



Kootenay Mountaineer

The KMC Newsletter

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Next deadline: May 10th

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Trudging Up Grassy Peak.

Snowshoes: Not just for hanging above the fireplace anymore.

By Bob Keating, Special to The Province

CASTLEGAR - It is the fastest growing winter sport in North America. Snowshoes are not just for hanging above the fireplace anymore. And for the truly adventurous, the backcountry beckons. Bob Keating took a snowshoe trip in the Kootenays earlier this winter and filed this report.

The goal: We gather in brilliant morning sunlight at the base of Grassy Mountain, 12 kilometers east of Castlegar in the Selkirk Mountains. Our goal is Grassy Peak, four km away and 600 meters straight up. It's a perfect day to strap on snowshoes - sunny and cool with a meter-deep pillow of snow. There are 12 of us, mostly members of the Kootenay Mountaineering Club. We get a short talk from group leader, 49-year-old Dave Mitchell, about sticking together (which we often ignore) and staying alert for avalanche danger. Then we're off.

Choosing the right shoes: They knew 6,000 years ago about the importance of having the right shoes for the job. The first snowshoes were crafted by people

from Central Asia, who used them to get across the glacial land bridge from Asia to North America.

Those shoes soon evolved into the wood and rawhide snowshoes you still see today, though often as "folksy" artwork hanging in mountain chalets.

In the 1960s, snowshoe makers began experimenting with neoprene, aluminum and other materials to improve durability and make them lighter.

The "sport" of snowshoeing began to truly take off in the '80s as the shoes improved and people became more interested in the outdoors. Snowshoeing now grows about 20 per-cent each year with more than 30 snowshoe manufacturers annually selling a million plus pairs in North America alone.

Snowshoes range in price from \$50 for cheap, plastic shoes (not recommended for backcountry trips) to \$400 for lightweight, top-of-the-line shoes. One member of our group has the old wood and rawhide version and swears by them, but they become rarer with every passing year.

Almost anyone can do it: The beauty of snowshoeing is almost anyone can do it. Our group ranges in age from 18 to 60. For some this is only the first or second time they have ever been on snowshoes.

Those of us with less experience fall back in line and let the more seasoned types break trail. It's much easier following footprints.

A sturdy set of ski poles helps me keep my balance as we tromp toward the peak. The fresh untracked snow and endless views are breathtaking.

What's that noise? About three km into our walk up Grassy Mountain we hear a whump as a section of snow gives way beneath us - a subtle warning to be aware of avalanches, one of the major dangers of snowshoeing in the backcountry.

We space out and carefully watch each other cross any treeless slopes near the top. Dehydration, frostbite and getting lost are also serious risks. It's best to start with people who know what they're doing.

The peak: We reach the peak after about three hours of snowshoeing and the view is fantastic. We can see the rolling, treed

hills of Washington state to the south and the dramatic peaks of the Valhalla Range to the west. We break out our Thermoses of hot chocolate and coffee and have lunch in the noon-hour sunshine.

This walk is part of the longer Bonnington Traverse, which stretches along the spine of the Selkirks from Castlegar to Nelson.

And after seeing the first four km, I decide that I must snowshoe the entire thing one day. *This article was printed in the Tuesday, Jan 25, 2005 edition, pA39, of The Province in the "Adventure" section. It was accompanied by a half page color picture of a KMC snowshoer on Grassy Mountain.*

Until It Hurts Wallet, Consumers Ignore Global Enviro-mess.

North American society hasn't yet reached the stage where environmental maturity replaces gluttonous, macho consumerism. We're still collectively asleep at the switch, blithely ignoring ecological danger signs everywhere in the pursuit of comfort and convenience. It's the great American/Canadian lifestyle. But the ostrich approach to diminishing resources, particularly oil, can't continue. In one respect, gasoline sticker shock is the best thing that can happen to wake the environmentally complacent. If it doesn't hurt us in the pocketbook, we tend not to care- and that dismally myopic attitude continues to allow massive, unsustainable exploitation of most other natural resources. It isn't enough to worry about the price of oil and gas. If we don't also think about vanishing fish, water shortages from global melting of glaciers, the threat of extinction now facing one-third of Earth's amphibians- and so many other environmental crises- we'll be driving hybrids through a junk world of our own making. *From James McNulty's, "Until It Hurts Wallet, Consumers Ignore Global Enviro-mess" article in The Province, Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2004*



Slide Show

NATIONAL PARKS OF UTAH - April 29

On **Friday, April 29**, the West Kootenay Camera Club is presenting a slide show by Castlegar hiker and photographer Ron Perrier. He has been to the desert southwest twenty five times. Southern Utah, where all these parks are located, is his favorite destination.

The parks shown: Arches, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef, Bryce Canyon, and Zion, are in the Colorado Plateau. It is a huge area that takes up part of four states, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Utah. The Colorado River bisects the plateau, but is only part of one park, Canyonlands. Over the years, he has visited each park many times by hiking, backpacking, kayaking (the Green River through Canyonlands) and four wheel driving. He believes that this is one of the most visually spectacular areas anywhere. Still using film, this will be an old-fashioned slide show using two slide projectors.

Sentinel 113 is a large amphitheatre at Selkirk College, seats 125, with every seat providing unobstructed viewing. Tickets are \$10 at the door with all proceeds going to the West Kootenay Camera Club's digital projector fund. For information, call Vi Madrigga at 365-3660.

Economic Value of Outdoor Recreation Tallied

As part of the Central Coast and North Coast LRMP's, the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC conducted the first ever assessment of the economic contribution of outdoor recreation in BC. Data independent, self guided outdoor recreation is difficult to obtain, and many of the estimates are considered conservative. Despite these challenges, we were astonished to learn that the current annual contribution is over \$55 million and growing. And this only represents the value to the Central and North coasts and the Queen Charlotte Islands. Just imagine how high the number would be if we could do the same type of study for the whole province! Copies of the report can be obtained from the Outdoor Recreation Council's office or at: <http://www.orcbc.ca/pdf/CoastRecReport.pdf>
From the Outdoor Report, Vol. 17, #1, Winter 2004.

More Than A Resource?

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that Canada's air, water and forests have value beyond the market value of their resources. In June 2004 the David Suzuki Foundation, represented by the Sierra Legal Defense Fund, intervened in a case between the province of B.C. and Canadian Forest Products Ltd. The case

involved a 1992 forest fire in northern B.C. that had been started by forest company negligence. Lower courts had ruled that the company was only liable to the province for the cost of fighting the fire and replanting the trees. However, lawyers representing the foundation argued that the lower courts had failed to take into account non-market values of the forest: everything from fish habitat to drinking water protection. The Supreme Court agreed, saying the forest clearly had public value above the market value of timber.
From the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada newsletter Leaflet, Dec.2004.

Business as Usual?

In the future, a "business as usual" attitude just won't work, and Canada will need a far more coherent, comprehensive and strategic approach to energy and climate change policy. Some of Canada's existing energy structure is aging. Major investments are being made for long-term projects. Energy demand is increasing. Infrastructure and development issues will continue to arise. Important decisions will have to be made and these decisions will have to be made within the larger context of what best benefits the economy and the environment. What is resoundingly clear right now is that Canada has no such policy on long-term investment in energy, including renewables and infrastructure. Business itself continues to wait for

federal plans on Kyoto. Canada must step up and coordinate the rate of technological development, implementation, and integration on a national scale. This includes innovation and development of new technologies that enable Canada's competitiveness in both energy demand and supply. Review. Fall/Winter 2004, The National Round Table on The Environment and the Economy, Ottawa.

LIGHTNING SAFETY TIPS

AVOID: Avoid water. Avoid all metallic objects. Avoid the high ground. Avoid solitary tall trees. Avoid close contact with others- spread out 15-20 ft. apart. Avoid contact with dissimilar objects (water & land; boat & land; rock & ground; tree & ground). Avoid open spaces.

SEEK: Clumps of shrubs or trees of uniform height. Seek ditches, trenches or the low ground. Seek a low, crouching position with feet together with hands on ears to minimize acoustic shock from thunder.

KEEP: Keep a high level of safety awareness for thirty minutes after the last observed lightning or thunder. Treat lightning like a snake: if you see it or hear it, take evasive measures.

