the underside of a semi-detached exfoliation roof. From Dave's grunts and comments above, the next pitch seems cruxy. I shoot a few photos and have a gummy bear while AMC heads up. John offers me the lead; I decline it. So he takes off again, getting in a few pieces: up a slabby wall, into a corner, out of it again, traversing faint holds to the right edge of a big ledge. A comment drifts back down to me: "5.8, with a 5.10 fear factor!" The exposure is big now, the climbing more sustained, and the runouts appear more meaningful. Following, the last move to the ledge almost blows me off as the pack shifts. I've just popped the last pro, a .5 Tri-Cam, and the prospect of a huge cheese grater pendulum isn't too appealing. Luckily a jug appears. Back along the ledge to John. "Dave put in a pin here, but he took it out again," he tells me. Right on! You can tell you're doing alpine stuff when you can wham in pins for fun.

John offers me the lead again; I decline again. The last pitch has left me feeling a bit shaky. Besides, it's too much work to lead with a pack of this size on. So again it's John who takes off first from the belay, running it out up easy slab to a short, steep step, and above weaving into a nice crescent-shaped corner. Pretty casual 5.7 and just as well, because there are only two or three placements on the full ropelength pitch. Now it's time for the fifth pitch. Dave and AMC arc kicking back at the next belay, because it's the end of the hard climbing. John cruises up to meet them, navigating through a bunch of roof steps that are really only vertical, and dodging the big block that Dave found was wobbly. Cruising up last, staying in the edge of sunlight (it's afternoon by now), I am exhorted by my companions to give this sucker a nice big push. John takes me tight. I brace and heave with my feet, and the refrigerator-sized stone goes sailing out into space to many choruses of "Rock!" Rumbling and bounding head over heels, it cascades down I the slabs, blowing apart into smaller and smaller chunks with each impact until by the time it hits the sidewalk, down at the base, it's so much gravel. And that was why we named the last pitch the Block Party, because trundling is always a social sport.

Above us, the slabs kick back. We cruise them. They're cake. They're casual. We still have the ropes on, but this is more of a gesture to propriety than for any real need. Ahead looms an island of trees. Dave is all for going right and hitting some steeper stuff, but it's getting on in the day, so we

veer left, along a big pink feldspar dike, and exit stage left. Off with harnesses, rack up, switch the shoes for Hi-Tecs, have some gummy bears. Someone hauls out the mandatory Powerbar. Drink the last of the water.

You can tell that some people have been raised at the crag, and others in the hills: AMC and Dave are ready to head down; after all, we've done the climb, right? But for John and I the summit is calling. So up we go. More blueberries, more krummholz to tangle up the rope on. Out on a knob and lo! the summit is a long, long way away yet. Two people decide that this is enough. They crash and stare down the northeast face while John and I drop the packs and race for the summit. A kilometre of ridge-running with better and better views. Drop a new stone on the cairn. Shoot a photo of the sun dropping behind Steinbok. Somewhere on that edge our friends Guy and Mike are pushing it, looking for freedom. Turn around and race back down, into the gathering gloom. Reunited, all four of us cruise down the southeast ridge, like going up but in reverse; finding and losing game trails, dodging overgrown boulders, splashing into hidden streams. Eventually we push our way into a clearcut, receiving a fine coating of fire-weed spores as we struggle over stumps and seedlings to the road.

Dinner that night is a hasty affair by headlamp — Kraft Dinner mixed with Ichiban, my specialty. As the sun sets, some hunters visit us; they have mistaken the explosions of John's pyrotechnic arsenal for the more familiar (to them) noise of rifle shots. We swap BS about the mountains and beta on how to dodge the highway tollbooths. Later, the stars come out. Bedtime.

The next day, it's freezing in the valley, but the big face on Alpaca is baking above us in the morning sun. Photo op. Our route is clearly marked by the white streak left by the tumbling block. Ann-Marie has already named it for us: "Purple People Eater" because we all have purple clothing this weekend. A quick breakfast and we head back up to the cliff. We want something big this time. Cruising along the base, it's slow going for me; my cardio seems so weak after a summer of drive-by geology. We hike all the way up to the col with Vicuna, grab some lunch, and then try to start a route towards a beautiful handcrack somewhere up that face. But even before we intersect the slanting ledge line of the Ricker Route, reality sets in and we work out that we'll be back at the car past midnight at this speed. Oh well, the face will still be there next year. Rap off, back down the talus and snow-fields, through the forest and the blueberries, into the car and the trip is over.

Driving home through the darkening valley, following the north-side route in a vain attempt to dodge traffic, I can't stop talking. We've done it!— after all the dreams, the delays, the false starts; those grey days when summer seems like a forgotten dream; those days at the crag when you wonder if you'll ever climb well enough to go out and just pick a line, any line, in the mountains. Despite all of this, we have moved from consumption to production — we've put up a new technical climb in the mountains. And so, even though the sun has set, in my head the face is still shining against the sky in the hot light of dawn, and always will. It's why I climb.

Purple People Eater. A new route on the east face of Alpaca Peak in the Coquihalla area. Begins at the base of a prominent, right-leaning dihedral at the left center of the face. Five pitches of roped climbing to 5.8, with a few long runouts, followed by 200m of easier scrambling on slabs.

F.A.: David Vocadlo, Ann-Marie Conway, John Simms and Drew Brayshaw, September 1994.

Tubes On Skis

Jim Firstbrook

A long, long time ago, about last May, four tubes went on a ski trip in the Mount Stuffington area. Being tubes, the initial focus of the trip was on placing a monster food cache on Glacier Pond. This cache was stocked not only with delectable food treats but special single-malt fluids. The trip began at Trifrost pass — being lazy tubes these tubes used WhiteSaddle Air to begin their trip — this way they got to feast on Jenn King's cookies. Once they started skiing, of course, the tubes wanted to get to their cache as quickly as possible so that they could eat all the treats and drink the special single-malt fluids.

I will digress for a moment to explain the tubish way. It involves primarily food and single-malt fluid obsession, but also includes a fixation on linking turns in unbroken powder snow, devotion to reaching the top of easy peaks and an inability to remember the proper names of geographic locations. This name problem often manifests itself as kind of dyslexia with the original name soon mangled beyond recognition. The name 'tube' for this species comes from a topological assessment of their physiology and their obsession with tubal intake and exhaust. Tubes frequently chant their motto: "We are but tubes."

These tubes toiled up the Rapier Glacier under heavy loads of food and fluids and up and over Furry Gap. Whilst in the area they climbed Mount Chris Spennier. But then anxiety about their food cache and special single malt fluids got the best of them and they headed straight to the food cache. It is a frightening scene to watch tubes descend on a food cache after days of special fluid deprivation. Small children and pets are best kept away lest they be consumed in the orgy of feasting.

Reluctant to leave their cache unattended the tubes spent a lot of time in the vicinity of Glacier Atoll climbing Mount Tuesday, Mount Initiality and Blackroot. The area is a vast tubal playground. Finally, they grew restive since all the special fluids had been consumed and they headed down the Franklin River planning to ascend the Daunted Glacier into the Black Cape Range.

Unfortunately the weather spheres (for surely if we are tubes the gods must be spheres) were not happy with the tubes and endless days of drizzle ensued. Finally the tubes could stand the drizzle and single malt deprivation no longer, and escaped down Scared Creek where they were picked up by WhiteSaddle Air and returned to Jenn King's cookies.

The tubes were J. Tubebrook, C. Metztube, D. Tubany, G. Tube.

Redlining The Fun Meter

On February 5, 1994 Graham Rowbotham and Bob Koen climbed a beautiful new ice climb in the Sumallo River valley east of Hope, B.C. The route ascends a wide sheet of WI 4 ice in a magnificent alpine setting and can be climbed in a long day from Vancouver.

The route lies near the bottom of the north face of Silvertip Mt. Approach up logging roads from Sunshine Village off Highway 3. Normally these roads are plowed for several kilometres to the Silvertip ski area. Continue up the Sumallo valley when the road begins to switchback up the hillside to the left. Head for the incredibly obvious north face of Silvertip and climb up a large avalanche cone at its base. The climb drops

down a cliff to the right of the top of the cone. A short bit of WI2 ice gets you to the base. 2-3 hours from the car.

We climbed the route in 2 pitches on the right. A line more to the left would likely be WI5. A single rappel on double ropes got us back to the ground.

Warning: This route is very worthwhile, but only do it in the most stable conditions. When we did it there hadn't been any new snow in weeks and the avalanche conditions were truly stable. But a slight breeze came up in the afternoon and pretty soon there were some very impressive spindrift flows pouring out of the bowl above and right down the climb. I wouldn't want to be on the climb when there was any significant amount of new snow above.

Redlining The Fun Meter. Coast Mountains, Sumallo River Valley. WI4, 50 metres. F.A.: Graham Rowbotham and Bob Koen, February 1995

Bob Koen

The B.C. Interior

Stegosaur Ridge

Steven M. Horvath

It was summer of 1990 and I was sick as a dog with a virulent stomach flu. Yep, it was another of our KMC climbing camps and the aggravation of seeing my friends leave for their daily forays was almost too much, but I knew (or rather Paul knew) that I was in no shape for anything more strenuous than occasional windsprints to our "outhouse with a view." Apropos view; it was — in the true meaning of that word — awesome. To my right was the huge north face of Mount Odin, all black, water-streaked granite, and to my left the awesome (here we go again) panorama of the Stegosaur Ridge. A quick check with our resident climbing guide expert, Earle Whipple, confirmed that it had indeed had only one ascent — a most respectably fast traverse by our friend Don Vockeroth in 1971. I spent hours squinting at it through my heavy binocs — about the only exercise I could manage — planning ascents and camps and assorted adventures.

So, a few years later, there we were, Hamish and I — Paul had to back out at the last moment due to a bad ankle and work commitments — flying up the Odin Creek valley. The flight in was fun as always, and looking for a suitable campsite even more so — our first encounter with the local variety of PBS. Enormous smooth slabs flowed down for thousands of feet between the many ridges of the Steg Ridge and Mount Thor. Our pilot, good lad, finally touched down, precariously balanced on two flattish boulders with an alarming drop beneath the doors. The air smelled faintly of wood smoke, the horseflies materialized instantly, and we started looking for that elusive flat spot for our home-away-from-home for the next week. Some three hours, several carries, and a bit of civil engineering later, we were finally able to relax in our lawn chairs with a Kokanee — the luxuries one can afford when one flies in only half-loaded (but still pays the full price).

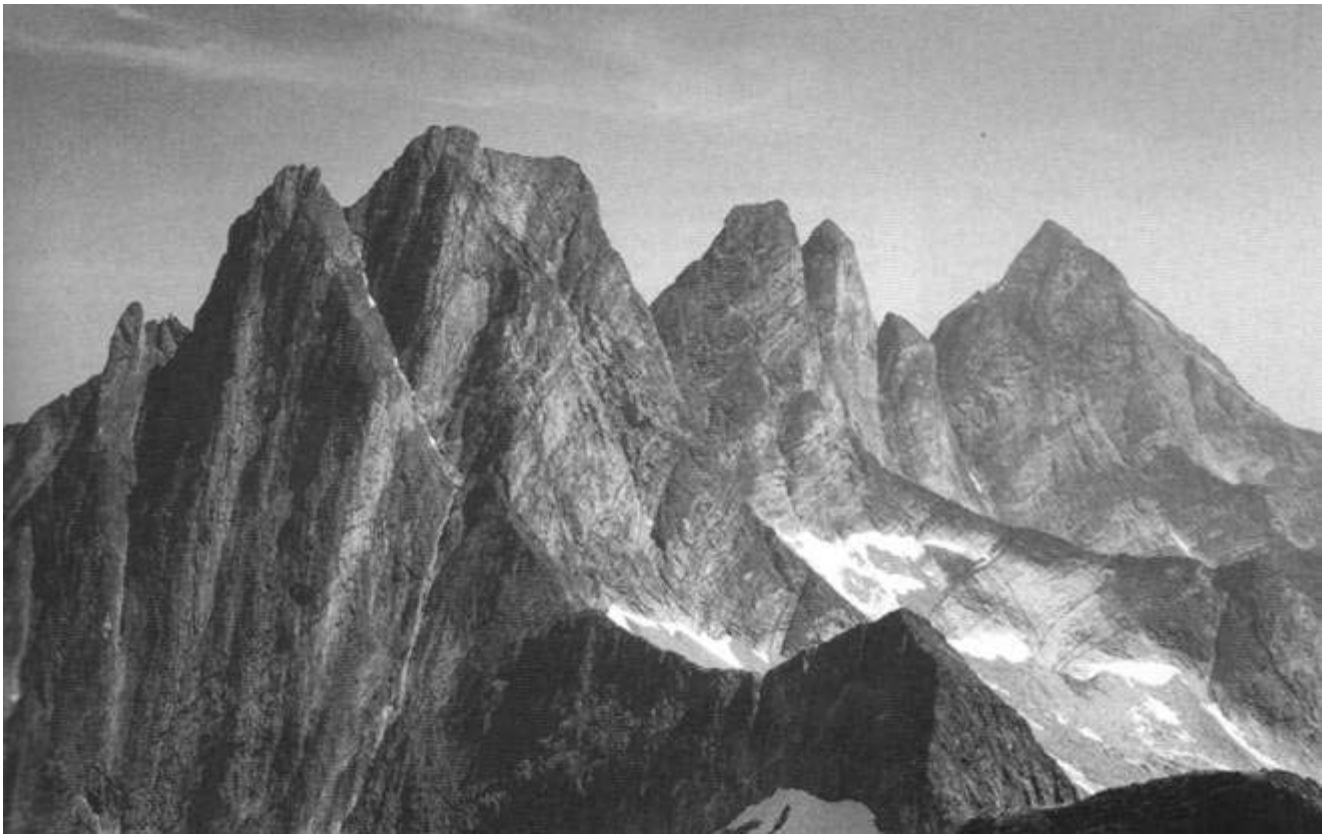
After a leisurely discussion and study of maps and copies of Earle's manuscript (one without the mistakes, unlike the book), we decided to "have a look" at the southwest ridge of Mount Niffleheim. I was rather tempted to try the south buttress of Mount Niffleheim, as it was not only impressive but also right above us, but Hamish shook his head and uttered cryptically, "FOBS. Just look at it, don't you see, typical Kootenay granite, f—ing overhanging boilerplate slabs." So we packed up and decided to pay homage to the absent and hardworking Paul by having another Paul Allen-alpine start. We overdid it a bit though, for even he would have left camp long before nine o'clock as we did. The approach turned out to be — as is usually the case — considerably longer and harder than it looked from the camp, and we did not start climbing until noon. We were not worried; the ridge did not look that long or difficult. It had been climbed anyway, and the days are long in July. We should have known better. It was about twice as long as we thought, some 13 pitches, and no (or is it yes!), it had not been climbed. The first ascent party climbed the peak by the north ridge; uncle Fred and buddies (1987) also approached the peak from the glacier to the north and gained the southwest ridge some seven pitches above its start via a 4th Class gully (that we used for descent). It was on these first seven pitches that we found the best climbing and enjoyable route-finding — fairly consistent 5.6 to 5.7.

To make a long story short, we huffed and we puffed and we rushed and made the summit around 6 p.m. We downclimbed what we could, rapped the rest (three full raps), and almost missed our tent in gathering dusk. But boy oh boy, did those Kokanees and chips taste good when we finally got to our lawn chairs.

We slept in, ate, read and decided to go for an exploratory walk toward Mount Thor. We found a mountain goat ledge across the ridge to the east of us, only to find ourselves in another steep bowl. More FOBS imposing all the way down to the valley, so we decided to climb up rather than across to get to what appeared to be some grassy ledges. A few interesting raps off stunted pines later, we decided to look for a possible traverse. We followed an indistinct trail of goat turds — a climber's version of Hansel and Gretel — and soon crested on another ridge looking at another stretch of FOBS with the many ridges of Mount Thor receding into the smoky horizon. Hamish decided to backtrack to camp and I, feeling adventurous, went up and up, hoping to reach the tent by short-cutting across the intervening ridge. I did beat Hamish (barely), but only after an excitingly-fast climb down the ubiquitous slabs (this time only of the FBS variety), spurred on by the darkening skies and fast-approaching rolls of thunder.

Clear skies returned during the night and remained for the next few weeks. It was hot and the purplish haze from forest fires was so thick that we could barely see Mount Odin across the valley. Time to do something cool. The closest place was the steep couloir between Mount Niffleheim and Steg Number 1. Good choice — snow was firm enough to think almost longingly about the crampons that we left in the tent, and the climb on the west ridge of Steg Number 1 was pleasant medium 5th Class with an exposed traverse just below the summit. We were pleasantly surprised when our always-reliable source (Earle Whipple) informed us that ours was only a second ascent of the peak and a first by that route.

Time to go west. Hamish said that the northeast ridge on Mount Kelly that looked so inviting from Mount Niffleheim, was still unclimbed (as, by the way, is the southeast one). The only problem might be in getting there. By then, though, we



Stegosaur Ridge from the west with Mount Niffleheim left of centre. Photo: Hamish Mutch.

were in an exploratory mood, so up and over and around and across we went. A marvellous hidden horizontal ledge got us across the overhanging on the back side of the ridge west of us, into a large basin below the disintegrating glacier southeast of Mount Kelly. The grass was green, flowers in full bloom, creeks of meltwater were everywhere, and all this never before seen by human eyes. We soon found out that the northeast ridge was not accessible from the basin, so we scrambled to the foot of the southeast ridge, changed into rock shoes, and up the white granite we went. The beautiful, at times quite interesting, 4th Class ridge — again, rather longer than expected — ended abruptly on top of a deep undercut notch across which loomed the upper part of the ridge. It was already early in the afternoon, so we called it an exploratory cum rest day and had a leisurely lunch, a snooze (Hamish), a pipe (me) and headed down. Some of that lovely 4th Class felt different now, so we made a few raps (must have been that leisurely lunch).

Since the southeast ridge proved to be not what we were looking for, it was, obviously, time for the northeast one. To get to it, we had to get a good night's sleep first, then climb a peak on the Baby Steg Ridge (the long ridge between Mount Niffleheim and Mount Kelly — a mirror image of its bigger brother to the east, thus our name for it). To our surprise there was a large cairn on the summit and, almost predictably, Mount Kelly was not as close as we hoped for. As a matter of fact, it was behind another summit of the Baby Steg. Hamish offered to have a summit siesta if I felt like having a "look." How he knew that I could not resist such an opportunity to indulge in one of my favourite pastimes, I'll never know. I packed two oranges and a handful of mints and was off before he could change his mind.

The downclimb was interesting, probably a medium 5th Class, but of course all of this was going to be Class 4. The ridge to the next summit was knife-edged, white granite set at just the right angle — sheer delight on a windy, summer day. In about an hour I was sitting on top, thoughtfully chewing the first orange, inspecting Mount Kelly and thinking back to when Paul and I climbed its south face a few years ago. The ridge looked imposingly steep but broken-up. I decided to have a look at the notch between me and the start of the ridge and, if the notch looked passable, give it a quick try. I yelled to Hamish, waved in the general direction of Mount Kelly, and slid down into the notch. What a relief it was to see a way across it and up the ridge. As for the rest of the climb, well, it was perfect 4th Class, steep, narrow, and exposed — very much a ridge. Once on the summit I enjoyed my orange and memories, looked for the register (gone), and then made my way back, this time more slowly. The round-trip took some three hours.

The weather was stable so we decided to conclude our trip with another F.A. This time we did not forget to pack our crampons, and our trip up the by-now-familiar couloir between Mount Niffleheim and Steg Number 1 did not take very long. Our objective was the east ridge of Niffleheim. By now we had ample opportunity to study possible lines on it and felt that we had found the key — way out of the top of the couloir via a slanting ramp starting some 30m down the other (north) side of it. It was one of those rare days when everything works out, for a change. The ramp went easily, and the steep slabs above it on the north face were not only interesting, but more than pleasant. The ridge proper above this was easy 5th Class, except for the last pitch. The whole of the east mass of Mount Niffleheim culminates in a horizontal ridge/ causeway some 60m long and l-2m wide, at the end of which the mountain rears itself one more time in a summit pyramid. The first few metres were challenging and then, almost too soon, we were sitting on

top playing "spot that summit" again. The downclimb, although not lacking in interest, was almost anticlimactic, except for the last rappel. All that was left was a long, lingering walk to the tent through the alpine meadows which were now almost devoid of the flowers that had greeted us just six days ago. We got to our tent all too soon and Hamish magically produced the last of his secret cache of goodies, liquid and otherwise. /&

Mount Niffleheim, southwest ridge. Start at the lowest point of the ridge and follow this to the summit. First seven pitches are fairly consistent medium 5th Class, the rest is low 4th and 5th Class. Descend by downclimbing the route and rapping to the point where it is possible to rap north (two raps) into a gully that can be downclimbed to a point level with start of the climb.

F.A.: Hamish Mutch & Steven Horvath. July. 24. 1994

Mount Niffleheim, east ridge. From the col between the objective and Steg Number 1, descend about 30 m to a slanting ledge with a crack in the middle (5.4). This leads to the slabs on the east edge of the glacier on the north side of the mountain. Two pitches (up to 5.7) exit at the start of the upper part of the ridge. This is mostly broken-up granite, low 5th Class. Last pitch up the summit pyramid/block has an interesting start (5.6-5.7). Descend by downclimbing/ rapping the ridge to where it is possible to rap down to the col. Most raps need two 50-m ropes.

F.A.: Hamish Mutch & Steven Horvath. July 29. 1994.

Mount Kelly, east ridge. Gain the ridge by climbing second smaller summit east of it. Then downclimb this, gain the next summit and go for it. 4th Class, or can be done as low 5th Class.

F.A.: Mutch & Horvath July 28. 1994.

Steg Number 1, west ridge. Ridge was gained via steep snow couloir between Mount Niffleheim and the objective from camp in meadows on the S side of the ridge. 8 pitches, up to 5.6. Descent by downclimbing and rappels (two, one is 50m). Second ascent of peak.

F.A.: Hamish Mutch & Steven Horvath. July 26. 1994

Mountainsleeping

Steven M. Horvath

This piece was submitted to the 1994 CAJ and was included until the very end, when cm electronic pack-rat stole it from the computer. The editor's apologies to the author come in the happy form of using the piece here.

I was quietly reading my book in our tent. The weather was certainly not what one would expect in middle of August; then again, we should not have been surprised. By this time of the summer, we had had to cancel, postpone or cut short every one of our climbing trips — and we had such marvellous plans; a first ascent here, a quick recce there.

The summer of '93, as everyone knows by now, was a wet one. The veggies in our garden were looking decidedly anemic and my tennis games were rained out with distressing regularity. We had planned and packed for, argued about and postponed, enough trips to put a mild strain on our friendship, and yet we eventually managed to talk ourselves into giving it yet another try.

It was damp and drizzly all the way to our pick-up point some seven km up the Downie Creek; the chopper was late but hope springs eternal (or is it that, pigheadedness rules?).

The flight in was spectacular, as always, with Downie Peak and the Boulder Peaks looming imposingly on the sides of the steep Interior B.C. valley. Wind was gusting up and the pilot had a bit of a hard time deciding where to land, but then there we were, standing on steep scree next to some rusty oil drums. Oil drums? An old Cominco exploration site from the sixties, the pilot explained before flying off. We engineered a tent platform on a flat stretch of small scree, making sure it was upwind from the drums, as the kerosene smell was overpowering. Later, we set out to do some après-dinner industrial archeology. Next to our tent we found a rusted cookstove, assorted pots and pans and kitchen utensils and a crate full of unpacked English chinaware. At least we could dine in style. On a small peninsula right next to out-flow of the lake we found remnants of wood frame buildings, bedsprings, rotted bedding, batteries, tools and more rusty barrels and various assorted other debris of the ecologically cavalier sixties.

We went to bed early, only to be rudely awakened by our tent doing an overly realistic imitation of a U.F.O. takeoff. Paul, still in his sleeping bag, was trying to brace the tent poles and I realized that the glorious weather of the summer of '93 had caught up with us again. The wind kept gusting all night, and when we were finally able to look outside, we could see nothing but snow. We settled down to yet another rest day. We munched on each other's goodies, brought each other up to date on our lives, kids, books read and generally tried to avoid doing anything that would force us to venture outside. The major hardship of the day, at least for me, was the result of the strict prohibition by Paul's wife against any pipe smoking in the tent, meaning, I finally had to wrap myself up in my flaccid Therm-a-rest and have a quick smoke behind a large boulder. Cruel woman.

All the excitement was too much, and we kept drifting in and out of sleep all day. It was during one of these interludes that Paul had his brainstorm — though why he had to wake us up, I'll never know. "Eureka!" Paul cries, "Mountainsleeping!"

Recovery from this kind of awakening was slow but there was no denying the beautiful simplicity of the concept, not to mention the commercial implications. Just think of the ever-increasing number of people willing to part with their hard-earned dollars just to be able to experience the rush of communing with our pristine Canadian wilderness. Many of them come across as having an exquisitely fine sense of awareness of their importance in the scheme of things, yet they appear stressed out, out of shape and in sore need of the restorative/rejuvenative experience of Mountainsleeping (MS, pat. pend.). We can offer to fly people into a spectacularly beautiful and remote spot (at least seemingly so — we do have to keep the overhead costs down), wine and dine them, then let them sleep in all that clean alpine air, 12, 14 even 16 hours a day. In short, we would provide the restoration and they would provide the dollars (which do seem to possess a considerable restorative value to us).

Next afternoon, well rested from exhaustive field testing of the sleeping component of our MS proposal, I could no longer delay the call of nature so I packed a nice, though definitely not MS quality, T.P., pipe and tobacco, struggled into my boots and stepped out into the whiteout. An hour later I found myself rather intrigued by specks of elemental gold in a bunch of old core samples that I found under a large

overhang. Heck, I could even see things in color: the glacier next to me was blue, the snow white and the sky whiter yet. So, obviously, time for a pipe. That pleasant duty done, I slowly scrambled up next to the edge of the glacier, inspected some interesting crevasses and another hour later found myself high up the south ridge of Downie Peak, from which I could inspect the first part of our proposed walk-out. The weather was obviously clearing; I could see our tent, and next to it small figures of Paul and Hamish waving and pointing towards Boulder Peak. Some 30 minutes later, I met my friends in the saddle between Downie and Boulder Peaks. Paul — considerate as always — brought my ice axe and harness, but obviously lacking clairvoyance, failed to bring my proper glasses. This was just plain not good enough, as the two middle-aged keeners had decided (just as I suspected) to make a run at the south ridge of Boulder Peak. I tried to follow them, but quickly discovered that bifocals are not the best aid for fast free climbing on a bright summer day. So, as time was of some essence, (it being past 4 p.m.), I reluctantly turned back. Paul and Hamish reached the summit just as the sun was setting and returned suitably pumped.

Our attempt at the northwest face/south ridge of Downie Peak next day found the mountain in early winter conditions. Paul decided to turn back upon gaining the ridge, as his knee was feeling the after effects of his "run" up (and down) the evening before. Hamish and I continued up the sharp, crumbly ridge, but after a lengthy study of the snow plastered summit block, through occasional breaks in fast moving cloud, decided to act our age and retreat. High objective hazard and relatively low technical difficulty was not one of our favourite combinations.

