



# Kootenay Mountaineer

The KMC Newsletter

Issue 4

July/August 2006

Next deadline: Oct. 10

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### ▣ Activities

Club Trip Reports: Ymir Mt, Mt Stanley, Mt Dolly Varden, Dominion Mt, Mt Fisher, Outlook Mt + Glory Basin, Mt John Carter, Selkirk + Idaho Pks, Mt Rinda, Insect Pk, Texas Pk

Other Trip Reports: Tajumulco, Mt Rinda, Summit Pk, Monica Glacier-North Buttress, Gladshiem/Asgard, Pontiac Pk, Mt Evans, East Face of Midgard, Cooper Spur, Gates Pk, Seven Summits Trail, Mt. Assiniboine.

Mountain School Courses Reports: Rock skills workshop, Learn to lead.

In Memoriam: Norman Thyer (1929-2006)  
Hans Gmoser (1932-2006)

## Jumbo Regional Recreation Area being considered by the Regional District of Central Kootenay

The West Kootenay Coalition for Jumbo Wild presented a proposal to the RDCK to create a Jumbo Regional Recreation Area, which would protect important wildlife values while assuring continued local use for that portion of the Jumbo wilderness that falls within RDCK (area D) boundaries.

In response, a motion put forward by Area D Director, Andy Shadrack, to refer the Jumbo Regional Recreation proposal to the Land Use and Resource committee

for further study and consideration, received overwhelming support. The committee will report back to the board in August.

The purpose of the proposed Jumbo Regional Recreation Area (approximately 25,000 hectares) would be to preserve the natural ecosystems for the conservation of wildlife, the maintenance of biological diversity and to provide ongoing recreation based upon the enjoyment of the natural environment. All existing tenure holders will be 'grandfathered' into the proposed agreement and no new commercial or industrial developments or expansions would be allowed.

A similar approach is being considered in the East Kootenay district as well. "Rather than the controversial Jumbo resort, East Kootenay recreation and environment groups are considering a separate proposal for the eastern portion of the Jumbo area for a linked, 'Hands Across the Mountain initiative' stated Rowena Eloise of Argenta Coalition for Jumbo Wild. "The Resort development continues to receive widespread opposition in the Kootenays."

Colleen McCrory, of the Valhalla Wilderness Society, spoke about the negative impacts of the Jumbo Resort development. "This development is gigantic, at full build out, there will over 7,000 beds and over 700,000 visitors a year, almost the size of the city of Nelson and will have far reaching implications for the entire region."

Grant Trower, Friends of the Lardeau Valley, told the RDCK that the Lardeau Valley had already lost a considerable amount of land to the Duncan Dam and his community will be greatly impacted by the Jumbo Resort. The Glacier Creek drainage side of the Jumbo proposal is very important and receives high use by local residents. "I support the Jumbo Recreation Proposal that will grandfather

in existing permit holders as the best solution for our area," stated Trower.

Rowena Eloise, who has been involved in the campaign to stop the Jumbo development for the past 19 years said, "The positive response from the RDCK is encouraging. We believe that the best solution for this area is the proposal for the Jumbo Regional Recreation Reserve. This issue is at a critical stage and needs the attention and support of all concerned citizens."

The proposal can be viewed at [www.vws.org](http://www.vws.org) For more information contact: **Colleen McCrory, Executive Director** Valhalla Wilderness Society. Tel: 250-358-2333. E-mail: [vws@vws.org](mailto:vws@vws.org)

## Tips for Hiking in Grizzly Country:

- Carry a quality bear spray in a side holster.
- Update yourself on bear activity and be aware of likely bear hangouts, such as dense thickets, creek drainages, timbered edges, rock slides and in season berry patches.
- Travel cautiously at night, dawn and dusk. Bears move more during low light hours and use horse/hiking and game trails for convenience.
- Scan constantly for fresh bear sign scat and avoid areas of fresh bear activity.
- Enter blind spots on trails cautiously. Especially along creeks, rivers and streams where a bear's hearing is handicapped by the noise of moving water.
- Practice safe food preparation and storage = away from the camp.
- Avoid animal carcasses especially if they have been buried. Bears will feed on these for several days and will stay in the area to protect their food.
- Stay within groups

## Prepare For a Bear Encounter:

The Wyoming Outfitters and Guides Association, in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Professional Guide Institute put together a course titled "Safety for People, Safety for Bears" Tim Doud chaired the committee. Below are tips from the course on how to mentally prepare for a bear encounter. The course stresses this theory: If the mind has never been there before, the body doesn't know how to respond.

-Assess the situation. (Raised ears

indicate curiosity on the part of the bear).

-Stay calm. Remember that few bear encounters result in an attack.

-Keep the bear in sight at all times.

-Don't run.

-Try to leave quietly if the bear isn't aware of your presence. If the bear is aware of you, but is at a distance of 100 meters or more, stay calm and walk away from the bear.

-Don't make sudden movements or yell if the bear is close. Instead, talk quietly and calmly to the bear and slowly back away while slowly waving your arms.

-Never stare at a bear because they perceive eye contact as threatening.

-Act non-threatening if the bear is close and upset. Talk in an authoritative voice and back away slowly. Drop a hat or bandana to distract the bear, but leave your backpack on for protection. Have your pepper spray ready.

- Use pepper spray only when the bear is 30 feet or less away and leave quietly when it retreats

-As a last resort, play dead and curl into a ball, covering your neck and head with your arms and hands.

*By Mark Kayser in the North American Hunter magazine, November 2002.*

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## Update on Glacier Creek Recreation Area

Kim Kratky

The RDCK agreed by a large majority to study a plan presented by West Kootenay enviros (with the support of your Conservation Chair) for a Glacier Creek Regional Recreation Area to be administered by the RDCK. This proposal would grandfather in all current activities, including logging, trapping, and commercial skiing. It would ensure motorized access by the public. Under this scheme, similar to ones the provincial government is encouraging elsewhere, the RDCK would shoulder the costs of what would be minimal upkeep--that is, roads and bridges and perhaps outhouses. Keep in mind that the RDCK voted only to study this plan, not give final approval.

Now it seems as if some of our elected representatives are turning against even this minimal effort. The commitments of the following three representatives are in question: Josh Smienk, Al Dawson, John Dooley.

If these are your representatives and you are interested in a Glacier Creek recreation area (support seems strong in the north Kootenay area), I suggest you write the following so they know the opinion of their constituents:

Director Josh Smienk  
Electoral Area E  
6225 Highway 3A  
Nelson, BC  
V1L 6S8

Director Al Dawson  
Electoral Area F  
2553 Holmberg Road  
Nelson, BC  
V1L 6K7

Mayor John Dooley and Council  
City of Nelson  
Suite 101, 310 Ward Street  
Nelson, BC  
V1L 5S4

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## KMC Trail and Mountain Access Roads

The Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC (of which the KMC is now a member club) is compiling a list of Trail/Mountain access roads for which there are concerns about restrictions on their use. The list for the Kootenays is currently empty. Take a moment to let me know if there are access locations in the Kootenays that are of concern and I will collect and deliver to the FMC for incorporation into their provincial-level effort.

Martin Carver

## Adventure Tourism and the Kootenay Mountaineering Club

A Recreational Management Plan may be in the works for the West Kootenays! The inventory and mapping of the KMC "high value areas" (for non-motorized zoning etc.) will become critical and help in deliberations and hopefully consultation. I'm asking you all to think about those special areas we enjoy visiting and why we value them. Hopefully a formal process may start in the late fall. Send your comments to [president@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca](mailto:president@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca)

## It's Crowded At The Top!

What does it all mean?

Ninety people summiting Everest in one week. Oldest summiter-peaking Everest at 70 years, 7 months and 13 days. Youngest summiter on all seven summits-20. Soon to be youngest summiter on Everest 15. Sixteen times to the summit of Everest. First Lebanese to the summit. First Filipino to the summit. First double amputee to the summit. First helicopter to land on summit. First time a combined Palestinian and Israeli team made it to the summit. Nepalese couple weds on top of Everest, and last but not least, first person to have stripped on the top of Everest.

The head of the Nepal Mountaineering Association urged his government to take action against the Sherpa who stripped. Everest is considered a god by Nepali Buddhists. *Info from Reuters and Time.*

## Equipped to climb -The Mountain Goat

The mountain goat lives out most of its life on talus slopes and windswept alpine ledges. The mountain goat is nearly immune from predators in this cold, harsh environment. The name of this animal is a misnomer as the species is more closely related to African antelopes, and its closest relative is the European chamois also an expert climber. The hooves of a mountain goat have hard outer shells and rubbery, concave footpads that act like suction cups when weight is applied. These feet give the goat better edging and smearing ability than the best rock shoes. The mountain goat's legs are relatively short, its body heavyset. This body type puts the mountain goat's weight and center of balance right over its feet as it moves and allows the goat to negotiate its vertical environment with ease and agility. It is not uncommon for a goat to leap ten feet from one ledge to another, turn around on narrow, icy ridges only inches wide, or pull itself up from ledge to ledge with its front feet. Experienced climbers often have better success on difficult rock in an unforgiving environment, and this is true of mountain goats as well as humans. In many areas of North America, fewer than half of each season's kids survive the first year of life. Accidental falls and severe weather, both

hazards of free climbing are the usual causes of death. As you observe and appreciate these special climbers, and perhaps squelch a bit of envy of their inborn talent, please watch at a distance that respects their wildness and does not alter their behavior.

*Wendy Hanophy (Biologist) in the Trail and Timberline website.*

## Googling for KMC Newsletters

Since I took over administration of the KMC Web site, I have been putting electronic copies of the KMC newsletters (with personal addresses and contact info blanked) on the site. So if you go to our site (<http://www.kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca/newsletters.html>), you will find all newsletters since November 2002 available in PDF format.