Lightning Safety for Campers and Hikers, By Richard Kithil, President & CEO, NLSI Article published in The Outdoor Network, vol IX, no.2, 1998

Introduction to Mountaineering Course

Are you looking to repeat Hamish Mutch's 2002 route up the north face of Redtop Mountain? If so, this course is for you. Taught by Marc Deschenes (an ACMG certified ski guide), this course will cover the basics of safe travel over glaciers, snow and ice, and will provide a great starting point for budding alpinists.

Date: May 21 to 23, 2005

Material Covered:

1. Moving safely over snow and ice.
2. Roping up for glacier travel.
3. Self-arrest and self-belay with an ice-axe.
4. Snow and ice protection systems.
5. Crevasse rescue.

Cost: TBA

Required Gear:

- Ice-axe (available for rent from Peter Jordan).
- Helmet.
- Harness.
- Crampons.
- 5 metres of 6 mm prussic cord. Making and using prussics will be taught in the course
- 5 metres of climbing webbing . You will learn how to correctly knot slings during the course.
- 2 locking carabiners.
- 2 non-locking carabiners.
- Belay device, such as an ATC.

Valhalla Pure sells climbing supplies such as prussic cord, webbing, and carabiners and also has one set of climbing gear (crampons, ice-axe, helmet) available for rent.

If you are having difficulty obtaining any of the required gear for the course, contact me, as I may be able to organize a loan of some climbing equipment.

Apply: Spots on this course are limited so apply soon. To apply send an application form (available from me or on the web at http://www.kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca/application_form.html) and **non-refundable** deposit (make cheques payable to the KMC) of \$100.

Revelstoke Resort Plans Unveiled

The master development agreement for the planned \$270,000,000 Mount Mackenzie Resort near Revelstoke has been unveiled. The project will feature 100 ski and snowboard runs, 16,000 beds, an 18 hole golf course and a multi-use trail system.

-News Services, in The Province, March 18, 2005

Green initiatives will accelerate if there is cooperation. Education is the key with cooperation on green initiatives. A lot of sustainability issues involve a change in behaviors, a change in attitude. It's very difficult for people who don't see why they should do this. Once you can explain to them why, they can see the long-term benefits, both to themselves and the community at large, as well as the environment. Then they will go along with it. Benefits include cost savings, health and safety, resource depletion and ecological impact.

Writers are invited to submit work to a new anthology about the **Purcell Mountain Range**. The Purcell Suite: Upholding the Wild, will be a collection of essays, non-fiction stories and creative documentary exploring natural history, adventure, politics, journey, sojourn and epiphany in the Purcells. Although this collection is aimed at supporting the Jumbo Wild campaign, its broader goal is to introduce the general public to the wonders and issues of the whole Purcell Range. I'm looking for pieces of 2,000 to 4,000 words that have strong storylines rather than rants or political polemics. Royalties from the book will go to the Jumbo Wild campaign.

Submission deadline: May 1/05

Please send submissions and short bio in hard copy to

K.Linda Kivi

1-4925 Mareello Rd.

Nelson, BC, V1L 6X4

Canada

Inquiries can be directed to klkivi@canada.com. Please refrain from putting this address on any lists.

Digital versions will be required when pieces are accepted for publication.

Individual actions may seem small, but put together, they can change the world

Walking Downhill Article submitted By Stan Metcalfe, Physiotherapist

Spring has hit. We can put away our skis and walk on the solid earth. Moving smoothly and efficiently will maximize the enjoyment of the day and reduce strain on the body. This is easily practiced in smooth easy walking, rolling along flat terrain. As we ascend a hill, the power to overcome gravity allows us to stimulate our muscles, heart and lungs. The descent requires our muscles to control our body weight as we saunter downhill. Correct use of our lower limbs will allow us to control our speed as we descend the hills, allowing for a smooth lope back down the trail.

As weight is lowered down the mountain the legs flex and extend to absorb the forces of the body and decelerate the falling motion. The heel hits the dirt and the ankle, knee and hip all flex. The glut, quad and calf muscles all perform an absorbing contraction to provide smooth control of the flexing leg. This lengthening control requires a high degree of coordination. That is why when we are tired and a little clumsy walking down hill can seem like a jarring experience. If movement through the body is uncoordinated, repeated strain on the muscles and joints can lead to tightness, stiffness and pain.

It is difficult to maintain proper walking habits at the end of a day, especially when we are tired and our minds focused on cold refreshments and food. Instead, we can train movement patterns at home in a controlled environment.

Smooth downhill stepping is very similar to walking down stairs. It will allow us to study our movement pattern. Let us slow down and take one step at a time.

Stand with the ball of your foot at the edge of the step. Slowly lower the other foot to the step below. As you step down control the movement until your foot is one centimeter above the lower step. Stop there, don't allow your foot to touch the step below and smoothly reverse this to stand on the upper step again. The last few centimeters are difficult and many people allow themselves to drop to the lower step. Try again, really slow this time. You must be able to stop the motion at any point you choose. Gradually ease yourself close to the step below then ease back up to the top step. Now that you are comfortable with the training drill, look and feel to what your lower body is doing. Is your knee pulling inwards to become knock-kneed? Are your low back and pelvis contorting, bending sideways or rotating. Do you feel tightness or strain anywhere?

A mechanical view of proper technique requires maintaining the proper alignment of the lower limb. The weight should be balanced on the ball of the foot, even between the ball of the great toe and pinky toe. The center of the knee should be in line with the second toe and center of the hip socket. The pelvis is ideally level to the ground and your spine and pointing square downhill. An ideal movement will feel smooth and easy. The weight will be balanced on the ball of the foot, even between the ball of the great toe and pinky toe. The knee will flex in line with the second toe and hip. This smooth movement will optimize the natural movement of the leg.

The practice in a controlled environment needs to be brought outside. When fatigued we will feel a lack of control of the lower limb. Attention and awareness can allow us to correct movement faults we see. When descending a hill try and mimic the smooth

movement learnt on your steps at home. Pay attention to the weight on the ball of your foot. See the knee lined up with the second toe. Feel your gluts contract to keep your torso gliding downhill in a smooth, rolling pattern.

This is a simple way of looking at a complex movement with many variables. It is an attempt to correct some frequent problems in the mechanics of motion. I hope that this will help some of you have fewer aches in the evening and for the years to come.

Parks Roofed Accommodation Strategy

You may have heard the controversy about the Province's proposed "Roofed Accommodation" strategy for BC Parks. As if commercializing all the BC Crown land was not enough. Depending on what reports people heard you may think that the ACC (and perhaps in turn the FMCBC) along with some of the moderate ENGOs (including CPAWS, Federation of BC Naturalists and the BC Wildlife Federation) are supporting this strategy. This is the general message that was conveyed by Minister Barisoff and WLAP staff and reported by other ENGOs. The above groups did participate in a government workshop (the FMCBC was not notified nor invited to this workshop) where their input was given, however it is not necessarily the case that they support the whole strategy.

This strategy stems from legislation (Bill 84) passed by the Liberal government that mandates "roofed accommodation", facilities and access for BC Parks. While the ACC is looking at a proposed new hut in Berg Lake area of Mt Robson Park (one of the facilities identified in the strategy), such a structure would be quite different than other potential accommodation developments. This would be a typical ACC public hut with basic amenities and modest hut fees. In addition, this proposed hut would take pressure of the existing camp sites and alleviate some of the environmental damage that comes with "wilderness camping sprawl" We understand that other facilities identified in the strategy would be more commercial lodge style of accommodations (e.g. a chalet on the Spearhead Traverse) which most members would not support. Evan Loveless met with Minister Barisoff to discuss this strategy and the FMCBC position with respect to the strategy. The FMCBC is in the process of redefining our park/wilderness hut policy, however the basic position is that we generally do not support "structural improvements" inside parks (especially commercial developments - lodges), however we will evaluate proposals on a case by case basis. If such facilities are to be developed they should be restricted to intensive recreations zones according to Park Master Plans (if they exist). Contact us for more info on this strategy. *From the FMCBC E-Bulletin April, 2005*

Tips on Writing Effective Letters to the Editor

- * Try to link your letter to the date and title of a story previously appearing in the paper.
- * Deal with one topic and have one major message.
- * Put the main point at the beginning and progressively less important details towards the end. Be brief (350 words max) and specific.
- * Use a straightforward, factual approach - not sarcasm.
- * Include your name; address and day phone number - staff may call if they're interested.
- * Try to submit within 48 hours (for dailies) of the article you're responding to.