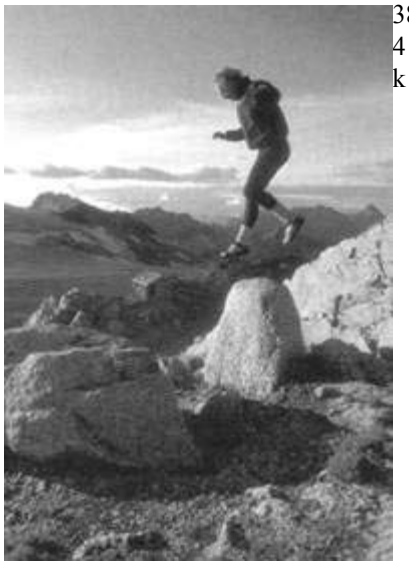
We found ourselves with some free time, and as we had quite enough of MS, we decided to do a good deed and burn what we could from the mess left behind by Cominco. This resulted in what surely must be the biggest bonfire set at this altitude in the Kootenays, all this accomplished without an approved burning device.

As for the way out, we made the car in late afternoon, but not before some considerable Class VI bushwhacking, alder wrestling, raps off of old half-rotted stumps, the old stepping-into-the-hornets'-nest-while-hanging-by-one-arm-over-a-cliff-on-an-alder-branch trick, huge huckleberries, enormous fresh bear scat and a few obligatory high-level talks about route finding. Ah, the joys of our Interior valleys.

So, what next? Fly to the long ridge of clean granite, camp by a small lake, try a few F.A.s and then walk out (Hamish tells us that there is a sort of a trail on the other side of the ridge) and hope to hit the cars before our wives get worried. Let's hope that the summer of '94 will not necessitate farther field tests of MS.

Boulder Peak, south ridge. 3rd Class two-thirds, of the route, then follow one roped pitch (medium 5th class). Climb up a band of whitish limestone, then 3rd Class to the summit. Some rappels on descent. The route was climbed in early winter conditions.

F.A.: Paul Allen, Hamish Mutch, support by Steven Horvath. August 20, 1993



Jumping for joy with Catamount Glacier in the background. Photo: Laura Adams.

ACC Starbird Camp

Jacqueline Louie

Imagine a week climbing on granite, snow, and ice in almost perfect weather. A base camp so high, that you do two 3000-m-plus peaks the very first day. Five new routes. Great food and even better company. It was a week to remember — the Alpine Club of Canada's Starbird Range camp in the Purcells, August 14-20, 1994.

Approximately 30 km west of Radium, B.C., as the crow flies, the Starbird Range has it all: varied climbing on granite, snow and ice, a remote setting between the spectacular Bugaboos, and the high glaciation of the Farnham Group. After driving from Radium to the end of the Forster Creek road (an old logging road), it was an eight-kilometre slog up the valley to our camp at the Olive Hut (2650m), erected September 1990 in memory of sister and brother Brenda Olive and Peter Olive.

Summit of Alpha Centauri with North Star behind. Photo: Laura Adams.

Three porters, with loads ranging from 38 to 45 kgs, carried the bulk of the group's equipment to the base camp. With an elevation gain of 900 m, it was a stiff hike for the rest of us too, since we had to haul our own gear, plus some group gear. (Anyone considering an Alpine Club trip where the helicopter doesn't fly in dunnage is well-advised to be prepared for a gruelling walk.) But it was worth it, with climbing every day for everyone in our group — guide Roger Laurilla, assistant guide Laura Nelson, camp manager Keith Haberl and eight participants.

We camped in tents around the hut, which was used for cooking and meals — good food and lots of it. The camp's high elevation meant peaks were within easy reach with starts at a reasonable hour (nothing before 7 a.m.). The climbs are primarily granite ridges and faces with straightforward glacier approaches.

August 15, the first day of climbing, three rope teams travelled together from the hut to the Gwendoline/Scotch Peaks col and across the glacier to North Star Peak, the highest summit in the immediate area at 3125 metres. After reaching the summit of North Star Peak at the head of the North Star Glacier, all three groups continued to Mount Alpha Centauri (3090m).

August 17, Keith Haberl, Myron Yeley and Sean Pokorny climbed a new route in a discontinuous snow and ice gulley immediately to the right of Mount Harmon's east ridge, connected by rock pitches to

5.4. It was a good day for climbing. Laura Adams, Brian Ball, John Christian and Dave Kirkby did a new route August 17 on Galloway Mountain (2970m). The group ascended the southeast face, climbing the central rock band that leads directly to the summit, with three full pitches of mixed climbing up to 5.6. They descended the standard route along the north ridge.

August 18 was a day of rock climbing on the Scotch Peaks to the south and east of the hut. One team (Brian Ball, Myron Yeley and Dave Kirkby, guided by Roger), climbed directly from the hut to the summit of Scotch Peak No. 1, with extensive rock climbing on the latter part of the route with pitches to 5.9. Another group, with Keith guiding Sean Pokorny, Al Michelin and John Christian, climbed a new route on the west face of Scotch Peak Number 3 directly to the summit, descended via the northwest ridge to the col between Peaks Number 2 and 3, and climbed Scotch Peak Number 2 via the south ridge.

August 19. With Keith guiding, Dave Kirkby, Al Michclin and Brian Ball set out to establish a major new route on the previously-unclimbed east face of Mount Harmon (2940m), named for Canadian Alps photographer Byron Harmon. The route takes the gully to the left of the prominent arête which comes down from the third of the three summits on Mount Harmon's east face. The route is Grade III, 5.8, on relatively good granite the whole way up corners, cracks and chimneys.

Also Aug. 19, the team of Laura, Myron Yeley and Sean Pokorny established a new route on Black Fang (3000m) via six full pitches of alpine ice — up to 60° — on the mountain's east side, then along the standard route to the summit. In the descent, they rappelled off the summit tower down the north face, descended the northwest ridge and the northeast face to reach the Catamount Glacier. Crossing a series of large bergschrunds from the ice onto the glacier was fairly tricky, Laura said. "They were so large it was difficult to navigate." The group was on the route for 10 hours that day.

Other peaks climbed during the week were Gwendoline Mountain (3125m) and Mount Nanette (2910m). Participants agreed what made the Starbird Range camp outstanding was the high, spectacular location, quality of guiding, and camaraderie in a small, cohesive group. "The three of those things combined made just a wonderful camp," said Brian Ball of Calgary. He had never climbed anything more difficult than 5.4 before, other than top-roping, but made it up a 25-m, 5.9 crack on Scotch Peak No. 1. "I didn't feel like I was being pushed, yet I did more stuff than I thought I would've done, and more than I thought I could do," he said. "That's what mountaineering is about, trying to surpass your limits. It allows you to go beyond what you think is your potential." John Christian of Bethesda, Maryland, said he ended up doing a lot more climbing at this camp than at any other Alpine Club camp he'd been at, because he didn't indulge in rest days.

It was the first Alpine Club of Canada trip for Myron Yeley of New York City, and he said it won't be his last. "I had a great time; it was great fun."

The Starbirds aren't as spectacular as the Bugaboos and have less technical climbing — about 10 climbs of significant difficulty (5.9), according to guide Roger Laurilla. But it's an excellent area for basic mountaineering because it has everything: mixed climbing, rock climbing, small easy peaks. "It gives you a taste of what the mountains are — it's a good area for that," Roger said.

Participants: Brian Ball, John Christian, Dave Kirkby, Bill Louie, Jacqueline Louie, Al Michelin, Sean Pokorny and Myron Yeley.

The Rockies

Alberta Bound

Glenn Reisenhofer

The first time I heard of Mount Alberta was in association with the Sunwapta River. A friend from work and my girlfriend Colleen were about to embark on a trip to climb Mount Woolley and Diadem. We had been warned about the bone-chilling effect of the Sunwapta, and even been offered neo-prene booties to cross this fast-flowing, ice-chilled river. I figured that no river could be that cold. I was wrong; it was an unfriendly welcome to the Sunwapta.

No one in our party had been up Woolley Creek before and the trail was particularly difficult to follow in some sections. We soon found ourselves in the middle of a huge, desolate boulder field, wondering where the trail was. We figured that the bivi site was on top of the headwall where the lush, green shrubbery stood in strong contrast to the dusty gravel field that we were in.

We eventually managed to find the trail close to the creek and discovered a five-star Hilton classic on top of the headwall. We were definitely impressed by the beauty of the surroundings, but mounts Woolley and Diadem stood at the head of the valley with their summits buried in the clouds. The prospects for the next day's climb did not look good, but we went to sleep with hope.

The clear morning sky was never to materialize. It rained. Towards the afternoon, the rain let up a little, and we went for a tour. Colleen and I looked for the mysterious Woolley Shoulder that I had heard about so much in my youth. I imaged that the peaks beyond the shoulder were of another league. I found out later that this assumption was correct. The rain and the scree drove us back from getting a peek over to the land of the magical and mystical. I knew then that one day I'd get a glimpse over that shoulder.

The next time I found myself in the Sunwapta with numb lower digits and goose bumps all over my body, was with four friends from work. Bob and Matt were keen on doing the Woolley/Diadem thing, while Peter, Liam and I were interested in having a look over the shoulder.

At last, my chance to get a view across the "Black Hole." But first, we had to attend to the infamous scree! None of us have had the pleasure of such fine uphill neanderthalling before. This slope was atrocious. There was no indication of a trail — not even the faintest animal trail. We eventually found ourselves just below the shoulder, on the far left side. This was not a good idea considering that these cliffs that barred our progress were the parents of the offspring that we had just slogged. We found the climbing to be entertaining, particularly Liam and Peter who both found themselves dangling by one arm when a certain foothold or two had slithered down to join its siblings.

One of mountaineering's greatest joys is to surmount some obstacle and witness the

visions beyond. The sight on the other side of Woolley Shoulder will always remain impregnated in my mind. It was wild! The Stutfields, the frightening north face of North Twin, and Alberta all came into view. I was in ecstasy.

I shouted down my enthusiasm to my pals who were still on the "other side." There was no reply. I dropped my pack and peered back down the shoulder. I was to witness some of the greatest mountaineering manoeuvres ever accomplished on the Woolley Shoulder approach. Both Liam and Peter, in their desperation, were laybacking up a frozen snow cone that had been deposited since last winter. They had bare hands on an icy snow arête and their feet braced against the crumbly rock. It seemed to work for the lads as they made slippery, upwards progress. This is a feat that I've never seen repeated in the mountains.

In the West Face couloir, 1992. Photo: J. Everett.

Soon we were once again on the summit of the shoulder, staring in awe at the surrounding environs. Down towards Little Alberta there was a hut perched on a rocky outcrop. We soon scampered down towards the hut with magnificent views all around. I fell in love with the place, though little did I know that I would have an affair with Alberta for five years.

Once we were at the hut something seemed to change. The log book in the hut indicated that the only way to climb Alberta was to do so from a bivy, which would still take a long time, longer than we had available to us. Peter felt that we did not have enough time to do the route in the two days that we had available to us. I was crushed, but what can you do if you go climbing with your boss who doesn't want to be late for work by a whole day? I knew we could do the route and I secretly wanted to continue on by myself, but the wisdom of the experienced prevailed and we didn't try Alberta.

That night was the first of many nights I would spend in the hut. I didn't sleep well. A strange feeling crept over me as I thought about the arena of the giants that we were in. They seemed enormous, remote, and inaccessible, a feeling that I was never able to escape that night or any other time I was in the vicinity.

In the morning Liam and I ascended the west face of Woolley as a consolation prize. This face on Woolley proved to be an excellent adventure. The ice face goes directly to the summit with an easy decent down to the Woolley/Diadem col. We followed Bob's and Matt's footsteps down to the col. We noticed a large crevasse that Matt had fallen into and we decided to be more careful when following their tracks.

Once at the col, Liam decided to rest while I had a stroll up Diadem. I peered down the north face knowing that my friend Jeffery had made the first ascent. Shivers ran down my back as I withdrew from that airy viewpoint. On my way back to the col I noticed Liam messing around with his pack. His Thermarest was precariously balanced on a rock. Soon it decided to lose its potential energy and started to slowly roll down the glacier. At first it went unnoticed, but soon it was out of reach as it picked up momentum. By some stroke of luck it snagged on some irregularity on the glacial surface and as soon as Liam and I roped up again we retrieved it. Once down, we met Bob, Matt and Peter and we swapped our various adventures at the Hilton classic bivy.

Round two was fought with Jeff Everett. We had an adventurous year together and we figured that an ascent of Alberta would be an excellent way to top off the summer. Jeff had never been in the area before and he enjoyed the "wonderful" experience of the two cruxes of the approach for the first time: the Sunwapta and Woolley Shoulder. When we reached the shoulder the winds were howling and it took all of one's strength to battle the scree. I reached the shoulder first and managed to toss a line down to Everett. He was appreciative as he "hand-over-handed it" up to the shoulder.

We found Alberta, as Yvon Chouinard would describe it, "enormous and evil-looking." The top was embedded in clouds and the prospect of a successful climb looked dim as we approached the hut. We decided to give it a try anyways and we set the alarm for 4:30 a.m. Who knew, maybe the next day would dawn beautifully clear.

It did dawn clear and we were quickly on our way with the sandman still in our eyes. We had studied the mountain as carefully as we could from the hut. We knew that there were two rock bands to negotiate before we got to the base of the Japanese couloir. Somewhere between the first and second bands the clouds started to visit us. We continued to traverse right looking for a break in the rock band above. The farther we traversed, the greater the degree of difficulty became.

The clouds were soon joined by their friend, the snow. Jeff and I realized that we were way too far on the east face by now and that the snow was not going to let up. It was time for us to descend. As we turned around to traverse back we noticed a solitary bashie-like device slotted in a crack with some webbing attached to it. Jeff and I snickered at the poor buggers who were rapping on this part of the face, until we realized we were in the same position. How did they get there and why were they rappelling? Only Alberta will know. Thus ended attempt number two. On the walk out we both realized that we had to take this thing more seriously.

The next time in we booked a week off work. The weather seemed okay and we had a lot of provisions — so much, in fact, that we hired some porters. Chris and Randy had never been into the area, and here was a perfect opportunity for someone to carry gear in for us. They agreed, and Jeff and I were on our way to try our luck again.

We decided that with a week off we could possibly try a new route on the west face. No one to our knowledge had been there, so we thought we'd go have a peek. As on our previous trip, the weather went sour. This trip we had some time on our side, so we did some sightseeing. Soon we were restless and decided to move on. We bade farewell to our porters as we shouldered our monstrous packs and headed towards the south end of Alberta.

Once there, we hit an awesome ramp that carried us perfectly around the south and west side of the mountain. We also found an ancient bivy spot close to the south end of the peak. The only unfortunate parts of the trip around the peak were that: we could not see any lines up the mountain due to the clouds sticking to the side of the peak; and Jeff had promised me that there were palm trees and hula dancers on this side of the mountain — he lied.

In the distance we spotted an inviting arête. Jeff and I decided that this was going to be our route up the west face, though we had no idea exactly where we were on the mountain. We set up the tent high on this arête. It was a perfect spot, with running water at the base of a long, snow couloir. Who would ever think that there was a snow couloir on the west face: With high hopes, we went to sleep early. During the night we discovered that our hopes had turned into frozen droplets of sleet and snow. We shook the tent, and ice cubes would slide down the sides. In the morning we peered outside and to our amazement it was clear. The storm had only lasted a little while. We quickly gathered our gear and we were soon on our way.

It took only one hour to gain the top of the snow couloir; this was real nifty climbing: soloing with a headlight on. Towards the top, the snow gave way to ice and our concentration increased. The couloir had expanded to a snowfield and we traversed left into a Scottish gully almost six rope lengths long. The going was typically easy except for a move or two. Within sight of the top of the gully we both wondered what we would find.

We were simply blown away. Below us lay the north face and we were on the northwest ridge. We looked at each other in amazement with our mouths open wide. "How did we get here?" was the question in both our minds. "I guess were not on the west face, eh Jeff?" "Well sort of — just on the north end, that's all," was his reply.

From here the line was obvious, but the rock needed a face lift. We swapped leads for four pitches. This was some of the most intense rock that I had climbed. The third rock pitch had a special quality about it. First a 5.9 roof and then laybacking up a pillar of loose blocks that were laying there stuck together by frost. It was frightening.

At the top of the fourth pitch we met a belay station. Now we definitely knew where we were. Ahead of us was a wall that looked like an 11.d sport route with some pins spaced very far apart. I told Jeff that I preferred not to lead this pitch. He told me likewise. We both remembered what Blanchard had written in the hut book, "A3 and scary." Well, it looked hard and we were filled with fear and trembling, so it did not take much for us to stick our tails between our wind suits and flee.

This is the only time in my climbing career with Everett that he has ever wanted to back off of a route.

Fleeing was not easy, and when we reached our tent we were left with the remains of our two skinny ropes — 20 m worth. "Well at least we have enough to go across the glacier." " Yeah! Great. Now we can't even do the Japanese route." We both knew that we were snookered for that year's attempt.

1993 was one of the worst summers that Alberta has ever had. It rained and snowed ceaselessly throughout. Nevertheless, Everett was keen to try again. We knew there would be snow and lots of it, but when we pulled over Woolley Shoulder, and had our first peek, the snow reached all the way to the first rock band on the east face. "I don't know Jeff, that's a lot of white stuff up there."

One of Jeff's favourite sayings in the mountains concerning a route is "it'll go" or "it's okay." He rarely wants to give up, and this was another of those times. But at 3050 metres, with soggy snow up to my crotch and a wet snowstorm on its way, I had had enough and I forced Jeff to go down. I'm surprised we didn't get swallowed by a blanket of wet slush.

Our last trip in was Jeff's fourth and my fifth try. We were both psyched and had a pre-success certainty. We were so lucky that we didn't even have to hitchhike to get there, and Jeff managed to sweet-talk the warden, so that he forgot to ask us about our back country permit. We didn't have one. To top things off, the Sunwapta was at its lowest level ever: barely above the calf muscles. Things were going well.

The approach went fine and the slog up Woolley Shoulder seemed quite gentle and for the first time, there was no wind to greet us. At the hut we realized that neither of us had brought a watch, so, never mind what time it was, how were we going to get up in the morning? We woke up many times with a jolt and run outside, because we thought we had slept in. After several false wake-up calls, we got on our way.

With Japanese umbrella near summit, 1994. Photo: J. Everett.

This time we hit the correct passage through the second rock band and got to see the elephant's ass for the first time. We now knew we were on the proper route, but to our disgust, the rock was sopping wet. Six pitches of falling rock, little protection, snow, verglas, and water brought us to the "whiteout zone." Since Jeff and I had tried Alberta so many times, Alberta figured that it wouldn't give up its summit easily. It would make us ascend the narrow ridge in blowing snow and low visibility. That was the only way we would be allowed up.

Somewhere along the summit ridge, Jeff noticed a dull piece of material sticking up from the snow. He dug and yarded to unravel one of Mount Alberta's mysteries — the Japanese umbrella. Here on the summit ridge of Mount Alberta we stumbled on an umbrella, left behind on a successful ascent in 1925. We carried it onwards to the summit and placed it in the

Beginning the rappels, 1994. Photo: Glenn Reisenhofer

cairn, although we did have a difficult time in believing we were on the summit, for we could see nothing. I made Jeff walk farther along the ridge until he was out of sight. He returned with the good news that it only went downhill from there. We finally had done it and we were ecstatic.

Back at the hut we met two friends from Canmore. They were in to try their luck at Mount Alberta for the first time. Two days of excellent weather had dried the cliffs and Mount Alberta shined on them. They cruised the climb and made it home that night. It was a pleasure to witness their progress up high on Alberta: just two, tiny figures barely moving. The gate was opened and entry was allowed to the mysteries of Mount Alberta.

On the drive home we picked up a hitchhiker at the base of a mountain by the Columbia Icefields. With New Order blaring from the speakers, Everett pointed out avalanche tracks high up on that mountain. In the awesome beauty of that day a very different reality took place. On that mountain a small avalanche took the life of a friend. All four of us who'd been on Mount Alberta knew this person well; he was our friend and climbing companion. When we re-met the others from Alberta we shared sorrow instead of joy; we cried instead of laughed.

That last attempt on Alberta left me in a spiritual vacuum. Finally achieving success on the mountain and the loss of a close friend had altered the drive of ambition. For now, the ascent of Alberta signifies the end of an era.

Mount Aylmer - New Route

Paul O'Byrne

This ridge offered a mixture of snow and rock climbing with plenty of exposure down the north face. The route had a remote feel despite its proximity to Banff, and if climbed later in the season would hold far less snow and more dry rock. We cycled and hiked from Lake Minnewanka trailhead to Aylmer Pass, and continued into the upper reaches of the Ghost River Wilderness. After traversing around the north side of the peak on scree (good goat trail), we stopped at a lovely kettle lake and then headed down to a grassy bivi spot at 2070m (Map 82-0/6, grid reference 106875), which took us 9 hours.

Threatening weather cleared for the following morning, giving us good views as we ascended a brown scree slope to gain the ridge crest. Scrambling and half a pitch of 5.4 led to the base of a big buttress. We avoided this by traversing left to a big snow and scree bowl, rejoining the ridge at a long, flat bench above the buttress at 2620m. Here the fun climbing began. The ridge consisted of a series of rock steps and snow slopes on the southeast face, intersecting with a huge cliff on the north face. We pitch-climbed the rock bands (a total of eight pitches up to 5.5) and moved together on the lower-anglecl slopes. Isothermal snow conditions and a number of wet snow avalanches kept us on the rock as much as possible. The route stays on the ridge, or within half a rope length of the southeast face, until a compact 10m step is reached high on the ridge. Here we traversed 75 m left to a weakness in the step which formed the final rock pitch, and ascended a rib to regain the ridge for the final stretch to the summit (14 hours). The descent followed the regular scramble route on the southwest slope of the mountain.

Mount Aylmer (3162m), Front Ranges, East Ridge, III, 5.5.

F.A.: Matt Siska, Paul O'Byrne. 12 June, 1994.

1994 Bow Valley Rock Climbing Update

John Martin

Perhaps inspired by consistently fine spring and summer weather, local climbers were particularly active in new route development during 1994. The majority of new routes continued to be single-pitch sport climbs, but there was also a resurgence of interest in longer, more traditional-style routes. As well, the retrofitting program initiated in 1993 by TABVAR (The Association of Bow Valley Rock Climbers) for existing routes continued in 1994. This program involves the upgrading or installation of top anchors, replacement of fixed pins with bolts, route straightening and addition of protection bolts (with approval from first ascensionists), and camouflaging of fixed gear.

Acephale continued to be a focus for top end sport routes, with about a dozen new climbs going up. Todd Guyn's Sweet Thing, on the awesomely steep Upper Wall, was the hardest addition and the first route in Alberta to receive the 13c grade. Other

routes currently in progress at the Upper Wall may be even harder.

Hard routes also went up at another very steep cliff, Carrot Creek's Carrot Patch (aka The Cave). This was the scene of a half-dozen new climbs in the 11c to 13a range and will likely produce harder routes in the near future. As well, six new 5.11 routes were established on the Gully Wall and Raven's Nest Buttress. Virtually all fixed gear in the canyon was camouflaged during 1994.

Cougar Creek was surprisingly busy, with a couple of dozen new routes from 5.9 to 11d being established. Ten of these were in the well-travelled downstream areas, 11 more were at Canadian Forks Cliff, and three were on previously undeveloped cliffs beyond The Forks up the drainage leading toward Grotto Mountain. Considerable retrofitting was done on the more popular cliffs and every route at Cougar Creek can now be climbed without gear.

Despite the intense attention Grotto Canyon has received for over a decade, new territory continued to be charted in 1994. Four new routes were established and several projects in the 5.12 and 13 range are in progress. The anchors at The Alley were upgraded and the routes at Grotto Slab were retrofitted. Runouts at Grotto Slab are still long by sport standards but are at least reasonable now — some of the climbs previously had no protection at all.

At Heart Creek, Jupiter Rock was totally "sportified", with four new climbs in the 10b to 11a range being added in the process. Upper Heart Crag was also retrofitted and produced seven new routes from 5.6 to 10c. The development at Waterfall Wall (aka Trail's End) was completed with one new route.

Another major retrofit was carried out at Kid Goat, where all the one-pitch climbs at the north end were upgraded to sport status. Two new climbs, both 5.10, were added at the same time.

The long-ignored Grassi Lakes area got four new climbs in the 5.10-11 range, as well as a nice 5.6 Swiss cheese slab just above the upper lake — one of the few genuinely easy sport routes anywhere in the Bow Valley.

After a busy 1993, The Back of Lake Louise was quiet in 1994 except for two new moderate bolted lines (5.8 and 5.9) left of Imaginary Grace.

Coral Crag, near Banff, was "revealed" fully developed to the climbing public in 1994. The area consists of south-facing, 75-90° bedding plane slabs with 30 very technical routes from 5.8 to lid. This scenic climbing area is on the north bank of the Cascade River, a short distance downstream from the first bridge on the Cascade Fire Road. The approach takes about 40 minutes, 30 by bicycle to the bridge and 10 on foot along the riverbank.

Another formerly "secret" crag, The Sanctuary, also "came out" in 1994. This is a set of steep, south-facing cliffs on the mountainside immediately east of Steve Canyon, about 50 minutes from the road. To date the area has 17 fairly short but intense climbs from 10a to 12c.

At Steve Canyon, the existing routes on Upper Wall were retrofitted and four new climbs in the10c-11a range were added.

The Alcove, a small amphitheatre below a waterfall in the drainage west of The Stoneworks, is yet another new area. Only three routes (11d, 12a and 12c) have been established to date, but two projects are being worked and there is potential for more. The Alcove is reached by trail from Harvie Heights in about 35 minutes.

In spite of its significant untapped potential, The Stoneworks was dormant except for one new route, a 12a tips crack left of Spider in a Tub.

At Yamnuska, four new multi-pitch gear climbs went in: Hanging Out (10b), five pitches starting just right of Unnamed; Extender (10c), seven pitches leading up from the top of The Tongue; Gormenghast (12a), a four-pitch alternate start to Chockstone Corner, and Dreambed (11c), eight pitches starting 75m left of Red Shirt.

Chinaman's Peak became the scene of the longest sport route north of Mexico, Sisyphus Summits (10d). This 500m climb is at the left side of the north face, near the popular Northeast Buttress. Despite its seemingly modest grade, Sisyphus Summits is a weighty undertaking — of 21 pitches, nine are 10c or 10d and seven more are10a or10b.

At EEOR, Raptor (10b) is about 10 pitches of mainly low-angle rock just left of the huge gully at the left end of the cliff. The crux comes on the first pitch, after which the climbing is mainly 5.8 or easier.

Guide's Rock (Mount Cory) was also the scene of a new multi-pitch sport climb: Sea of Dreams (10b/c), left of Three Roofs.