Now for the really good part. As it happens, Google periodically searches and indexes the KMC Web site, so you can use Google to search all the newsletters that are on our site. To search the newsletters, go to Google (<http://www.google.com>) and in the search box type: <search terms> site:kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca Replace the token <search terms> with some key words of what you're looking for. For example, recently Sandy wanted to look up Kim Kratky's report on climbing Mt Hulme. the easiest way to do this is to google for hulme site:kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca

This generates four search results, three from the newsletters and one from the mountain database. It turns out the first hit is Kim's report; you can either click on the search result link (in this case the link is titled "Inside", which is the newsletter section where the term "hulme" first occurs) to bring up the newsletter as a PDF document, or click on the "View as HTML" link which will bring up the same newsletter converted to plain text. The first way is nicely formatted and easy to print, the second way is much quicker, especially if you are on a dialup Internet connection.

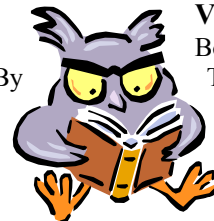
Happy searching! Doug Brown.

**Try the B.C. Internet Mapping site at <http://maps.gov.bc.ca/> It has lots to offer including trail descriptions.**

## Hiking The West Coast of Vancouver Island

Book review

By



Tim Leadem,  
Greystone Books,  
Douglas and  
McIntyre  
Publishing  
Group. 2005.

This is a very good trail guidebook containing descriptions of the West Coast Trail, the Nootka Trail, the Carmanah-Walbran Trails, the Wild Pacific Trail and the Cape Scott Trail. There is also natural and human history zeal as Mr. Leadem is a zoologist. It is available in the Castlegar and District Public Library.

"I have hiked many other trails on the wet west coast of Vancouver Island (including all of the ones in this book) and I have long wanted to share them with others who enjoy exploring the wilderness. For me, the question is always how to do this responsibly. I realize that by broadcasting the physical appeal and beauty of a place, something of its wildness may be lost as more people are attracted to experience the same landscape. However, I also understand that by promoting remote areas, they are more likely to be protected from development. That is the paradox: to conserve an untouched place, it must often be opened to human scrutiny in order to obtain the will to preserve it. Too often, though, some of the wild is rubbed away in the process.

I am a firm believer that people need untamed places for their souls. The sense of the spiritual that is in all of us is touched by these scenes-the swirling of the sea as it shoots up surge channels, the liquid emerald of a stream as it runs through a rocky gorge, the glint of the sun as it shines off a tiny fern in the dank humus of the forest floor. Perhaps we need these wild places just to be and not necessarily to be there for us. The many species that make up the forest ecosystem can survive quite nicely without us. There should be places on this globe where humans do not dare to tread.

Enjoy these hikes. Take in their incredible beauty and inexhaustible wonder, but leave these sacred places as you find them. Better still, do your part to ensure that we may know other wild places in our hearts if not with our eyes." Tim Leadem

## KMC Member certified through the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides

Leah Zoobkoff of Nelson was recently certified through the A.C.M.G. Leah notes that: "The course was 7.5 days in Canmore, Alberta. The challenges I faced were due to the fact that I was a good 10 years younger than the other participants: They don't get many 20 year olds wanting to take this course.

I am now Certified through the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides as a Day Hiking Guide. The course covered navigation, leadership skills, hazard management and heli hiking. The days were intense as there was so much to learn. We were asked to lead a section of a hike, having the instructors right behind us evaluating as we went."

BRAVO Leah!

We wish you continued success in these endeavors!

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## Mountain School Tech Tips: Some Notes on Climbing Ropes

Looking for an all-round rope, is a bit like looking for an all round ski. A nice skinny ski with fish-scales on the base is great for skiing the trails around Paulson summit, but just ain't gonna cut-it on a big powder day in the backcountry. Similarly, a nice light rope will be great for glacier travel, but might make you a bit nervous when you're 8 metres out from your last piece of gear half-way up the south face of Asgard. In lieu of an unlimited budget and ownership of multiple ropes, the best you can do is choose the most appropriate rope that will work for most of the climbing you want to do.

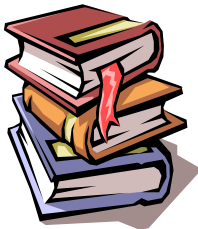
All climbing ropes are dynamic, that is, they stretch on impact to absorb the forces generated when a climber takes a whipper. Static line is available, but is unsuitable (even dangerous) for climbing and is used for hauling gear, rescues and caving. Modern ropes are made of an outer sheath (the mantel) woven around an inner core (kern), and vary in length from 50 to 70 metres (you can buy dynamic rope off the spool from MEC), with 60 metres being most common.

Dynamic ropes are categorized into three types depending on the diameter of the rope, single, half and twin. Single ropes are between 9 and 11 mm in diameter and are intended to be used individually. These thicker ropes are ideal for crag climbing and top-roping but are heavy to lug about on a glacier. They make good first time ropes for beginning climbers and you can even buy them with an extra thick sheath if you are planning on doing lots of top-roping. Half ropes are between 8 and 9 mm in diameter and should be used in pairs (climbing with two ropes) generally clipping alternate pieces of protection. They provide some added safety on alpine routes (for example, rock fall is less likely to chop both ropes) and can be used singly for glacier travel. Twin ropes are thinnest, 7.5 to 8 mm in diameter and are also designed to be used in pairs, although both ropes should be clipped into all protection pieces. Using twin ropes requires good rope management skills but they can be used singly for glacier travel. Ropes also come in dry and non-dry finishes. Dry ropes are impregnated with some chemical that makes them water resistant. Ice climbers will definitely want dry ropes, and some people buy dry ropes for alpine climbing and glacier travel, but, in my experience, the dry finish wears off after a while and you are left with a more expensive non-dry rope.

Once you've got your new rope, take care of it. Don't store it in direct sunlight or near chemicals. Buy or make a rope bag and use it for crag climbing. Don't step on the rope – especially with crampons on, and whack your buddies upside the head if they step on your rope, check your rope after use, look for flat spots and abrasion of the mantel. Some obsessive compulsive types keep a record of how many falls their rope has taken, but most of us don't have the kind of time (or personality) for this.

Want more information? MEC has a lot of great information on-line including a comparison chart showing the weights, length, impact force and number of falls for each of the ropes they sell. Just go to [www.mec.ca](http://www.mec.ca) and search for ropes under "articles & info".

References (available for loan from the KMC library):  
*Rock Climbing: Mastering Basic Skills* by Craig Luebben



## KMC August Library News: Lotsa Local Authors

It's no secret that there is a lot of talent in the Kootenays and in the KMC. If you want to read some books by local authors (and KMC members) the library has two books that might interest you. The first is Vivien Bowers' widely acclaimed "In the Path of an Avalanche" the true story of a large avalanche at Silver Spray Cabin in Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park that killed six people. This book is a great read, full of details about how avalanches happen and an in-depth look at backcountry travel in avalanche terrain. The other is jointly written by K. Linda Kivi and Eileen Delehanty Pearkes and is an exploration of life in the Columbia Mountains titled "The Inner Green." A somewhat introspective book, K. Linda and Eileen explore what makes living in the Kootenays so special.

New books in the library this month:

- They Came to the Hills (gift from Jim Petroske).
- 2006 Canadian Alpine Journal

# Norman Thyer

Norman Thyer passed away on Thursday July 20, 2006. He died at home which is what he wanted. Anna and his daughter Anita were at his bedside.

Norman Harold Thyer was born in Gloucester, England on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1929. Upon completion of high-school (equivalent) and obligatory military service, he headed off to Antarctica and the Falkland Islands for some adventure and travel, and to work at various meteorologic observation outposts over a 3-year period. In the isolating conditions of extensive boat travel and remote stations, he developed his interests in astronomy and photographic processing amongst others, hobbies which he maintained for many years.

He returned to England for his first university degree (mathematics), and then went to Seattle to obtain his PhD in meteorology. It was likely here that his true mountaineering experiences began, with the Seattle Mountaineers. He climbed mainly in the Pacific Northwest area.

He came to stay in Canada in the early 60's: first to Vancouver, then to Montreal and finally to settle in Nelson in 1968, home base for the rest of his life. Here in Nelson, he joined the KMC in which he remained an active member over the following 4 decades or so. He climbed many mountains in the Kootenay area, and enjoyed ski trips and snowshoeing in winter.

Norman sought occasions to climb during his travels to various parts of the world. In the early 60's he spent a year in Africa on a field trip to Ghana, in which the highlight was a climbing trip to the Ruwenzori in Western Uganda. In 1980, Norman worked in Nepal for several months, and this was his first opportunity to explore some of the mountains in that part of the world. He was to return twice: in 1989 with a Canadian expedition in an attempt to climb Tilicho Peak, and then in 2002 in which he became the oldest (at 73) to summit Island Peak, at 20305 ft, his life-time highest peak.

Norman loved the outdoors. An eternal student of his surroundings, he never went far without some tools for observation and resource for knowledge. Those who hiked with him often saw him stop to pull out his microscope to observe snow fleas or an interesting flower or sedge. He would have the answers to a variety of questions, from the technical (on topographical maps or formation of "giant's footsteps" in the snow), to the curious (on the food source of the snow flea). If he didn't know the answer off-hand, he could often find the answer in a book in his bottomless pack or provide a reference to look up at home. He meticulously collected and documented innumerable types of information about his observations of nature, geography, peoples and cultures. He enjoyed the stimulating conversations of the many and varied members of the KMC.