* Get someone who cares about your reputation to check the letter. *This is from the David Suzuki Foundation's website at <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/>*

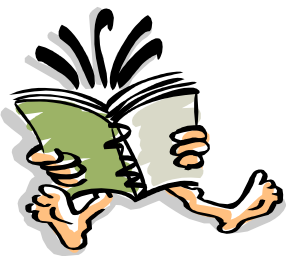
I'm teaching the **Red Cross Wilderness first Aid course** that a number of club members are taking in April. There has been substantial interest in an additional course so I have set June 3, (evening), 4th & 5th, and the subsequent weekend, June 10th, (evening) 11th & 12th for a second course. The cost of the course is \$260.00 and includes all texts. 10% of the tuition can be donated to a participant's favorite club. Anyone interested in registering, or obtaining a course synopsis can contact me via e-mail: (teogo@shaw.ca) Terry O'Gorman, Canadian Red Cross First Aid Instructor

Kokanee Glacier cabin

We have booked the Kokanee Glacier cabin for a KMC ski week on March 11-17, 2006. In the fall we will take applications and deposits, and have a lottery if necessary, for the 12 spaces.

For Sale

CRISPI Telemark boots, Women size 8 ½
good condition \$125.00 OBO Tel. Martin 352-xxxx



Library News:

New Reading for Spring and Summer

Although our winter has been marked by a dearth of snow and an overabundance of sunshine keeping the avalanche hazard generally low, low does not mean nil, and there is still a chance of getting caught in an avalanche. The absolute best avalanche book on the market for backcountry winter recreationalists is Bruce Tremper's "Staying Alive in Avalanche Terrain." Check it out of the library and read it, it might save you and your friends a nasty ride.

Our current weather pattern also means that summer climbing season may well be with us sooner than normal. If you want to get a leg up (pardon the pun) on the season, "Alpine Climbing: Techniques to Take You Higher" will help. This excellent book covers all the basics of alpine climbing and is well illustrated with drawings and photos.

Other new books in the library are:

- "Risking Adventure: Mountaineering Journeys Around the World." This book, an assemblage of the late Jim Haberl's climbs around the world explores the nature of adventure.
- "Voices from the Summit." A compilation of articles by the world's greatest climbers from the annual Banff Mountain Film Festival.
- "The Best Ski Touring in America." Steve Barnett describes a range of multi-day ski tours through Canada and the USA.

Our librarian is Sandra McGuinness.

"Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world. For, indeed, that's all who ever have."
-Margaret Mead, quoted on the [Live The Vision](#) climbing website

Club Trip Reports

True Blue ski trip, January 9

The True Blue Recreation Area lies just south of Kaslo by the airport. It offers hiking and biking trails in the summer and cross-country skiing in the winter.

Robin Lidstone, Barbara and Larry Hanlon joined me to do some exploring. This area reminds me of the Paulson Trails 25 years ago. Old logging roads provide the easiest and most defined routes. There are signs along the way to indicate routes off the main roads. These trails are easiest negotiated by following old ski tracks. We ventured to one of the viewpoints, which offered stunning views of Kootenay Lake and the surrounding area. I was glad there was lots of fresh snow to slow the descent on the narrow trail from this point. We skied one trail called Sleepy Hollow. It followed a gully towards Lofsted Farm I am sure no one had skied there this year. Besides breaking trail we had to manoeuvre around, over and under fallen trees and bush. The highlight of the day was when a moose charged out of the bush in front of us.

This is an interesting area to explore if you like ungroomed cross-country skiing and feel comfortable without well-marked trails.

Carol Potasnyk

Clearwater Creek to Ymir (Wildhorse Cr.), January 16

It was -9C with about 6" of fresh snow. The first 5 kms were groomed, the next 2 kms the trail was broken and then we were on our own. It was no problem as we had 3 strong trailbreakers. It was hard to get them to stop so we could have lunch! The skiing was excellent from Huckleberry Pass to the cars. The trip took 6 hours.

We were Dave Grant, Robin Lidstone, Jan Micklethwaite, Carol Potasnyk, Gene Van Dyck, and David Cunningham

Snowshoe trip on Cornice Ridge, January 29

After rain and mild weather, with some good hard frosts at higher elevations, the snow was as hard as it gets. Skiing was very difficult and so it was time to do a snowshoe trip.

The ridges on the north side of the Kootenay Pass summit are excellent for ridge walking, ski touring and when the conditions are right, snowshoeing. I had planned to do a loop, following the ridges, starting at Cornice Ridge then turning east towards the communication towers, then south back to the highway.

The weather did not cooperate. It was very foggy and windy. We walked to the end of Cornice Ridge but could not find where the ridges branched because of the fog. We took a gps reading and examined our maps, but decided to turn back. Once back at the highway five people decided to go home and five people decided to hike to the cabin on the south side of the highway.

We were Dave Grant, Larry and Barb Hanlon, Jan Micklethwaite, Gene Van Dyck, Alex Walker, Jill Watson, Mary Woodward, Leah Zoobkoff, and David Cunningham, coordinator.

Keystone Mtn.(1663m.,5456', map Salmo 82F/3) Jan. 29

As the skiing has been so beastly lately, trip coordinator Sandra McGuinness deemed a snowshoe ascent of the Bonnington Range's dread Keystone Mtn., 4.5 km. north of Salmo, to be an appropriate outing. Besides, she was buoyed after subduing the neighbouring Erie Mtn., also on 'shoes', only days earlier. Only two others, Janice Isaac and I, were mad enough to join her as we departed Nelson at 7:30 on a foggy, drizzly weekend morning.

It wasn't at all heroic, and a clammy white mist enveloped us much of the way up, but we did reach the top. Details follow. We turned off Highway 3 about 3 km. west of Salmo, onto the Erie Rd. access, just east of Erie Creek Bridge. Then we drove north until the recently plowed portion ended, parked at the km. 1 sign, and headed out at 8:20. After 30 min. of tramping on the snow-machine-packed mainline, we turned right or east onto the signed and gated "Whiskey Creek Road" (about 757-509), just north of a bridge over Whiskey, or Hooch, as it is on my map. Thanks to good snowmobile packing, we made excellent time on Whiskey, finally turning left onto a northern spur called "Gary's Road" (772-519), which was also nicely packed to its end at 782-529, 4750'. We then headed up a huge, denuded cutblock, kept to the left of a shallow watercourse, passed into timber, and soon reached a ridge. Here, we turned right and in minutes reached the timbered summit at 11:55 (3 hrs. 35 min. up). We enjoyed a brief 25 min. lunch in steady snowfall and -1 C temps, congratulating ourselves on the excellent snowshoeing conditions (no, I'm not being sarcastic) all the way to the top. Return was via the ascent route in 2 hrs. 20 min. for a total day of 6 hrs. 20 min. Good access, good exercise, and we never got rained on. Of course, the fog lifted on the way down, so that we finally got some minor views. There might be some good spring skiing in the massive west- and southwest-facing cutblocks in the upper Whiskey (or is it Hooch?) drainage.

Kim Kratky

Qua Peak (2 374 m.) on Skis, February 6

I am not a morning person. Which is akin to saying George Bush is not a Liberal. And so it was with great sadness that I set the meeting time for my February 6 KMC ski trip at 6:30. Misery loves company, so I was vaguely disappointed that the participants didn't produce the anticipated whining and moaning – Llewellyn had the most satisfactory response with some uncontrolled laughter (or was it weeping?). I had calculated that in order to tag the summit of Qua Peak (which was the objective), about 1600 m vertical would need to be gained and lost and some 18 km would need to be traveled. Despite my best efforts at rationalizing an 8:30 start, I knew that we'd need to get going long before we saw the sun to have a hope of signing the register and returning to our vehicles before dark.

Jeremy Baker, Maurice de St. Jorre, Llewellyn and Taz Mathews, Peter Tchir, and Sandra McGuinness met me at the appointed spot early on a cool and cloudless morning. After a beacon test in the Whitewater parking lot, we were off like a pack of shopaholics on Boxing Day morning, climbing the 400 m of the Summit side in 30 minutes. We traversed across Catch Basin to reach the col on Blaster's Ridge just as first sun of the day arrived to illuminate the peaks.