Climbers have been active at Moose Mountain, near Bragg Creek, for several years but the rock was generally considered to be too loose for leadable routes. Extensive cleaning on one of the more promising sections of cliff during 1994, however, yielded six good overhanging sport climbs in the 11a to 11d range. The cliff is called Larry's Wall after the late Lawrence Ostrander, killed nearby in a climbing accident in 1993. In a more traditional vein, the unpromisingly named Barney Rubble (10b) climbs the buttress in the fork of Canyon and Moose Dome creeks in four pitches.

In the Ghost River area, three new cliffs were opened up: Wild West Wall features a three-pitch sport route (11c), as well as two shorter, easier routes and two harder projects; the nearby Arrowhead, a free-standing pinnacle, sports three routes (10c, 12a and 12b) and a project; and Descent Wall has a two-pitch 11b sport route. At Phantom Bluffs, some of the existing routes were retrofitted and four new ones were established at 5.8-11b.

Mount Colin New Route

Unlike my route of 1992, On-Ramp, (CAJ, 76, 1993, p. 109), this route is visible from the hut. To the right of the summit, there are two large V-shaped gullies in the face. The left margin of the left gully is the Centennial Route. The left margin of the next gully to the right is Freeze Drive.

Start in just left of the bottom chimney (it may be wet). Once in the bowl above the chimney, move together, always trending left, until difficulties force a resumption of belaying. Four pitches to the summit ridge. The second to last pitch moves slightly right into a right-facing corner/chimney. It tops out just above the Smythe step (rap point) on the southeast ridge. No pitons were used. This was done in a freezing cold wind, hence the name.

Freeze Drive. Southwest face of Mount Colin, Jasper area. II, 5.7.

F.A.: Reinhard Berg and Yassin Boga. July 10, 1994.

Reinhard Berg

The Black Pyramid

Grant Statham

Obsessive, mysterious and a beautiful thing. Unlike any other mountain...it's a Wild Thing.

Mount Chephren towers 5000 feet over the highway and its perfect symmetry draws a mirage of lines down its northeast face. This beautiful face had only one winter ascent, in 1987. A plumb line to the

summit, the route called The Wild Thing captivated me and drew me with a passion. I wasn't the only one susceptible to such desires — Sean Dougherty and I made a plan for the spring in '92. Three seemed like a logical number for a route like this, and it didn't take much persuasion for Joe Josephson to buy into our plan. I'd been up to the base for a try three weeks earlier, but was scared off by avalanches.

It seems, though, that time fades memory, and now, with growing trepidation, we walk ever closer. Floundering through waist deep snow provides a convenient excuse to bail. I'm hoping for an escape and can't seem to find a good enough one yet. Emotionally, this is the most dangerous place, approaching the base of a big route. Considering the frequency of avalanches down our gully, doubt is lingering about me and I can't seem to get rid of the sick pit in my stomach; I'm thinking that maybe this is the proper feeling to have right now.

The face seems angry — it doesn't like uninvited guests. We march up towards the first pitch, daunted by what we can't see, but what we know looms above. Out of the swirling mists avalanches continue to race down the route and their message is clear, yet among us there is an unspoken acceptance that is all too common with these pursuits. Joe wins the toss and leads us over a short rock wall and into the gully. With absolutely no protection and an almost constant spindrift stream over his head, Joe's steady upward progress is amazing, but it's still a strained few minutes until we all gather under an overhang with a solid anchor, a momentary island of safety. We discuss the spindrift, and decide it really still is just spindrift. There's a lot of quiet uncertainty here and I wonder who might mention it first.

As we continue up this gully the pounding never lets up and we end up wearing a rope the entire way. All this time I spend trying to justify what we're doing in this garbage chute. Fifty metres from safety, I look up to see the biggest slide yet, coming right at me. Joe's at a belay and I feel the rope jerk tight as he screams to hang on. Gritting my teeth I hunch into a rock corner and feel the snow tear at me, trying hard to take me where it's going. This is getting just stupid: they're getting bigger and we've gotta hurry up. A fifty metre detour right is supposed to take us to a waterfall, but as I look up and scope my lead I notice a clear lack of ice for a waterfall pitch. In fact there's no ice at all. Now it's my time to concentrate as I balance my front points on small edges and hook tools in sugary snow. This is hard, and it's not supposed to be hard yet.

The gully continues up to an abrupt halt at a large and steep rockband. This next section is meant to be the crux of the route and a difficult-looking chimney marks the way. Dropping Sean off to dig us a home, Joe and I continue in fading daylight to fix the first of three pitches. Sporting good rock and even better protection, the pitch seems to fly by. Rappelling down the rope I'm overwhelmed with a feeling of satisfaction, we've had a great day, getting started is usually the worst part. Now we're 3000 feet up, the weather is clearing and with one pitch fixed, I'm descending to a warm brew and a sleeping bag. Joe and I take a few minutes to laugh and reflect on our situation; the mountain lies quiet and lets us enjoy our insignificant presence. Nothing could be better.

Arriving back at our hole in the snow, it seems that Sean's last hour wasn't as pleasant as ours. His burlap-style Gore-tex is frozen solid with an icy glaze, as is his stare. The envisioned living room is the size of a car trunk and when I ask what happened, Sean only slurs out an incoherent reply. He'd gotten cold and disoriented while digging and was too afraid to climb out of the small hole he'd dug for fear off falling off. Now he's about to vomit while Joe undresses him and I dig around and start the brew. Sean's recovery is slow and it's increasingly apparent that one of us gets to sleep with a partner tonight. Jojo wins the dating game and zips his bag together with Sean's. It's a long night and sleep comes late; I can barely move with only one foot of space above my head but eventually drift off to the sounds of cooing and something about spooning?!

Kicking out the snowcave door the next morning, I squint as the sun radiates my face. Warmth. Climbing outside brings renewed energy at the sight of a cloudless day and last night's antics are long-forgotten. This morning anyway, the sun is our friend and we bask in its heat, welcoming the revived strength it brings.

Our fixed line comes tight under the weight of Sean's jumar. Back at the high point now we pull out duvets, shift around and settle in for the extended hang — this next pitch has the looks of a long one. As I watch Joe arrange his rack he seems rather quiet and I wonder what he's feeling now. Is it fear? I'm nervous and I'm only belaying. The only other two guys to have led this pitch both took long falls. I think we all know that but thankfully nobody mentions it. Sean clips the anchor and settles in at the belay as I wish Joe the best and unleash him from his moorings.

Four hours and 40 metres later, Joe is once again secured to the wall. It's been an intense half-day and I'm sure glad to have had some company at the belay. The squeeze chimney and tension traverse across the slab was wild, as was the TV-sized block that just missed my head. A section of steep, thin aid climbing proved the hardest part, but once Joe accidentally removed the VW bus sized snow dollop (which once again just missed my head) and exposed a few more cracks, he was cruising to the top. Sean's wildly free-hanging and spinning jumar was testimony to the steepness of the pitch and shortly thereafter we were reunited again.

My turn to lead now and I inch my way up the chimney, the thought of a bivi site driving me higher while I root for gear and throw away most of the holds. One foot hangs in an aider while the other stems and balances across the chimney; I'm screaming within myself to hurry up but can't seem to move any faster. Looking down, I can see the smile on Joe's face and can imagine what he must feel right now, after finishing his hard lead for the day. The emotion difference in 25 metres is vast; I'd like to smile too but the intensity of my work won't allow it. I'm focused on what's ahead and the metres creep by until at last I stand on a snow ledge and feel my friends climbing up the rope. Now I too can smile.

Joe volunteers to dig while Sean craves one more pitch. He just spent 15 months without touching a rope while healing a broken back and now I think he wants to prove something to himself. In the dwindling light he clips a headlamp to his belt and attacks the corner with a passion. For me though, it's a quiet time as I pay out rope above and watch Joe work below; I'm incredibly relaxed and satisfied with our position. The crux is below us and tomorrow we should get off this beast. Thousands of feet below a car drives by on it way north up the Parkway; it's not absorbed and doesn't stop. The driver is oblivious to us and probably wouldn't care anyway; they'll never know the emotions of this mountain and somehow, I pity their loss.

Descending Sean's fixed rope, I climb into our cave and close out the vertical

world for another night. Inside, with the stove purring, it's warm and cozy; candlelight flickers off a glazed ceiling and it's easy to forget where we are. A marked contrast to our previous evening — tonight sleep comes easily.

Morning arrives on schedule bringing another cloudless day — we rush about brewing and packing, making a point of getting an early start. Traversing into the final gully I can see the top, but this time won't be fooled into thinking it's close. The snow above us takes a direct hit from the sun; it absorbs heat readily and makes a point of spitting avalanches at us early — Chephren knows we're close.

Straightforward climbing up easy snow interspersed with short steps of desperation lead us up to the final pitches. Anticipating the "type of climbing one dreams of" described by the first ascent party, we're more than a little let down to arrive under a collage of stacked rocks — what drugs can make you dream of this? Sean takes the first pitch and is rewarded with long runouts and a terrifying belay. After a quick meeting at the belay, Joe decides to keep climbing in the hope of a better anchor above. Ignorant to all this I continue jumaring away, cresting a rise to see Sean grunting to hold my weight and Joe 40m higher with only one piece of gear in. He's only got 5m to go until a ledge, but that doesn't seem to do him much good right now. It suddenly gets quiet in the gully as we wait anxiously for some security. It comes after a few moments and once again I'm climbing up the rope. Greeting Joe at the belay I can see that he's fried — his face is drawn and I don't think he wants to be scared anymore. I can't blame him; every pitch he's climbed so far has seemed to be either desperate or runout. Apprehensively, I pass Joe my jumars and focus my attention upwards.

Overhangs, two feet wide and choked in the back with ice, this next section looks beautiful; only not here — I want this to end now. It's almost dark and with any luck this could be the last pitch. I'm focusing again and the climbing is awesome, sideways chimneying with tools stacked in an ice vein. The protection is great and I ring in solid pins whenever I want. Anticipation drives me higher until finally I pull onto a ledge and can see up — there's one more pitch. It's 9 p.m. and my turn to be fried. The anchors shift with the weighting of jumars as I stand and stare blankly up, wondering what to do.

If the pins don't come out from the jugging, then my shivering will surely wiggle them loose. I'm freezing and this is a serious place to be so cold; leading the next pitch is the only way I'm gonna keep myself warm. So guided only by the beam of a headlamp, I force myself into the final chimney and gun for the top. It's hard here and steep too; I'm actually glad it's dark, to hide the void that drops away underneath. My world is a two-foot-wide circle of light and I mix free with aid climbing, unmindful of anything outside that circle. Soon I can see the top, separated from me by only a thin snowbridge spanning a dark hole. Carefully worming across it until I can rise to my feet and look up, I notice the summit and the low-angle scree slopes that fall away to the west. A strong wind now bites at my clothing. Shouting out my relative security I can just barely hear the howls from below echoing through the night. It's 12:30 a.m.

The piles of scree don't give up very easily as I frantically scrape around for any sort of anchor. Nothing. The pressure mounts as I can sense the boys freezing down below. Finally, for lack of anything else as an anchor, I lie flat on the rocks and brace for the coming weight. The harness bites my hips for what seems like forever; I gradually become iced over and began feeling like I am part of the scree slope.

James Blench on The Wild Thing, Mount Chephren. Photo: Kevin Doyle.

Hyperventilating is my only way to keep warm. It is 2 a.m. when at last we all gather on the summit and cut the frozen ropes from my harness.

Sometime later — I'm not sure what time it was — I lay on my back amongst a frosty pile of rocks trying to catch a precious hour of sleep. I'd just managed to drift off while sitting with a cup of soup, pouring it all over myself and my matted sleeping bag. In a delirious stumble I'd cramponed my thermarest and couldn't figure out why it was flat; I slept on it anyway. We were wasted, but psyched. Never before had I been rewarded for such intensity. Those days of driving under the peak, looking up and always wondering, were over. A burden of obsession had been lifted and I was at peace with the mountain.

Now as I gaze upward from the road on my way to other places, I can stop the truck and smile at Chephren. It stares at me once again and I sense its moods and emotions; this time, though, it's not all so overwhelming and I think I can finally understand. Mount Chephren is a beautiful thing and truly a Wild Thing.

New Summits And New Routes: The Old Goats Group

Rick Collier

Octopus Mountain (2932m; 9620 feet): June 22, 1994 (first ascent)

John Holmes and I hiked the trail up the Simpson River, crossed on the suspension bridge to the Surprise Creek cabin, and then backtracked a kilometre to Indian Creek. We bushwhacked the right branch of this creek up into snowy meadows below the northeast ridge of the objective. The next day we followed this ridge, which included some interesting snow steps (likely gone by late July), in its entirety to the summit; no cairn or record found.

Mount Sam (2880m; 9450 feet): June 22, 1994 (first ascent)

From Octopus Mountain, John and I descended the broad connecting ridge to the southwest (and later to the southeast) and made good time to the col between this ridge and the ridge running southeast to the true summit of Sam. Once on the ridge, we had good mixed scrambling, with several minor summits before the main summit at the far southwest end; no cairn or record found.

Mount Peters (2850m; 9350 feet): July 7, 1994 (first ascent)

Mardy Roberts and I cycled from the Ya-Ha-Tinda Ranch up Scalp Creek, over the height of land, and down Skeleton Creek to the intersection with Forbidden Creek, which we followed on foot to the drainage from the valley east of Condor Peak. We camped near Condor Pass, and the next day followed the trail down to Peters Creek and ascended the easy slopes of Mount Peters to meadows at tree line. From here I went on alone and scrambled easily to the north summit (which bore a cairn); the main summit is, however, further to the south. The intervening ridge is easily traversed to a notch directly under the south summit. I descended scree to the south, then climbed the cracks and ledges of a somewhat exposed wall (about 50m) to gain the ridge slightly south of the summit, which is then easily followed back north. No cairn or record was found. Descent was made from the summit by two short rappels to the notch itself. The rappel route could be climbed; down-sloping and undercut holds make the lower section less appealing than the original route.

Mount Owen (3087m; 10,128 feet): July 21, 1994 (new route)

John Holmes, Carmie Callahan, and I cycled southeast on the Ottertail trail to the point where it intersects Float Creek from the northeast. We then followed game trails and bushwhacked up Float Creek to the col overlooking McArthur Creek to the east. The bushwhack is strenuous, involving much side-hilling, dense slide alder, and great tangles of avalanched trees — five kilometres took us seven hours. However, the upper section is a delightful mix of mature forest and meadows, and there are freshwater springs just below the col itself. The next day we followed the north ridge in its entirety, including the southwest upper glacier and snowfield, to the summit — a very pleasant ascent, with superb views of the Goodsirs.

Caledonia Mountain

This prominent quartzite peak is located on the Alberta/B.C. boundary, about 15 kilometres northwest of Yellowhead Pass. The east ridge forms the right-hand skyline when viewed from Highway 16 near Clairvaux Creek. An approach was made up the Miette Pack Trail until we were directly across from the objective, then we bushwhacked to a camp by a small lake at 1900 metres, 2.5 kilometres east of the mountain.

We followed a moraine to the base of the east ridge which was then climbed directly (three pitches), then short-roped to about 2450m where the ridge steepened. Six belayed pitches mixed with short-roping overcame the difficulties of the ridge. The rock quality of the ridge varied from very solid to rotten, friable bands, but was generally good. The belayed pitches were mostly easy lower 5th Class with a couple of 5.6 moves here and there.

On the east summit we found a small cairn. Excellent solid quartzite led us to the main (central) summit where no cairn or sign of previous ascent was found. A cairn was built and register left. A straightforward descent on small, brown scree was made down the southeast face via a shallow, diagonal gully starting between the east and main summits. We then climbed over an 8000 foot (2450m) pass just south of point 8327 feet and dropped down to camp.

This was an outing of the Jasper/Hinton Section of the Alpine Club of Canada.

Caledonia Mountain (9370 feet, 2855m). Harvey Struss, Brian Gibson and Greg Home. September 23, 1994.

Greg Horne

Mount Robson New Approach Line

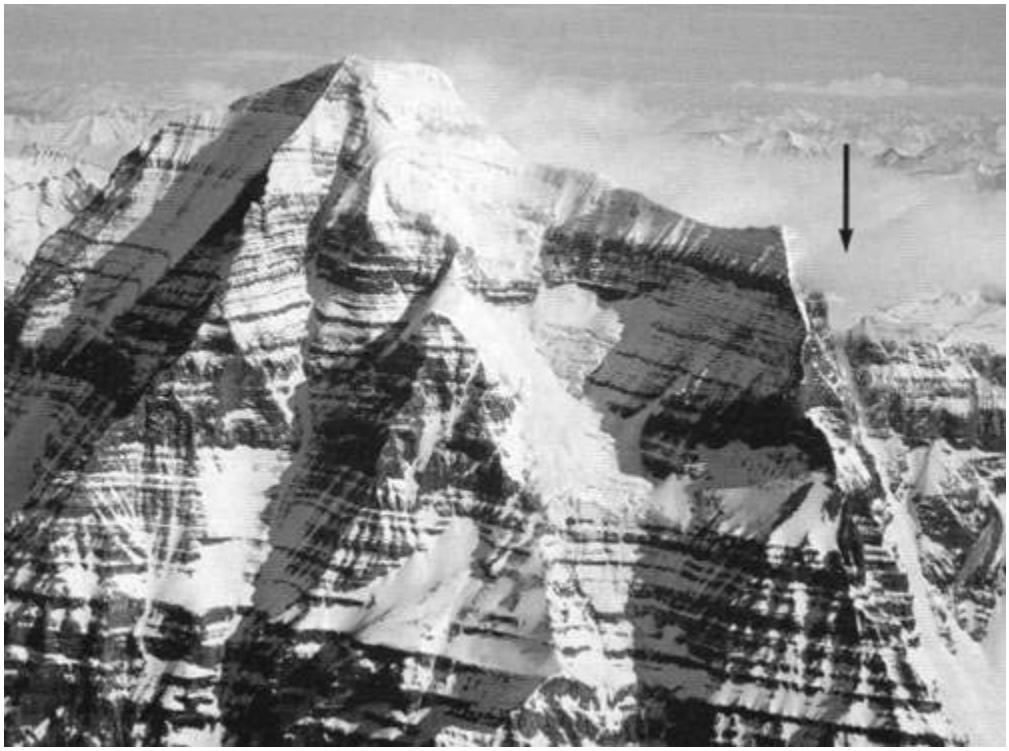
Greg Horne

In March 1989, Richard Parsloe and I had just returned to the parking lot after a failed winter attempt to climb Mount Robson. We spied two guys getting their gear ready to go climbing. Two parties back-to-back attempting Robson in winter? Wow, things are getting busy here! Not likely though, just a coincidence. Their gear and clothes caught our attention; Were we time warping? Their style appeared dated about twenty years earlier. Better check them out and see what's going on.

It turned out one of the fellows, Les Wilson, had first attempted Robson in winter with Leif-Norman Patterson in 1963 or 1964 (CAJ, Vol. 48, p. 109). Patterson was exploring an access route to The Dome from the south side. In particular he was interested in climbing a huge couloir which leads directly to The Dome. In his attempt with Les Wilson they abandoned the Patterson Couloir in favour of a spur ridge dropping from the south side of the

Robson/Resplendent col. This spur was approached by skiing up the valley that joins the Robson River just downstream of Kinney Lake. It must have been an extremely intimidating place as huge slide paths flank this valley's sides. Climbing the spur proved straightforward, mainly trailbreaking in snow and step-kicking. When they reached the col, it was bitterly cold and although they gave up the idea of climbing Robson, they bagged Resplendent, then skied down the Robson Glacier to Berg Lake and out.

The idea of accessing The Dome from the south side of Robson/Resplendent had intrigued me for some time before my meeting with Les Wilson. This chance or fate meeting refueled my interest in the possibility of using this much safer spur to gain access to The Dome.



Mount Robson, showing the Patterson Couloir. Photo: Greg Horne.

I had to wait until September, 1994, to check out this route. It had been an incredibly good summer, weatherwise, for Robson. Thirteen people had summited Robson in one day just before Harvey Struss and I started our exploration climb on the south side. I had no desire to make a summer-run up the valley bottom that Patterson and Wilson had used in winter; devil's club and unknown canyons scared me away. Instead, we used the steep but direct approach to the Ralph Forester Hut as our start. Rain and a thunderstorm, while we camped at Kinney Lake, was the warning of foul happenings to come. A continuous, cold shower from the dripping vegetation, crowding the fall-line trail to the timberline, was a refreshing compliment to our pre-dawn start.

Just above the last headwall, and below the hut, are the Yellow Bands. These bands allow an easy traverse left to the base of the Wishbone Arête. Instead, we traversed them right, crossing the ridge the hut is situated on, about 100 or so metres below the hut. We crossed sérac debris, well below the toe of the south face hanging glacier, then began a several-hour traverse of the Yellow Bands. The scree was generally soft, and with an ice axe in the uphill hand and ski pole in the lower hand, travel was rapid.

When we turned the broad corner and were able to first see the Patterson Couloir, crossing it looked ominous. There was a serious bergschrund below, and rocks were tumbling down the couloir. However, when we got right beside the couloir it seemed much tamer. One at a time we spotted each other across the soft snow, constantly checking above for falling bombs. Next, a minor crossing of a different bergschrund was the only place we needed to rope up to reach the Robson/Resplendent col. A right diagonal traverse led us to the spur ridge about one third of the way up from the base. Here was a good campsite with a snowbank for water supply. We pressed on up the spur. It was at first just scree, but then it degraded to gravel-covered, downsloping, slabby steps that demanded attention to detail. We reached the col just in time to set up camp before dark. It had taken about 12 hours from Kinney Lake to the col. We had hoped to reach The Dome in one day, but not this trip. A good storm moved in and during two nights at the col it left a foot of heavy, wet snow. On the second morning we pulled the pin. Retreating down those gravelly slabs, now covered with snow, was out of the question. We groped our way down into the whited-out Robson Cirque, making a couple of bonus detours into optional sérac mazes, before continuing down the Robson Glacier and out to the parking lot that evening.

Robson's summit remained elusive but we confirmed there is a reasonable route to access The Dome from the Ralph Forester Hut. A better schedule would be an easy half-day hike to the hut, then, on day two, traverse the Yellow Bands, head up the Patterson/Wilson Spur and reach The Dome.

How Times (Don't) Change

Jeff Everett

Let's face it. Unless you are interested in activities that directly involve the use of fossil fuel-burning machines, it's hard to find a thrill in Winnipeg. Well, that's not entirely true — I do risk my life even-day riding my bike in this city. Still, I really looked forward to climbing in the Rockies with my old friends when I went back at Christmas. With those guys, a thrill is not hard to find.

Having survived another bout of ennui driving across Canada's grain garden, I set off on one of my rare skinny-ski excursions into the back country. It was then that I spied an interesting-looking combination ice-dagger/ice-hose on the north side of Mount Kidd. I asked myself, "Who might be interested in climbing that?" In nanoseconds the answer came: Dave or Glenn. (The two-and-a half-hour approach, I assumed, would fail to satisfy Jeff M.'s home- and dog-owning responsibilities.)

Exceeding my great expectations, both Dave and Glenn both joined the climbing party. I wisely suggested the use of skis for the approach, as the trail was snowy and inclined in the upper reaches of the valley. Unfortunately, in the lower reaches it was neither, and I ended up carrying my downhill racing-cum-touring skis on my back.

The fellows were dubious concerning my choice of an objective that day, and became more so once they caught a glimpse of the route. Glenn pulled out one of his umpteen camera lenses to view it more closely and said, "It's not touched down!" Chuckling, Dave suggested we return for a ladder, but his comment was purposely ignored.

"I already told you that," I replied to Glenn, happily adding, "look how short it is; it'll be a techno-day!" I then gesticulated in true rave fashion. It shouldn't have mattered to Glenn anyway; he was only taking pictures.

Up we went across the steep, dry, and windswept slopes below the route. We were afforded fine views of Ribbon Falls; a big, unclimbed ice route just to the west (a very avalanche-prone one, I might add); and big, grey clouds. I glanced back at the lads and thought to myself, "Is it me, or is our party lacking the levity and zeal typical of past outings? Hmm. Perhaps Glenn is burdened with thoughts about how he is next going to cut his hair, and Dave with what will be his next outdoor equipment purchase. Oh well."

Once we arrived at the base of the route, we geared up for a few hours of sport. Glenn set up his tripod, Dave took the price tags off his equipment, and I prayed to the Indian deity Gnish, asking that the inert piece of water hanging above our heads remain attached for just this one day. Suddenly we heard a sound — was it the polyphonic pluckings of a twelve-string acoustic accompanied by a deep, sonorous, male voice, or was it the wind? Glenn and I maintain that it wasn't the wind — we heard Gordon Lightfoot up there; Dave strongly suggested otherwise. "Why not?" I thought, "Neil and Joni were heavily influenced by the Rockies. Maybe eastern musicians come out to spark up their imaginations too." Obviously Dave was thinking that more than just imaginations had been sparked up that day.

It probably became apparent to Dave and Glenn that I was psychologically troubled during my lead up the rock to the dagger. "See," I sputtered, "not aiding yet." And minutes later, "Look. My points are in a crack, they're not on the piton!" Et cetera.

"So what?" they thought, "we're cold; hurry-up." Easy for them. Two seasons ago they aided one of the coolest routes around. I sniveled, trembled, snorted, and whimpered yes. But aided, no. There is a reason why I use umbilical cords only as dog leashes. Yes sir, pride!

Once secure in my belay stance, I began hauling up on the two 8.5s. Oddly, one was moving as if it were unattached and the other not at all. Suddenly Dave-the-speed-demon's new helmet came into view, followed by Dave. Then there was movement on the other rope. Glenn had pre-empted his career as a climbing photographer, had chosen pain over, and was scaling the icy dagger. Alas! We were three once again and for one short moment, times were as they once were — three lads having genuine fun and thrills in the great outdoors. I was given another reminder of old times on the descent, when, dislodged from above, a rock the size of a haggis violated my personal space.

This outing made me realize that although some things don't change over our lifetimes, others do. Equipment for one — the more ergonomic and efficient (and expensive tools and step-in crampons are still foreign to me. Fitness changes too. I can see the day when none of us will relish hanging by our arms to avoid breaking our legs. And friendships — time and distance have changed the dynamics between my climbing partners, and between them and myself. Other friends are gone altogether. Fortunately, however. We will always have the satisfaction one gets when one is getting a feel — a real feel — for the medium from whence we came.

Jeff Everett on Ribbon of Darkness. Photo: Glenn Reisenhofer.

Jeff Everett on Ribbon of Darkness. Photo: Glenn Reisenhofer.

Ribbon of Darkness, Mount Kidd north face Kananaskis, AB. 50m, III, WI5.

F.A.: J. Everett, D. Campbell, and G Reisenhofer. December 1994.

Cold On The Shoulder

Glenn Reisenhofer

It all started with a ski up Ribbon Creek to get some exercise and enjoy the great outdoors. The climber's eye naturally scans the walls in search of excitement. This is a story of one such adventure that developed into three. On Boxing Day of 1994 Jeff Everett, Dave Campbell and Glenn Reisenhofer skied up the crusty trail of Ribbon Creek and walked to the base of a dagger that must have been seven feet away from the wall. The most adventurous of the three climbed the rotten rock, placed a few pitons and stemmed as wide as he could to the unformed pillar. We, at the base, cowered in the fear that the pillar would soon come crashing down with the climber on it. It didn't, but we still shook with frizzed nerve endings.