Norman enjoyed travel. His sense of adventure, likely stimulated by his stay in Antarctica, led him around the globe, and over his lifetime he traveled to each of the 7 continents. His purpose was varied: at times he traveled to discover new cultures and people such as when he traveled Europe by bicycle in his younger years, at times he traveled for work, and at times he brought aid or knowledge to the area he was visiting. In his later years, he still planned regular trips abroad, including a return trip to Antarctica some 50 years after his initial trip. He had a working knowledge of several languages, and rudimentary knowledge of several more. Folk-dancing was a favorite hobby, and he joined and taught folk-dancing groups in the various places he lived.

Norman had a strong interest in ecology and the impact of our Western lifestyle on our environment. This interest started long before ecology and the environment became common issues. While he recognized and appreciated the advances of the Western World which have greatly improved our lives, he realized the harm we may be doing to our surroundings by our current consumer-based lifestyle. He felt strongly compelled to contribute to society by sharing his ideas and working towards improvement in a variety of areas. He wrote many letters to political leaders, and common citizens (through letters to the editor amongst others), to provoke thought and to stimulate improvement of the ecological impact of our lifestyle. More importantly, he was true to his principles and lived his life in a way in which he thought would do the least harm. Such an example was his use of his bicycle for travel, including in the many parts of the world in which he worked and visited. He was particularly proud of his successful effort to cover 100 miles in one day at age 70.

Norman was also an advocate of human rights, and participated in various campaigns to better the lot of those who suffer. Once again, he frequently used the written word to bring attention to injustices, both locally and globally. He was commonly described by those who knew him as kind and gentle, knowledgeable and interesting. Though quiet and unassuming, he left an impact on many around him.

Norman will be missed greatly by his surviving family: his wife Anna, his two daughters Anita and Linda, and his four grandchildren.

At Norman's request, there will be no service. Using his dry sense of humor, Norman stated that he did not want someone playing Amazing Grace at some ceremony. There will be an informal gathering to celebrate the life of Norman Thyer. The Thyer family would like to extend an open invitation to all interested in joining them on September 3<sup>rd</sup> (his birthday) at 10am at the lake at Nancy Greene Provincial Park. Feel free to bring hiking shoes and a picnic lunch too.

Linda Thyer

## Hans Gmoser (1932 – 2006) - Canadian Mountain Pioneer

By Chic Scott

Hans Gmoser, the eminence grise of Canadian mountaineering, died July 5<sup>th</sup> from injuries sustained in a fall while cycling the 1A highway near Lake Louise. In recent years Gmoser had shunned the limelight, content to enjoy his two favourite activities - cross-country skiing in winter and cycling in summer. But during the 1950s, 60s and 70s he laid the foundation of modern mountaineering in Canada. He pioneered rock, alpine and expedition climbing; he popularized ski mountaineering and was largely responsible for creating our professional mountain guides association. Through his films and later through helicopter skiing he made the Canadian mountains world famous.

Born in Brunau, Austria, July 7, 1932, Hans grew up during the troubled war years. As a teenager he discovered the mountains and a lifelong passion was kindled. With his friend Franz Dopf he climbed and skied and developed his mountaineering skills. Then, in 1951, Hans and Leo Grillmair immigrated to

Canada. Life was pretty spartan for the pair and their first job was logging near Whitecourt, Alberta. Soon they made their way to Calgary, where they were joined by Dopf. Linking up with the Alpine Club of Canada they began to discover our incredible mountain wilderness. During the summer months their passion was rock climbing, pioneering new routes on Mount Yamnuska in the front ranges of the Rockies. In the winter it was ski touring near the Stanley Mitchell Hut in the Little Yoho Valley near Field, BC. Here they celebrated their first Canadian Christmas and learned to love their adopted country. Hans played the zither and Leo loved to sing so the wilderness cabin was full of music.

Hans' mountaineering achievements during the fifties and sixties are numerous and a brief list would include early ascents of Mount Alberta and Brussels Peak two of the hardest challenges in the Rockies, a remarkable ascent of the east ridge of Mount Logan, Canada's highest peak, and a new route on the north face of Denali (Mount McKinley), North America's highest summit. As a skier he pioneered new high-level ski traverses in the Purcell Mountains and along the crest of the Rockies from Kicking Horse Pass to the Columbia Icefield. For young Canadian climbers and ski mountaineers he was an icon and inspired several generations of fledgling mountaineers. The idealistic articles he wrote in the Canadian Alpine Journal were music to young ears looking for an alternative lifestyle: "What were we trying to do? Were we trying to show off? Were we trying to kill ourselves? - No! We wanted to inhale and breathe life again. We were rebelling against an existence which human kind has forced upon itself. We were rebelling against an existence full of distorted values, against an existence where a man is judged by the size of his living-room, by the amount of chromium on his car. But here we were ourselves again: simple and pure. Friends in the mountains." But it was as a mountain guide that he really made his mark. He began leading ski tours for Erling Strom and Lizzie Rummel near Mount Assiniboine in 1953. Lizzie became a close friend and confidant, as did Fred Pessl one of Hans's first clients. Hans never forgot the early friends he made in the mountains. They supported him when he needed help and he repaid their trust many times over. In later years Hans would host 'Nostalgia Week' at his lodge in the Bugaboos and invite his early clients and supporters to join him for a week of heli-skiing.

In 1957 Hans founded Rocky Mountain Guides Ltd. He led mountain climbers during the summer but the real bread and butter programs were the ski weeks in the winter, at Mount Assiniboine, Rogers Pass and of course at his beloved Stanley Mitchell cabin in the Little Yoho Valley. From 1957 to 1967 Hans made 10 ski and climbing films that he toured all over North America, from Alaska to California and east to Montreal and New York. One year he had 53 lecture dates on his schedule and attracted a crowd of 2500 people in Detroit. Hans accompanied these films with a romantic narration that thrilled and inspired audiences. A critic in a Milwaukee newspaper wrote, "In narrating the film Mr. Gmoser offered more than entertainment, there was a simple lesson in philosophy."

Hans was a gifted communicator and wrote in the Canadian Alpine Journal, "In the end, to ski is to travel fast and free - free over the untouched snow covered country. To be bound to one slope, even to one mountain, by a lift may be convenient but it robs us of the greatest pleasure that skiing can give, that is, to travel through the wide wintry country; to follow the lure of the peaks which tempt on the horizon and to be alone for a few days or even a few hours in, clear, mysterious surroundings."

Although Hans loved traditional ski touring from small cabins in the wilderness, he is today known as the father of helicopter skiing. In 1965 he ran the first two commercial heli-ski weeks from an old logging camp in the Bugaboo Mountains, near Radium, BC. Heli-skiing took off, for the timing was perfect: the requisite jet helicopter technology was just being developed. By 1968 the luxurious Bugaboo Lodge was open, welcoming blue ribbon clientele from around North America and Europe. Hans' Rocky Mountain Guides Ltd. grew to become Canadian Mountain Holidays (CMH), with 500 employees and a dozen lodges scattered throughout the interior of BC.

Hans was of course in the right place at the right time, but he was also the right man for the job. He developed a heli-ski industry with strong ties to the traditional mountain guiding and mountain climbing communities and he always felt that heli-skiing was a wilderness experience. He wrote: "Our primary aim is to offer our guests a safe and educational mountain outdoor experience. We want our guests to be comfortable and to feel at home in our lodges. We want to keep our lodges free of the electronic noises and images that invade our lives everywhere else. We consider ourselves to be intruders into one of the few large, contiguous natural areas left in the world. Therefore, we ask our guests that they, along with us, respect the sanctity, silence and the spirit of these natural wonders we are privileged to share."

Hans was also a founding member of the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides and its first technical chairman. Throughout his career he took a keen interest in guides affairs and for a number of years was the association's honorary president. Hans's pioneering efforts in ski touring and heli-skiing created an industry that today employs hundreds of guides and thousands of support staff.

Beyond all these notable achievements Hans was simply a remarkable man who inspired loyalty and in return would be your lifelong friend. He was a man who, in the words of the poet Rudyard Kipling, could "walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch." Gmoser numbered among his friends and clients Prime Minister Trudeau (who he guided up Bugaboo Spire), the King of Spain and the King and Queen of Norway, but during his tenure at the helm of CMH he probably knew the name of every guest who skied at his lodges and every staff member who took care of them.

Hans met his wife, Margaret MacGougan, skiing at the Stanley Mitchell Hut and they married in 1966. They have lived all these years in the same modest house in Harvie Heights (near Canmore) and have two sons, Conrad (Lesley) and Robson (who is a ski guide like his father) and two grandchildren.

Hans has been greatly honored over the years, receiving honorary memberships in the Alpine Club of Canada and the International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations and an honorary doctorate from Thompson Rivers University. He was elected to the Honor Roll of Canadian Skiing and to the U.S National Ski Hall of Fame. He is a recipient of the Banff Mountain Film Festival Summit of Excellence Award and, in 1987, was awarded the Order of Canada. Just a few weeks ago he was a founding inductee into the Canadian Tourism Hall of Fame.

Not long ago Hans commented: "Looking back, I've had a good interesting life. I had my time in the mountains. I had my time as a businessman. So what more can I ask for?" Hans' passing will bring to a close a large, interesting and very creative era in the western Canadian mountains.

According to his wishes there will be no funeral or memorial service. Margaret and Hans' family have asked that you all remember and celebrate Hans in your own way. In lieu of flowers, he would be honored by a contribution to the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides: ACMG, Box 8341, Canmore, AB. T1W 2V1.

*Margaret Gmoser is a long-standing member of the KMC and she (and Hans) have many friends within the KMC membership.*

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## **Slow climb up Everest deadly, doctor warns**

People attempting to scale Mount Everest should think more about their health and less about "the climb," says a doctor who has reached the summit.

Between 1980 and 2002, the death rate has remained about one death for every 10 successful ascents — despite better understanding of acclimatization, improved climbing equipment and established routes that might be expected to make the climb less deadly.