A quick 400 m descent down the south side brought us to Qua Creek, which we followed into the NW-facing bowl below Qua (passing some cliff bands lower down on the north). We were able

to ski up the bowl to within 20 m of the ridgeline between the two peaks of Qua. We kicked steps up a steep gully the final distance to the ridge and then boot-packed the remaining short distance to the summit, arriving at 12:15 - 5:15 after we started. Unfortunately, the skies had clouded over hours earlier, and our views from the top were rather limited by low cloud and snow squalls.

Against all odds (given the January monsoon), we had good to excellent skiing down Qua Bowl and through open trees below, making for a quick trip back to the valley bottom. Despite a slowing pace (except for Sandra and Taz) we made quick work of the grind back up to Blaster's Ridge, which we reached at 3:15, just over 2 hours from the top of Qua Bowl. A quick ski down Motherload to our vehicles finished our day.

Despite the lack of sunny skies, it was a grand tour to the top of a rarely ski-ascended 2374m peak. Thanks to all participants.

Coordinator and scribe, Doug Brown.

Note: I am calling "Qua Peak" (which is an unofficial name) the middle and highest of the three peaks that run in a NNE direction from Qua Lake (which *is* officially named).

The B Trip: Beacon Basin and Beattie

Don't be misled by the trip title, all the participants were strictly A class. Mary Baker and Bob McQueen from Trail and Rossland respectively, met Don Harasym, Alex Walker and I just before 9 am at Whitewater Ski Area on Saturday **February 12th**, where we procured the "black box" for Whitewater's Beacon Basin. The Beacon Basin is a fantastic learning tool (provided free of charge by Whitewater) for practicing transceiver searching for single, multiple and deep burials. Eleven avalanche beacons are buried near the bottom of the snowpack. Each avalanche beacon is covered by a square of plywood buried about 25 cm deep (this allows you to easily probe and confirm that you have found your target). The avalanche beacons are wired together to a cable that is attached to a tree. The cable plugs into the black box, which has 11 switches inside. You can turn on as many or as few avalanche beacons as you like making your practice sessions as easy or difficult as you choose.

Our day started with a review of how everyone's beacon turned on, and switched between transmit and receive. Although this is something we rarely, if ever, do at the trail head, much better to know how to operate your buddies avalanche beacon prior to an incident than in the middle of a real life rescue. Once we had that sussed out, we practiced some single beacon searches, using a variety of techniques – digital searching, induction searching, and the tried but true grid search.

Then we randomly turned four avalanche beacons on and each of us searched at our own pace for the beacons. Without any coordination whatsoever, we managed to find all four relatively quickly. We tried a couple of techniques for locating the second, third and fourth beacons. The first was the technique variously called the "Multiple Simple Arc Search" or the "Micro Box Technique". This involves travelling in a circle around the first found victim with your beacon on its lowest sensitivity setting (it is helpful to toggle between the two lowest sensitivity settings) until a second signal is located, after which standard search techniques are used. Most of us found that this was a very useful way to acquire further signals.

The second technique we used was to return to the location where we first identified more than one beacon (you must first mark the location where you detect more than one beacon) and performed a

standard search from that location. Personally, I found this technique a little more time-consuming as I had to be careful that I was not simply honing back in on the first found beacon. I also found this second technique not quite as systematic as the Micro Box or Simple Arc technique.

For our second multiple burial practice we ran a full rescue scenario complete with screaming, hysterical victim (my favourite role), team leader, and multiple searchers. We had some difficulty locating our fourth and final burial, which was buried a large distance from the other beacons, highlighting the importance of thoroughly and systematically combing the entire search area.

After all that work, we felt we deserved a little fun, so we drove back down the Whitewater Road and parked at the usual backcountry parking area and skied/snowshoed cross-country to the old mine site beyond Hummingbird Pass. After some lunch here, we skied/snowshoed a gentle line to the top of Mount Beattie where we sat in the sun for a second lunch. We had an easy and pleasant return trip back down our up track and were back to the vehicles by about 3.00 pm. A great day out, and thanks to everyone who joined me on this trip and made it such a success.

Coordinator: Sandra McGuinness

Note: The Beacon Basin at Whitewater is available to anyone free of charge, just ask at the front desk and they will radio ski patrol to give you the black box.

Snowshoe to Moose Cabin, February 13

On a gorgeous day with great snow conditions 6 snowshoers and 1 skier made our way to Moose Cabin. We took the first road to the right going in and went about 1 km past the usual route across the swamp and made our way down the hill at the north end of the swamp meadow. After eating lunch by a cosy fire in the cabin we came back on the main fork of the logging road. We were Renate Belczyk, John Golik, Al and Pat Sheppard, Larry Wunder, Ed Beynon and Hazel Kirkwood, coordinators.

Moonlight Over the Mountains: A Ski Traverse Of the Bonnington Range

Way back in October 2004, I put a three-day trip into the Copper Cabin on the KMC winter trip schedule for late February. However, when late February came around with a solid high pressure system holding way over the entire province of B.C. and a full moon guaranteeing bright nights to match the bright days, adding an extra day to the trip and doing the complete Bonnington Traverse seemed much more appealing than skiing up to the Copper Cabin and trying to eke out turns on south facing, and undoubtedly, sun-crusting slopes. My pre-trip attempts to find out if the Bombi Road (Munson FSR) was still plowed were all unsuccessful, so we packed four days of food figuring that if we skipped the Grassy Hut and went straight on to Steed Cabin, we would make a high traverse over Dominion Mountain and spend our extra night at the Huckleberry Hut.

Day 1: Grassy Cabin and Grassy Mountain

Doug and I met Jeremy at the hitching post in Nelson at 8 am on **February 22nd** and we all drove south on Highway 6 to the Porto Rico Road where we left Jeremy's truck and continued on to Bombi Summit in ours. At Bombi Summit, the powerline road looked plowed so we drove on up. Around kilometre 3, it became apparent that BC Hydro was no longer plowing the road, but, so

little snow had fallen since the last plow that the road was easily negotiable to kilometre 7. This put us at around 1600 metres due west of the pass between Grassy and South Grassy Mountains.

Leaving the truck at 9.40 am, we skied through the woods and picked up the old road that switchbacks up to the pass, which we followed for about 500 metres before taking a more direct line up to the ridge. Jeremy hadn't been to the Grassy Hut before, so we skied down to the cabin for lunch arriving at 11.15 am. A couple of sleeping bags were laid out on one of the bunks and lots of food was lying about the cabin, evidence of another party staying at the cabin but off skiing somewhere. Much speculation and investigation of the amount of food the other party had then ensued as we tried to decide whether or not they were doing the traverse, and whether or not we should continue on so that we didn't all have to crowd into the cabins for next three nights. Eventually, we decided to stay the night at Grassy and take our chances on having room-mates for three nights.

After lunch, we skied up South Grassy and took a run down the east facing slopes into Grassy Creek. I found the snow very fast but Jeremy commented that it wasn't steep enough for him to turn on! Although the skiing wasn't horrendous, we'd all had better and decided to pass on another run and ski up to the top of Grassy instead. From the top of Grassy we could see the route we'd take tomorrow, over Twin Peaks and the south ridge of Siwash Mountain to the Steed Cabin. Jeremy and I took a short run down the north facing slopes off the top of Grassy towards Grady Lake, but, although the pitch was good the snow was somewhat wind-affected. Doug skied back to the cabin where he found our room-mates mutely encased in their sleeping bags where they remained for the next several hours, despite the Lear Jet roar of our Dragonfly stove melting snow for hours mere feet from their heads.

Day 2: Grassy Cabin to Steed Hut

I started our noisome stove at 6.30 am the next morning, and after breakfasting and packing up, we left Grassy Cabin at 8 am, while our cabin mates somehow managed to slumber on. We followed the north ridge of Grassy Mountain down to the pass at the head of Granite Creek and continued on up to the most northerly of the Twin Peaks where we stopped for a snack. Descending off north Twin Peak we had surprisingly good skiing down north facing slopes to the pass on the Glade-Granite Creek divide.

The snow on the 360 metre climb up to the col on the south ridge of Mount Siwash was wet and sloppy, glopping up our skins despite liberal applications of skin wax. From the col, a very quick ski down got us to the Steed Cabin at 2.00 pm where we removed the tin cans the sleds had stuck in the stove and brewed up some afternoon tea. At 3.15 pm, I left the lads melting snow and digging out the wood pile and skied back up to the south ridge of Siwash Mountain which I followed over one subsidiary bump to arrive on top of Siwash at 4.10 pm. As I had told Doug I'd be back by 5.00 pm, I hastily clicked off a couple of pictures and skied back down the way I had come.