First it was a foot, then one tool and then the other tool were carefully placed on the ice. The other foot remained on the rock as our man Everett stemmed between ice and rock upwards, He placed a screw as high as he could and turned the pillar with great difficulty. With deep, yogic breathing patterns he strived for the top and bellowed out a huge howl of joy. The two of us joined him and finished the ice hose above, therefore establishing Ribbon of Darkness, 5.7, WI 5, 50m.

The second trip in was done in an

exploratory nature. As we had approached Ribbon of Darkness we spotted a small seepage on the SE face of Ribbon Peak and figured it might contain some goodies up higher. In the new year Glenn went in to check out the route only to find a goat, a grey jay and a small grade two with some intermingled snow slopes. The route didn't go very high, but the goat demonstrated some excellent scree bashing techniques. Wherefore and Why (WI 2, 200m) was the result of Glenn's adventure. The descent took longer than planned due to an investigative nature: "wonder what's in this canyon... nothing but steep walls... ugh!"

The last trip up the creek lead Kevin Blades and Glenn to a bowl high up on Mount Kidd past Ribbon of Darkness. Mountain biking by headlamp, postholing and slogging up scree brought us to the route just in time to witness a powder avalanche come down the route and stop at our feet. It seemed to move like a slow boat down and over the individual flows of ice. "Well, guess the route is clean now," was the reply of one of the lads.

As progress was made up the climb it gave us a very alpine feel, like we were climbing at the Columbia Icefields, for repeated spindrifts swirled there way down. At the top of the climb there was an unformed dagger out of our reach. To the left there were some ice smears barely wider than two-and-a-half feet and Kevin was sent on his merry way. Well, maybe not so merry with all that swearing, for on the crux he ran out of ice and was repeatedly bombed by spindrift, so intense at times that he could not be seen or see, for his glasses were coated with snow. This alpine adventure produced The Wreck of the Glenn Fitzgerald WI4+, 300m.

Kevin Blades engulfed on Wreck. Photo: Glenn Reisenhofer.

In recognition of his contribution as we climbed the "Canadian Ribbon Creek Trilogy" we would like to thank Gordon Lightfoot for his tunes, route names and for the realization that "it's cold on the shoulder, you know that you get a little older everyday."

A New (?) Route On Vice-President

Geoff Powter

On June 30, 1994, Bill Durtler, Peter Tucker and I followed the Iceline Trail from Takkakaw Falls to the base of the north face of the Vice President. Our initial objective was a repeat of the Toft/Reasoner route on the north face, but one pitch of climbing in the couloir left two of us bleeding from rockfall. We opted instead for a wider and clearly safer gully to the left. This slope, which averaged 50°, climbed about 400m above the rolls of the glacier before joining the prominent north-east ridge which drops from the east summit of the mountain. The ridge was followed for one-and-a-half pitches to a small cornice which provided a moment of entertainment before gaining the summit plateau. The plateau was then followed to the summit proper.

On the way, we passed by the top of the Toft/Reasoner route, and a view down this encouraged us in our choice to bail on the couloir: the cornice at the top of the route, which is described in Rocky Mountains of Canada-South as "overhanging," appeared impossibly so. The face of the cornice had sheared, leaving a blank wall 25° beyond vertical. Even with Tucker's remarkable alpine skill and Durtler notorious drive, we would have likely had to reverse the entire couloir had we climbed that far on the original route. The route we did complete was felt by all of us to be a far more enjoyable outing than any of the other routes on the mountain, and makes a fine, safe traverse with little backtracking in combination with the President. Return to the base of the climb was simple, cutting east over the shoulder dividing the President Glacier from the north face of the mountain. Although the route seems an obvious target on the peak, there is no previous record of an ascent, and so is reported here for the record.

North face of the Vice President.
The northeast ridge route follows the left arrow. The Toft/Reasoner route follows the right arrow. Both routes traverse right to the summit. Photo: Bill Durtler.

Vice President, Waputik Group (3066m), north face to northeast Ridge, 3.5 hours to main summit from toe of glacier.

F.A.: Peter Tucker, Bill Durtler & Geoff Powter. June 30, 1994.

Rockies Ice Update 94-95

Joe Josephson

First of all I would like to thank all the people out there who helped make my recent guidebook Waterfall Ice: Climbs in the Canadian Rockies a success. I am greatly indebted to those who helped me pull the information together to make the book possible, and I thank all of those who bought the book. As hard as I tried to prevent any errors, there were inevitably a few that squeaked through. An upcoming second printing should correct most of the errors, but for those of you who don't want to buy essentially the same book, you can get an updated set of corrections. Please send a self-addressed stamped #10 envelope to: Waterfall Ice Corrections, Box 2727, Canmore, Alberta TOL OMO.

In almost uncanny timeliness with the new guide, the 1994-95 ice season was one of the worst on record. This came after some of the best seasons ever in the early 1990s. Only the most reliable classics formed up well; unless you were interested in extreme routes. Arctic Dream, Sea of Vapours, Riptide, Le Lezard d'Or (with an additional pitch), French Reality, Nemesis, French Maid, and Blessed Rage all formed.

Popular areas like The Ghost had a slow year. Only one route formed in The Valley of the Birds and as a result, This House of Sky was virtually overrun. There were sometimes as many as ten parties on the route at one time. And as is to be expected, there was more than one rescue. Even The Sorcerer and Hydrophobia were at least

half a grade harder than usual. The usually abundant Mount Wilson and Weeping Wall areas were slim. But on the positive flipside, parties were cleaning up on a number of mixed lines as they looked for routes to do.

A few years ago in this column I mentioned a notable increase in the number of ice climbers tramping about in the Rockies. Judging from this past season, that observation was a gross understatement. There has been an exponentially greater number of climbers thrashing about in the Rockies. Yes, thrashing. The volume of leader falls and accidents has become legion. Safe and smart ice and winter climbing requires a unique set of attitudes, judgments and experiences. They are not difficult to attain, but require some thought and a healthy dose of patience.

Another grim reality to hit the Rockies has been the increased occurrence of bolts, chains, and fixed ropes on established climbs. Several years ago, local Banff guides placed numerous chain anchors on Professor Falls and Roman's Gully among others. Their claim was that it makes the routes easier to guide. I have talked to numerous senior guides in the valley and the consensus is that there are some climbs, into which category Professors and Roman's Fall, that should not have permanently fixed anchors. The biggest concern expressed from experienced climbers and guides is that the presence of bolts on these climbs destroys the learning grounds for a whole new generation of ice climbers. The tiered nature of Professors and similar climbs makes it ideal for learning climbers to stop, place anchors and safely make their way up multi-pitch routes. Once these crucial skills are learned, these climbers can then move on to bigger, harder and more serious routes in a safe manner.

Another activity of concern that has been on the increase is the stringing of fixed ropes to help seed the formation of free-standing columns. The most outrageous example of this activity has been in Johnston Canyon. It will not leave a good impression if and when the Parks Canada sees a piece of climbing rope dangling from one of the most popular tourist attractions in Banff Park. Such negligent consideration for the potential consequences will at the very minimum create a further alienation between climbers and the Parks administration. It is immature to imagine that the access problems escalating in the U.S. will not hit the Rockies. And besides, it is quite obvious that the "seeding" of ice routes with a rope simply does not work.

I raise the above questions because I believe it is imperative that individuals take responsibility for their actions and that they thoughtfully consider their consequences on the entire climbing community. We are entering a period of profound change in the way and the places we have the privilege to climb. User fees, access limitations, and excessive trashing of climbing venues are only a few of the serious issues affecting all climbers, winter and summer.

NEW ROUTES

Waterton

The Waterton Park/Pincher Creek area has seen a real renaissance of new route activity and exploration. Two years ago the hardest routes consisted of a couple of technical Grade 5s. Now there are at least half a dozen Grade 5+ or harder routes, including several mixed lines. A number of more moderate lines have been cleaned up as well.

The Redeemer *** 55m IV, WI6

This classic is left of Lucifer in the Castle River Area near Westcastle Ski Resort. It has been known for years as Hell's Angel. The first ascent was in January — which required driving for 14 km on snowmachine-packed roads followed by a three-hour slog uphill to the base. Shortly after the ascent, several other parties went into the area and the "getting seriously stuck — walk 20 km" rate was about 50 percent.

The first ascent team climbed the route in two pitches, the first 35m on technical, lacy ice to a cave on the left. The final 20m started on an overhanging pillar leading to easier ground and the top. The second ascent party climbed the route in one pitch and was reported to be "pumped for a week." Rappel the route.

Side Swipe City 30m II, WI3

This is the short smear 10m left of Expert's Choice and slightly up hill. It was named for the large piece of ice that fell off the route and nearly killed a belayer at the base of Expert's Choice –Left Side. Rappel the route.

Mrs. Brown Chooses the Dagger 30m II, WI4

Monty Python fans will love this one. This route is found 40-50m left of Side Swipe City on the far side of scree cone. A few moves of rock lead to thin ice that steepens near the top. The route ends in the cliff face. Rappel the route.

Buffalo with an Aqualung 25m II, WI3

Another quick smear 10m left of Mrs. Brown.

Le Pilier des Putains 45m II, WI6

This is a stiff variation to French Kiss. It forms over the buttress just right of the normal way. It is a hideously small and technically rotten free-standing column. Rappel from large tree to the left.

The Deviant** 40m II, 5.6 WI5

Five meters right and at half height of Quick and Dirty is a broad icicle that hangs off a small ledge. Climb up a very steep and thin smear just to the left of the icicle. The smear ends below a roof (fixed pin) at which point there is an awesome rock traverse onto the icicle (fixed pin). The rock is excellent, with large incut holds and good gear. A few or kbs /bugaboos and a Number 2 or 2.5 Friend should suffice. Rappel the route.

Blue Rodeo ** 135m IV, WI3

This good route is found just left of Sullivan Falls. In the dazed and exhausted state in which you reach the route (four hour approach), Blue Rodeo vaguely resembles a cowboy straddling a saddle horn. The left-hand chap is slightly harder than the right; they both converge on a broad section of rolling ice leading to the top in one and a half pitches. Several harder pillars or mixed variations are possible. Rappel the route. The route is visible from Highway 5 leading from the Park gates to the Waterton townsite.

Racing with Shadows** 90m IV, WI5

This spectacular looking pillar ends in a rock wall just left of Blue Rodeo. The climb is in two sections divided by a good ledge. Dripping from the ledge to the ground there may be three smears. The first ascent team climbed the middle smear that started mixed and ran up slightly thicker ice (WI4). The second pitch climbs a deceptively steep, and fortunately short pillar to easier ground and the top. Rappel the route.

Pork Chubby 100m IV, WI4

This small curtain lies isolated in a gully about 500m left of the Sullivan ft«//.r amphitheatre. A 20m steep step leads to easy, roily terrain above.

Kananaskis

A Wizard Prang * 50m III, WI4

A detailed description has not yet been produced, but his route lies on Mount Head near Highwood Junction, adjacent to Stoney Creek (82-J/7 GR688871). The approach takes 1.5 hours from the ranger station with low avalanche hazard and good views of the prairies. This route is moderately wide with several sustained lines up a series of short pillars. Rappel the route.

The Ghost Valley

Going to the Sun Highway 1300m IV, WI6+

Yes, this route is 1300m long. However, there are only four pitches of real climbing. It is located in the valley west of This House of Sky and is complicated to find. It was originally seen from the ridge line atop This House of Sky. The first pitch is a radical free-standing pillar that only marginally touched down on the first ascent. The team climbed up rock behind the pillar to get rock gear up high (fixed pin in place); they then came down and sent the pillar. Lots of walking above leads to several pitches of alpine-type ice climbing that tops out on a subsidiary summit of Costigan's Boil. Rappel and downclimb the route.

The Bow Valley

Tout les Matins du Monde * 90m II, WI3

This fun route is found on Mt Cory in the deep cleft on Guides Rock between the rock routes Paper Chase and Take it for Granite. Park on the 1A Highway and hike about 45 minutes uphill to the route. The first pitch in a right facing corner is 30 cm wide and of varying thickness. Rock protection with pitons and nuts is recommended. Find belay on fixed pins at the top of the corner. The second pitch climbs moderate ice to 70°. Rappel the route.

The Radium Highway

Westafailurz 60m III, WI4+

This fun, steep curtain is found up Tokkum Creek above the Marble Canyon Warden Station. Ski up the trail for just over an hour and past the route Winnebego Warrior. The route is in a huge avalanche bowl on the right side of the valley. Hike 45 minutes up the slope to the route.

Field

Warthog ** 40m III, 5.7 WI6

This mixed line takes on the icicle-laced overhangs just left of Pilsner Pillar. Climb onto the main ledge where the pillar of Pilsner starts. From the right side of the ledge climb a short ice smear to access a rock ledge. Traverse right on the rock to the base of a free-hanging icicle. Gently stem onto the dagger and gun up 20m of overhanging stalagtites to the prominent ledge half-way up Pilsner. Push up a free-standing tube that ends in a rock roof just below the top of Pilsner. Rappel the route.

Bruce Hendricks on The Redeemer Photo: Brad Wrobleski.

Icefields Parkway

Aboriginal Genocide 90m III, WI5

This route is in the same amphitheatre as Murchison Falls, but is 300m left. Climb a thin smear to a short but pumpy pillar that backs off into snow. Walk up to a final WI3 pitch that ends in a rock wall. Rappel the route.

Lessons of Oka 70m III, 5.7, WI4

This is the first of two good, short mixed routes found about 200m right of Murchison Falls. Look for a wide, teardrop shaped curtain pouring from the rock wall. A few years ago, a party was nearly killed at the base of Murschison when a house-sized rockfall came from the large rotten overhangs way above these routes. This route starts in the left-facing corner and climbs 10m of mixed ground to another 10m of 5.7 rock leading to more mixed climbing. The final 35m pitch climbs the left side of the ice curtain. Rappel the route.

Zapatista Liberation 90m III, WI5

Just right of Lessons of Oka, this route climbs up to the right side of the teardrop curtain. Pitch one climbs steep mixed ground over several overlaps for 15m to a small ledge. Continue up a short pillar that leads to fatter, easier ice on the right side of the teardrop. Rappel the route.

Bastarir Sirdar 110m IV, WI5

This is the long-known about ice found way above Melt Out. Finally someone has had the gumption to make the four-to-five hour trudge above Melt Out to find out what it's all about. There are several smears in the area and it is unsure which is Bastarir Sidar. The route starts with 60m of thin, hard-to-protect ice. This is followed by a 50m WI4+ pillar that eases off after 20m. Rappel the route.

Second Descent

Kayla D. Stevenson

The ACC Rockies Grand Traverse

This is not just another epic about some heroic first ascent; rather, it's about history being made! We are the group who will use the new Peter Fuhrmann Route to descend

from Abbot Pass for only the second time. Legendary Swiss guides, hired by the Canadian Pacific in the early 1900s, never did find a route which would bypass the Death Trap. However, Peter Fuhrmann, our dauntless guide, discovered a new route on a solo climb in 1991 and would now shepherd us down that very descent.

The night before our departure from Marble Canyon, five intrepid climbers meet — not without some apprehension and a little fear — with Peter Fuhrmann, our leader, mentor, and task master. Questions haunt us: Are we fit enough? Will we be in exposed places? How fast are we expected to go? Who is this man with the easy smile and comfortable manner, in whose hands our lives will rest for the next seven days? Peter assures us novices that by the end of the week we will definitely be comfortable on loose rock; after all, we are in the Rockies, aren't we?

Fears are replaced by eager anticipation as Peter describes the week's plans: seven days of hiking and climbing which will include traversing up and over four high passes for a distance of over 60 miles, gaining a total elevation of over 12,000 feet, climbing a 10,000-foot peak, enjoying deluxe accommodation in Alpine Club huts, sumptuous gourmet meals included. Even a mid-week bail-out night at the new Lake Louise Alpine Centre, with showers and real beds, has been arranged. Intriguing terms scattered throughout his talk, like "lovely exposed ridge" and "cat walk," have us hopelessly hooked.

We span all ages from 20 to 70, different levels of climbing experience, and various occupations. Karen, the accountant from Calgary, wants to conquer the snow slope where she had fallen a previous year; Ann, the newly retired teacher from Edmonton, expects the greatest personal challenge of her life; Peter, a retired geologist and former President of the ACC Calgary, keeps combining theory with practice; Dominique, retired French professor and leader for the ACC Vancouver Section, looks forward to singing Gregorian chants from suitable heights; and Richard, engineer from Victoria, dreams of climbing to the Abbot Hut. Dan Verrall, camp manager and chef extraordinaire, completes our party.

Three volunteers, Gordon, Rob and Doug, join us on and off during the week. They will carry anything for us (even though we are supposed to carry all our own gear), cut steps on steep hard snow slopes where needed, dig great quantities of snow for melting, and generally boost morale when the going gets tough.

Day 1: Our goal is the Fay Hut — from Marble Canyon up the Prospector's Valley. We dub Peter Fuhrmann "Peter the Great," a title he has undoubtedly already earned; Peter Verrall we call "Saint Peter," a title he will undoubtedly earn. Now Peter the Great does pack inspection and tells us we have too much weight. We take things out and volunteer our 'porters' to carry even more than their already-loaded 65-pound packs.

It is a beautiful hot day and, much to our surprise and delight, Peter takes a slow, leisurely 'guide's' pace, letting us know that this is the way it's supposed to be done. Maybe I'll make it for the whole seven days after all! A family of tourists, stopping off to see Marble Canyon, takes one look at our huge packs and slow pace, asks where we're going, and remarks we'll never get there at this pace. Peter smiles knowingly and carries on.

Soon we discover that this is no ordinary trip; we are expected to learn a lot as well. For instance, we must master balancing on a narrow log, with a hidden agenda to test us to find out who gets panicky at heights. No one does. So far, so good. The next lesson is "Follow the Leader." All of us fail miserably. We mutiny and choose our own, more secure log downstream to cross. No one falls. But Peter has his work cut out for him if he is to hone us into a well-oiled climbing team in a mere seven days.

Having scrambled up the final steep slope, we arrive at the Fay Hut around 4 p.m. We're left with plenty of time to listen to the first of Peter's many epic stories, sip sherry, sit in the sun, and enjoy the most wonderful lemon chicken accompanied by rice and fresh vegetables. No instant dried food for us. This is living!

Day 2: This day's destination is the Neil Colgan Hut. Our wake-up call comes around 8:30 a.m. No pre-dawn holler for us! With lunches made, packs jammed full again, everyone finally ready, we head up and out of the trees onto open rocky terrain.

Before crossing our first icefield, Peter gives us a lesson on tying in quickly so the group is not held up. Of course we're all thumbs but, finally, two rope teams head out across the Fay Glacier and up to Canada's highest hut (2900m). Once arrived, we relax on the balcony and enjoy the 360° view: Hungabee and some of the ten peaks in one direction, the Goodsirs, Howsers and Bugaboos in another.

As the sun sets, temperatures drop, and snow starts to fall, we are confronted with a dilemma: the outhouse sits on a knife-edge ridge at a huge distance from the hut!!

Something must be done about putting a liquid outhouse closer. Next day, the men grab a reject-outhouse barrel and literally roll it along the edge of a cliff next to the hut. While the men discuss the design of this new facility, we women contemplate just how it will accommodate us! Serious objections to its deficiencies and not-so-casual references to discrimination result in a unisex design: the funnel is placed under an old seat instead of nailed to the side wall. I get to christen it with the first descent.

Day 3: The highlight of our trip, the summit climb of Mount Little (3140m) on a glorious day, awaits us. But before we can ascend our "Everest," Peter organizes an impromptu class. It covers short-roping to climb on loose rocky terrain, knot tying, coiling the rope around our bodies, rope management, and belaying our rope-mates across tricky spots.

We rope up. Peter leads the first rope; Dan the second. We start up the snow slope with helmets donned and crampons on. Then we go onto the steep loose rock, remove our crampons and begin to work our way up to the summit. Peter begins 'gardening' (clearing rocks out of our path) as he leads his rope team up, meanwhile calling back something about what is taking the second rope so long.

Climbing on the second rope, I am convinced that this day is to be my last. Not only does every handhold come out in my hands but rocks crash down all around with a thunderous roar. Despite more of Peter's gardening, it's two steps forward, three back.

How am I to know it's perfectly safe? After expending what seemed like an enormous amount of effort during four endless hours, we reached the final ridge to the summit. The pinnacle looks like nothing more than a high pile of loose rubble, vaguely shaped like a peak, falling away in every direction. With a great feeling of accomplishment, we record our names in the summit register. Huddling precariously on whatever substantial rock we can find, we enjoy looking down on people peering up at us through the telescope at Moraine Lake.

Time to leave the summit, although reluctantly. We downclimb a steep snow-slope, turning around to face the mountain exactly where Dan had drawn a line in the

snow. We reach the hut expecting a well-earned rest. But, no! Time for more lessons. After donning additional layers of clothing, we troop down to the glacier below to practice ice-axe arrest and crevasse rescue. We throw ourselves down into the snow-filled bergschrund time and time again, every which way, then climb out onto the snowfield to rescue Saint Peter. This fellow climber is hanging over the edge of the bergschrund, complaining about hypothermia, while we fumble at setting up the rescue system. With Peter alive and safely rescued, we all return to the hut for the evening's entertainment: the infamous outhouse move, the spectacle of our hut host and porter ascending a nearby peak, and the sun setting behind a panorama of glowing peaks. A perfect ending to a perfect day!

Day 4: Peter warns us that this will be our most strenuous day: we will descend to Moraine Lake via the Shiesser Lomas Route. As we approach the col between peaks 3.5 and 4, our predicament becomes all too obvious. We have to go down 1500m — straight down. The Valley of the Ten Peaks stretches out below us, looking vast and intimidating.

Peter tells us not to worry! A little voice inside me gets another picture. Peter: "No problem. I have recently re-marked the route with orange paint splotches." Little voice: "If only we can spot them!" Peter: "Wherever there are tricky spots, there is a cable or a chain to hold onto." Little voice: "Yeah, when the route gets too vertical." Peter: "Don't wear gloves; you need bare hands to hang on." Little voice: "Will I panic?" Peter: "No reason to be scared." Little voice: "Oops, cold fear setting in!"

Down we go, working our way into the unknown, trusting Peter the Great to live up to his name. At first the going isn't too bad if one discounts the impossibly loose rock underfoot. As we make our way down into the abyss, we are surprised to discover there actually is a route. It seems to disappear beneath our feet every time we look. Small comfort that this route has been traveled by many climbers before us. We encounter the first cable and, sure enough, my feet slip. I swing free, hanging on for dear life, and am thankful that someone placed those anchors securely.

Another cable, then a chain along a short traverse, then another cable, and we think the worst is over. Wrong! I hear Peter mumble behind me: "... and now for the slimy couloir, rusty chain, cat-walk horror show." Little voice squeaks: "'horror show' wasn't a word used during the pre-trip briefing."

And a 'horror show' it turns out to be! No chains or cables to help us traverse the icy couloir, only some steps chopped for us by Dan and the porter. Then a rusty chain to clip into for a 20-metre descent. As I unclip from that reddish chain and turn around, there before me is the Cat Walk, a narrow rock bridge with only thin air to hold onto. Where are cables and chains when you really need them?

After the Cat Walk, everything else on the route seems like a walk in the park. Without great exertion we get to the moraine and make our way through the open forest along Moraine Lake and towards the waiting van. Lake Louise Alpine Centre lets us enjoy hot showers, dinner, a visit to the guide's room, a sauna, and a well-earned rest.

Day 5: This is our longest day in boots. First, we travel back through the Valley of the Ten Peaks which presents plenty of views and opportunities to photograph the Schiesser Ledges. We climb over Wenkchemna Pass, down the steep scree, glissade snow slopes into Prospector's valley to wind up at Eagle Eyrie. Then, after a brief rest and more of Peter's epic sagas, we rope up once more to go over Opabin Pass, descend to the Opabin Plateau and, finally, down to Elizabeth Parker Hut for the night.

The evening's excitement is provided by Peter's tales of yet more exploits. At the same time we hear ongoing cries for help from the direction of Wiwaxy Peak. Peter stops talking to watch, as we all do, a dramatic helicopter rescue — just as it gets dark — of two cold and scared climbers. Never a dull moment on this trip!

Day 6: This is Richard's day. His dream, to climb to Abbot Pass, is within reach. We hike from Lake O'Hara to Lake Oesa, then scramble up the scree and snow towards Abbot Pass. It is a long, tough, grueling slog, not to say grunt. A nearby thunderstorm encourages us to hurry even when the going gets tough. Although an awesome phenomenon, we want to avoid carrying singing ice-axes and electrically charged packs. It starts to rain as we climb the final scree slope. Ten cold, wet climbers finally arrive at the Abbot Hut. Richard's tender loving care gets the ancient coal stove started. We soon warm up while our wet clothes adorn the beams overhead.

Learning the history of the Hut makes our stay even more enjoyable. Built by Swiss guides in 1922, the Hut is a magnificent stone structure. At 2800m, it was the highest in the Rockies until the Colgan Hut was built. Construction materials were carried from Lake Louise by horseback up the Lower Victoria Glacier as far as crevasses would permit, then human backs took over for the rest of the way. Today, 70 years later, it still stands as a tribute to Phillip Abbot, who in 1896, without guide or hut, died while attempting the first ascent of Mt. Lefroy.

Day 7: The descent to Lake Louise will bring our final and most challenging day. We will not come down by way of the infamous Death Trap, which Peter sees as too dangerous for climbers, but by the much safer path discovered by him. He will guide our descent by way of the Fuhrmann Ledge Route.

We get up at 5:30 a.m. to watch a glorious sunrise. We know today's start won't be an early one because our crampons have been left behind at Lake O'Hara in anticipation of warm weather and mushy snow. So because the temperature dropped below freezing during the night, we have the perfect excuse to go back to bed. After all, the morning has already yielded enough magnificent photos to justify the entire day.

We enjoy a leisurely forenoon. While being treated to Dan's specialty for brunch, eggs Benedict, we look longingly towards the summit of Mount Lefroy. If we could only have another day and climb it. Shortly before noon we are ready to start out. We traverse right from the hut along the shoulder of Mount Lefroy. The snow is still hard, so Dan and a porter go ahead of the group, chopping steps into the steep snow slope. At one point we watch four climbers on the Upper Victoria Glacier, directly across the Death Trap, as they descend from the summit of Mount Victoria.

Peter, who had gone ahead to mark the correct ledge and build a cairn, now signals for us to join him. The Fuhrmann Ledge is at times nothing more than a band of rubble clinging to the sheer vertical walls of Mount Lefroy. In places the Ledge disappears altogether and, looking between our boots, we can see all 1000 feet down to the Lower Victoria Glacier. Silent with concentration we work our way along the one km-long ledge, belaying each other across tricky spots. Peter's now well-oiled climbing team has its finest hour and descends the scree and snow onto the rock-covered Lefroy Glacier. We are elated and

breathe a collective sigh of relief. We have done it: the second descent! Would this make-history? In our books — yes!