In a commentary appearing in Saturday's issue of the British Medical Journal, climber Dr. Andrew Sutherland of the Nuffield department of surgery in Oxford, U.K., said he was "shocked by both the amount of altitude-related illness and the relative lack of knowledge among people attempting Everest."

Sutherland, who made the ascent on the north side of the mountain as a member of the Everestmax expedition, said he saw more cases of altitude-related illness than the predicted one- to three-per-cent incidence rates.

While some believe inexperienced climbers are a factor in the death toll, Sutherland said, all the climbers he knew who died had experience climbing to 8,000 metres.

"In my view, climbers are not climbing beyond their ability but instead beyond their altitude ability," Sutherland wrote.

"Unfortunately, it is difficult to get experience of what it is like climbing above Camp 3 [8,300 metres] without climbing Everest. Climbers invariably do not know what their ability above 8,300 metres is going to be like."

Exhaustion and altitude-related illnesses cause people to climb too slowly, Sutherland said.

High-altitude cerebral edema can also result in an altered sense of reality that may deceive climbers into thinking they can get to the top and down again, Sutherland said.

Generally, he said, the rate of ascent should be no longer than one to 1.5 hours per 100 metres.

"If you are too slow this means that something is wrong and your chances of not making it off the mountain are greatly increased," Sutherland wrote. "But with the summit in sight this advice is too often ignored."

Records of deaths on the mountain at the French consulate in Kathmandu all show people who "take too long to reach the summit." **CBC News24 Aug 2006**

*"The mountains have always inspired people. They take us out of our everyday routine and perhaps challenge our minds as well as our bodies. The mountains invade our senses. Smells, sounds, temperatures, and textures- even tastes- often seem so much better from the heights. But for those of us with vision, the greatest reward on hikes and climbs may be the vistas and close-up scenes in the mountains." Brenda Porter*

**"If you don't scale the mountain, you can't view the plain"**

Ancient Chinese proverb

# Melting Mountains

## How Climate Change is destroying the World's Most Spectacular Landscapes

**O**n 23 July 1983 Ian Whittaker and I were inching our way up the Bonatti Pillar, a legendary Alpine climb up 2,000ft of golden granite on the southwest face of Les Drus, high above Chamonix in France. Walter Bonatti had made the first ascent of this route alone over five days in 1955. It is a legendary mountaineering story; perhaps one of the greatest exploits in the history of Alpinism, to rank alongside the first ascents of the north faces of the Eiger, the Matterhorn and the Grandes Jorasses.

We all need heroes. Walter Bonatti was the hero of heroes; a man way ahead of his time whose mountaineering prowess was awe-inspiring. I repeated the routes he put up with a sense of reverence. I have followed in the footsteps of so many of my heroes and there were times on their routes when I half expected to see them pass me by dressed in the clothes and the equipment of their time, climbing steadily with grim, hard, unsmiling expressions. I knew that they would not notice me.

Only Bonatti has survived. The rest are all gone, leaving the faint glow of their brilliance on the routes they pioneered. Yet the icy world in which Bonatti played his high-risk games is changing with frightening rapidity. The mountains are melting, and it is not only mountaineers who will suffer the effects. The long-term outlook for the Alpine nations - and those in which the other great ranges lie - is bleak.

The Dru is an extraordinary pinnacle of rock. It sports an icy north face (one of the six classic Alpine north faces), a 3,000ft west face of smooth vertical walls and overhangs, and the spectacular southwest Bonatti Pillar. Few mountains have such a variety of magnificent lines on them or look so beautiful. The Dru crusted with a winter lace-work of ice and gilded in the golden pink of Alpine glow is one of the most striking sights in the Alps. The Bonatti Pillar itself rises in a series of steep, leaning columns seamed with fissures and bristling with overhangs. It rears up 2,000ft towards the massive capping overhangs just below the summit.

By late afternoon we had reached the Red Walls - 300ft of blank granite split by a hairline crack that bristled with old, rusting pitons. We were tempted to bivouac on a series of terraces at the top of the Red Walls but confidence got the better of us and we decided to try to get past the huge roofs and reach the summit in a day. As darkness began to close around us we found ourselves in increasingly blank and forbidding territory. The dark shadow of the roofs blackened the early night sky above and tendrils of mist began swirling up from the depths of the icy couloir glinting thousands of feet below. I began to follow the ropes draped down the corner, clutching in the darkness at unseen holds and shouting for Ian to give me a tight rope. After about 40 feet, the vertical corner seemed to pinch out into a smooth wall. Groping to my left, my fingers slipped into a sharp-edged crack and, with help from Ian, I struggled up until I saw the dark shadows of his legs hanging above me. He was sitting on a narrow ledge. I clipped myself to a handrail rope that Ian had fixed above the ledge. The handrail had been tied to an old ring piton and stretched across to the far end of the ledge, where he had tied it to a small flake of protruding granite. Once ensconced inside my bivouac bag I settled myself down on the comforting solidity of the ledge. Seconds later there was a heart stopping downward lurch accompanied by the thunderous sound of tons of granite plunging into the abyss. I heard a cry of alarm and pain above the roar of falling rock. My arms were outside the bivouac bag as I fell and I flailed them blindly trying to grab something. It must have taken only a fraction of a second but it seemed to last forever.

We bounced on the springy stretch of rope. The handrail had held. I swung gently on the rope with my arms pinned to my sides. I had held the fall on my armpits and for a confused moment I desperately tried to remember whether I had clipped myself to the handrail. In the sudden darkness, with the sounds of falling rock echoing up from the depths, I was momentarily disorientated. Where was Ian? I remembered that sudden yelp during the fall. Had he gone with it?

"By 'eck!" I heard Ian's broad Lancastrian voice beside me. I poked my head out from my bag and glanced at Ian. His head lolled on to his shoulder and his torch reflected a sodium yellow light off the surrounding rock walls. There was blood on his neck. We hung side by side on the tightly stretched rope and swore. With the help of our torches we were horrified to find that our ropes had gone. We looked at each other and giggled nervously. Two thousand feet up and no ropes! The handrail shifted suddenly, causing us both to squeak with fright, hearts hammering at the thought of falling again. I turned and shone my torch on the handrail. It looked odd. I twisted round, grabbed the rope. It shifted again and the peg moved. I lowered myself gingerly back on to the rope.

"Oh God," I whispered.

"What?"

"The peg's bugged. It's coming out."

"Christ! Where's the gear? Let's put something in."

"It's gone. The hardware, boots, everything. It went with the ledge."



Ian was silent. I looked at the flake where the handrail had been tied off. Tiny pebbles and dust trickled from its sheared-off base. Both attachment points could go at any moment. If either went, we would fall into the abyss.

"I think we had better stay very, very still."

"Aye," Ian muttered.

We hung there helplessly for 12 hours until at last a helicopter came into view and we were winched to safety.

Two weeks later, while working as a plongeur in the Montanvers Hotel, I saw an even bigger rock fall on Les Drus - a fall that altered the shape of the summit and spewed helicopter-sized blocks down the north face, creating a 1,000ft high dust cloud. So what? After being swept 2,000 feet down the north-east face of Les Courtes in 1981 and then having my bed disappear on the Dru in 1983 I am keenly aware that mountains have always been falling down, usually, it would seem, with me attached to them. It happens. The Cairngorms were once Himalayan in scale. Frost, wind and water have ground them down to their present lowly heights.

However, 20 years later it would seem that perhaps Les Drus are falling down rather faster than they should. In 1997 more than 1,500 cubic metres of rock fell into the valley below, destroying classic alpine routes such as the Thomas Gross and the Destivelle routes as well as some pitches of the Bonatti Pillar.

This was nothing compared with the collapse on 29 June this summer, when the west face of Petit Dru suffered yet another enormous rock fall. A fortnight earlier, two climbers on the Quartz Ledge escape route from the top of the north face had been alarmed to discover that a gaping crack had split open along the length of the ledge. It was the first sign that the Bonatti Pillar in its entirety was soon to disappear, alongside the famous Harlin Route on the west face and large chunks of the American Direct. The collapse occurred above the previous 1997 fall. Fifty years of iconic climbs had disappeared without trace. More surprisingly still, no one was killed. Climbers have been advised to steer clear.

Such warnings are becoming ominously familiar in the Alps nowadays. Two years ago Victor Saunders, one of Britain's leading climbers, and his companion, Craig Higgins, had reached a point halfway up the Matterhorn's Hornli ridge when their climb turned into a nightmare. "An enormous avalanche hurtled down the mountain's east face," said Saunders. "I have never seen so much rock falling at one time." An almost continuous rain of boulders ricocheted past them as they cowered under an overhang. Within an hour an even bigger rock avalanche was thundering down the north face, obliterating the classic 1931 Schmidt route that I had climbed in 1980. This was swiftly followed by the thunder and dust cloud of yet another vast rock fall. In one of mountaineering's biggest mass rescues, more than 70 climbers had to be hoisted from the slopes of the Matterhorn. A ban on climbing the mountain was instigated for the first time in history as rock falls battered its broken flanks. It seemed to the survivors that the very Alps had started falling apart.

In the summer of 2003 one of the world's most iconic climbs, the 1938 route on the Eiger's north face, became yet another victim of climate change. Climbers were shocked to find that there was barely any ice left on the route. The huge second ice field, the third ice field and the White Spider had melted away and now consisted of rubble-strewn rock slopes dusted by blackened snow and pocked by forlorn patches of ancient grey ice. The heat wave of last year, reported to have been the hottest Alpine summer in 200 years, seemed to have finished off this venerable climb. It may be that it is only ever climbable during the winter months, when some semblance of névé ice has reformed.