Day 3 Steed Cabin to Copper Cabin

No-one would believe it, but we again had good skiing descending north slopes from Steed into the headwaters of Rush Creek. We skied across the headwaters of Rush Creek and skinned up to the top of a prominent ridge running west from Siwash Mountain. The normal route to the Copper Cabin travels in a horseshoe around the head of Erie Creek through a wasteland of sled and snowcat tracks and cut-blocks. Instead of subjecting ourselves to

this tedium we followed the east ridge of Siwash for about 1.5 km until it curves to the north. Staying right on the ridge crest we followed it north eventually descending, again in good snow, to Erie Creek. A 400 metre climb under the baking sun through wet snow got us to the Copper Cabin in time for afternoon tea in the sun on the porch. Before dinner, we all skied to the top of Copper Mountain, enjoyed striking views, but suffered a miserable descent on crusty sun-baked snow.

Day 4 Copper Cabin to Barrett Lake

The final day of the traverse is undoubtedly the most spectacular, as the route travels entirely over the high ridges and peaks of the Bonnington Range from Copper Mountain to Empire Peak. We were away again just after 8 am, and skied easily up to the ridge above the Copper Cabin which we followed in a generally southerly direction to the top of Territory Peak. The final slope to the top of Territory Peak is steep, but possible on skis. Colony Peak is an easy ski from Territory as the ridge between the two is much broader. The final ridge section from Colony to Empire is the crux of the trip, as the ridge narrows just before the summit of Empire and a short section must be negotiated on foot. We were on top of Empire by 11.15 am, so, with lots of time available, sat for an hour over lunch watching (and wondering) as the local heli-ski company somehow eked out a couple of dubious looking runs off northeasterly slopes on Cabin Peak.

A slushy ski down the southeasterly slopes of Empire Peak dropped us onto the Barrett Creek Road, which, as usual, was thoroughly sledged and provided quick, if painful, egress, to Jeremy's truck on the Porto Rico Road.

Participants: Jeremy Baker, Doug Brown, Coordinator Sandra McGuinness

Cornice Ridge ski trip, February 26

On a sunny and mild day, four of us departed from the Kootenay Pass parking lot at 9:40 for destinations on the north side of the highway. Following a well-beaten track, we reached the South Summit (960-347, 2115 m, 6940') of Cornice Ridge in 1 hr. 20 min. We then de-skinned and skied down 200' to the col to the north, re-skinned, and continued on the track to the highest point (962-355, 2139 m, 7017'), which the kids now call "The Camel," in 2 ¼ hours from the truck. En route, we were disturbed by the angry whine of snowmobiles in Lost Creek, below and to the north. In fact, we could even see the "n" shapes of their high markin'. As the snow seemed much better than expected, we decided the 1,000' SE face of our peak might actually be ski-able. We did so and even got some untracked lines in soft spring snow down to the flats below. We returned via another made track to re-join our ascent route well below our first peak. Survival skiing down the up-track in nasty snow, we encountered a BC Parks contractor on snowshoes who was out doing a count of winter visitors (there were plenty that day). Back to the truck by 2:00 for an easy 4.5 hour day. Give it a C+/B- for spring skiing.

On the trip: Vivien Bowers (co-ordinator), Eric White, Janice Isaac, Kim Kratky (recorder).

**KMC Annual "Kaslo Lake Hilton" Ski Week,
March 12 to 19 Starts Wretched, Ends Better**

Day 1: Orientation, Mount John Carter

Our first day at the Kokanee Glacier Cabin, herein after referred to as the Kaslo Hilton because of the ostentatious and excessive luxury afforded by the "cabin", started with the usual orientation to the full facilities of the resort – hot showers, flush toilets, gas fireplaces, etc. After a quick lunch our group of 12 split into two groups of 6 for the mandatory multiple avalanche victim scenario. Kokanee Glacier Cabin is one of two places in the Kootenays (the other is Whitewater Ski Hill) to have a Beacon Basin – 11 avalanche beacons buried at the bottom of the snowpack, with a 30 x 30 cm square of plywood over the top for a probe target, all wired together and connected to the "black box." You plug the black box into the wires and turn on between 1 and 11 beacons and, as they are buried at the bottom of the snowpack, you get to practice deep burials as well as multiple burials. I opted myself as team leader for the rescue drill, which I really like because you get to yell at people and boss them around. I yelled at everyone and bossed them around and we found our four beacons in about 5 minutes. Once you've done that you can go skiing. Pretty much everyone went off and skied to the top (or close to) of Mount John Carter. Unfortunately, snow conditions were not very good for the ski down – a mix of breakable, and unable to be broken with a nuclear missile crust.

Day 2: Nansen Mountain, Kokanee Glacier

A group of 7 skied up to Cond Peak, down to Coffee Pass (on very hard packed, some might say icy, snow) and returned to the cabin via the Keyhole. In the meantime, 5 of us left the cabin late (about 9.15 am) and skied up Griffin Creek to Nansen Mountain. Doug, Maurice and I skied to the top of Nansen, while Murielle and Tom were content to remain in the meadows below. The ski down was the same mix of breakable crust and ice as the day before.

Day 3: Kane Peak, Grays Peak, Glory Basin, Kokanee Glacier

An ambitious day for most people. Jeff and Shawn (the cabin custodian) skied up onto the glacier, down to Coffee Pass, up to the south ridge of Kane Peak and climbed to the summit via the east side. Doug, Roland, Dave T. and I skied over to Grays Peak, climbed the peak and descended via the usual spring route to make a circle tour back to the cabin. Maurice and Ken skied up to the glacier and back down near the Battleship, and Murielle led her group of four faithfuls (Bob, Dwain, Dave W., and Tom) around Glory Basin.

Day 4: Mount Robert Smith, Upper Griffin Creek

The ski conditions remain challenging, so for want of any other tour, six of us skied into the basin south of Mount Robert Smith and went up to the summit via the col to the east. The snow was very icy, treacherous to ski up and fast to ski down. Murielle had a fifth faithful follower (what alliteration) in tow and they went for a tour in upper Griffin Creek.

Day 5: Boomerang Basin, Around the Slocan Chief Cabin

Thankfully, the good weather broke overnight and it started to snow the next morning. Five of us skied up into Boomerang Basin after first descending to Tanal Lake. Up in the alpine it was soaked in so we skied only as high as treeline. Quite a few in the group took a rest day, while some took a short tour down to the

power-plant below the cabin, and some people even managed to find a few good turns on the new snow that had accumulated on slopes above the Slocan Chief Cabin.

Day 6: Beaujolais, Mount Giegerich and Nansen Mountain

Overnight and during the previous day about 20 cm of snow accumulated which did wonders for the skiing. Most people were content to ski runs on Beaujolais for the day, but Doug, Roland, Maurice and I did a couple of runs on Beaujolais and then travelled further afield. We ended up skiing runs all over Mount Giegerich and Nansen Mountain in very good snow conditions.

Day 7: Beaujolais, Smugglers Ridge, Tamarack, Tanal Lake

Our final day was pretty soaked in with perhaps another 5 cm of new snow. One party returned to Beaujolais as the clean-up crew and reported good skiing all day. Another party spent the day on Smuggler's Ridge, and, as is usual for Doug, Roland and I, we spent the day all over the place – skiing first off Smuggler's Ridge, then down Tamarack and finally ending the day with Tom and Murielle on slopes above Tanal Lake. Much to the chagrin of some people, although it was snowing the next day, it was not enough to ground the helicopter and we all got out before lunch.

Overall, an excellent ski week, with great food and company. Kudos to Murielle for organizing the week – and cleaning the cabin windows at the end of the week!