We stop at the Plain of the Six Glaciers Tea House for pie and a last look at our new route. Then we hike down to Lake Louise where a tourist keeps his distance from our rather ripe and sweaty bodies but, nevertheless, takes the final group photo.

Devil's Fang, Ghost River -New Route

There are three obvious lines to the left of Bonanza's normal start at the chimney. Start in the first large left-facing corner. Climb this crack to its top and then traverse right to a dihedral. Climb the crack on the right fact. Halfway up the crack, traverse right onto a small ledge leading to a larger belay ledge (30m). The second pitch continues directly above in a right-facing inside corner. Complete the whole crack which at its top joins the standard route leading directly to the treed plateau (30m).

Bonanza Direct, Ghost River, 5.8+.

F.A.: Frank Campbell, Dennis & Nancy Stefani. July 1, 1994

Called On Account Of The Maelstrom Of Wind, Rain And Snow

Tom O'Sullivan

Watching the stars twinkle in the night sky I wanted to sleep but couldn't. I was too anxious and restless. My mind was racing about the climb I was to commence in less than three hours. I was bundled securely in my sleeping bag, bivying in the Wilcox Creek Campground, at the Columbia Icefields. It was May 27, 1994, 2:30 in the morning and not a creature was stirring in the campground— only me.

In less than an hour I would be getting up to attempt Sidestreet 2, an alpine route, with Jeff Everett. Jeff was comfortably cocooned nearby in his bivy sack and seemed impervious to my restlessness. I was quite envious of his unencumbered sleep. I contemplated throwing some of the gravel that I was lying on his way and making growling noises to alarm him but refrained from doing so. I reasoned that despite Jeff's good natured disposition I didn't want to risk annoying him at this early hour. I figured that if I disturbed him with my bear ruse he might seize an opportunity later in the day and get even while belaying me as I jugged to my heart's content on Sidestreet.

Looking beyond Jeff's immune form, I watched as clouds occasionally would sweep in from the direction of Mount Athabasca across my field of vision and obscure the grandeur of the night sky. The drama continued throughout the night, high above my head. The twinkling stars would show incredible brilliance only to fade and hide behind the greyness of the storm clouds as they were swept eastward by the invisible winds.

While I lay awake, taking in the nocturnal panorama, I thought of the ancient Ionian philosophers who envisioned their universe as being infinite in extension and duration. The philosophers considered stars to be pin-holes in a dark curtain through which the earth's inhabitants glimpsed the cosmic fire filling the space. According to early Greek cosmology the spherical heavens enclosed the earth like the bark of a tree. The philosophers viewed the earth as being the centre of the universe. The sun, moon and planets were held to surround the earth and revolve in concentric circles around its axis. Such a theory represented an awakening in humankind. It reflected a radical departure from the reliance upon the mythological world to explain natural phenomena. Instead it represented a quest, by our ancestors, for natural explanations and rational causes.

When dawn approached and our eventual departure became imminent, I became more anxious and restless, and yet fatigued. I could feel every minute irregularity defining the gravel of the campground beneath my sleeping bag. I half expected to be awakened from my semi-consciousness by some noisy night critter brushing its whiskers across my head as it puttered about in the grey of the dawn. Occasionally, rain would splatter on my face causing me to roll over in my sleeping bag and pull my tuque down over my eyes. I yearned for sleep but it did not come.

The last time I had felt as fatigued was when I was six years old. My family use to visit Prince Edward Island every summer. I grew up making sand castles and spent endless hours frolicking in the waves. One day I had become very exhausted from playing in the surf. I had neither the strength to stand out of the surfs turmoil nor the energy to fight its ebb and flow. My father often told me that if I ever found myself in difficulty while swimming in the ocean I was to avoid panicking, remain relaxed and float in the buoyant saltwater. I followed his advice that day and was able to fight my helplessness in the strong surf and powerful rip tides. I eventually regained my strength and was able to win back the purchase of the shoreline. After crawling out of the surf onto the beach, I wrapped my entire little self in a huge beach towel. Feeling completely spent from the effort and the coldness of the salt water, I slept the day away. I had never in my life felt so exhausted until now.

In the last 48 hours I had managed to get only three hours' sleep. It had been one of those weeks. The stresses of life were beginning to well up and consume me. I had needed a rest and looked on this adventure to the Columbia Icefields as a break from my everyday responsibilities. However, my preoccupation at the thought of jugging up at least 400m of fixed line while the protection was pulled out on account of the tension on the rope, climbing on mixed rock and ice in crampons, aiding on the roof and possibly being avalanched off the descent ridge in addition to my other all encompassing stresses was simply too much for me to handle. I was overloaded with stress and was simply fatigued. To make matters worse the weather had all the appearances of becoming inclement.

Just when I finally began to doze off I was awakened by Jeff wrestling with the zipper of his bivy sack. In a very rested and cheery voice he queried whether I had a good night's sleep. I told him I hadn't slept a wink and was wiped. "No matter," he exclaimed. He indicated that my fatigue would make me experience the climb in a fashion similar to the usual fatigue alpinists feel on long multi-day climbs. Memories of working long hours as an exploration geologist in the high Arctic, with its short field season, came to my mind. These recollections were intermixed with the demands that my current job of articling as a student of law for a firm in Calgary were requiring. It was exhausting just thinking of my current employment situation. I quickly dispelled the thought and turned to reviving my body for the day's adventure.

Our departure from the campground had been expedient. We had prepared our packs the night before. When we awoke, we stowed our sleeping bags and drove slowly from the campground to the Icefields Parkway. The stillness of the dawn was punctuated by the car's tires crunching

on the gravel. The car's headlights briefly illuminated spruce and fir trees that were swaying with the wind. We turned in a northerly direction and drove two km past the Columbia Icefield Interpretative Centre. I swung the car around and parked on the shoulder of the road.

The panorama of the Athabasca Glacier spread itself out before us. In the early dawn light I could partially make out Mounts Athabasca and Andromeda, the Athabasca Glacier, as well as the lower reaches of the east face of Snow Dome. While taking in the alpine grandeur, a cool, moist wind blew down from the glaciers and struck my face with a refreshing force.

I couldn't believe how much the Athabasca Glacier had receded through the years. About 14 years ago I had spent a fruitless time examining the lateral and terminal recessional moraines of the glacier for evidence of trilobites on a first year University of Alberta Geology field trip. At the time, Sunwapta Lake appeared a lot smaller and the tongue of the glacier more prominent. In the intervening years I had failed to notice the glacier's recession, as I had been more intent on driving to and from ski races or looking at the conditions of the peaks for climbing.

From my vantage point, the northern reaches of Little Snow Dome and the descent ridge were draped in snow and rain, and were only partially visible. The ice climbs on Snow Dome, Borderline and Slipstream were hidden behind a white bank of cloud. It looked like the weather was going to be the determining factor of the success of the climb and not my physical and emotional limitations.

The first barrier that Jeff and I had to surmount in our bid to gain the lower reaches of Sidestreet was Sunwapta River. We had to cross this cold body of water to gain access to the Snow Dome Glacier. This glacially-fed river began its existence at the foot of the Athabasca Glacier, one km upstream from our location. Its meltwaters were captured between the lateral and terminal moraines of the glacier to form Sunwapta Lake. The river's drainage basin followed the west side of the Icefields Highway before joining the Athabasca River at its confluence downstream. At our location, the Sunwapta's northerly flowing waters were greenish-grey in colour, thigh deep and very cold. I figured that the experience of feeling the cold water while crossing this aquatic barrier would shock the fatigue from my body, or at the very least, make me wet and even more miserable in my tired state.

Jeff led the way. He scrambled down the bank of the river and skirted across to the river's cut bank on the opposite side. From my position on the opposite shore, it appeared that the river where he crossed looked deeper than we had anticipated. Since his legs were much longer than mine, I scanned upstream for a better position to attempt my traverse.

I found a suitable location to cross the Sunwapta about 100m upstream from where Jeff traversed. A small gravel bar allowed me to hop over a number of Sunwapta's braided channels. With most of the river crossed, I reached the deepest channel. I was forced to wade into the fast flowing water. The water flow was very powerful against my legs and footing. When the water had reached mid-thigh, I knew that I was in store for an uncomfortable day.

THIS ADVENTURE WAS NOT ABOUT ACCOMPLISHING A DEMANDING ROUTE UNDER ADVERSE CONDITIONS, BUT ABOUT EXPERIENCING THE ATTEMPT WITH A FRIEND.

While fighting the current and feeling the pounding of cold water against my legs I looked out beyond the river's bank to see Little Snow Dome completely encompassed in a white veil of rain and snow. The day had the makings of a classic epic. I pushed my way against the river's current to the ice and snow lining the steep cutbank on the opposite side. I had taken my ski poles for balance and was happy for the extra security they provided as I fought to maintain my balance crossing the channel. My Tevas had loosened on my feet and threatened to detach from the force of the current. When I went to step out of the swirling turmoil, I nearly lost my footing on the loose gravel and ice lining the river bank. I envisioned a repeat of the childhood experience in the surf, except this time the water wasn't salty, only frigid.

When I regained my balance, I scrambled up the bank to where Jeff was sitting. He was ripping off his running shoes and trying to get some feeling back in his feet. I threw my pack down onto the glacier debris, ripped off the Tevas, peeled off my wet socks, pulled out a dry pair and threw them and my Scarpa Vegas on for warmth. While the legs of my pile tights were wet from the crossing my legs were warm so I didn't feel that miserable. I found that the coldness of the river's waters had momentarily' revived me.

We headed off up the moraines of the Snow Dome Glacier towards the ridge. After walking over hummocky terrain for about 15 minutes, we halted. The weather had deteriorated considerably since the time we had left the car. It had started to rain quite heavily. At higher altitudes it was snowing and visibility was nil. We decided to pack in our attempt on Sidestreet. It just wasn't safe to continue. The weather had gotten the better of us and it was only 5:00 a.m.

This adventure is memorable for a number of reasons. At the very least, we had made an attempt, albeit a very low one, on Sidestreet. We rationalized that it was better to have made the attempt than to have sat within the warm confines of the car avoiding exposure to the maelstrom of wind, rain and snow.

The alpine route known as Sidestreet, II 5.9 Al, is situated on a ridge known as Little Snow Dome which descends in a northeasterly direction from Snow Dome on the Columbia Icefields. Sidestreet is one of several large gullies that split the steep north side of Little Snow Dome.

The route consists of four pitches of mixed snow and rock climbing. Typically the climbing is mid-5th class except for one section that is YDS 5.9 and Al.

Walk up snow slopes to a short easy mixed pitch; continue up snow slopes for about 300m until below a roof in the gulley. Climb the slab below the roof, which may be ice or may require aid, to the roof. The roof is avoided by turning to the left at the top of the slab to gain a corner above (5.9). The remaining pitches lead to more easy snow slopes. Ascend the snow slopes to where the gully narrows and presents two pitches of mixed climbing. A hidden gully exists at the top of the second pitch which bypasses the headwall and leaves you short of the summit. The descent is via the northeast ridge on easy snow slopes to a col. Drop down the col to the north side of the Dome Glacier. Beware of isothermal avalanche danger on the ridge.

It should be noted that the guidebook

fails to mention that a very brisk crossing of the thigh-deep Sunwapta River is required to gain access to the Dome Glacier if the route is done in the spring. Note that the route is not recommended in summer because of the threat of rockfall.

French Creek - New Ice Route

The first pitch is a fun 50m, 5.7 mixed pitch with good gear if you work for it. A short WI3 pitch gains a snow slope and a short snow climb to a 25-m W14 pillar. Another short snow hike leads to the last pitch. This a 50-m WI4 pitch with good varied climbing in a pretty gully. Rappel the route.

An old two-pin anchor was found partway up the first pitch, but that was the last sign of previous traffic we saw.

This is a worthwhile project, especially if you are getting paid for it. Bring four to six pins, a few screws, beacon, probe and shovel. Have fun.

Coffee Suckin' Do Nothin's 200 m, IV, 5.7, WI4. In French Creek, 200 metres west of Auto De Fe. F.A.: Paul Vidalin, Bill O'Connor, Larry Stanier. January 25, 1995.

Mount Kerkeslin — New Ice Route

On the southwest face of Mount Kerkeslin there is a waterfall ice climb in each of its four major drainages. Ghost Falls was the last of these four climbs to be ascended, and is previously unreported. Two unsuccessful attempts preceded the first successful ascent. Tricky route-finding up forking creekbeds gave rise to its name and the reason for at least one failed attempt. The approach begins from the entrance of Mount Kerkeslin campground on Hwy 93, south of Athabasca Falls. The top pitch of the climb can be viewed if one drives about half a kilometre south of the campground entrance.

A one-hour hike up the dry creekbed led us to the huge chockstone lodged between the canyon walls. We propped up a log and frontpointed up it to overcome this obstacle. It can also be bypassed by delicate climbing on the left wall of the canyon. The ice climbing began with a short 10-metre pitch. A normally-dry second pitch was bypassed in the forest to the left. More creekbed-walking followed to the first fork, then a right turn to the next pitch of ice. We continued walking to the next fork and turned left, which led us to the base of the final two pitches, WI4 ice.

Ghost Falls, 175 m, III, WI4

F.A.: Ed Laporte and Greg Horne, December 27, 1989.

Greg Horne

In The Shadow Of Giants

Brad Wrobleski

It was from the top of Mount Bryce that I first noticed the East Face of Mount King Edward. After climbing the north face of Bryce I looked down and across the heavily crevassed western wing of the Columbia Icefields and saw Edward's icy eastern side. At that point I knew I would be making another trip back up the Bush.

Four years later, in the sun-baked summer of '94, we returned to Golden and began the dusty, bumpy, kidney-jarring, 140-km ramble up the logging roads of the Bush River. Entering the Bush area is a bit like a venture into The Ghost River — it is a good area for a four wheel drive. As we didn't have a Pathfinder or access to a Bronco, we borrowed the next best thing — Jerry's mother's Delta 88. So what if it only had two-wheel drive — it was big enough for four mountain vagrants and a whack of gear. It also had a V8 engine powerful enough to make us fly over any downed trees or deep road trenches, providing you got enough speed. Besides, it had character.

It took 20 minutes for the dust to settle after we stopped the Delta 88 at the last cutback at the end of the Bush River. It was hot. Very hot. Hot enough to turn a stick of garlic butter to liquid within the time it took us to unload the trunk.

"Ah, $©*%!," said Pete as he slapped his arm. "Ouch," said Jerry. "$*©%#!" cursed Andrew. "*#@*A!," I yelled as I slapped two spots at once. And so it went, the discovery of Bush Horseflies. The stinging realization that the place was inhabited by Horseflyous majorannoyous — the three cm, blue-black flesh-eating flying varmints of the hot summer of '94. They could have been confused for hummingbirds — they were huge. Big enough to survive a blow from your ice-axe. Big enough to leave a crater of missing flesh from your arm. Big enough to force us to the brink of insanity. We didn't have to worry about the Bush's reputation as a haven for huge grizzlies because of all the swearing, yelling, cursing and slapping as we thrashed through the fly-ridden brush to the glacier above. The four of us made enough noise to push the Bush grizzly population to Vancouver.

We camped at the toe of the glacier, beneath the enormous, daunting west face of Mount Columbia. We slept beneath a starry sky, slightly obscured by the haze of B.C. forest fire smoke, next to the trickle of glacier water flowing beside us.

The next morning we awoke before the glow of the rising sun. We were all there. None of us had been abducted in the night by marauding horseflies. We slapped on crampons, tightened harnesses, tied knots and cinched the leash of an ice tool to our wrists, and began the pound up to the east face of King Edward. We could see it there in the distance above the glacial horizon; the silhouette of the gray monolith, its white ice face angling upward to a crown of brown limestone. And all the features of the face slowly gaining more detail in the rising orange glow of the day's light.

I like the Bush. I like the remoteness, the giant expanse of thick, deep-crevassed glacial ice and the ever-present feeling of being somewhere new — of being somewhere few people have found. A place not written into the detailed submission of a guidebook. A place where the words exploration and adventure have true meaning.

As we climbed up the deceiving distance of the sloping glacier to the base of the route I reminisced of the past. Collie, Outram, Kaufmann, Stutfield, Woolley: what was it like for them as they traveled this area back in the early part of this century? What did the ice face of Mount Bryce look like? What were the bears, bush and horseflies like? What was it like to spend a month or more in this magnificent place? The first ever. I bet it hasn't changed. Not much. Knowing this gives me peace.

The entire face was in the sun when we started climbing. It was warm. Maybe a little too warm. It's a good thing the face was short. I wouldn't have wanted to spend hours beneath the rotten rock of the limestone band. The climbing was straightforward. 50° ice and snow steepening to 70° near the top. Not difficult; just fun. Fun alpinism— seems like an oxymoron.

The top steepened, then flattened to a notch in the summit ridge, creating a view to the west. With a short step of more ice/snow then rock we stood on the top. I had never seen so much ice: the Chaba, Freshfields, Columbia and Lyells spread out before

us, showing their awesome fractures and features. Looking down on the labyrinth of monstrous crevasses we had wound our way through makes me shudder.

The view in all directions was not endless — we thought we could see Forbes, Cavell and Temple but the forest fire smoke obscured the detail. But we knew they were there. We spent over an hour on top surveying the land for more known peaks, more identifiable landmarks. Pete slept most of the time.

We descended the loose talus of the west ridge down toward camp. None of us liked the idea of returning to the heat and the horseflies and the stinging, frustrating dense bush.

Half-way down the glacier we met up with them — the horseflies. As we were the only source of exposed flesh for many kilometers they were happy to see us. Where we reached the beginning of the bush we crossed grizzly prints the width of Volkswagen hub-caps. I had a can of pepper spray in my pack but was more tempted to use it on the flies; if we were attacked by a bear it would at least be over in a few minutes. Death by fly-bites would be worse — slow torture.

We reached the car dripping in sweat, tired, half-eaten and ready for home. We loaded up the dusty trunk. When we closed the lid, the back bumper fell off. The bumpy Bush had been too much for it. Jerry's mother was not going to be happy. She thought we had taken the car cragging at the Back of the Lake. So, we dealt with it the only way we knew how. We tied it on with five metres of 7mm cord, bid adieu to the flies and the heat and the dust and King Edward, visible in the distance, and steered the newly dubbed Prussik 88 toward one of the few modern luxuries Outram and Collie might have wished for: the Dairy Queen.

East Face of Mount King Edward (3747m). Columbia Icefields Group

F.A.: Jerry Auld, Andrew Brash, Pete Smillie and Brad Wrobleski

Andrew Brash on Mount King Edward. Photo: Brad Wrobleski.

Mount Amery — New Route

Jason Thompson

I remember reading the first ascent description for Mount Amery in The Rocky Mountains Of Canada — North and being intrigued by the comment "first and apparently only ascent." So when rain and snow threatened to prevent a planned Columbia Icefields trip in October, 1993, Eric Geppert and I decided to do some exploring up the valley south of Mount Amery to look for a potential new route. We hiked up the valley after fording the North Saskatchewan River (knee-deep in October), and camped at a small lake (83C/2 GR051651) a couple of hours from the road. It snowed overnight, but the accompanying cloud didn't prevent magnificent views of surrounding cliffs and hanging glaciers. We hiked far enough up the valley to see that the cliffs were continuous, but there appeared to be an easier-angled section on the south face of Mount Amery.

I returned to the area early in June of 1994 with Hugh MacDonald and Bob Pelkey. The North Saskatchewan River was now waist deep and proved to be an exciting crossing. The next day dawned clear, but we didn't leave camp until 8 a.m. At the head of the valley we searched for a route through the cliffs and found a gully that was easier than expected. It angled steeply up and to the right, but was continuous throughout. We climbed through the cliff band and traversed back to the left to reach the base of a wide gully, bordered on the left by an overhanging buttress (GR 024639). This upper gully was still filled with snow and looked treacherous in the warming sun, so we continued to traverse left (west) on narrowing scree ledges until we reached the hanging valley (GR 018639) south of Mount Amery. We now had a clear view to the summit icefield, but the weather was deteriorating rapidly. My altimeter showed that we were within 200m of the summit when we turned around at 4 p.m. in a blinding snowstorm. We arrived at camp sodden and it poured all night. Now I was determined to return to the area, but it wasn't going to be until the weather forecast was perfect.

On August 19, Hugh MacDonald, Kent Sawatzky, Eric Geppert, and I waded one more time across the North Saskatchewan River. Eric offered to take shrinkage pictures, but we declined. Thereafter, and contrary to popular belief, Eric has repeatedly denied the rumour that he conceals a private shrinkage picture collection at home! We camped further up the valley this time, at a lone tree below glacial moraine (GR 035634), four hours from the road. The next morning we made a rapid ascent of the right-sloping gully. A group of mountain goats scrambled up ahead of us. This time we climbed the wide upper gully beside the overhanging buttress, rounded its shoulder to the west, and then traversed and climbed a scree gully to the summit icefield. The summit was gained in another half hour, six hours up from our camp. There was a small collapsed cairn of four or five stones (John Martin's cairn from 1987) on the summit, which we built up and left a summitregister inside. We lolled about for a couple of hours sipping Kahlua and enjoying the views before starting our descent. On the way down we descended into the hanging

Below the face of Mount Amery, the route marked. Photo: Jason Thompson.

valley and traversed the scree ledge under the overhanging buttress to avoid downclimbing numerous small steps in the wide gully.

It was an easy, enjoyable ascent (as long as you don't mind river-wading, bushwhacking, and boulder stumbling!) with a remote feel that belied its proximity to the highway.

Mount Amery (3329m), Alexandra Group. New route on south slopes.

F.A.: Hugh MacDonald, Kent Sawatzky, Eric Geppert, and Jason Thompson. August 20, 1994.

"Minster Mountain" — First Ascent

On October 8, 1994, my mom and I climbed a 3120m peak (10,200 ft., 83 C/3 158742) east of Sunset Pass. This peak is unnamed on the map that I have (Minster Mountain is applied to a point two km northeast of the peak we climbed), but I believe it is Minster Mountain, as referenced in The Rocky Mountains Of Canada — North.

We started from the Sunset Pass trailhead at 6:30 a.m. by headlamp. At the Sunset Pass campsite we left the trail and bushwhacked to a high col (GR 121723), arriving at 10 a.m. From there we contoured over three more passes (GR 135724, 145730, 145741) before slogging our way to the summit up tedious scree slopes. There was no evidence of a cairn, so we built one and left a summit register. The summit afforded splendid views of the northwest faces of Whitegoat Peaks and Mount Cline. Mom and I reveled in our first first-ascent before starting the return trip at 4 p.m. In the evening twilight we saw a cow and calf moose at 2500m crossing over from Waterfalls Creek and descending toward Pinto Lake.

This appeared to be a very active migration route between these valleys as we observed numerous fresh tracks. We descended to treeline by dusk and my mom's flashlight batteries died out soon afterwards. Mom and I then spent two hours holding hands and bushwhacking through alders by the light of my headlamp before stumbling onto the Sunset Pass trail near Norman Lake. How's that for a mother-son bonding experience! We reached the highway at 10 p.m. after a grueling 30km round-trip day. Mom (fifty-something) felt fine the next day, but I could hardly walk.

Minster Mountain (3120m), Cline Group

F.A.: Anne and Jason Thompson. October 8, 1994

The East

Quebec Report

Peter Gernassnig

This past summer Val David local Paul La Leperriere finally published his long-awaited (five years, Paul!) guidebook to the area. It offers clear and concise information on the six major sites in Val David. Unfortunately, the publication has done nothing but put additional pressure on an area that is already overused.

One beautiful May day this spring, Janet and I decided to sample some of the fine classics in the area, but upon arrival, found that almost all the routes had top ropes on them. It was bad enough climbing through angles of rope, but I saw worse: old, bold lines had been retrobolted, and established elimination problems had also been drilled. Don't get me wrong; I have done my own share of bolting. But to take a classic granite crag and turn it into a gridwork of bolts is to show a total lack of respect for the rock. The persistent tunnel vision in the Montreal climbing community about climbing only at Val David is to blame. Fine crags, such as Weir, Mont Orford and Labeden, see very little traffic while there are line-ups for routes at Val David. A whole-area guidebook might be one solution, by encouraging some exploration.

While in the crowds, more bad news hit me: access to Mont King, the area's principal crag, is threatened. The land through which the access trail passes had been purchased and fenced off. Thankfully, an alternate trail has been found, and the incident seems to have passed.

An aging body attached to a youthful mind is a dangerous thing. Injuries kept me off the rock until the end of August, when I found myself in Canmore, Alberta. I climbed with two people who shall remain anonymous and who were into developing crags which they told no one about. Not only did I find myself on some of the nicest limestone routes I have ever done — albeit with some loose rock — but best of all, no crowds. Upon my return to Montreal, I quickly set on a quest for my own secret crag. What followed seemed absurd: me hiding, crouched behind bushes while others wandered around looking for their own secret crag. And me making pacts with others — I won't tell anyone or touch yours if you don't touch mine — certainly not like the good old days.

The good news is that I know of eight happy little secret craggers who have joyfully been brushing and drilling all summer long, so there are plenty of new routes. The bad news is, on threat of a slow and painful death, I may not reveal any exact locations — yet. Weir continues its slow plod to becoming the hardman's cliff in the Laurentians, and I have heard a great many good things about an area called La Vache Noire which sits on the southern end of Mont Tremblant. Fifty-metre bolt-protected face routes seem the norm.

Labeden, situated twenty minutes north of Val David, is a small but well-developed vertical granite wall 16 to 20 metres high. Featuring a three minute approach, a high quality line every three metres and a southern exposure, this fine crag is finally getting the attention it deserves. To date, there are 15 routes ranging from 5.6 to 5.12, with more routes to come.

Excellent routes are also being developed in a small cluster of crags very close to Montreal (a clue for perplexed locals...). When the dust finally settles, and the holes are filled, there will be upwards of 40 routes to be enjoyed, ranging from 5.10 to 5.13.: details to come; I'm too young to die.

Ice aficionado Bernie Mailhot and his cohorts have developed a fine new rock area down in the Eastern Townships. Twenty-five routes have been done so far, ranging from 5.8 to 5.13.

Work continues on the overhanging 300-foot amphitheatre mentioned in last year's report; work being the operative word. With much loose rock and hard climbing, progress has been very slow.

The best of the newer crags in the Eastern Townships is Orford. Though only one hour's drive from Montreal, the approach to this fine crag can unfortunately only be described as "hellish": 25m of very, very steep hiking leaves one gasping

Quebec Rock. Photo: Pierre Bedard.

under a magnificent 50m high quartzite crag that sports 25 routes predominantly in the 5.10 and 5.11 range. There are many harder routes waiting to be done, but the hike seems to be acting as a deterrent. The principal developers, Jean Claude Maurice and Julien Dery can only be commended for their fine efforts.