A local guide, Hans Ueli, has reported enormous rock falls. One such fall woke him at five in the morning and, upon looking out of his window, he saw that the lower half of the 6,000ft high face was obscured by an enormous cloud of dust. Climbs the length and breadths of the Alps have suffered similar collapses. On Fiescherwand there was no snow ice at all on the entire four-mile wide north face. The north face of Les Droites near Chamonix, recently only climbable in the winter, now even in the coldest months presents an insurmountable 600m barrier of smooth, bare rock slabs where once there had been pristine ice fields.

Ironically, only a few days before the Bonatti Pillar disintegrated, a man regarded by some as a half-witted religious bigot announced at the G8 summit in Gleneagles that as far as he was concerned America did not regard global warming as important nor pressing. Leastways that is how I interpreted President George Bush's words.

Scientists now believe global warming is melting the Alps. The ice that for thousands of years had filled the deep cracks at the summit of the Dru has started to melt. The glue holding this rock tower together is leaking away. More seriously, the crust of permafrost that binds the whole mountain range together is beginning to melt. The foundations of buildings, roads, mines, tunnels, cable-car stations and their supporting pylons are entirely dependent on the frozen solidity of this permafrost. As it steadily melts, the whole infrastructure of Alpine tourism is at risk, as well as a great many lives. All the most famous ski resorts in Europe are situated in valleys overlooked by mountains held together by permafrost. The high altitude permafrost zones lie on steep slopes above these settlements, roads, railways and valleys. Massive slope failures and landslides leading to blocked rivers, dammed lakes and catastrophic flooding will be especially pronounced in the Alps, which has such steep topography and high population levels.

Already climatologists have predicted the complete failure of the Scottish ski industry due to lack of snow within 20 years and the Alpine ski industry within 50 years. Many Alpine ski resorts would already be out of business but for the snow machines. Because

the best Alpine ski fields and lift systems are above the crucial permafrost altitude of 8,202 feet, it could spell the end of the ski industry as we know it, let alone the more esoteric world of mountaineering. When you consider that one sixth of Austria's gross domestic product comes from Alpine tourism, the effects of permafrost meltdown could be far more wide-ranging than just screwing up our winter sports holidays.

Climatologists, geologists and civil engineers from all over the world are making disturbingly similar reports. Glaciers in Antarctica are thinning twice as fast as they were a decade ago and this may destabilize the west Antarctic ice sheet, which, if melted, contains enough ice to raise sea levels by as much as five metres. A gigantic slab, the Larsen B ice shelf, has already fallen off its eastern side. Ablation rates of glaciers are speeding up all over the world. Retreating glaciers in the Peruvian Andes are adding huge amounts of melt water to already overburdened mountain lakes, greatly increasing the risk of dam collapses and alluvion avalanches. There are passes in the Cordillera Real in Bolivia that just 20 years ago were glaciated, yet now are rocky moraine fields. Only two weeks ago it was announced that Kilimanjaro in Tanzania would lose its year-round mantle of snow within 10 years. One-third of Kilimanjaro's ice field has disappeared in the past 12 years. In Iceland ice cores have shown that temperatures are at their highest since the arrival of the Vikings. The past two years have been the hottest since records began in 1822. At this rate of melting, all the ice will be gone in 200 years.

In the Arctic, a region of sea ice the size of France and Germany has melted away in the past 30 years and there are fears that the inflow of fresh water could possibly lead to the shutdown of the Gulf Stream, which bathes Europe in warm water. This would plunge Britain into winters that would be the equivalent of those in northern Canada. It wouldn't save the ski industry, not unless you like skiing in conditions of 40C below.

Boreholes sunk to monitor ice temperatures in Switzerland, Austria, the Dolomites, the German Alps, the Sierra Nevada and the Abisko mountains in Sweden have all recorded temperature increases of between 0.5 and 1C during the past 15 years. The ground temperature in the Alps has risen considerably over the past decade. As air temperatures have increased, the effects below ground are being magnified fivefold. A test borehole dug in Murtel in southern Switzerland has revealed that sub-surface soils have warmed by more than 1C since 1990. Increasing evaporation caused by warmer summers is also triggering thicker falls of winter snow, which insulate the soil and keep it warm. All in all it is not looking good.

Spotting the early signs of the imminent collapse of buildings and valleys may be possible. Mountains collapsing around your ears are a dead giveaway. Noticing that cable stations and other buildings have developed cracks should also be easy. But by then the horse has well and truly bolted. The abrupt disintegration of the Matterhorn, the Dru and the desertification of the north face of the Eiger may mean that some classic routes can no longer be climbed, but they are also the harbinger of far more gloomy events. Is this global warming? I don't know. It might just be a normal climatic cycle. Somehow, unlike President Bush, I don't think so. It may not be the day after tomorrow but it certainly looks as if it is all because of the day before yesterday.

**By Joe Simpson** *Printed with permission of Joe Simpson and The Independent, November 2005 - Independent/UK first published in The Independent. Joe Simpson is a climber and author of 'Touching The Void'. Brought to the KMC's attention by Norman Thyer.*

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# Club Trip Reports

## YMIR MT. (2398m. 7867') June 7

Today we were 12 plus two who came a little later catching up and making it 14. Good snow for going up made it an easy 3 hours to the summit. We went up through Ymir Bowl to the West Ymir Saddle which is not exactly West but is a local term for the westerly exposure. This has always baffled me a bit. Great views of our fantastic mountains. Also saw two mountain bluebirds, millions of ladybugs and a cornice melting of a ridge to make a minor avalanche. Fun in the snow on the quick trip down through the bowl made for another K.M.C. day with friends and family (for me the family part.)  
Mary Woodward.

## MT. STANLEY (2371m. 7779') June 14

We met at the Playmore meeting place for what looked like would be a rainy day of outdoorsmanship. Using 2 vehicles we made our way up the Koch Cr. Rd, then turned south on Grizzly Cr FSR. Another 5km brought us to the Greasybill FSR which we followed for 8 km. All these roads were in very good condition. We drove Greasybill FSR to within 1/2 km of its terminus. From here we headed SE (our calculated position for a straight line to Mt Stanley) through a recent clear-cut into the basin above us. We worked our way on a long steep snow path to the top of this ridge. The clouds lifted enough so that we could see Mt Stanley a short distance straight ahead. We could also see the usual eastern approach and Grizzly Cr FSR from here. It was obvious that we had better climb the small bump to the right and try a western ascent along the ridge rather than descend down to the nice lake in the valley below (and trying for the mountain's far off eastern slope). This was a pleasant ridgewalk, unfortunately in very cloudy skies (the temperature and no-rain was accommodating). The "bump", which we knew we might have to scramble up, began looking more ominous the closer we got. The decision to go up it as far as we could was made with everyone realizing we might have to backtrack and go counterclockwise around the mountains lower slope. With the excitement and adrenaline associated with scrambling up craggy bumps, we eventually made it up the "bump". From here it was a short down and up walk on snow and shale to the top of Mt Stanley. During our lunch in the clouds, an incessant rain began. This continued for the rest of the day...and, was probably the same downpour that caused the flooding in Nelson. We placed a register and then decided to go clockwise around the lower slopes of the previously mentioned bump. This turned out to be a very good choice as the travel was easy and very quick on both bare sidehill and snow. We retraced our path once back upon the ridge and enjoyed some good glissading down to the cars. We noticed fresh truck tracks where we had parked our vehicles. The six drowned, but warm and smiling rats were Jan Mickelthwaite, Shannon Naylor, Gene Van Dyke, Jill Watson, Mary Woodward and Steven Miros. These good roads seem to open up some very good exploration possibilities, both skiing and hiking, of what appears to be readily accessible peaks in this range.

## MT. DOLLY VARDEN (2569m. 8428') June 18

Seven of us met at Rosebery at 7:30 and continued up the road to Alps Alturas in 2 vehicles. The road is deteriorating but still passable after several stops to remove rocks and trees. I guess we were the first group up this year. It is definitely a 4X4 with clearance road.

We started hiking at 9:15 and got to the east (higher) summit at 11:30. I had been considering going up the steep gully east of the summit (from the lakes between Marten and Dolly Varden) but this wasn't enthusiastically received so we just went up and down the direct route. The hiking involved lots of walking on snow and then a nice ridge walk to the summit. Unfortunately the register was very wet. The weather was threatening all day but we had lots of sunshine and no rain.

Thanks to the following cheerful and fit hikers for joining me:

Lou Chioccarello, Vicki Hart, Ted Ibrahim, Hanspeter Korn, Shannon Naylor, and Delia Roberts.  
Bill Sones, trip initiator

## DOMINION MTN. (2210m. 7250') June 21

Four of us met at Porto Rico Rd between Nelson and Ymir. We drove up this road to the junction for going to Lost Lake. The high flowing creek made us park our vehicles at this point and walk the road (Hopefully after spring runoff this will be passable as it adds about 2km to the walk. The road after the creek was still in very good condition up to the junction for Huckleberry Hut). We hit snow just before Barrett Lake. Two separate ATVs caught up to us but could not make it to the cabin. The lake was ice covered. We paused to inspect the cabin and noted in its register that 2 snowshoers had passed through the previous day doing the Bonnington Traverse.

We chose to head for Dominion Mtn by going counterclockwise to the other side of the lake with a continual elevation gain. This route quickly put us just below the summit on its north side from where we had a very easy scramble to the top. What a surprise! Shannon Naylor, another KMC'er was having her lunch on the summit (Shannon had climbed Cabin Peak from near Huckleberry Hut and walked the ridge over to Dominion. She decided to continue the Ridge over to Empire Peak and Commonwealth Mtn.)