Participants: Dwain Boyer, Doug Brown, Maurice De St Jorre, Ken Holmes, Tom Johnston, Bob McQueen, Roland and Murielle Perrin, Jeff Roberts, Dave Toews, Dave Watson, and trip reporter, Sandra McGuinness

Mt Sentinel, 4500' March 30

Six hikers came out for this early season steep workout. The mountainsides up to about 4500 ft. had been free from snow until just the night before the hike. The day seemed to be improving and the snow was rapidly melting. The group split into two at the outset with the intention of meeting for lunch on the ridge overlooking Castlegar. One group went up onto Indian Flats and followed the now well-defined trail to the old road above. The last km of the trail was in a foot of snow. The other group hiked various sections of elk trails to the old road above from a spot about 1km up Pass Creek Road. It was roughly straight up open slopes except for the last several hundred meters where it was very grown in and about a foot of snow was on the ground. Both groups encountered small flowers such as prairie buttercups, spring beauties, blue eyed Maries, glacier lilies and Ed saw one yellow bell. The entire group met on the ridge and had a good lunch in the stiff cool wind. The very steep incessant downhill return tested everyone's legs. I'd rather climb it twice than go down once. Or have a gondola like the Grouse Grind... Definitely not at all the same leg muscles we use for skiing. But does this group have good lungs!

We were Renata B., Ed B., Hazel K., Jill W., Eliane + Steven M.

Where in the world are the most breathtaking

Hikes? Peter Potterfield notes his favorites in the book *Classic Hikes Of The World*. Three of his picks are close by: The West Coast Trail, the Rockwall Trail and the Wonderland Trail with the route from Diablo Lake to Lake Chelan in Washington State.

Climbing Nights Report

But Where Are All The Holds:

The KMC at Gravity Climbing Centre

Urban legend has it that when gym climbers go outside to climb for the first time they almost inevitably look with disbelief at the crag and exclaim "But where are all the holds?" Hopefully, all the KMC members who turned out for climbing nights this winter will remember that the local crags and mountains don't sport blue and yellow tape marking out the routes.

February and March climbing nights were well attended with many old faces from earlier in the winter turning up alongside some new faces. As usual, I made climbs on many of the routes look excessively hard, while Hamish made them look frightfully easy. Leah's climbing continued to improve and Vicki climbed extraordinarily well in a pair of sneakers.

Participants: Doug Brown, Dave Grant, Vicki Hart, Dave Hough and son, Marlene Johnston, Peter Jordan, Sandra McGuinness, Hamish Mutch, Kevin Penny, Leah Zoobkoff.

Dates: 20 January, 4 & 18 February, 8 & 24 March.

Coordinator: Sandra McGuinness

Other Trip Reports

Nootka Island, September 2004

Four KMC friends, Renate Belczyk, Hans Peter Korn, Jill and Dave Watson enjoyed a hike last fall in the pristine wilderness of Nootka Island on the West Coast of Vancouver Island.

A water taxi took us from Zeballos to the north end of Nootka Island and was to pick us up again on the south end in five days. Once the boat had deposited us and our belongings, we were on our own. We never saw another trekker. We loaded the heavy packs on our shoulders and started hiking. We walked mostly along beaches, but every once in a while we had to enter the rain forest because of cliffs or high tide. The going along the beaches was not always easy, and the forest proved to be a real challenge. We had to climb over huge fallen trees or wedge ourselves underneath giant logs to get to the other side. We had to cope with upturned roots, muddy sections, and to go up and down steep cliffs with the help of ropes that had been left by hikers before us. We also had to cross creeks and rivers, jump from rock to rock, hike over deep beds of soft seaweed and cross small bays on logs. We were always happy when we found a place to camp in the evening, had done all our chores and finally sat around a driftwood fire and relaxed.

The scenery was absolutely stunning. There were waterfalls, tiny islands, charming bays, sandy beaches and an ever-changing ocean and sky.

We also came in contact with wildlife. We saw lots of bears and even came close to a few of them. We also saw seals and otters, eagles and other seabirds. One day we saw a wolf, the first one we had ever seen in the wilderness. The wolf eyed us for quite a while, then disappeared. About five minutes later he came back with eight other wolves and then started howling. The four of us did not quite know what to do. We gripped our hiking poles a little tighter, stayed close together and marched on. The wolves eventually disappeared and we lived to tell the story!

On the fifth day of our journey an easy trail led us the last few kilometers to FRIENDLY COVE, our destination. It is a beautiful spot surrounded on three sides by ocean and tiny heavily treed islands.

We learned that Captain Cook came here in 1778 and was greeted by hundreds of friendly natives. Only one Indian family lives here now. Captain Vancouver also landed at this point at the end of the 18th century and so did the Spanish Commander Bodega Y Quadra. Both claimed the coast for their countries. We know who won! A small church, which is now a museum, tells the history of this delightful island.

Our water taxi arrived in the afternoon and took us back to Zeballos, thus ending an exciting and wonderful wilderness trip in this amazing country of ours.

Renate Belczyk.

Hiking Halls Creek, September 23, 24 2004

A quick warning- this is the Halls Creek in Capitol Reef National Park, Utah, not the one near Salmo.

Although it was only mid-September it had already snowed heavily in the high country, and our original plan to hike some fourteeners in Colorado was on hold. We decided to lurk in the desert for a while, hoping that the new snow in the mountains would melt off. This hike, which had been on my wish list for several years, starts at Halls Overlook, about 60 miles south of U24, on the Notom-Bullfrog-Ticaboo dirt road. (No, I'm not making this up). We drove down the night before to avoid the many hazards of getting up early. From the parking area the trail switchbacks steeply down to the canyon floor, which is initially several hundred yards wide, with the cliffs of Halls Mesa on the left, and the famous Waterpocket Fold on the right. The trail partly follows the dry wash, but more often shortcuts directly across the meandering loops. Shade is rare, and it is hot, hot, hot. We camped after about 5 hours, a short distance before the entrance to the Narrows. Halls Creek Narrows is a classic Utah Slot Canyon, deep, dark and increasingly narrow. In many places you can touch both sides at the same time. Next morning we entered these Narrows with a mix of trepidation and excitement. At first the water was only an inch or two deep, but we were soon up to our knees, and then to our waists. At other times we walked on the sandstone floor, or on a strange super-saturated sand. This sand would shake like a jelly on impact, as water oozed out, while every so often someone would plunge through to their crotch. No matter how often this happened, it was always followed by shouts of both terror and laughter. Watching someone extricate themselves was almost as entertaining as watching them fall in! About two thirds of the way through the Narrows, now wading in chest-high water, Murray who is in front, announces: "Guys, we gotta swim!" We backed off a short distance to reorganize. After double-wrapping our cameras, watches and lunches in garbage bags, which we had brought "just in case", we started swimming down the canyon, awkwardly holding the bags out of the water. Fortunately the water was warm, and we all enjoyed adding this new medium to our hiking experiences. It took us 4 ½ hours to navigate the 3 miles of Narrows, slow going even by our relaxed standards. Rather than retrace our steps through the Narrows we looped back to camp over Halls Divide. After a quick pack, we headed back up the canyon in the full afternoon sun. Every 20 minutes or so we collapsed in the meager shade of a lone cottonwood, or wispy tamarisk.

The final 800 feet up to Halls Mesa was hard going, but fortunately by now the sun was setting behind the Waterpocket Fold. We reached the camper (yes, camper!) at 7:15, just as it got dark, and rewarded ourselves with cold beer, and barbecued steaks. Hey, we deserved it!

Summary: 22 miles, 2 days, desert travel/camping, narrow and deep canyon. Lots of fun.

Participants: Tara Travis, Murray Miller and reporter Hamish Mutch.

Other great hikes in Capitol Reef

This park probably has more outstanding hikes for its size, than any other area in the Four Corners. I strongly recommend these three hikes as well.

1. **Frying Pan Trail**: From the campground head up Co-Hab Canyon, cross the Frying Pan, and detour over to Cassidy Arch. Great views, half a day, car shuttle or easy hitch back to start. Definitely one of my favorites, I have done this hike four times.
2. **Upper Muley Twist**: Up the canyon and back down the slickrock rim of the Waterpocket Fold. Very scenic, long day.
3. **Lower Muley Twist**: Overnight hike down an easy canyon. Good intro to desert hiking and camping. Carry all your water. One and a half days, car shuttle or difficult hitch back to start.

The Park Service has printed trail descriptions, complete with maps, for Halls Creek and Upper and Lower Muley. These are kept hidden away in a filing cabinet – Be sure to ask for them, if you decide to go.