And now, more bad news. Another local site has been threatened with closure, making five areas in the Montreal region that are: either closed to climbing or are threatened with closure. The president of the Federation Quebecois de la Montagne, Anne-Marie Cournoyer, is making the access issue a priority, and has already made significant progress at Mont Orford. Perhaps it is time to mobilize Quebec's issues with other national access concerns.

Gems Of The Long Range Mountains In Western Newfoundland

Paul Fenton

It was September of 1991 when I first visited Newfoundland, and what a visit. I had spent a great deal of time and money travelling to classic hot spots in North America, and now here I was standing on the shores of Western Brook Pond. Kim Grieve, my girlfriend and climbing partner, had just pulled an all-night drive from St. John's to Rocky Harbour.

I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Yosemite with a big lake in the middle of it — 730m of cloud-trapping granite jutting skyward out of this landlocked fiord. The unique features of the north face clawed shreds of cloud out of the sky. I sheepishly said to Kim," If only I had known — right here in Atlantic Canada's back yard!" Grinning from ear to ear she replied, "So now you know." How many years will it take to even attempt to scratch the surface? My mind became a thrashing sea of spindrifting plans. Kim continued her adventurous smile. "There is as much rock and ice to climb here as there is cod to catch!"

Some Recent Pioneering Efforts

cornerbrook, located on the west coast of Newfoundland between Stevenville and Deer Lake, is home to great people, and plenty of rock and ice. A quick drive along the Humber River between the town and Marble Mountain is revealing, to say the least.

Resolution WI3, 75m; Fenton, Grieve, Duncan; December 31, 1991. This climb is located on the east side of the Trans-Canada Hwy., 1.5 kilometres southwest of Marble Mountain. A 10-minute slog up a snow slope from your car will put you at the base. There is room for several routes.

Resolution takes the thickest ice right of centre. The ice is notably thin on the first pitch so short screws are in order. Top-out onto a snow slope into the trees on the right; traverse right rappelling through trees to the snow slope at the base.

This was the first ice climb completed in Cornerbrook. We started the climb in the afternoon on New Year's Day; we all brought in the new year on rappel. At one point, 47 cars stopped to watch including CBC TV/Radio, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, RCMP, and SAR personnel. On the second pitch we were blinded by a giant searchlight and asked to signal if we needed a rescue. We waved them off and our celebration continued in silence.

Weeping Druid WI2 + , 50m; Fenton, O'Dolan; January 5, 1993. Located on the southwest face of an outcrop locally known as "The Old Man." Approach via the west bank of the Humber River. Be prepared for a ruthless high-angled bushwhack (skis are useless). Caution should be taken crossing an avalanche-prone slope approximately 30 minutes into the journey. The zone flushes directly into the unfrozen Humber River. Two hours should put you at the base of the snow slope below "The Old Man." Ascend the snow slope directly below a giant naturally-sculpted face. Weeping Druid is directly below the right cheekbone. Ascend until you run out of ice — rappel the route.

Curse of the Druid WI4, 5.8, A2, 150m; Fenton, Grieve, O'Dolan; February 7, 1993. Same approach as Weeping Druid, only further west on "The Old Man." This classic is the most predominant ice feature on the wall. Southwest exposure creates a rotten chandelier on the crux curtain of the first pitch (climbed on the first attempt — avoided on the second). Climb steep ice or rock (left side of ice) on first pitch; second pitch starts moderately, then intensifies, finally giving relief via a mixed snow and ice pitch which leads into the forest. Rappel the route or slog northwest along the ridge top for approximately one kilometre. Descend large snow-filled gully.

Gros Morne National Park, located 45 minutes west of Deer Lake on Highway 430, is home to big-wall, rock & ice climbing. The first ascent/new route potential of this area is unbelievable, to say the least. The walls of five landlocked fiords and the Tablelands are the primary items of interest. Newfoundlanders refer to a lake as a "pond," hence Western Brook Pond, Bakers Brook Pond, Ten Mile Pond, Trout River Pond. St. Paul's Inlet empties directly into the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Access in summer is difficult, except for Western Brook Pond which has a daily boat tour, weather permitting. Winter is a different story. When the bogs, rivers and ponds are frozen, skis, snowshoes and snowmobile can gain you access. The fiords make their own weather. Storms can materialize within minutes, producing

relentless winds.

Rocky Harbour is the base for operations for the best big wall rock and ice around. From here you can access Ten Mile Pond, Bakers Brook Pond, Western Brook Pond and St. Paul's Inlet.

Amadeus Amadeus WI4, 110m; Fenton, Grieve; February, 1992.

Turn left onto Highway 431 at Wiltondale. Drive to Birchy Head. Park at the service station near the warden's office. Look west from here with Bonne Bay at your back. Slog deep snow up to the base of the largest of four ice climbs. Ascend 40m of mostly vertical chandelier, some relief for the next 15m which leads onto moderately-angled snow/ice chute. Top-out into trees and slog east along ridge. Downclimb and rappel from trees to snow slope at base.

The entrance to Burridges Gulch is found approximately nine kilometers from Wiltondale travelling west on Highway 430. The gulch is visible to the north from the right-hand side of the road. It appears as a crown of small peaks tucked in the back country. If you drive too fast you can miss it. A two and a half kilometre trek following the river will take you to the heart of it. There are many two- and three-pitch climbs on various ice and mixed terrain.

Joker Wild WI2, 50m; Fenton, Grieve; March 24, 1992. Ascended largest ice mass in the centre of the east side of the gulch; rappel route. The climb was done as a last resort after much mild weather melted other formidable objectives. We could not resist a quick piece of small candy after crossing several dodgy snow bridges on the river.

Gros Morne Mountain is the second highest point in Newfoundland, sitting at 807m. From the north rim you can view Ten Mile Pond, the smallest of the landlocked fjords, and the south face of Rocky Harbour Hills. The mountain is home to caribou, rock ptarmigan, and Arctic hare.

No Place for a Baby Wl4+, 190m; Fenton, Prior, Slaney; March 6, 1994. This climb is located on the lower north face of Gros Morne Mountain, between the fjord and Middle Plateau. At the base it is almost as wide as it is tall. The first attempt on March 3 was foiled due to a crampon breaking in half while leading the second pitch. We bailed and returned on March 6 after waiting out weather. All members climbed the last, most difficult pitch in a brilliant display of northern lights.

Bureaucratic Spindrift WI2 +, 115m; Fenton, Prior, Slaney; March 10, 1994. Located at the east end of the lower portion of Gros Morne. Travelled approximately one kilometre up Ten Mile Gulch from the eastern shore of Ten Mile Pond. Snow turned to heavy rain while we were descending. Rivers of relentless spindrift flowed during the entire climb. Slaney named the climb because it reminded him of recent bureaucratic encounters.

Jacinta WI5, 495m; Fenton, Prior, Slaney; March 14-15, 1994. Located two-and-a-half kilometres up Ten Mile Gulch (east) from the shore of Ten Mile Pond. It is the longest continuous waterfall ice climb in Ten Mile Gulch, on the south face of Rocky Harbour Hills.

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Foreign

Everest Without Oxygen

John McIssac

The trip started out as most do, with a first week in Kathmandu organizing equipment and purchasing the necessary supplies, full of enthusiasm and optimism for the journey that lay ahead. Our plan was to drive overland to base camp via the Friendship Highway. Our route would meander through the lush fertile valleys and steep river gorges of Nepal, across the Friendship Bridge to the border town of Zhangmu, and wind its way around dangerous hairpin bends and steep vertical drop offs to the town of Nyalam. Nyalam translates as 'the path to hell' — an apt description of the road conditions.

Although we could have traveled from Kathmandu to base camp in only three days, we elected to slow down our approach, taking the opportunity to acclimatize and rest for three days. Despite our gradual advance, one of our climbing members, Jamie Clarke, became seriously ill with sinusitis. The fact that the air pressure decreases with increased altitude only exacerbated Jamie's condition. He decided to return to Kathmandu for possible surgery. We thought that if he could recuperate at lower altitudes, he still could return and participate in the latter half of the expedition. However, I felt uneasy with this development because our team was no longer a single unit. We all felt concern for Jamie. We were already a small team attempting a big project. With one less team member on board, each of us would have to shoulder a heavier work load.

Base camp sits on a gravel wash, at 17,300 feet on the toe of the Rongbuk Glacier. It was March and our team was the first to arrive for the season. As a result, we were able to select the prime site for our base camp. We parked ourselves on the very site where, in 1922, Mallory and Irvine camped. Our strategy was to spend three to four weeks at base camp before we moved up to advanced base camp (abc). We thought that if we were well acclimatized at 17,300 feet, we would increase our performance at higher altitudes. I realize now that base camp elevation was at the threshold of a man's ability to acclimatize and still function normally. Any higher and your body is constantly fighting deterioration. Still, the time was valuable, We spent three weeks climbing everything in sight and we got in touch with ourselves and the other team members. Since we were all part of an Everest Expedition in 1991, it was everyone's second attempt. We knew the hurdles and obstacles which lay before us. At least we thought we did!

By the end of March, various expeditions started arriving at base camp. Our climbing community grew larger. By the time all teams had arrived, more than 80 people were aspiring for the chance at a summit bid. There were few national teams like ours. Most were commercial teams. As the base camp population swelled, the new faces were a welcome relief. We had been the sole team in this godforsaken wilderness for more than two weeks. Over cups of tea, we developed new friendships.

Jamie arrived back from his convalescence in Kathmandu just as we were to start moving up to ABCL It was great to see him back on the team. He had spent some time in Kathmandu but felt he

needed to acclimatize at higher altitudes. He decided to spend some time trekking in the Khumbu region with his girlfriend. He looked great when he returned. We were now a single unit ready for the next part of the climb.

Tim, Kami Tsering, Ang Pasang and I made the first journey to the site of abc. It was our responsibility to make sure that the Yaks, which would be carrying all our gear and supplies, could pass through the ice fields between EC and abc. It is a 20-km trek to abc. Without the use of 30 Yaks to carry our equipment, our task would be horrendous.

When we arrived at ABC, the site we selected for our camp was at an altitude of 21,500 feet, higher than the usual location of 20,300 feet. The rationale for choosing this location was that we wanted our ABC to be closer to the North Col. At first, our trips from BC to abc: took us three days. After a few trips, we were able to cover the distance in only seven hours.

The journey from ABC to the North Col (23,500 feet) has many objective dangers. This section climbs over crevasse laden ice fields to the base of the North Col. From here, you encounter steeper sections of 60° ice and séracs before you arrive at the Col. We usually traveled this section in early morning when the danger hazard was low. This workload was largely shared by Tim, Mario, Denis, the four Sherpas and myself. We would spend two weeks at a time carrying 30 -pound loads up to the North Col, before heading down to the warmth and comfort of bc. Jamie was still affected by his sinusitis and Alan had problems acclimatizing, so they concentrated on organizing the external communication system. Our expedition had the benefit of a satellite dish. We could contact anyone, anywhere in the world, who had a phone. It was this type of technology that made our trip so widely known in Canada. In 1991, in their role as communications personnel, Alan and Jamie pioneered the logistics of setting up such a device. So it was a natural for them to bring this technology to our 1994 expedition. Much of their effort on Everest was directed to informing the media of our progress on the mountain. Jamie and Alan ardently competed for air time, taking turns communicating daily developments to the Canadian media.

Our intended route would take us up the Great Couloir on the North Face, through the Yellow and Grey Rock Bands and on to the summit pyramid. We would climb from the North Col to the North Ridge, an altitude gain of 800 feet, traverse across the wide expanse of the North Face and access the Great Couloir. The strategy was to traverse low, below 25,000 feet, and position ourselves in a direct line below the summit. On April 8, after a long day, the Sherpas first established Camp 5 (25,500 feet), located at the beginning of the Great Couloir. The terrain from the North Col to Camp 5 is relatively easy, although a missed step or a snagged crampon could mean a 6000-foot ride down the North Face to the main Rongbuk glacier below. We fixed this section of the climb so that travel would be safe. It provided a quick exit route to lower ground in the event of bad weather.

The first few carries from the North Col to Camp 5 were quite arduous but after a couple of trips we began to adjust to our workload. I thought that we were strong enough to stay at the lower altitudes of ABC and make the carry from ABC to Camp 5. My reasoning was that the more we stayed down low, the more we would preserve ourselves. The carry from ABC to the North Col only took two hours, so why not? You know the old saying, "climb high sleep low." The first time we tried this technique Denis, Mario, Tim and I left abc: for the North Col early in the morning. We arrived at the North Col in good time and rested for an hour. Picking up some equipment that we needed for the upper mountain, we continued onwards to Camp 5. Our loads were heavy. Around dusk, Mario struggled into Camp 5, completely exhausted from the day's efforts. Unfortunately, he had developed a mild case of high altitude pulmonary edema by moving too high too quickly. He was a valuable team member and I felt bad that I had pushed him to those limits. I was the climbing leader and it was important for me to keep everyone's safety in mind. Mario had done so much work in getting the North Col in place that a carry like that one was just too much. I searched my soul that evening as Denis, our team doctor, helped Mario through the night. The four of us had just made a critical carry to Camp 5. Our loads included some vital supplies for the last camp, Camp 6.

Denis helped Mario back to ABC as Tim and I stayed on to start the process of establishing the route to Camp 6. The location of Camp 5 is at the entrance to the Great Couloir, next to a outcrop of rocks. The site location was superb, safe and spectacular with fabulous views extending to Cho Oyu and straight down 7000 feet into the Rongbuk valley. The only drawback was that the sun first appeared at 1 p.m.

While positioned here, Tim and I set ropes halfway to the proposed location of Camp 6. Tim developed frost nip on his hands and was feeling ill from the tremendous effort he was putting into getting us in the favorable position we were in. We both decided that a much needed rest was in order and so we made a hasty retreat to lower altitudes. Not much took place on the upper part of the mountain for the next few days.

May was just around the corner and anytime now we could expect the monsoon snow to start. We needed to accelerate our drive for the top since this window on the pre-monsoon climbing season would soon be closed.. After a three day rest in abc, Denis Brown and I moved into position at Camp 5 to fix the last section up the Couloir to the site of Camp 6 (27,300 feet). It was great to be back climbing with Denis. We had shared a lot of time together on this project and although Denis was the team doctor, he was also a strong, committed mountaineer. I always enjoyed his ability to keep things into perspective. We arrived at the location of Camp 6 after a grueling climb up the Great Couloir. Denis did most of the leading on this part. I could tell that he was really enjoying what we were doing. Upon arriving at the location of Camp 6, we cached the supplies and some rope. We radioed our progress to our teammates who were stationed at abc. I think that the news of our success rejuvenated the whole team. We were another step closer to our elusive goal.

However, the next day, we awoke to a misty view with low visibility and high winds. The day did not improve, so the only recourse we had was to retreat. The body does not stay healthy for long at 25,500 feet. The storm lasted a few days. During that time the jet stream winds pounded the summit. We could see a constant cloud plum, extending two km long, streaming from the top of the mountain. Travel above the North Col was all but impossible. When the winds did die down, the Sherpas were keen to continue their efforts by solidifying our position at Camp 6. They, too, battled with the extreme wind conditions. To the south, we could see the monsoon cloud forming. Snowfalls were occurring more frequently now. The constant trail breaking more than doubled our travel times from one point to the next. The Great Couloir had accumulated a sizable snow pack but

whereas other slopes were discharging their loads with a flurry of avalanches, this great gully just refused to release. We now had Camp 6 established and supplied with most of the equipment that we would need to launch a summit push. It was at this time that Chomolongma, Mount Everest, Mother Goddess of the Earth, started to talk.

The Taiwanese team made a dash for the summit via the North and Northeast Ridge route. A late start and deteriorating weather resulted in one member reaching the summit in white-out conditions. He descended the West Ridge until reaching technical terrain. There he tried to traverse across the North Face in an effort to rejoin the Northeast ridge. The day passed and it was soon darkness. During the night, he ran out of oxygen. From a telescope, positioned in base camp, he was last seen sitting at the top the North Couloir, helpless. He died a hero in the eyes of the Taiwanese.

Around this same time, another death occurred. A Nepalese cook boy developed cerebral edema at the Italian Team's Advance Base Camp. Apparently, he went to his tent not feeling well. Everyone in camp thought that he had returned to base camp and so no one checked in on him. It was not until two days later that he was discovered in his tent, lying in an advanced state of cerebral edema. Efforts were made to transport him as quickly as possible to Base Camp. He made it to base camp but died shortly after arriving there. A wave of shock went through the Sherpa community on the mountain, with a general feeling that this was a bad omen.

Meanwhile, our team was concentrating on negotiating one last piece of technical ground before reaching the summit pyramid from Camp 6. This was to have been our last obstacle! Mario came forward with a request to make a contribution and he really came on strong now. If Mario could solve the technical aspect of the Yellow and Gray Rock Bands above Camp 6, then the stage would be set for a summit push. Mario knew that by fixing this section, he would have to exert a tremendous amount of effort. Effectively, it would eliminate his chance for a summit attempt.

Mario and Lhakpa Sonam set out from abc for Camp 5 and then onto Camp 6. The rest of the team was on hold at abc and the North Col. We were trying to set the stage for a successful summit push and also provide backup for Mario and Lhakpa. When they reached Camp 5, they found that the wind had torn one of the tent's flies. Snow had completely buried the camp. A few hours of excavation were required to put things back in order. That night, the mountain received a fresh blanket of snow and Mario and Lhakpa had to wait at Camp 5. The Great Couloir still had not slid yet and the new snow just made a bad situation worse. We knew that a person is only effective for so long above 25,000 feet. Our situation on Everest was getting critical.

It was time to take a hard look at our position. Mario and Lhakpa were unable to move up or down because of the snow conditions. Without a drastic change in the snow pack it would not be safe to proceed. My sole concern now was to get Mario and Lhakpa back into the safety of the North Col. Back at abc, Alan and Jamie had stirred the Canadian media into a feeding frenzy with reports that Mario and Lhakpa were trapped in a death position. Probably due to problems in translating English into French, Mario's poor mother received word that her son had been killed. If they wanted to get the attention of the media, they certainly were successful. However, the rest of our team and the rest of the teams on the mountain disagreed with this sensationalizing of events. Anyone who has spent enough time in the mountains has surely experienced some delays due to weather conditions.

Mario and Lhakpa eventually made it back down the mountain, though they had to deal with a small slide, and we all regrouped into ABC for a much needed talk about our position and to re-think our strategy. After a lot of debate, it was decided that our original route was not an option. We simply did not have the manpower to push through the technical upper part of the face and still have fresh climbers to make a summit attempt. We came to the conclusion that the only alternative for our team was to change routes to the North and North East Ridge. This was the route the American commercial expedition had a permit for. We would require their permission, as well as the permission of the Chinese Mountaineering Association. Our route change cost us dearly. The leader of the American trip levied a fee for using his route. Our team was to carry seven bottles of oxygen from the North Col to Camp 5 on the North Ridge. The Americans needed the oxygen at Camp 5 to assist their clients in their quest for the summit.

The North and Northeast Ridge of Everest was technically easier than our North Face route. However, it was also longer. The Americans had already established camps along the North Ridge route, and logistically, this situation really helped us. We came to an agreement that as long as they were not using the tents and sleeping bags, then we could use them. With Lhakpa's frightening experience and the death of three people on the mountain, our Sherpas started to think that the Chomolongma, Mother Goddess of the Earth, was trying to tell us something and we were not listening. Despite this belief, we still managed to get our Sherpas to aid us in fulfilling the American's request. Our team was now working on marginal manpower. I made the oxygen carry and returned to ABC. We were all positioned in ABC waiting for the right weather pattern to develop for a summit attempt. Again, it was decided that Tim and I would be the first summit team.

On May 21, the fierce jet stream winds showed indications of moving south. Our summit push was about to begin! Tim and I started climbing towards the North Col. Accompanying us were Mario, Alan, Jamie, Ang Pasang, and Kami Tsering. They were carrying some of the supplies needed for Camp 5. The trip to the North Col was uneventful since Tim and I had made this trip many times throughout this expedition. After a good night's rest, we proceeded onwards to Camp 5, situated at 25,700 feet. Tim and I left after the others because we wanted to limit the amount of time we spent at high altitude. We realized that our success on this mountain depended on how we executed this final phase of the climb. Approximately one hour after leaving the North Col, I looked around to see where Tim was. He seemed to be quite a distance behind me.

I was not concerned about Tim's progress because I knew he was a strong person and was probably pacing himself. It was not until two hours later that I became truly concerned for him. He did not appear to have climbed much since I last looked. Later I was told that Tim had been unable to proceed due to fatigue and illness. The effort he made to the expedition was too much for his body. I felt a deep sense of hurt for Tim as I watched him return to ABC. He was such a driving force, both physically and mentally, to our expedition. He gave it his all and now his body was telling him to stop. As I sat alone at Camp 5, it was decided below that Denis Brown would take Tim's place. However, Denis was situated at ABC and I would have to remain

at Camp 5 for 24 hours until Denis could join me. The change in summit partners not only forced me to stay at high altitude for an extra day, but it also caused some logistical problems. We had now lost one day in our schedule. The Americans were on a summit attempt and would need to use the tents that we had planned to stay in. As a result, Denis had to carry a tent from the North Col to Camp 5. When he arrived, we both had to cut a tent platform in the snow. There was an upside to all the changes: I was pleased to have Denis with me. Both of us were turned back at the same point in 1991 by the force of the jet stream winds. As we huddled in our very small two-person tent, with the wind slapping the side walls against our faces, we felt good about having this opportunity for a second chance at the top.

It was now the evening of May 23. We would wait until the next afternoon to proceed on to Camp 6. Denis and I wanted to minimize the amount of time we spent at the higher altitude of Camp 6. In fact, our plan was to arrive just before nightfall. Prior to our midnight summit departure, we would rest and replenish our systems with needed fluids and nutrients.

Our departure did not happen until 4 a.m.. The last minute chores of getting ready — physically, and most importantly, mentally — seemed to extend on. This was to be the single most important mountaineering day of our lives. The weather was deteriorating. The forecast was for increased wind as the day progressed. We had to move. We would not survive at these altitudes for any length of time without the use of oxygen, and if we descended to wait for a break in the weather, it would most certainly have put an end to any further summit attempts by me. My body weight was down by at least 30 pounds. It did not seem feasible that I would possess the energy needed to descend and climb back up later.

The Americans were also in position at Camp 6. Due to the seemingly unstable weather, all but one of the Americans decided to hold at the camp for better weather. Steve Swenson from Seattle was in the same predicament as Denis and I. He, too, was making a bid to climb Mount Everest without the use of oxygen. Around 3 a.m., Steve started what was to be his successful summit push.

From Camp 6 we crossed a short snowfield to the base of the Yellow Band. As my headlight bobbed up and down, my breathing took on a rhythm of its own. It felt good to be on the move again. I proceeded ahead of Denis and took the lead into the 4th class rock of the Yellow Band. Sections of this were fixed with old and new rope. I would use these to help with balance and also to assist my legs. Each step took a great effort. After about two hours, I reached the top of the Yellow Band and the start of the Northeast Ridge. The elevation was just over 27,000 feet. As I strode over the ridge, the sun was just rising to the southeast over Bhutan. I could see Makalu and beyond to Kanchenjunga. My body was filled with excitement because of where I was at and what I was doing. I was feeling strong. As I looked up, I could see Steve just completing the First Step. I switched my radio frequency to his and suggested he slow up so I could catch up to him and help break the trail. I never did catch up to him.

The effort required to overcome the technical aspect of the First Step was something I had not anticipated. The step itself is only about 100 feet high with many ropes fastened in various positions. In an attempt to cut down on weight, I did not bring an ascender along. The climbing is about Grade 5.5. I had to arm-over-arm in sections in the hope that the ropes would not separate. When I reached the top of this piece, I was breathing hard and my body was pumped with adrenaline. The cheers from my teammates on the radio brought me around and encouraged me to go further. I took a few minutes to catch my breath and enjoy the view. My location afforded me a good view of the surrounding terrain. This was the first opportunity that I had to monitor Denis's progress. I saw that he had made it up the Yellow Band and was half-way along the Northeast Ridge, on his way to the First Step. We exchanged a wave, and proceeded on. Both of us were deep inside ourselves. Our focus was on the arduous task at hand. My energy level was still up but I noticed my pace had slowed. Looming before me was the wall of granite and quartz which formed the Second Step. At 28,838 feet, this feature of the ridge offered the most vertical climbing on the route. In fact, in 1975, the Chinese installed a metal ladder to gain access to the snowfield which leads to the Third Step. It was here, that in 1924 Mallory and Irvine were last seen disappearing into the mist.

What started out as a clear and calm day had now deteriorated into near whiteout conditions. The swirling clouds would open periodically, and the summit would appear enticingly close, so that I could almost reach out and touch it. By now, I was fueled only by my determination. I could feel tremendous pain with every step. Taking up to 20 deep breaths for every two steps, my progress slowed. I did not have the energy that I started out with. I learned on the radio that Denis had turned back after ascending to the top of the First Step. He complained about the cold and how drained he felt. Denis knew that I was going for it and would give it my all. To this day, I believe that he knew he would need to be there for me when I came down. So, he unselfishly turned around and in doing so preserved himself for the events that were about to unfold.

When I radioed to abc, Alan had the strangest advice. He suggested that I blast through the pain and all would be okay on the other side. I thought about the suggestion he had just given me. The problem was, I could not fathom his rationale. We were not at sea level and as far as I could see, there was no one handing out Gatorade and cookies.

Standing all alone, with the wind howling and snow blowing all around me, I decided that I was not ready to quit without one last final effort. I would climb on, at least to the top of the Second Step and check myself after that. The rock of the Second Step is sheer granite with an off-width crack running up the centre of a 50-foot high block.

As I neared the Second Step, I realized that in order to reach a ladder left on the face, I would be involved in some tricky climbing on exposed terrain. Ropes had been fixed in place but I was unable to utilize them without the use of an ascender. I squeezed into a chimney at the start of the step. Climbing on snow, I worked my way up over blocks and through large, body-sized cracks to the start of a 30-foot snow slope which leads to the beginning of the ladder. Once I was on the ladder my mind was at ease. I could firmly grip the aluminum. The ladder had been fastened to the rock using expansion bolts but over time, due to weathering, it broke away. Pitons were placed and the ladder is now fixed to the rock wall with the aid of rope and slings. The ladder had a lot of give and swing which worsened the farther I worked my way up it. I got to the top of the ladder just as a strong gust of wind blew. The ladder swung back and forth and I quickly wrapped both arms around the rung as I held on for my life. Thankfully, the wind died down and with an awkward step off

the top rung, I found myself on a shallow slope comprised of fine shale.

The ridge from here to the third and final step was wind swept but its angle was easy. The footing was good and there was no snow to make the going harder. I had made it past the most technical part of the ridge, but not without a price. I was now extremely tired. I sat down to let my body catch up with itself. I could see the Third Step about 500 feet ahead, and the summit pyramid just beyond. Everything seemed so surreal. Moving in a dream, I spotted some large boulders and walked over to them. Darting behind them, I tried to shelter myself from the cold wind. It was two o'clock in the afternoon. Using the radio, I informed ABC about my present position. Our Sirdar, Lhakpa Sonom, who had been on this route before, suggested that at my current pace I was still three hours from the summit. That meant that if I reached the Summit by five o'clock, I would only have two hours to descend before darkness fell. I continued on, literally inching my way up the mountain, one step at a time. I wanted this so bad. My pace slowed even more as the visibility worsened and ethereal, misty clouds shrouded and engulfed me as if to remind me of just where I was. By now it had been 12 hours since I left Camp 6. I was so close to the Third Step. Fighting the pain, I convinced myself that everything was okay. I moved up another 50 feet — stopping, breathing, moving, stopping, breathing.