Everyone enjoyed the vistas. After a comfortable lunch we continued down the mountain's east ridge and picked a steep snowless slope for our descent. From here we walked the bumps towards far off Cabin Peak. I suspect everyone questioned the time it was going to take us. It was however the first day of summer and thereby everyone felt making the longest day of it wasn't such a bad idea. After enjoying the views on Cabin Peak we decided it best to avoid the mother grizzly and cubs that Shannon had mentioned seeing and followed the opened south ridge down to the road, past the old mine site and then walked by Huckleberry Hut. Someone had taken a lot of effort to slash brush on a large part of this trail. The bridge across Barrett Cr. is still impassable for all except ATVs. We arrived back at the vehicles at 6pm. The trip took 4 hours up and 5 down. Next time I think it'll be straight to the mountain and back by the same route, unless we're on skis.

We were Ross Bates, Maurice De St Jorre, Bryan Reid, Al Sheppard, Gene Van Dyck, Jill Watson, Eliane & Steven Miros

## MT. FISHER (2843m. 9327') June 27-28

A very, very hot sunny day and more in the forecast was the setting as we met at the Hitching Post in Nelson prior to departing for Cranbrook. We drove in 2 heavily loaded vehicles and except for a vapor lock near the Salmo-Creston summit, the drive went well. Dinner was had on "the strip" in Cranbrook. Most dining places apparently close at 8pm, which is when we arrived. Fast food seemed to be the order of the day. Ugg!!!

After dinner we headed out of town. At Fort Steele we turned right on Wardner- Ft. Steele Rd. and followed it for 2.2km. to the Mause Creek Road. We turned left onto this and camped in several tents. Mt Fisher was looming off to the east. The camp had the most horrendous cloud of mosquitoes hovering about and after a couple hundred bites everyone fell asleep in the heat with a planned wakeup of 5:30am.

At 4:30am, everyone slowly came awake due to someone-without a watch- quietly asking if it was 5:30 yet. We were fed, packed and off before 6. The earlier start apparently suited everyone. The 8 kms up to the trailhead was on a bumpy but good road (a high clearance vehicle is recommended). The apparently popular trail starts off as a well marked B.C. Forestry trail (There is some room for car camping at the trailhead and a creek a short distance away).

The trail is very steep and switchbacks up along a creek and we were all happy to have gotten an early start before the sun hit. We assumed the water was not safe to drink and therefore packed lots of it even though the creek was flowing strong. Everyone probably had second thoughts about it when the beautiful waterfall appeared on the first bench. The trail climbs steeply around and above this 100+m waterfall to a cirque with a very small but pleasant meadow. From here the route to the summit becomes evident (assuming of course you have the correct summit in mind, which Hamish and Ray did). We worked our way straight ahead to the back of the basin and then scrambled up the steep loose scree slope that ended at a col on the southeast flank of Mt. Fisher. It was relatively easy scrambling, with special attention to not knock material down on the others. A very strong wind blowing at the col cooled everyone off. The views began to open up to the east and south. From the col there is a rough cairn-marked steep path to the summit (there are 2-3 paths to follow but all essentially meet up at various times). No exposure, but precipice on both sides. Near the top pitch there is one boulder to scurry around/over and then the comfortable summit.

What a great view of the Rocky Mtn Trench, the Purcells and the Rocky Mtns!!! Everyone was very impressed. There is a large summit register to sign and we were all surprised to see that this was Hamish's 20<sup>th</sup> time, yes 20<sup>th</sup>, time to the summit. It was very easy to see why he came so often.

After a long lunch at the top we slowly/reluctantly worked our way down the mountain. Every so often enjoying the vistas with a rest break. The heat on the lower portion of the trail combined with its steepness made for some very sore feet. We arrived at the cars at 2pm and stopped in Cranbrook for refreshments. We were back in Nelson at 6pm.

The group: David Cunningham, Steven Miros (narrator), Shannon Naylor, Ray Newmar, Gene Van Dyck, and trip initiator Hamish Mutch.

## OUTLOOK MTN. (2591m. 8501') and GLORY BASIN CIRCUIT, July 5

Outlook Mountain is located in the southern part of Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park. Other peaks in the vicinity are Mt. John Carter and Sunset Mtn. These three mountains enclose the south end of Glory Basin. Glory Basin is a broad north sloping alpine valley, its north end terminating at Sapphire Lakes and Lemon Pass.

On Wednesday morning, the group of eight met at the Kokanee Glacier Road and proceeded to the trailhead at Gibson Lake. Starting from the trailhead at 8:15am, the trail was followed to the south end of Kokanee Lake. At the outhouse we left the trail and ascended the east shoulder of Mt. John Carter. At approximately 8100' elevation the group contoured around the west flank of Mt. John Carter to reach a saddle below Outlook Mtn. A short walk on bare rock led to the summit at 8501'; it was 12:00 noon.

An enjoyable lunch on top was enhanced by good views in all directions. Peaks were identified and new adventures planned. Ted checked out possible routes to link up with the West Fork Trail he and Robin Lidstone are working on. We departed the summit at 12:45pm and descended to the pass between Outlook Mtn. and Sunset Mtn. Four of the group went up Sunset Mtn. (8850") then rejoined the others in Glory Basin. Glory Basin was descended to Sapphire Lakes (fast travel on firm snow), then out to Kokanee Pass via Outlook Creek. At Kokanee Pass all remaining food was consumed before the final haul out to Gibson Lake. There was much talk about great pasta feeds at the Colander Restaurant as we pound our way down the trail.

We were out at 5:45pm, thus ending a fine 9 ½ hour day in the mountains. The group consisted of: Ted Ibrahim, Caroline LaFace, Francois Miros, Steven Miros, Gudrun Rieter, Jill Watson, Mary Woodward, and Gene Van Dyck, coordinator.

## MT. JOHN CARTER (2610 m.) July 12

Only four people showed up for this hike even though conditions were much cooler than usual, but possible showers were forecast. We set off from Gibson Lake at about 8:10am and reached Kokanee Lake by about 9:20am. We then left the trail near the toilet going through the fairly open bush to the left of the trail and of the cliffs. We turned right up the first gully and then left above the gully aiming for the ridge on the right of Mt. John Carter. Much of the climb to the ridge was on snow. On reaching the ridge we then aimed straight for Mt. John Carter going over the bump that precedes it. We reached the top at about 11:45am and relaxed for lunch. So far conditions had been ideal for hiking with high cloud and cool temperatures. A little after noon we noticed rain was falling over the Vahallas. We decided that we should start our return quickly, taking the most direct route down. We had a few drops of rain on the way back to Kokanee Lake, but then the rain clouds passed us by. We were Caroline LaFace, Peter Tchir, Ray Neumar and coordinator, Ted Ibrahim.

## SELKIRK AND IDAHO PEAKS, July 26

We met at 6am at the Slocan Junction and arrived at the lower Idaho Peak parking lot at about 8am. The flowers and the sun were bright around us as we moved quickly to Selkirk

Peak so we could make most of the climb in the shade. We were on top (2324m.) by 10:30am and after a snack headed for Idaho Peak (2273m.). The flowers on the north slopes were at their finest east of the upper parking lot and significantly diminished as we approached Idaho Peak.

We were Kay Medland, Nancy Rennie, and coordinator Ed Beynon.

## MT. RINDA - THEN AND NOW

Then was **Sept. 2, 1956**. A somewhat younger Bob Dean left his car at the Little Slocan Lake for his first ever Kootenay hike, going directly up through the bush on the east side of Mt. Rinda (**2499m. 8199'**) and eventually arriving at the summit. Finding no water, and only a stunning view of the entire southern Valhalla range, untrammelled by any sign of human activity, he decided to head straight down to the lush green meadows of slide alder and the tinkling stream of roadless Hoder Creek.

Over a day later he made it back to his car. Two days after that, he repeated the whole trip to recover his driver's license and a \$5 bill he had inadvertently left at his bivouac site.

Now was **Aug. 5, 2006**. Bob, Gene Van Dyck and myself, drove 6 kms up the Hoder Creek FSR from the Little Slocan Lakes, turned off to the right up the new Gasga Creek FSR, and were transported effortlessly to about 5100 ft. We then strolled leisurely through park like surroundings to a pleasant scramble up the south ridge of Rinda, arriving at the notch just east of the summit in 2¾ hours. The notch is just one move of fourth class which was soon overcome. We spent an hour on the summit in brilliant sunshine, gazing at the panorama of the Valhallas, before returning to the truck in about 2 hours.

Many things have changed over the past 50 years, but it still remains the best viewpoint to see the south end of the Valhalla Range.

Judging from the flagging in the bush above the Gasga FSR, it will apparently end up at least at 6000 ft. making the summit of Rinda no more than a 2 hour hike from the road head. Fortunately, the west ridge of Rinda stretches on for at least 8 kms past the summit, all of which is above tree line. It is an excellent ridge walk, which could be turned into a circuit ending either at Drinnon Pass or in the south Fork of Bannockburn Creek.

Maurice de St. Jorre

## INSECT PEAK, (2463m. 8081') August 6

Seven of us hiked up the Blue Grouse Basin trail, which still has/had windfalls across it and then up between Hampshire Mountain and Insect Peak finishing up on the Insect Peak ridge. Four of the party went over towards Hampshire - just to take a look. On the return we went down into the basin and back down the trail. No one had a camera.

Jenny Baillie, Bob Dean, Caroline LaFace, Ray Neumar, Natasha Tam, Gene Van Dyck, Jill Watson.

## TEXAS PEAK, (2450m. 8050') August 16

Six met in Nelson and drove via Kaslo to Retallack. From there we continued towards the Reco Mountain col but found the steep section of the road too rough for the truck. Leaving the

trucks below that section we followed the road nearly to the col and then climbed up to the ridge.