Sentier Martel-Chalet de La Maligne to Guègues Exit (1060m), January 13, 2005

One of our favorite hikes of this past winter's holidays was on the Sentier Martel in the Verdon Gorges located in the southern Pre-Alps of France. The trail through the canyon was created by the French Touring Club in the 1930s and is part of the GR4 (Grande Randonnée French Trail System)

Although much smaller than the Grand Canyon in Arizona, the Grand Canyon du Verdon is deep, compact, wild and beautiful. The 21km canyon is up to 700m deep varying in width from 6 to 100 meters at the bottom and 200 to 1500 meters at its rim. The gorge is lined with sheer white cliffs, awe-inspiring limestone formations and sloping rock carpeted with green forest. Clear blue Provencal skies make it all the more dramatic. The gorges were formed while the Alps were "growing" combined with erosion of the Jurassic limestone by the Verdon River. Human artifacts dating back 400,000 years have been discovered in the more hospitable parts of the gorges. Surrounded by human habitation for thousands of years the deepest gorges were thought to be impenetrable. Only a few local woodcutters went down into the gorges by ropes, looking for wild boxwood (Buis) stumps that they used to make boules. The rocky passages and violent currents of the gorge kept people away until 1905 when speleologist Edouard-Alfred Martel did a 3-day exploration of the entire gorge. Fourteen kilometers of his trail, the Sentier Martel, remains in heavy use today. It descends 298m from the French Alpine Club Chalet de La Maligne into the gorge and then follows the Verdon River to the Couloir Samson car park. The trail goes upriver along the shore, up, down and through various limestone overhangs, down the 70m ladders of *La Brèche Imbert* and through the 670 m. *Baou Tunnel*. The Baou Tunnel as well as several other tunnels

on the trail are remnants from 1902 when authorities began tunneling galleries for a major hydro project. Fortunately the French government decided to forever preserve the gorges after construction, nearly half completed, halted for the two World Wars.

The trail experiences considerable use (except for the winter months) and a shuttle service can return hikers to their cars. Other hikers, including us on an earlier visit, hike back on the spectacular *Route Des Crêtes* high above the gorges. This however adds another 14 kms and 600m of elevation gain to the trip. The access road to the trailhead, the D71 and D25, is a spectacularly nicked out route with hairpin turns on the cliffside starting at *Lac de Ste Croix*. Breathtaking views over sheer drop-offs and the pretty blue ribbon far below punctuate this road that is barely wide enough for two small cars. The turnouts are few and far between. It's not easy to look and drive, or be on the cliff side of the road in the car when someone is trying to look and drive. On this trip we got very close to a small herd of Chamois grazing along the road. The trailhead is at the closed-for-the-season Chalet de La Maligne. After an early lunch on its grand balcony overlooking the gorges we began our descent (sightseeing along the route and a visit to Moustiers-Ste-Marie made for a late start).

With the shorter January days, only 1 car and no shuttle service, we decided to either hike most of the trail in both directions or take the only other exit out of the gorge at the Guègues ladders. There is no other exit and our decision would be made at the turnaround time. Where that would be, we really weren't sure: The trail into the gorge is a series of impressively constructed switchbacks taking you some steep 300 meters to the river below. The trail meanders along the river offering magnificent views of the cliff walls in all directions. Every corner introduces another grand sight. After climbing the 100m to the top of the La Brèche Imbert Ladders Viewpoint we decided it best to return and try out the Guègues exit. Jean was impressed at the height, steepness and construction of the metal ladder staircase. The Brèche Imbert is basically a chimney with a spiral staircase working its way down to the water. We hiked back to the Guègues ladders and climbed up the gigantic pile of scree left over from the hydro tunnel. The tunnel is now used as an emergency exit or during thunderstorms to avoid the Brèche Imbert Ladders. The tunnel itself is essentially 4m x 4m and 1196m long. We had a quick visit inside and then began following the steep and now obviously not very much used trail to the heights above. After about 200 meters of steep climbing and minor route finding we arrived on a large long ago abandoned pastured bench on which the ruins of the Provencal Guègues farm remain. This place was idyllic and very serene surrounded by cliffs up and down. The crumbling stone house was in the center of a spectacular setting. No road and the only way in other than our approach was on a small footpath which we still had to find. We found the trail far behind the house and continued the remaining 460 m of elevation gain on an increasingly deteriorating trail up to the closed mountain pass road, the *Route Des Crêtes*, high above. It became obvious this trail is little used except for climbers using it as a shortcut to access cliffs below. With the sun slowly setting we worked our way down the mountainside alternating between the road and using shortcuts through the garrigue to avoid rather long switchbacks. The views on the descent were fantastic but the day quickly cooled as we entered the shade. We reached our car a short time later.

We were Eliane, Jean and Steven Miro. There are numerous hikes in this area and it's great to visit if one ever gets the chance!

Two impressions of a hamlet in Nepal

Here are my own impressions of changes in Nepal, and of its foreign visitors.

I have visited Nepal twice. The first time was for 6 months in 1980, working on a CIDA project. It gave me a rather cynical view towards foreign aid, when Canadians working in one of the world's poorest countries live more luxuriously than at home. A Canadian working on a project would be paid in one day as much as a Nepalese professional on the same project would earn in a month. On a CIDA project, pay & benefits were twenty times as much as doing work for CUSO requiring the same qualifications. I don't think Graham Hancock was exaggerating in his book "Lords of Poverty".

(For a review of "Lords of Poverty", go to the Book Review section on the home page.)

On my second visit in 1989, I accompanied the Canadian Mt. Tilicho Winter Expedition to their base camp at Tilicho Lake, north of Annapurna. By then, Kathmandu had acquired television and American-style fast-food outlets. One of the latter was the immediate goal of most of our group on returning to Kathmandu after the trek. However, it gave me a dose of "culture shock" after spending weeks in the rural areas. I have noticed the same thing here, when some members of our mountaineering club make straight for the nearest tavern after a week's camp in the mountains. Is this a sign of an addiction?

In Nepal's rural areas, piped water and electricity seem to be definite benefits, and if income from tourism makes them more affordable, that is a positive effect. However, my impression was that roads brought squalour. I noticed a significant contrast between two neighbouring communities in the Kali Gandaki valley. Both had electricity and piped water. Jomosom also had an airport, hospital and military base; Marpha did not, and it was accessible only by footpath. Some of Jomosom's streets were like muddy, open sewers. In Marpha, the water flowed in neat, stone-lined channels, the streets were paved with flagstones, and the buildings were clean and well-maintained.

Its population was probably more settled and less transient, and probably the

community spirit was different.

If we are to provide aid to Nepal and similar countries, I think education, especially in hygiene and health, should be the priority. High technology without appropriate infrastructure can lead to failure.

And how about tourism in Canada too? In August 1994, I attended a conference in Edmonton, going there by bus, and returning in someone else's car. We had with us a fellow from Quebec who wanted to see the Rocky Mountains, so he came with us as far as Lake Louise, and planned to take the bus back to Edmonton that same day. We decided to take a short trip to Moraine Lake. The road there was so choked with vehicles that we couldn't drive to the end of it; we could only park on one side of the road and walk the rest. With vehicles parked on both sides, there was only one lane free in the middle.

I'm wondering where this is all going to lead to in the future. With the earth's population approaching 8 billion (at a conservative estimate), if everyone expects to be able to see the Canadian Rockies once in an 80-year lifetime, then they will have 100 million visitors a year. If these visits are spread over a 100-day tourist season, that's still a million visitors a day. If they come 4 to a car of length 4 metres, then their cars, lined up bumper-to-bumper, will stretch 1000 kilometres, all the way from Lake Louise to Seattle.

So what's the prospect for the future? Are we the last generation that will be able to experience real wilderness, and drink clean water directly from a mountain stream? Will future generations have to be content with videotapes of the earth as it used to be, or with virtual reality? At least, such vicarious travel will consume less energy. Did I aggravate problems by going to Nepal? Nowadays I analyze my travel plans more critically; is the benefit, to myself or others, sufficient to justify the damage? Should I drive 200km to attend a meeting when I have little to contribute to it? Should we be promoting tourism that involves fossil-fuelled travel halfway round the world? Should we revive the British slogan from World War II: "Is your journey really necessary?" According to Michael Tobias's book "World War III",

the next war is already in progress: humanity vs. the rest of the biosphere. Update: December 2002.

My "challenge of the year" for 2002 was to climb a mountain in Nepal above the 6000m/20000ft level, and it happened that our route passed through Lobuje. My impression lay somewhere between those of John Hunt and Jon Krakauer. The place was not abnormally dirty or insanitary, and the toilet facilities were adequate and as good as at other places in that region. One large building appeared to be new. Our visit was in October, at a different time of year from Krakauer's visit, and there were not any problems with snow. There were not any Everest-climbing expeditions present, but nevertheless the place was quite crowded with trekkers, mostly going to Everest Base Camp or Kala Pattar, a viewpoint nearby. I suspect that problems could easily develop with a larger number of visitors, as happened with the "bottleneck" that Krakauer described.