Soon, I began to realize that my dream was slipping away from me. I did a mental check to see if I was still cognizant. Finally, as I knelt in the sparse snow of the ridge, I realized that I had to come to terms with my situation. I just wasn't going to make it. No! I screamed and shouted. Don't give up. Stand up. Move. Slowly, I forced another upward step. A few more steps, then I had to stop and breathe, stop and breathe. I had pushed to the end of my physical limit. My senses were extremely heightened and I knew that I needed to preserve enough energy to retrace my steps back to the safety of Camp 6. Again, I monitored my reasoning, as I feared that cerebral edema would start to take over and destroy my judgment. Looking up, I could see the summit. It appeared so close. I turned my back on it and started heading down, only to stop myself in mid stride. I looked back at the summit and started towards it again. Slowly, slowly, I forced myself towards my goal. My inner turmoil was agonizing as I fought with my decision. Finally, at 3 p.m., with tears streaming down my face, I collapsed in the snow at the base of the Third Step.

Putting my face in my hands, I openly wept for what might have been. It was over, with only five hundred and twenty-one feet left. I could have stood on top of world, but I would have arrived at dusk, totally exhausted and would have been forced to bivy above 28,000 feet, without the aid of bottled oxygen. I know in my heart that my life would have ended on the summit pyramid of Everest if I had continued. The fact that my ability to analyze was still functioning helped me reason this out. Our radios were tied into the satellite dish stationed at base camp below. So, I was able to phone anywhere I wished. I needed something to hold onto and live for. I wanted to hear the voices of my two daughters, Alicia and Leanne. I wanted the sound of their voices to be irrevocably imprinted on my brain, so I could hear their words over and over again, like a mantra. I had to put my hands over my eyes to thaw out the tears and allow me to see. When I looked back along the ridge, everything was sorted out. Relief flooded over me. I knew that the decision I had made was the right one. Would we have succeeded if I had died?

I played back the route in my mind and began to prepare myself for the return. I knew it would require a lot of effort. I stood up and started down. A renewed energy came over me. Maybe going down was that much easier? Or maybe my mind was at ease now?

Retracing the Second Step was scary. The ladder was tricky to get onto but things went well after my feet were firmly planted on the rungs. When I reached the base of the step, I sunk into the soft powder snow and was quickly reminded of the work I had ahead of me. I was tired. Any amount of trail-breaking would only push me further into exhaustion. Soon my pace had slowed again. I started stopping and sitting for longer and longer periods.

Although the terrain back to the First Step is gently sloped, the constant sidestepping worked my left crampon off my boot, and I had no choice but to re-size my crampon. It took me 45 minutes to complete a task which would have taken only five minutes at lower altitudes. All that time, I was bent over. When I stood up, my chest seemed to feel very tight. At the time, I attributed this to being bent over adjusting my crampons. Proceeding down the ridge at a snail's pace, I found myself continually stopping. Although I felt that I was all alone on the ridge that day, I really wasn't. The Americans had a powerful telescope and, from their position in BC, were able to monitor my movements. They would radio our team and inform them of my progress or lack of it. They also communicated with my best friend in life, Cathy-Anne David, who was following the events at BC. She would radio up to me, and using a variety of techniques, from gentle persuasion to outright ordering me, she would encourage me to move, even if it was only one step at a time. By now I had made it to the top of the First Step. As I peered over the edge, I could see the alpen glow on the tents of Camp 6. The camp looked close but I knew I was still a long way out. I downclimbed and lowered myself with the use of the old ropes. If the ropes had broken, I would be history. I was fading fast and I knew it. I needed to get down, and I was willing to take the chance that the ropes would hold.

On his descent, Denis had dropped some emergency medical oxygen at the base of the First Step, just in case we should need it. When I reached the bottom of the step, I picked up the oxygen and proceeded along the ridge. My breathing was very laborious and my chest felt tight. I didn't know it, but pulmonary edema was starting to set in. Slowly, I made my way along the ridge. My progress consisted of a few steps, followed by long periods of rest. Many things kept me going on, even though it would have been easier just to sit, fall asleep and never have to take a step again. The voices of my wife and daughters told me that they loved me and needed me. The words of encouragement from my teammates kept me focused on returning to camp.

It took some time but finally I was able to get to the end of the Northeast Ridge where the exit ramp connecting to the Yellow Band is. Arriving here, I took off my pack to get at the oxygen that Denis had left for me. I was very cold. My system had stopped producing adequate heat to keep me warm. I needed something to get me down the last part of the mountain and into Camp 6. The sun had set behind the mountains to the north. Night was closing in. My last memory was crawling across the final snow field on my hands and knees. With a low moan, I collapsed in front of our tent. Denis heard me and immediately got me out of my gear and into the relative comfort of the small tent. Unwittingly, I made the

mistake of lying down on my back, with a sleeping bag over me. After about five minutes of laying down, I suddenly jerked upright and, lunging at Denis, grabbed him around the shoulders. A ton of bricks was crushing my chest. I was suffocating. Denis knew by the terror in my eyes exactly what was happening. He grabbed a bottle of oxygen and pushed the mask over my face. Turning the control lever to maximum flow rate, he calmed me down by talking softly to me.

It was a long night. Our supply of medical oxygen soon ran out and, in order to keep me alive, Denis had to brave the wind and cold and go outside to get an oxygen bottle from the American team. Throughout that night, Denis took excellent care of me and monitored my well-being. His fingers became frostbitten in the course of enduring the extreme cold outside to get the oxygen and when he exposed his fingers to connect the tank to the mask. Without a doubt, Denis Brown saved my life.

Earlier, Denis had radioed down to ABC and informed the team of my condition. Immediately after his call, the team began to formulate a rescue plan. It was imperative that I retreat to lower altitudes as soon as possible. The team's dilemma was that no one was in a position to come help evacuate me. No one seemed to have enough energy to travel non-stop from abc to Camp 6. I was unable to move down on my own, yet I needed to descend. My survival depended on it. By this time, the whole mountain knew of my situation. Suggestions were bandied back and forth between the various teams on the mountain and our team. Most of these were not feasible or readily carried out. Finally, Chantal, a French climber participating on a commercial expedition run by Russell Brice, suggested that two of their Sherpas could leave early the next morning and travel to Camp 6. They would carry up more oxygen for me and would help me return to the North Col. At 10:30 a.m. the next morning, the three Sherpas arrived at our tent doorstep. Incredibly, they had traveled from ABC to Camp 6, a vertical distance of 6,500 feet, in under five hours. With the help of the Sherpas on each side of me, and with the aid of oxygen, I was able to downclimb to the North Col. On our journey back to the Col, I was barely conscious. However, I do remember seeing Denis falling past me and tumbling towards the drop-off of the North Face. It seemed so strange that the person who had just saved my life was about to meet a disastrous fate. First, I thought it was just a bizarre dream. Fortunately, just as he left my peripheral vision, a large figure appeared and blocked his path. Constantine, who was also a member of Russell Brice's expedition, was commencing his summit attempt when he realized that Denis was tumbling to his death. Courageously, Constantine stepped sideways and literally tackled Denis to a stop. By doing so, he saved Denis from a very long fall down the huge North Face and, ultimately, his death.

I cannot accurately account for all the events which took place next. I lapsed into a semi-comatose state. It has been recounted to me from many people who were there, that not only our team, but the entire climbing community on the mountain mobilized together and came to assist me.

With Tim Rippel on radio, calmly directing the rescue, and with Mario Bilodeau leading the way, I was lowered down on fixed ropes from the North Col to the safety of abc. At the base of the fixed ropes, where the glacier flattens out, the darkness was lit up by the glow of many headlights. It was 3 a.m. when I was carried into ABC on a makeshift stretcher. Denis, who had traveled on ahead of me, and our cook, Sally Wright, had transformed ABC into a makeshift hospital. As soon as I arrived, an catheter was inserted into my arm and medications were soon being delivered intravenously. It took two days before I finally came to. After that, I simply slept on and off for another two days. On the fifth day, with the help of Dawa, I left abc and proceeded to base camp. The adventure was over.

A year later, reflecting on the expedition, I realize that we were a good team. We went a long way towards putting a Canadian on top of the world without the use of bottled oxygen. In hindsight, I have concluded that we had an alpine style-sized team doing an expedition-style climb. For the style that we chose, we needed to have more climbing talent and depth in order to have placed someone on the summit. Yet we did succeed in obtaining one of our primary goals, and that was for all of us to come back.

Reviews

Compiled By Bev Bendell

Don Beers. Banff-Assiniboine: A Beautiful World.

Calgary: Highline Publishing, 1993. 216 pages. $19.95(soft cover), $24.95(hard cover) (Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Henderson Book Series No. 20)

After more than 10 years of publishing guidebooks, Don Beers's books just keep getting better.

Banff-Assiniboine: A Beautiful World is more than a guidebook. It is a history book, a small format coffee table book, and the armchair hiker's companion.

Similar in format to his previous books, The World of Lake Louise and the Wonder of Yoho, the landscape layout of this book is not so large as to be unwieldy but a little larger than would fit in a pack pocket. The book has all the requisite information essential to a guidebook in the introductory pages: park regulations, environmental concerns, hiking and backpacking safety guidelines, and bear warnings as well as geology and mountaineering information. Several pages of topo map reproductions at full scale will help the user orient him or herself.

Each trail description is preceded by a few words describing the outstanding features of the trail: multicoloured lake, spectacular panorama, open views, steep trail, high pass, etc. The descriptions themselves often include information on the historical basis for place names in the area. Distances are given in both metric and imperial, a great assistance to our American visitors and those of us still trying to adjust to the change in measurement systems. The book is full of historical quotes from early explorers and mountaineers which add a historical flavour.

As I looked up some of my favourite trails I was disappointed that not all access routes to some destinations were given, and sometimes without clear reason. For example, the more direct access to Burstall Pass from the Smith-Dorrien Road was omitted in favour of the back country access from Palliser Pass which would involve a backpack.

As we have come to expect from

Beers's books, the colour photographs are outstanding. Many full-page photos set this guide above the usual visually-bland guides. The colour reproduction quality would do credit to a more expensive volume.

If you have any of Beers's other titles you will not want to miss this one. As a hiker familiar with the Banff-Assiniboine area, I want this on my own guidebook shelf.

Bev Bendell

Mark Bles. In Search of Limits: Climbing the Alpine 4000 Metre Peaks.

London, Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1994. $36.00

Once, while on a British Airways flight from London to Rome, I was provided with a splendid view of the Alps. The pilot announced that we were flying over Chamonix and obliged by tipping the aircraft gently to one side, then the other. The plane, and the passengers, their faces pressed against the cabin windows, were like pilgrims, bowing towards Mecca.

Britons have had a well-documented romance with the Alps, a history of climbing there and writing about it dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. I confess to having read but a small portion of this prodigious output: books such as Whymper's 1871 classic, Scrambles Amongst the Alps, Unsworth's 1982 anthology, Peaks, Passes and Glaciers: Selections from the Alpine Journal, and a smattering of magazine articles and books by the likes of Bonington, Tasker, Simpson, et al. The promoters of this latest British offering by author and former SAS officer, Mark Bles, wish to place it within that same tradition. The dust jacket notes proclaim, "Mark Bles's enthusiasm and good humour make him a worthy inheritor of those Victorian luminaries whose reports opened up the Alps to all climbers in search of limits or just a good day out in the mountains."

Having never set foot in the Alps myself, it is with some trepidation that I undertake this review. However, Bles's publicists may be right in making the above claim. Whymper's book helped ignite an explosion of interest in and controversy about these mountains and mountaineering in general. While In Search of Limits is not likely to achieve such notoriety, it may yet manage to rekindle some of the mythic allure of those storied ranges.

The Brits, as self-proclaimed progenitors of the sport of mountaineering, have of Europe in matters pertaining to the sport. Even though, for the past several decades, the lion's share of press has been devoted to the more brazen and colourful locals, some of this conceit survives. I too feel a certain nostalgic attachment to the notion of a "Golden Age" of mountaineering. This may be the result of our own climbing heritage being inextricably linked to and fostered by many of the seminal figures in the sport. Or, perhaps it is an enduring Eurocentrism engendered through years of using climbing equipment, standards, and techniques, bearing European names with genealogies to match. Whatever the reason, and in spite of ample diversions in our own back yard, I am still drawn to works such as Bles's if only to fulfill some vicarious Alpine fantasy.

However, to his credit, Bles avoids any nationalist conceit or jingoistic Euro-bashing and sticks primarily to mountaineering. A more jaded observer might have devoted more time to debunking the myth of the Alpine idyll, focusing instead on the high-priced, tourist-ridden valleys and towns, the endless telepheriques and funicular trains, and the overpopulated huts with their primitive, if not nonexistent, environmental controls. While the latter are described in detail (and often with considerable humour) by the author, they are not the focus of the book. Instead, Bles places them within a broader social and geographic context, weaving them throughout the book's 250 pages along with the exploits of himself, an SAS Reservist, and a small party of Scots Guards. Together, they attempt to ascend, in one season, all of the Alps's 4000-metre peaks. The effort was part "Adventure Training," under the auspices of the British Ministry of Defense, and part fund-raising event for a British charity, involved in the study of infant death syndrome.

Imagine having the time and financial resources (not to mention top-notch gear) to spend five months skiing, climbing and touring through the Alps, with lodgings, transportation and other logistical support provided by the Swiss Army. Now imagine doing it while avoiding the suffocating weight of military and civilian bureaucracies, meddlesome sponsors, Swiss border guards and monster climbing packs. That, in a nutshell, is precisely what Bles and his colleagues managed during the spring and summer of 1993.

That Alpine climbing season, like our own, was marred by bizarre, unseasonable weather. What staggers the imagination, however, was the death toll in the Alps during this period — 137 — largely the result of avalanches. Bles chronicles and comments on these and other sobering facts and realities of climbing in the Alps with great candor and wit. Indeed, the great pleasure in reading the text comes not from nail-biting accounts of desperate climbing on routes of mind-numbing technical difficulty, or from cataloguing the many foibles and shortcomings of his climbing companions, or in tortured and convoluted self-analysis. Rather it is the author's ability to affect a balance between finely-textured and detailed accounts of the mundane and prosaic aspects of his experiences and the more profound and contemplative.

The title, therefore, has meanings beyond the physically heroic. Many of the ascents described were of a technically straightforward manner, made from a multitude of commodious and strategically-placed huts, and all manner of mechanical conveyances. The climbing party was deliberately assembled from climbers of mixed ability (some trying skis for the first time) and experience. As the dust jacket notes explain, "... the challenge was not solely in reaching the summits. It existed in the moment by moment decision-making which every climber experiences to survive. Acting on assessments of snow conditions, the state of rock or ice, steepness, exposure, weather, time and individual fitness, brought its own exhilaration."

Bles's decidedly anti-elitist approach allows him to take great pleasure in sharing the sunshine on the summit of Mont Blanc with throngs, people, or to heap scorn on the deplorable state of human waste management in the alpine huts His lively and irreverent accounts of international climbing culture on and off the mountain, and a visit from the expedition's Royal Patron, HRH The Duke of Kent, together with his ability to describe and comment on everything from the weather to the price of beer, (while telling a good story) make for enjoyable yet highly informative reading. On the whole, the book would serve well as a primer on the area, providing a wealth of practical information both in the main text and in its ample appendices.

The Alps are arguably the most accessible, most climbed and probably most described mountains on the planet — which makes this book all the more remarkable. What the author succeeds in doing is bringing an unjaded viewpoint to a familiar

subject, while at the same time reminding the reader that there is still much about the Alps that is challenging and committing as well as remote and beautiful.

Robert Stirling

Chris Bonington, general editor. Heroic Climbs: A Celebration of World Mountaineering.

Audrey Salkeld, editor. In association with The Royal Geographical Society and the Alpine Club. Seattle: The Mountaineers, 1994.

Heroic Climbs is a collection of more than thirty mountaineering essays accompanied by hundreds of beautiful black-and-white and colour photographs. Glancing at the list of contributing editors — a veritable who's who of the climbing world — one might think this would be the greatest mountaineering book ever written. It's not, for the simple fact that great climbers are not necessarily great authors.

The book is divided into geographical sections: the Alps, Europe beyond the Alps, North America, Southern Hemisphere, and High Asia. Each section is preceded by a brief essay reviewing the history of the area. I found many of the essays, particularly in the first two sections, tedious and lacking focus. Some of them ended so abruptly I kept flipping pages wondering where the continuation was. The book also frequently suffers from a certain Eurocentrism which can lead a thick-headed colonial like myself to rapidly lose interest.

There are some great moments, however. John Earle writes a charming account of his Patagonian exploration with the somewhat eccentric and highly-driven Eric Shipton. Charles Houston and Sir Edmund Hillary have contributed wonderful accounts of their Himalayan experiences. Doug Scott, as usual, is incapable of writing anything badly, while Reinhold Messner is incapable of writing anything coherent.

Bottom line on this collection of essays: uneven, but some really great moments. I especially enjoyed Roger Mear's account of his solo Antarctic exploration, After Dark. If you're like most of my climbing friends and find it hard to drop 40 or50 bucks on a book, don't worry too much about acquiring this volume; it's not an essential item on the mountaineer's bookshelf like, say, the CAJ or Touching the Void. If you can't afford Heroic Climbs, get your name on the reservation list at the local library or keep your fingers crossed; maybe a few copies will show up in the remainder bin at your local bookstore this time next year.

Jeffrey Eppler

Kurt Diemberger. Spirits of the Air.

London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991

This book has been reviewed from the somewhat jaundiced eye of one who has not had alpine experience. The value of the book is that it chronicles some of the more interesting experiences of an internationally-known alpinist.

The satisfaction which you may derive from this book will depend upon your approach. This work follows on Diemberger's other autobiographical writing; it could technically be called an addition to this material, but with some limitations. Spirits of the Air is more anecdota; therefore, for a neophyte alpine reader, it is somewhat frustrating. One could say that Diemberger is too close to his work, too familiar with many of the great peaks of the world and the impressive circle of peers with which he shares both aspirations and accomplishments. This familiarity seems to have disarmed the author in these descriptions, reducing them to "sketches." At times, I felt that I was reading a travel brochure, turning it from side to side, and then finding that the text "quit" on me. I wanted more. I wanted texture and I wanted detail.

The thing I wanted most of all was Diemberger's struggle in a climb, in terms of moves, techniques, equipment successes, and equipment failures. Such detail is what makes up the fabric of any climbing experience. The "inner experience" of the climb would emerge: it can't here; there is too little related.

This is all the more emphasized by the successful parts of the book, those sections in which the inner experience of an expedition is well-chronicled. Ironically, one of the best examples is not that of the author, but of Alfred Wegener's fateful expedition in Greenland. This section describes some of Wegener's audacious plans and innovative methods, including the design and first use of propeller-driven snow sledges. Like much of the Canadian writing on the Scott expedition, it melds the historical effort itself with Diemberger's own retracing of the route, including the discoveries of artifacts.

The anecdotal structure of the book also pulls the reader into the byways of Diemberger's interests — interests much less related to climbing in general. The main ones are his hobby of collecting crystals from rock formations, and his vocation as a mountain cinematographer. While, on the dust jacket, the publishers honestly forewarn the reader about the wide focus, these episodes seem curiously small and personal alongside the occasional epic treatment of historic mountain assaults, to which Diemberger was a party. One strength of the book is its geographical breadth. Sections of the book describe treks to Greenland, Death Valley, and East Nepal.

As a new reader to alpine literature, I was intrigued by how typical one of Diemberger's frequent references was. He views his career as attaining a "collection" of peaks — that is, climbing so many of a certain height over a number of years — and he refers to the supposed competition among leading climbers in this respect. The dust jacket notes that Diemberger "has climbed six of the eight-thousanders." This view of accomplishment strikes me as a bit macho and dated. It seems to contradict the author's supposed awe of mountains — dominating them by checking them off on one's list of accomplishments.

For the serious alpinist or alpine book collector, this is probably a must-buy, given the stature of the author. The book does, however, suffer from inconsistent depth and continuity which one would expect in autobiographic or memoir writing. For the casual reader, and the alpine neophyte, it might be best borrowed, something leafed through, so as to select the anecdotal material closest to one's own particular interest.

Greg Conchelos

June Fleming. Staying Found, the Complete Map and Compass Handbook. Second edition.

The Mountaineers. Seattle, 1994.

I've never really been lost. Not really. But I've been turned around and slightly twisted enough times to appreciate the value of a book like Staying Found by June Fleming. It is no small task to compile information that will not only help you keep from getting desperately lost during an outdoor adventure, but also help you enjoy any wilderness experience more completely.

I was very young the first time I remember misplacing myself — maybe five or six. I was walking with my father and grandfather in the woods of northern

Ontario: a landscape of nearly identical kettle lakes, jack pine forests, and glacial-scared granite domes. I remember my father's instructions to this day, "If you get separated from us, stay put and don't panic." When I looked up and realized the bristled leg in front of me wasn't my father, but a Jack Pine, I did just that. Minutes later I was rediscovered. Now I live in the mountains. My early experience in the woods of northern Ontario, where the haze of black flies is as much an obstacle to navigation as the topography, has become an essential foundation to my enjoyment and safety.

June Fleming's writing is an excellent reminder of these lessons. She explains the use of various maps, the compass, the map measurer, the night sky, and a range of route-planning and route-finding skills. She helps us understand nature's own compass and clock — the sun. She takes special care to teach young people the secrets of staying found. Combined, these skills will open the doors to a world of back country adventures that are sure to enhance any traveller's experience: from the dedicated trail-walker to the hard-core alpinist.

Ms. Fleming does not place the emphasis on the gadgets and gizmos of modern navigation. She does not, for example, recommend purchasing a hand-held Global Positioning System device (though she does explain how one works, in case you have a few grand to blow). She places the emphasis for staying found on you and me: the hiker, scrambler, climber, skier, and snowshoer. She urges us to take responsibility for our own safety, then explains how to do just that.

Staying Found also stresses the importance of basic navigational skills that use landforms and a knowledge of local geography as a guide. Understanding how to read a landscape, without the use of maps and compass, will enhance the use of these instruments when you do adopt them.

It may seem like a simple lesson to be learned, but we all have to start somewhere. One evening after work, within the first few weeks of arriving in the Rockies, I was hiking along a trail that lead to the head of a valley. It was getting dark and there were still 10k to walk, so I began to make my way home. Walking up the valley I had followed a single trail, but when I turned to leave the meadow I was in, there were a dozen trails snaking through the forest! I knew I wasn't lost — not even close — but it was getting dark (that's when the monsters come out) and I experienced that panic we all have, that would send me off in any direction, just to be moving.

But I didn't let that happen. I thought about my situation for a second, then remembered that creeks flow downhill — or in this case, downvalley. As basic as that sounds, it was the first of a long series of lessons that have helped me understand how to read the landscape. I followed the creek for a while, and soon picked up the trail.

There is an important point to be made: the mountains, the desert, the forest, each can turn from being a welcoming host to a treacherous adversary once we become lost. In teaching low impact camping courses in the past, I've stressed the importance of staying found, not only for our own protection, but for the protection of the landscape. People do stupid things when they experience that panic of being turned around — light fires, blaze trees, trample vegetation. That panic can have a serious effect on the land we have set out to enjoy and respect.

Of the books I've read that help people travel in the backcountry, June Fleming's is the most complete. There are scores of illustrations to help comprehend complicated theory, and she recommends having a map, compass and other navigational material on hand while reading. The only-thing missing is a better explanation of the differences between Canadian and American topographic sheets (this book is defiantly Americentric), and some adaptations for river-running and open-water navigation.

In the few years that I've been in the Rockies I've moved from a dedicated trail-walker towards an off-trail scrambler and route finder. This has not been an easy process. It has taken thousands of kilometres to learn the language of geography. It has taken hours and hours to learn the use of map and compass. I believe it would have been a much easier task had I read June Fleming's Staying Found sooner.

Stephen Legault

Jim Nelson and Peter Potterfield. Selected Climbs In The Cascades.

The Mountaineers, Seattle, 1993. $22.95

I had mixed feelings when I picked up this book. Having lived and travelled on the coast for many years, I grew up with Fred Beckey's Cascade Alpine Guides trilogy. I hoped that Jim Nelson and Peter Potterfield were not trying to write their own version of these. I was pleased after reading through the book to find that their ambitions were entirely different. Selected Climbs In The Cascades is a good book for someone who wishes to determine what the Cascades have to offer. If, after discovering the "selected Cascades," the climber is interested in learning more, he or she is then ready for Becky's all-inclusive guides.

The routes in this book are varied and will appeal to all types of climbers. They range from easy walk-ups, marathon wilderness climbs, glacier climbs, difficult rock routes on alpine peaks, sport climbs on crags, and ice climbs.

The climbs are described in a south to north orientation and the layout for individual climbs is in a logical sequence. The description starts with an overview of the climb, including: first ascent, elevation, grade, time, suggested equipment and season. The next section is detailed approach information. This is crucial for climbing in the Cascades. Bush and changing roads can be a real issue in this range. One nice touch is grading the approach, although I would have liked to have seen a more detailed explanation of what the approach grade means. If the climb you are contemplating is rated as a Grade 5 approach, what are you getting yourself into? Special permit requirements or other pertinent regulations are also mentioned. After the preliminaries are presented, the main route is described in detail. If the descent route is different, it is also described. Each climb includes photographs of the route and in some cases a general photo of the objective. For difficult rock or snow routes, a detailed sketch is displayed along with a route photo giving a very clear idea of the route.

The selection of climbs covers a large part of the northern Cascade Range. Some of the routes I expected to see were not included. I was really surprised that there were no climbs on Bonanza Peak. Being the highest non-volcanic peak in the Cascades, I thought it would automatically be included. There are no routes from the Anderson River group in British Columbia covered either. This area offers rock climbing similar in nature to Yosemite valley, so again I thought it would be a natural inclusion. One of the trips that the Cascades are famous for is the Ptarmigan Traverse. I was surprised to see that this route was also omitted. A strong point of the book is the quality of photography. Some very detailed pictures including several by

Austin Post give a good idea of the nature of each trip. A few of the photographs were mislabeled, but not enough to overly confuse the issue.

Selected Climbs In The Cascades is a good introduction to climbing in the area. If you want to know what the Cascades have to offer, this book is a good choice. If you need detailed information on the Cascades, you are better off with Fred Beckey's trilogy. Either way, you will discover the beauty of the Cascades.

Note: The fires of the summer of 1994 have altered several of the routes in the book. Areas affected are Tumwater Canyon and Snow Creek Wall. It is advisable to check with the pertinent authorities mentioned in the text as to the condition of the area.