From there we hiked over two minor humps arriving at the summit of Texas Peak in a little under 2½ hours. We returned via a different route

past a cabin and back to the vehicles. There were several cameras in the party.

Rob Dean, Don Harasym, Shannon Naylor, Gene Van Dyck, Jill Watson, Mary Woodward.



# Mountain School Courses Reports

## ROCK SKILLS WORKSHOP:

On May 21, seven of us – Joanne Stinson, Bryan Reid, Nicole Carlson, Dave Jack, Caroline LaFace, Robyn Brundage, and myself – had the good fortune to take part in a two-day rock climbing course with instructor extraordinaire Laura Adams, assisted by Scott Meyers. Despite having to abandon the Castlegar Bluffs half way through the first day because of torrential rain, we still managed over the weekend to learn about setting up anchors, gear and gear placement, rappelling, belaying, communicating, and climbing. There was an emphasis throughout on safety, skill development, the rationale for certain practices, and of course, fun. Both Laura and Scott were extremely knowledgeable, positive, patient, and skilled. All of us, regardless of our ability, finished the weekend more solid in our knowledge of all aspects of climbing and enthusiastic to do more of the sport as well as with a whole new list of climbing buddies. The make-up half-day class later in the summer at Slocan was just icing on the cake!  
Marilyn Nelson.

## LEARN TO LEAD:

Two people, Dave Jack and Linda Johannson, took this one day course at Slocan Bluffs where climbing on traditional gear was covered under the tutelage of Laura Adams.

# Other Trip Reports

*These reports are from club members, dates and destinations are not on the club schedule.*

## TAJUMULCO, May 2005

The group was set to meet at 4:30am., a desperate hour in any time zone. Fortunately the meeting place was only twenty feet from my room at the Casa Argentina Hostel, in Quetzaltenango (Xela for short), enabling me to sleep until a leisurely 4:20. The reason for this early morning ordeal was to climb Tajumulco, a 13,840' (4220m) volcano, the highest point in Guatemala, and also of Central America. Lonely Planet describes the trip as "a challenging two-day hike from Xela", which says it all.

We were a group of nine – two gringo guides, six gringo clients and one young indigeno apprentice. It had been a long while since my last visit to Guatemala, when we had spent about 10 days there without seeing any other foreigners. On this trip, one of my strongest impressions was of wall-to-wall gringos. About the only place you didn't see one was in the shower, and then there was often someone outside waiting their turn. Fortunately these young people are usually excellent company, and our hiking group was no exception.

I had already met two of them, Jenny and Emmanuel of Toronto, at the Cuauhtemoc/La Mesilla border crossing from Mexico, several days earlier. It was Jenny's first visit to rural Latin America, and for her every day (every hour) was a revelation. Emmanuel on the other hand had previously lived in Xela for many months, and by coincidence had also worked as a guide for Quetzaltrékkers, the group which was organizing today's hike. It had been a pleasant surprise to find that they also planned to climb Tajumulco, and we had agreed to go together. One of the other hikers was an Israeli who had recently completed two years of military service. Can you say fit? Strong? He showed us how to put on a backpack Israeli-army-style. Place the backpack (not daypack) in front of you, with the back facing away. Grab the pack with both hands and lift it straight over your head, while sliding your arms through the straps. Try it sometime, preferably with an empty pack, and not in the living room. Guaranteed to impress members of the opposite sex. I'm still practicing.

We piled into the back of a pick-up truck and drove to the 2<sup>nd</sup> class bus depot, Terminal Minerva. Here we boarded a "chicken bus", and headed to San Marcos, where we paused for an overdue breakfast and a change of bus. Nowadays chicken bus is something of a misnomer as chickens and goats are no longer allowed in the bus—they must now ride on the roof. The vast majority of these buses are old Bluebird school buses, made in Canada, and still sporting the bluebird logo on either side. The original seats, designed for three elementary or two high school students somehow contain four of the diminutive locals. The aisles are jammed with bags, baskets and more passengers wedged tightly together, oblivious to the "No Standees" sign in English, at the front of the bus. A hundred or more passengers is not uncommon, which makes for slow progress uphill. One of our hikers was claustrophobic and she found the journey very difficult.

The second bus dropped us at Tajumulco Tuichan, two sorry-looking buildings in a sorry-looking meadow, at around 9,000 feet. We started hiking at 10:30. Quetzaltrékkers lends you all of the basics such as sleeping bag, sweater, parka, toque, gloves and poncho, since the average tourist in these parts doesn't normally travel with any of these items. In addition everyone had some of the group food, a share of the group stoves, tents and tarps, and one and a half gallons of water. This was my first hike of the year, and the prospect of a 4,000; hike to camp, with an overnight pack and 15 pounds of \*\*\*water was a little daunting. Many years of travel by man and beast had worn a deep and obvious trail. Under grey skies we hiked past primitive fields and through grassy meadows before reaching an open park-like coniferous forest, at around 10,000 feet.

After 3 hours of slow but steady uphill plodding, we stopped for lunch. I was glad to learn that we had passed the halfway point. Almost immediately it began to rain, heavy

torrential rain. "This won't last long," I thought as we rigged a couple of tarps, "Tropical rainstorms never do". When we could prolong lunch no longer it was still raining hard, so we rolled up the tarps and donned our heavy-duty ponchos. As we slopped along, the rain changed to hail, with a background of thunder and lightning. The trail had now become a small creek and everyone had cold and wet feet. I tried to escape to a "happy place" by pretending that I was splashing in the warm surf on one of the long sandy beaches south of Tulum, but reality prevailed. We reached our 13,000' campsite at 3:30 after a reasonable five hours. Since it was still raining we hung the tarps again, and stashed our packs under them. My borrowed poncho was working well, and I was still fairly dry except for my feet, which were now quite numb. After setting up the tents I grabbed my sleeping bag, and hunkered down to warm up my feet, which took several hours. At one point Emmanuel passed cups of soup in to us, and later hot tea. Some people are amazing! If it had been up to me it would have been cold water and bread. Around 8 o'clock the rain stopped, and people began to doze off.

We were up again at 4. The plan was to hike the final 800 feet to the rim of the volcano, and watch the sunrise. It was dark and foggy when we set off, which did not bode well. The trail up the final cone was steeper and less distinct than yesterday, and flashlights were handy. We reached the summit at 5:30, where I wore my toque, gloves and everything else, as we waited for the sunrise. Fat chance! In the fog I could hardly make out the other hikers. After a while even the most optimistic abandoned hope and we hiked around the rim of the caldera, and down to camp by a different trail. We were back at the road by 11:30, just before the rain started, and in Xela again at 5, where it was still raining. And all that \*\*\* water we carried up? We dumped most of it!

Quetzaltrékkers is an excellent non-profit group, which is run by unpaid volunteers. They offer several hikes, some as long as 5 days, and also some local rock climbing. Proceeds are used to fund a free school and a dormitory for street children. Another reason to hike with this group is that it has become too dangerous to hike alone or even in small groups, due to the existence of machete wielding banditos. Although the creation of the Tourist Police [seriously!] has made some difference, it is still unwise to hike up the volcanoes near Antigua, or even between the villages which surround Lake Atitlan, once popular hiking destinations. Quetzaltrékkers are located at the back of the Casa Argentina Hostel (also recommended), on Diagonal Street, in Xela. You can hike safely, meet some fun people and support a good cause, all at the same time. Such a deal. Hamish Mutch.

## **A WANDER UP RINDA, (2499m. 8199'), June 17**

On a recent jaunt up Mt Heimdal in the Valhallas, I spied a new logging road, apparently still under construction, on the southwest slopes of Mt Rinda. As they didn't appear to be hauling yet, it seemed like an opportune time to avail ourselves of said new road and make an attempt on the lofty Mt Rinda.

So it was, on June 17, 2006 that Sandra, Delia Roberts, Kumo, and I found ourselves bumping our way up the newly extended Gasga FSR. The road was still pretty rough and bumpy, but we were able to drive to km 3.2, where the road was

blocked by an excavator – which wasn't a big deal, as the road was too soft to continue driving anyway (~1375 m). We shouldered our packs and followed the remainder of the incipient road, a distance of less than a km, to its end near the south ridge of Rinda at around 1520 m.

Under increasingly threatening skies (it was mid-June, after all) we made our way up the through the surprisingly open forest of the south ridge until we broke out of the trees and gained the long summit ridge of Rinda. There was very little snow about as we continued along the undulating ridge to the final exciting step across a chasm to the summit block – four hours from the truck.

While we were lucky that despite all the showers around, we were only hit with a short graupel blast, the anticipated views of the Mulvey Group were hindered by the clouds hiding many of the peaks – but on a sunny day, Mt Rinda would provide an exceptional viewpoint.

Notes:

- The Gasga FSR branches off the Hoder Creek road at km 5.8.
- We found all manner of survey string and flagging high on southwest slopes of Rinda (there appears to be beetle damage high on the south and southeast slopes) and I suspect that in a couple years it may be possible to drive to 2000 m, or possibly higher.

Doug Brown

## SUMMIT PK. (2272 m., 7454'), June 22

Map: Nakusp 82K/4 1:50 000

Summit Peak, in the Nakusp Range, is located above Summit Lake on Highway 6 and is visible from the highway. It provides excellent views of Nakusp, Upper Arrow Lake, and a portion of Slocan Lake. On a sunny June day, Leah Zoobkoff and I made a trip to this easy, walk-up summit. As is often the case, road access is the key, so here it is. Approaching from the south, turn right off Hwy.6 at the signed Wilson Lake road, about 9 km. north of Summit Lake Provincial Park. Re-set your odometer, pass alongside Box Lake lumberyard, and make the following turns: km. 3.5 left (signed); km. 5.3 right; km. 6.5 right; km. 7.5 left; km. 8.1 left; km. 9.7 left; km. 10.9 right. The last turning takes you onto the unsigned Harlow Creek road. Drive a further 4 km. up this road to a point where it bends left and crosses the creek. Just before the crossing, note a very bad road on the right. This is your access to Summit Peak. At this point, you are at GR 570-609, 4810'. Access from Highway 6 is two wheel drive.