In connection with the comments of the Sherpa exile quoted by Krakauer, one may question whether the tourist industry has been beneficial for the people of the region. Apparently it has brought much wealth, more than to some other parts of Nepal, resulting in dissatisfaction in those other parts, and this may have been a factor in the ongoing Maoist rebellion which is mainly active in the west of Nepal.

Is it desirable to have an economy that is mainly dependent on foreign visitors? I think that any region, whether a local community or a whole nation, should aim to be self-sufficient in the necessities, and use external trade for luxuries. The tourist trade has made possible some worthy professions, such as mountain guide and first-class cook. But it seems that far more people are working as porters, essentially beasts of burden for rich foreigners, and dependent on their arbitrary tips to achieve a reasonable living standard. Shouldn't they aspire to something better? In the end, the local people should make the decisions on the sort of "development" they want.

Norman Thyer, *From his article "Eco-tourism-Population beyond carrying capacity? Is this progress?"*

Visit his website at

<<http://mypage.uniserve.com/~nthyer/envarts.htm>>

Executive Notes

Correspondence-Nelson Search & Rescue would like to brief KMC on procedures, policies of call-outs. A meeting will be arranged so that we can establish a procedure for our members to follow.

Committee reports:

Huts and Trails -BC Parks to start work on Silver Spray and Woodbury trails.

-Trail clearing work parties will take place on Enterprise Creek, Sept 10th and Nilsik Creek Aug.27th.

-Most KMC equipment has been sold off.
Conservation -Valhalla Parks open houses were attended by a few KMCer's.

-KMC representation continues with the Jumbo Creek Conservation Society. The Living Lakes Conference held in the East Kootenays provided international publicity to the Jumbo conflict. We're now waiting on what the Regional District of East Kootenay will do with the rezoning of the land. First Nations might have strong influence in the issue. RK Heli Ski is willing to pursue legal battle.

-The number of alpine lodges, resorts and other operations in BC is growing substantially through tenure applications.

-The commercial construction near Grohman Narrows begins in May.

Climbing Camp -There is lots of room for people to sign up.

-Because of unpredictable and rising helicopter costs it is difficult in setting a fee.

-Discussion on how to cover large deposit,

required for the camps.

Summer Trips -Schedule is in this newsletter It is a compilation of all our summer offerings. If you are able to coordinate an outing on some of the spots left open, please contact our summer trips director, Martin Carver at 354-xxxx or <email suppressed>

Hiking Camp -The lottery was held March 17. There are 79 applicants with many on the waiting list.

-Cost for this year is \$325.

-Discussion on what steps should be taken to confirm "residency".

-Suggestion for next year's application form to be posted on website.

-Considering the need for a witness to the signature on waivers.

Mountaineering School -Planning an "Introduction to Mountaineering" course is scheduled for may 21 to 23. Focus on snow and ice travel.

Memberships - Lower count this year as a number of members have not renewed yet. The list will be included in our next newsletter, the May-June issue.

New Business -All other clubs' newsletters should be sent to the KMC mailbox. Our reciprocal exchange policy likewise.

-Other clubs' newsletters are available from our library.

-Beaver Valley Search and Rescue might offer an awareness class.

Old Business-Should membership servicing position be included as part of the executive.

-Continuing discussion regarding the need for liability insurance for all KMC members

brought up concerns:

* Have there been any successful lawsuits in Canada? It is suspected that they may be settled out of court and hushed up as part of the settlement?

* Does having insurance encourage people to sue?

* What happens if some one is hurt, sues and we don't have insurance?

* Will members want to risk leading trips without insurance? As it is now, some people don't want to lead exactly for this reason. Our club is based on trips.

* Will members understand the need for coverage? Should we worry about losing members?

The club's need for "due diligence", the need for trip waivers, competent coordinators, trip ratings etc. was also discussed. Examples of other B.C. clubs' policies regarding insurance coverage were read.

Joining the FMBC might solve liability problem, but the cost to members would be higher than getting our own coverage. For \$2,000/year for the entire membership we could have \$2M. coverage. Doug will research further information from the insurance company regarding the policy and what it exactly covers. It was noted that in having insurance we also would be buying legal representation should legal action ever be taken. The formal process to actually have insurance will take some time.

After much consideration , a motion passed: That the KMC purchase liability insurance covering all club members.

The KMC 2005 Executive:			Contacts:	
Chair	Steven Miros	365-xxxx		Membership Annual Dues Individual (19 yrs & up) \$20 Couple/Family \$25
Vice	Doug Brown	352-xxxx		Send complete membership/waiver form to <u>KMC Membership 2711 Granite Rd Nelson BC</u>
<u>VIL 6V3</u>				
Treasurer	Mary Baker	368-xxxx		To receive information by e-mail or to give us your address/e-mail/phone changes please
contact				
Secretary	Vera Truant	367-xxxx		<u>membership@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca</u>
Conservation	Kim Kratky	352-xxxx		Library Sandra McGuinness
Winter Trips	David Mitchell*	354-xxxx		E-mail update Contact <u>members-owner@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca</u>
Summer Trips	Martin Carver	354-xxxx		KMC President <u>president@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca</u>
Cabins & Trails	Ted Ibrahim	505-xxxx		KMC (Correspondence) address Box 3195 Castlegar BC V1N 3H5
Mtnrg. School	Sandra McGuinness	352-xxxx		KMC website <u>www.kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca</u>
Hiking Camp	Ron Cameron	364-xxxx		Newsletter submissions Eliane Miros Tel (250)365-xxxx Address: Box 365 Robson BC
V0G 1X0				
Climbing Camp	Doug Brown	352-xxxx		E-mail <u>newsletter@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca</u>
Entertainment	Vacant			Newsletter Editorial Policy We encourage all submissions of writings, cartoons, drawings,
book &				
Newsletter	Eliane Miros	365-xxxx		website reviews and trip reports. Suitability for publication is at editor's discretion. Articles and
adverti-				sements may be edited for clarity and length. Advertising must be thought to be of interest to
members				in regard to the outdoors, especially locally. Discretion will be used for commercial endeavors.

*Peter Jordan is filling in for David Mitchell.

2005 KMC CLIMBING CAMP – The Vowells

LOCATION:

The 2005 KMC Climbing Camp will be located at the north end of Vowell Glacier just outside Bugaboo Glacier Provincial Park, near 82 K/15 121230 (NAD27) at around 8100 feet. Climbing objectives accessible from camp include the famous granite spires of the Bugaboos (Howser, Pigeon, Snowpatch, Bugaboo), the granite peaks of the Vowells (Wallace, Kelvin, Snafflehound, Spear), and the easy mountaineering peaks of the Conrad Group (Conrad, Malloy, Osprey).

MAPS: 82 K/15 Bugaboo Creek, 82 K/10 Howser Creek.

ACCESS:

Helicopter in and out from a staging area up Vowell Creek. The staging area will be accessed by logging roads up Vowell Creek that are reached from the village of Parson south of Golden.

DATES: July 24 – July 31.

FEES:

Total cost is dependent on number of participants and exact helicopter costs, but is estimated at \$450-\$550 per person.. A \$100 **non-refundable** deposit must accompany camp applications.

AGE RESTRICTION:

The minimum age for participants is 19 years as of the date of camp.

ABOUT CLIMBING CAMP:

The Kootenay Mountaineering Club does not act as a guide service at its climbing camps. Rather, it merely facilitates transportation of members into remote, rugged wilderness areas where one's activities must be governed by the level of experience one possesses in such an environment. Previous climbing experience is mandatory.

MORE INFORMATION:

For more information, contact Doug Brown.

REGISTRATION:

Camp size will be limited to a maximum of 12 people. Applications will be accepted on a first-mailed, first-accepted basis. Camp will be open to KMC members only until May 1, 2005 when it will be open to the general public.

To apply for climbing camp, go to <http://www.kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca/climbingcamp2005form.html> print the application form, fill it in and mail it, along with your **non-refundable** \$100 deposit cheque (payable to the KMC) to:

Doug Brown