Rod Plasman

Craig Richards. The Canadian Rockies.

Sawback Press, 1994. $29.95

Contrary to traditional wisdom, one can sometimes tell a great deal about a book by its cover. Certainly, this is the case with The Canadian Rockies, a new book of fine art images by Canmore photographer Craig Richards. In its understated elegance, the cover of this book spares us the usual garish and competitive attempt to capture the eye of the passing tourist with the glitter of the Rockies. It implies mountains of an order and dimension that don't often appear in tourist brochures, but that nonetheless exist in the experience and in the hearts of those who know these ranges well. Like the images presented elsewhere in the book, the cover photograph is black and white — and silver. It is a great credit to the perceptual ability of this artist that he can share with the viewer just how much silver exists in these mountains. Like Carl Rungius and the other great mountain artists of the past, Craig Richards sees silver everywhere. He points it out to us — in snow and ice, in leaves, wet rock, cloud, and moving water.

When Craig Richards came to the Rockies 15 years ago, he was already interested in large format photography. As Mr. Richards gained firsthand trail experience, he began to see these mountains as early artists saw them. Deriding the worn-out formula of photographing mountains under clear blue skies, Mr. Richards abandoned the Rockies in good weather. What we get instead is a profound sense of cold stone, lingering snow, mist and wild weather harmonious with the experience of anyone who has genuinely experienced these peaks. By seeking self-expression, Craig Richards has, indeed, allowed the mountains, and mountain weather, to speak for themselves.

The cover image of the Giant Steps in Paradise Valley draws you into itself. The radiating presence of this small image makes it immediately clear this is not a book for those interested in capturing a superficial sense of mountain place This is confirmed by the contents of the book: 37 places we have all seen, in circumstances few have been able to capture. But this book is about more than mountains; it is about learning to see. Richard's images are a testament to a refined way of looking at landscapes. His book is a journey into the abstraction of dynamic natural design. Here we see rock and water, snow and ice, as witnessed by someone who has discovered that nature has been ordered for the eye.

Anyone who really knows and loves the Rockies will appreciate this book. The images that it contains are each works of art in their own right. Each image is so perfectly printed it could be cut from the book, framed and proudly hung. The introduction to the photographs by Folio Gallery's Peter Duthie is as articulate and tasteful as the images themselves. These images, and the elegant book that contains them, argue that there are some fine mountain artists in Canada and that, one day, a few of them might even turn out to be great.

Robert W. Sandford

R. W. Sandford and Geoff Powter, editors. Canadian Summits. The Canadian Alpine Journal 1907-1994.

Alpine Club of Canada, Canmore, AB, 1994. $24.95.

"History is bunk," was said by Henry Ford. I know too many climbers who seem to agree. For them it's not the past but the solipsism of the present that is meaningful. Canadian Summits is a beautifully-mounted anthology of pieces from the Canadian Alpine Journal that will give the present generation a vivid glimpse into the historical dimensions of their sport. The book takes us back on a "travelogue" of full-length CAJ excerpts from the last seven decades.

These pieces attest both to the continuities and discontinuities of mountaineering — in terms of sensibility, style, self-presentation, and of course language, which ranges from purple nature writing to the kinetic Barry Blanchard's making free with the "f" word.

Major advances in Canadian climbing are represented with accounts of Kain's first ascent of Robson, McCarthy's first on Bugaboo Spire, Fritz Wiessner's on Waddington, Jones and Lowe on Houser Tower. There is also pretty good coverage of Canadian achievements in the early days of modern ice climbing, with tales by Bugs McKeith and John Lauchlan, The book is careful to include a sufficiency of exploits by women.

Not all the climbing takes place on Canadian soil: two pieces (one by Sharon Wood, another by Hugh Burton) take us to the Himalaya and Yosemite, and show Canadians strutting their stuff free of nationalist insecurities. The selection is heavily skewed to the Rockies and the Coastal Range. Strangely there is no mention or photo of any peak in the Eastern Arctic. Wow!

The editors have thrown in a sprinkling of meditative pieces on the reasons why people climb. One pick especially required a bit of editorial daring: a long 1941 essay by Cyril Wates, called "Men, Mountains and Motives," which contains more than two dozen lines of inspirational rhyming verse. A sample:

Scaling the rocks to the névé, white
And the snow-ridge, corniced on left and right,
And when sunrise comes in its regal state,
You shall hear us shout from yon far arête
On our upward way.

Quite a contrast with the final essay choice, a defense of sport climbing by David Dornian, which depends heavily on an in-your-face, derisive attack on the "trads" and all that this book stands for. Sample: "If you're anything like me, you're tired to tears of the usual tales of big mountain masturbation, wooden with stubborn masochism in the face of random adversity... the idiocies in the views held by the gorp and Gore-Tex crowd."

The book's design is clearly commercial. It resembles Sierra Club coffee table books and does not try to reflect the CAJ's funkier look and feel. There are generous margins, the paper is good glossy stock, print quality excellent, and there are first-rate, full-page, black-and-white photos (many from the

Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies).

My only substantial criticism: as the reader moves through past time, it soon becomes clear that there is no concept behind the selections. Disingenuously the editors say at the outset that this isn't meant to be a "best of collection, nor representative of the journal's 77 volumes. What's lacking is a template that would orient us during the travelogue, and give the climbers' narratives some connectivity. They seem to have just randomly picked "good stuff" — which, happily, much of this material is.

John Thackray

(John Thackray has been the book review editor of the American Alpine Journal for over 10 years.)

Chic Scott. Summits & Icefields. Alpine Ski Tours in the Rockies and Columbia Mountains.

Rocky Mountain Books, Calgary 1994. $15.95

Knowing of the imminent release of Summits & Icefields by Chic Scott, and having seen a preliminary draft, I found myself checking the bookshelves at the Mountain Equipment Co-op several times a week, hoping to get my hands on it. When I finally had a chance to peruse the book, I was not disappointed. Chic Scott has done a remarkable job putting this book together. Being a master of the long ski traverses, as well as the author of Ski Trails in The Canadian Rockies, Chic Scott is eminently qualified to write this book.

The official release of Summits & Icefields occurred at the Banff Festival of Mountain Books in early November, 1994. Reading the book just before the start of the ski season was enough to get me waxing my skis in anticipation of the trips presented.

The book is just over 300 pages long and is the same format and size as several other books published by Rocky Mountain Books. It is a convenient size to slip in your pack as you are heading out for a day, week, or month of backcountry adventure.

The scope of the book is extremely ambitious. The area covered includes the Monashees, Selkirks, Purcells and Rocky Mountain Ranges of western Canada. It is impossible for a book of this type to be all-inclusive. Instead Chic has tried to put together representative routes in all of these areas. If your favorite route is not covered, wait for Volume 2! As varied as the area this book covers, so too are the types of trips covered. Chic has documented marathon ski traverses several weeks in length, back country destinations where a base camp is set up for several days of touring, long day trips, short day trips, as well as telemarking areas. There is also a small section on the various commercial back country facilities including pricing, skiing available, the hosts, access, amenities and phone numbers.

Summits & Icefields is written for ski mountaineers and for competent backcountry skiers looking to advance to ski mountaineering. In comparison to his Ski Trails in the Canadian Rockies, Chic has assumed that skiers contemplating any of these trips are experienced in assessing hazards such as weather, avalanche conditions and crevasses. Trips are not graded for difficulty. All trips in the book are for advanced skiers.

Chic Scott has amassed an astonishingly-varied batch of photographs for this book. He has approached his many friends and colleagues for photos as well as using several of his own considerable collection. The quality of the photographs is excellent. The photographs not only show routes to follow, they also show the type of terrain, as well as the views that can be expected on the selected route.

The introduction to the book covers the type of snow one can expect in the different ranges, as well as avalanches, suggested equipment, weather, administration, huts, hot springs and important phone numbers.

One of Chic Scott's greatest strengths in his writing is his strong sense of history. The route descriptions are full of anecdotes about earlier skiers and their adventures. There is a lot of history in this area, and it makes those long winter evenings in the back country more enjoyable to know some of the earlier happenings in the area.

This book is highly recommended for anyone interested in ski mountaineering in western Canada. There are enough varied routes in this book to keep one busy for a lifetime. Chic Scott has done an outstanding job in writing this book! I am looking forward to his next release.

Rod Plasman

David Thompson. Columbia Journals. Edited by Barbara Belyea.

McGill Queens. $49.95

David Thompson is, arguably, the most important European explorer in the history of the Canadian West. Over the course of his highly active life as a surveyor and fur trader, Thompson mapped a million and a half square miles of North America. During the relatively brief span he spent in the West, Thompson did what Alexander Mackenzie and a host of other adventurers had failed to do: he discovered and mapped a navigable route from the Rockies Mountains to the Pacific.

While many are familiar with Thompson's epic explorations, few contemporary Canadians have read either his journals or the narrative of his travels published at the close of his surveying years. The main reason why his extensive writings have not been more widely appreciated is that they are difficult to read. Thompson wrote his journals as an aide-memoire, rather than as an account to be shared later with readers. Concise to the point of terseness, written in what is now an archaic style and filled with astronomical measurements, the journals are a formidable study. Only serious researchers have managed to apply the diligence necessary to make them illuminate Thompson's world. As his writings approach 200 years in age, however, a new major edition of Thompson's Columbia River journals, edited by Canmore historian Barbara Belyea, has appeared that once again makes the writings of this extraordinary early explorer transparent to all.

While Thompson's narrative has appeared regularly, only fragments of his actual journals have appeared in print. With Ms Belyea's edited compendium of Thompson's Columbia Journals, we are witness to important exploration accounts that have never been published before. The fine introduction to this new and important volume provides a lucid summary of Thompson's life and work. In it Belyea places Thompson and the fur trade in the altered context of a West which has been totally transformed. Ms Belyea's thoughtful selection and careful sequencing of Thompson's notes bypasses the usual monotonous account of the daily trials experienced by travellers to the immense lands of the west before the railway. We are exposed, instead, to the true dimensions of Thompson's staggering accomplishment. But we also experience a sense of loss.

If you know the country Thompson describes, it becomes quickly apparent that the geography he explored barely exists anymore. Altered as they have been by settlement and industry, the landscapes and peoples described in Thompson's journals exist only as ghosts. It is not

just another time Thompson seems to be describing, but another place. While Thompson's Eurocentric mindset may at first appear as antique as his once-famous maps, the journals suggest that there was also something familiarly modern about this great mapmaker. In reducing multi-dimensional complexity of the West to the spareness of a few lines, his journals are like his maps. In both, history, nature and culture vanish. The abundance, glory and ecology of the West disappear. Reduced to mere geography, the West is laid out flat ready for the overlay of the new. Thus we come to see that, whether he intended to or not, Thompson made maps of human purpose, as well as maps of place. And we begin to wonder what self-interested purpose exists between the lines on our own maps of the West.

Robert W. Sandford

Walt Unsworth. Hold the Heights: The Foundations of Mountaineering.

Seattle: The Mountaineers, 1994. 432 pages, $29.95

Hold the Heights is a very well organized and descriptive book on the comprehensive history of world mountaineering. Unsworth has done a superb job describing the evolution of climbing.

It is, without doubt, the best book of its kind: a very good read for climbing history buffs and highly recommended.

Unsworth not only chronicles the first major ascents but he also highlights breakthrough achievements from ancient times to the ascent of Everest in 1953. Descriptions of some milestone ascents are enhanced by excerpts from original passages.

There are 24 pages of interesting historic black-and-white photographs and more than 20 general purpose maps. Unsworth also provides extensive sections on notes and references, a selected bibliography, and a detailed index.

Unsworth describes a wonderful selection of first ascents from the Alps to Greenland, Aconcagua to McKinley, and the Himalaya to the New Zealand Alps. Diversified portrayals of legendary climbers are narrated including Whymper, Mummery, Crowley, Wiessner, Merkel, and many others.

Perhaps the only weakness in this climbing history book is Unsworth's slant towards British accomplishments. Some very notable North American ascents and climbers are neglected, such as the ascent of Mount Logan in 1907, and Dora Keen's first ascent of Mount Blackburn in 1912 (though please see Leon Blumer's article in this edition of the Journal). He even failed to mention Fred Beckey.

Hold the Heights is much more than a mere chronology of climbing history. Unsworth has masterfully related the evolution of climbing to the reasons that people climb.

John Petroske

Joe Josephson. Waterfall Ice: Climbs in the Canadian Rockies.

Rocky Mountain Books, Calgary 1994 $19.95

In 1980, Albi Sole wrote the first edition of "Waterfall Ice, perhaps the world's first guide book to an ice climbing area. Descriptions of the hardest routes of the day: Slipstream, Polar Circus and Nemesis captured my attention, and pictures of John Lauchlan on all the rads fuelled my ice climbing dreams. In 1988, Albi put out the second edition, this time with more than 250 routes (the first had 89). Pictures of the Terminator, the Sorcerer and Riptide inspired me to begin ice climbing again.

In 1994, Albi passed the torch to Joe Josephson. The result is a change in format, a significantly changed grading system and about twice the number of climbs again.

What's good? There is excellent information on the sport of ice climbing and its hazards in the introduction. Joe has made an extra effort to make the book appealing to all levels of climbers with many photos (not all of the desperates), an equal distribution of stars throughout the grades and sound advice for the beginner and veteran alike. There are very good thoughts about selection of route for your ability, and the various hazards that are out there and how to minimize them.

The pictures in the book correspond, almost without fail, to the description on the same page, and the book gets big points from me on this alone. The grading system has some welcome changes, including the subdivision of the harder routes with a " + " or a "-"; the addition of seriousness ratings (for climbs that are run-out or are likely to fall down on your head); and an explanation of how rock grades translate to climbing a pitch with crampons on.

Which brings us to future vision. This book describes a grade (technical Grade 8) which has not been done, lets us in on unclimbed routes and drips and generally encourages us to open our minds to the enormous possibilities left in the Rockies. In the first edition, Albi Sole stated that the next generation would take free climbing to the yet untouched ice. In the second he stated that there were many routes to be done. Joe tells us that they're still out there, and then he tells us where.

What sucks? The photo reproduction. The photos in the first two editions were, on the whole, far better, and that's not very impressive when you consider the technological advances in the past 14 years. Half of the reproductions are just okay, while the others are abysmal — nothing more than a black blob on a white background. A bug stomped into the snow? A Rorschach splotch? No, a Kicking Horse classic. What makes this a great shame is that the content of the photos is good. There is a mix of historical and modern stuff, easy climbs and test-pieces, route shots and butt shots, but the inspiration factor of the book is compromised by not being able to make out what the hell you're looking at. Yeah, I know, it's not a coffee table book, but I can't help but think that Joe was let down by someone trying to save a few bucks on the production costs. The project deserved better.

Should you buy this book? This is probably a moot question. What are you going to do, use the 1988 edition? You want this book. My copy has already become an indispensable piece of gear in the top pocket of my pack, a record of routes done and very much a catalyst for dreams of high, wild winter adventure. You can't ask much more of a book.

Keith Haberl

Obituaries

Mary Frances Plumb Blade

Mary Blade of Vancouver, B.C., died Sunday, December 4, 1994, at Vancouver General Hospital of Alzheimer's disease.

Mary was born January 20, 1913 to Dr. H. T. Plumb and Maude Irene (nee Augustine) Plumb in Salt Lake City, Utah. She was raised and educated in Salt Lake where she learned to love the mountains, deserts, and wildflowers. She was the first woman to graduate as an electrical engineer from the University of Utah.

She and her husband, Dr. Ellis Blade, moved to New York City where she taught math and engineering at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art for 37 years. She received numerous awards for academic leadership, among them the Edwin Sharp Burdell Award for creative synthesis of Science and Art, and the Cooper Award for outstanding teacher as a result of students voting her the greatest influence among their professors. Mary was the first woman professor of mechanical/electrical engineering in New York City. In 1980 Professor Blade was honoured by the American Society for Engineering Education for her outstanding contributions to engineering education.

In New York, she studied watercolour with Don Kingman, sculpture with Jose DeCreeft, and printmaking with Anna Wong. Her works of art were featured in many exhibits in Canada and the U.S. An accomplished artist, musician, and author, Mary Frances was a member of a number of Vancouver organizations devoted to the arts and sciences. Her husband of 62 years, Ellis Blade, died hiking on Grouse Mountain in 1986.

She is survived by many students and friends who were influenced by her high levels of scientific and artistic productivity. Their lives and accomplishments are a testimony to her vitality.

The end time for Mary Frances, sometimes heady and heroic, sometimes compromised, was sustained by a group of friends who gave freely and with love. Her immediate message was "Live it up!"

Mary was a Life Member of the ACC.

Mary Follis

Herbert Markus Kaufman

Born April 25, 1944, in Altshausen, Germany. Herbert Kaufman passed away on December 16, 1994, at home after a strong battle with leukemia. Herb is survived by his loving friend, Carole Kirk, his children, Christa, Petra, and Ian, his mother, Klara, his brother, Paul, and many relatives in Germany. He was a trained pastry chef and spent two years in Switzerland and three years in England before coming to Canada in 1967. In 1974 Herb bought Pop's Bakery in Banff, and later he took over the Bread Basket in Canmore. Herb was an active member of St. Mary's Catholic Church, the Rotary Club, and the community, especially as a ball-room dancer. He will be remembered in the Bow Valley for his love of the mountains, skiing, hiking, jogging and curling.

Herb was a Rocky Mountain Section member of the ACC who lived in Banff. I first met him when he came on our Monashee Chalet ski camp in 1992. At that time, I gave him a lift to Blue River the day before the camp and during our ride I learned a lot about the bakery business. He definitely was a very committed baker. This later showed up in the camp when he couldn't keep his hands out of the baking business and proceeded to make us scones from whatever ingredients he could find. (We already had dozens of his whole wheat buns which I had bought from his Bread Basket store.) Herb also attended our Dave Henry Lodge ski camp (1993) and the Eremite-Tonquin Valley ski camp at the Wates-Gibson Hut (1994). He was an enthusiastic participant at the ski camps, both in skiing and in making scones or buns from pancake mix. After he attended the Monashee camp, he convinced several of his friends to attend the next two camps, and we all benefited from meeting these wonderful people. I know they will miss him very much.

Words cannot convey a person's personality. When I think of Herb, I can hear his clipped speech, and see his eyebrows flicking as he talked, and his tousled head as he came into the hut kitchen in the mornings. His big grin and great enthusiasm for the ski camps will be missed.

I was all set to throw in an extra bag of pancake mix in the food supplies for all my ski camps in the future because Herb was planning on attending them all. Now I won't have to do that, and I really wish this wasn't so.

We'll miss you, Herb. Adieu.

Ruthie Oltmann

Stewart Fall (1934—1994)

With the sudden departure of Stu in March, 1994, the mountains of western Canada have lost one of their characters. He was a very active member of the Club in the 1960s and 1970s, being a stalwart on the Vancouver Section's executive for several years as the Climbing and Section Chairman, and apprenticing for these jobs as a member of the Climbing Committee. As Chairman in the early 1970s, he had the difficult role of modernizing the Section as the "war vet" members faded out, and the new-hard core craggers entered the scene. Despite the constant flak, rhetoric, and brickbats, Stu steered the Section with a sound financial hand, which saw the accomplishments of a repaired Tantalus cabin, a finally-finished Whistler cabin, and an effective voice in the emerging Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia.

Stu started his alpine career during his electrical engineering student days at UBC in the early 1950s. From a background as a farm boy on Vancouver Island and high school billiard shark, he soon became the man of the mountains. The turning point was in 1953, when as a summer student he lucked into the field party of Dr. Geoff Leech of the Geological Survey of Canada. He was mapping the western half of the Kananaskis sheet, which runs as far west as Canal Flats in the western Rockies. When he returned to UBC, he joined the Varsity Outdoor Club as a carefree mountain rambler. He often use to say that his Master's thesis was interfering

with his climbing, skiing and bridge games. He had a photographic memory and filed away all details and hilarious moments of an outing for recall, which he often spelled out in thunderous humour many years later.

Stu was one of the pioneers in microwave communication development, finally finishing his Master's thesis on this experimental work after six years of tinkering. He joined the research and development arm of B.C. Tel and became a member of the BCMC. By the mid-1960s he was doing related work in England, using their much longer holiday liberties to ski at St. Anton, Austria for five weeks each year. He mastered the Austrian ski technique with religious fervour, and by the close of a second trip was nearly fluent in German as well.

Arriving back in Vancouver, he joined the Vancouver Section, but trimmed down his alpine pursuits to the weekender role. He was a solid contributor to the emerging political roles of outdoor clubs on the enhancement and preservation of our alpine environment, and boosted the Club's programs. At this period of his life Stu also served on the Section executive and various committees. To relieve the stress, he took up recreational jogging, which soon changed to very competitive road running and constant daily workouts of ever-increasing length. He was a Masters runner, winning most competitions in his age group, and bringing his marathon time down to an incredible two hours, 32 minutes at an age of forty plus.

Stu was the natural wit of any group gathering, putting this asset to good use while addressing intense issues in whatever club he was working for at the time. In the Varsity Outdoor Club, he invented the "GGH" (the white, sun-reflecting Garibaldi goon hat). About 100 ascents of different peaks are recorded in his notebooks between 1952 and 1980. I was very fortunate in being a participant on about one third of these trips. The climbing was coastal oriented — all the big volcanoes from Hood to Garibaldi, several times over, and at least 35% of the effort was in Garibaldi Park which he regarded as his second spiritual home.

His death came by complete surprise, and much too soon. It's hard to swallow that he woke one morning in late September with a headache, and died of a brain tumour only months later at the age of only 59. The memorial service was organized by Heiltsuk natives of Bella Bella who had taken him in as a brother and gave him last rites. Stu's name is now found on a dedicated park bench beside his running route around Elk Lake near Victoria; it is also found in the record books of the Canadian Athletics Association; in the Coast Mountain guidebooks under a number of first ascents; and in his writings of trip reports and Club affairs in the Vancouver Section's "Avalanche Echoes." He left a big mark in whatever he undertook.

Karl Ricker

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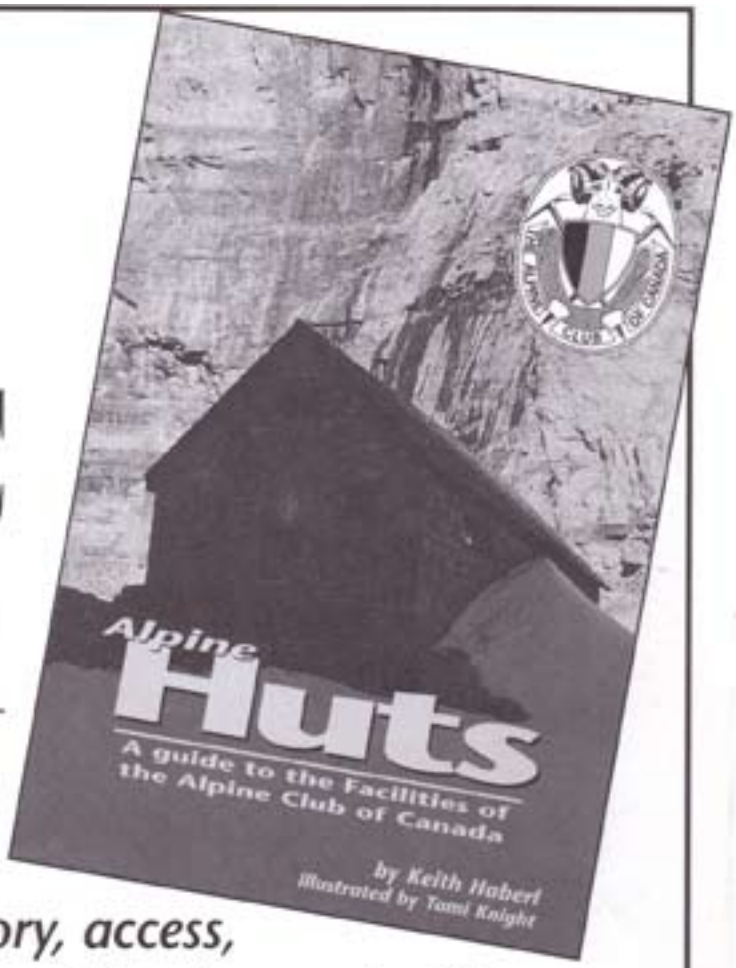

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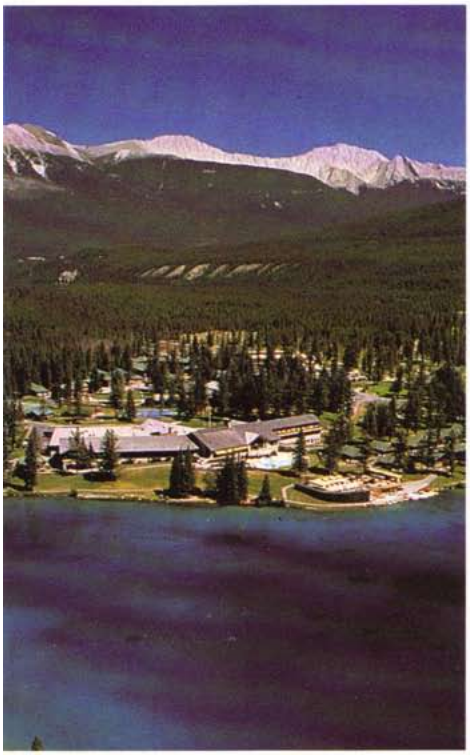

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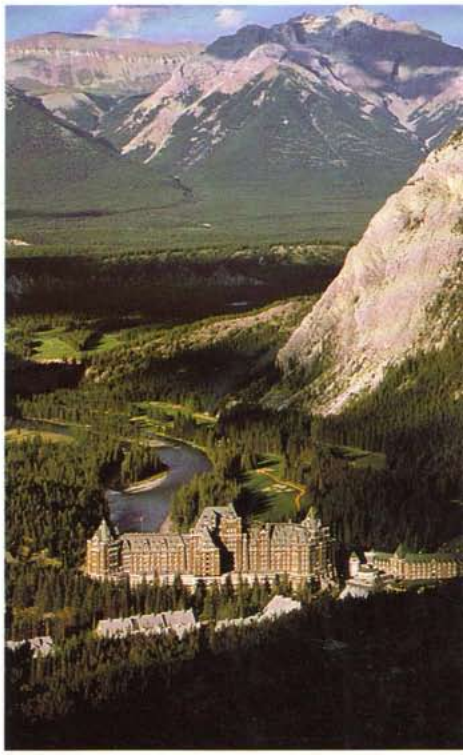

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Maintaining Our Perspective

Maintaining three majestic hotels in the Rockies also means maintaining the majestic environment in which they thrive.
This is as true today as it was almost a hundred years ago when Canadian Pacific Limited brought Swiss guides to the Edelweiss Village, not far from present-day Banff, and introduced the sport of alpine climbing to the Canadian west.
The promotion of environmentally sensitive tourism requires the combined commitment of private enterprise, environmental protection organizations and concerned communities. And at Canadian Pacific Limited, our best interests lie in respecting the interests of our natural environment.

Canadian Pacific
Charitable Foundation