Starting on foot at 10:05, Leah and I followed this spur road, which deteriorates into a watercourse and then becomes an ATV track/trail. In about 90 min., we reached a frozen lake at 6540' (559-590), where the trail ends. Continuing west on snow and over alps, we reached the north end of our peak's north-south ridge at 551-591 and hiked along the easy ridge crest to the summit at the south end by 1:10 pm. After savouring views of the Gold Range, Mt. Fosthall, the Pinnacles, and all of the Goat Range, we re-traced our steps to the truck in just under two hours for a 5 hr. 50 min. day. There are opportunities for kilometers of walking along the open ridge line east of Summit Peak.

Kim Kratky

## MONICA GLACIER-NORTH BUTTRESS, June 30-July 02

On June 30 Hamish Mutch and I walked into Monica Meadows, or - more accurately - we did our annual beast of burden impersonation [aka light climbing packs]. It was hot, humid and mosquitoes had a field day. Next day we walked to Starbird Pass and up the Monica Glacier to North Buttress of Mt. Monica and were able to climb a new route up the Buttress. It went all the way up to the summit on steep quartzite. Rock was solid where it was vertical and fairly dirty/ messy where it was not so steep, thus we kept roped up. The route went at 12 [60 m rope] pitches of class 4 to middle class 5. The descent was longer and scarier than expected. We were expecting to be down fairly quickly, however, the snow - it was by then a late afternoon on a rather hot summer day - was isothermal, steep and scary. All in all it was a long 15-hour day.

PS: The summit register showed about one ascent every two years. Hamish and I have by now climbed Monica via 4 different routes [2 of them new routes] and don't have to go back, however, it seems a worthwhile objective for a KMC trip. It might be a good idea to fly our flag in territory coveted by U. Oberti [he of Mumbo Jumbo "fame"], so to speak. Steven Horvath

## FIREWORKS ON GLADSHEIM (2830m. 9285')

Armed with a near perfect weather forecast, a photo of the entrance to the mythical Gladshiem "tunnel", and mountains of rock climbing gear, Sandra, René LeBel, and I started up the Gimli trail at 10:00 on Sunday July 2, 2006. We were headed for a couple nights in Mulvey Basin with our sights on Gladshiem (my last Mulvey peak) and Asgard (which, assuming success on Gladshiem, would be Sandy's last Mulvey peak).

The big pack combined with high humidity and a beating sun soon had me feeling like I'd wet myself, but I more-or-less kept my whining to myself and soldiered on. As we neared treeline, we began to hear some very unwelcome rumbling coming from ... you guessed it, Mulvey Basin. As the storm over the basin intensified, we slowly made our way around Gimli waiting for the storm to move off. But on this day, Thor was not to be so accommodating. By the time we rounded the south ridge of Gimli, the storm was really getting cranked up, and had been stationary for two hours! To add insult to injury, we could see that the only cloud in the whole region was the big, black, and flashing one that was pummeling Gladshiem. Fast moving cloud streamers revealed that the storm sucking energy and moisture from adjacent valleys. About the time we started across the talus field approach to the Gimli-Niselheim col, Thor noticed our intrusion, and decided it would be fun to pummel us with snow, hail, and rain. I was starting to feel like the character in the Dirk Gently novels who has a rain cloud follow him around. If I'd had a sat phone, I would have pushed that Environment Canada speed dial button to let them know what I thought of their forecast.

Once we reached the col, the lashing of hail was reaching a crescendo, so the three of us took shelter, meager as it was, in a wee alcove about big enough for my dog. Luckily my partners couldn't hear my whining over the roar of the raging storm.

After about 20 minutes, Thor decided to go for pizza, and the storm finally moved off after about three hours stationary over Mulvey Basin. René was first back up to the col, and he promptly exclaimed “Wow, a winter wonderland!” “Oh good”, I thought. He was right though, as Gladshiem was sporting a serious coat of fresh hail. Again I wished for the hotline to Environment Canada. Not to be deterred, we descended the very handy ledge to the snow of Mulvey Basin, wondering if our climb of Gladshiem the following day would rate M4 instead of the 5.0 we were expecting.

The snow in the basin was in very good shape, so we made good time down to camp north of the big Mulvey Lake at around 7000'. While most of the basin was snow covered, we were lucky enough to find a large dry area to camp on with easy access to water. While the sun was out, the air was cool and a steady katabatic wind was blowing, as it would constantly for the next two days. As the temperature plummeted that evening, Sandy and I teased René mercilessly as he had opted to leave his crampons at home.

I convinced the others that a 6:00 wakeup was plenty early enough – how long could it take? – so we didn't head off until 7:00 the next morning under sunny skies and warm temperatures. We quickly made our way down to the next lake, and then back up meadow to the “West Ridge Gully”, a very handy ramp that takes a very direct path for 1500 vertical feet to a point high on the west ridge of Gladshiem. Sandy kicked steps for the first section and then it was my turn. René used the “Oh I'd kick steps if only I had brought my crampons” excuse ... the gully seemed to go on endlessly in variable snow conditions and hail up to 20-30 cm deep. I thought I must be hallucinating as the ridgeline looked about 30 m away for the last half hour, but finally we did top out on the west ridge about 1:45 after we left camp.

The next section was pleasant class 3 and 4 scrambling along the undulating west ridge, although we had to watch for slimy lichen near the piles of hail that were melting in the sun. After maybe a half hour of scrambling it came time to don the rock shoes and pull out the rope. I got the first pitch that started from a large ledge on the south side a little down from the ridgeline. I started up a steep vertical crack that was too wide for a fist jam, but just right for a forearm ... hmmm seemed like a “Kootenay 5.0” as general consensus was that a modern 5.5 was appropriate. After the first tricky bit, I quickly ran out 35 m over fourth class terrain and set up a belay station right on the ridgecrest.

I handed René the sharp end, and he immediately realized my genius – his pitch looked much harder than mine. He wound his way up steep bulges on the ridgecrest until even he thought it looked too hard to continue that way. Following the directions in the Black Book, he made a descending and very airy, although not technically difficult, traverse on the south side. Eventually he made a short climb back up to the base of steep wall. Again, it seemed about a modern 5.5. By now, our sunny skies were much less sunny, and in fact it was looking like another electrical storm was only a question of “when” not “if”. With the deteriorating weather in mind, I chose to leave a chock placed at the belay as it was apparently going to take some fussing to get it out; we hoped to pick it up on the way back if it wasn't buzzing.

Whilst Sandy and René sorted the rack and rope at the top of pitch 2, I scrambled off in search of the mythical “tunnel”. After some easy scrambling up a chimney/cave/tunnel, I found myself on large ledge on the ridgecrest. A friend who had descended the route last summer had sent me a picture of a climber exiting the very deep tunnel/chimney, so feeling quite ridiculous, I stood around at 9000 feet on the west ridge of Gladshiem holding this photo in my outstretched arm trying to match the picture to the various cracks in the wall in front of me. And presto there it was! It didn't look particularly promising, but was a perfect match to the photo. I carried only the rope while René and Sandy had packs, so I tried not to laugh as they thrutched and grunted their way up the chimney come tunnel – which was actually quite interesting and fun for those without packs.

The tunnel pops out on the north side of the ridge, and as I'd been getting off so easy, it was unanimously agreed that it must be my lead again. After exiting the tunnel I headed straight up ledges to the ridgecrest again on easy ledges. Some third class terrain followed and then a tricky big step up (slimy) and Bob's Your Uncle, we were on the ridge top above all the fifth class climbing. When dry, the big step would probably be about 5.5, but harder for short folk; the rest of the pitch was low fifth at most.

We have heard many reports that significant rockfall has changed the west ridge of Gladshiem so that it is much harder than the rated 5.0. We saw no evidence of recent significant rockfall, so I don't think the rumours are true. I would say however, that by modern standards, the 5.0 rating is about 5 grades too low, and if you don't find your way to the tunnel, it would be much harder still.

The remainder of the distance to the top probably accounted for nearly half the length of the ridge, but we didn't need the rope, and so after 40 minutes of extremely pleasant class 3 and 4 scrambling (sometimes exposed) we were on the summit. We took a break for nourishment and fluids, rubbernecking all the while, but the building storms to the west encouraged us not to linger too long.

We quickly scrambled back to above the last tricky step-up of pitch 3 and did our first of four rappels. Rap 2 put us into the tunnel which we all down-climbed. After exiting the tunnel, it became clear that Thor wasn't done with us – the distant thunder wasn't sounding so distant anymore. When I threw the rope for our next rap, it crackled in a most unsettling manner and my hair, or what remains of it, starting standing on end. Suffice to say, we made haste and donated the stuck chock to the mountain gods. After René and I had finished rap 3 (which ended a maddeningly short distance away from our mountain boots and scrambling terrain), Sandy gave us what would become a familiar status report: “My ice axe is buzzing again!” I encouraged her to refrain from hurling the frightening thing off the mountain and continue down to us. After our fourth and final rap, we put away the rope and scurried off, taking care with the wet lichen, as it was raining and hailing.

The section of the ridge back to the top of the snow gully seemed much longer and more exposed than it did in the morning, but the static electricity kept us moving as fast as we could - whenever I lost sight of René I only had to listen for the arcing of the rock pro hanging on his harness to find him. We



did, however, make it to the top of the gully with all body parts intact – in fact, we arrived at the gully just as the storm passed off. What was a nasty grunt in the morning was a perfect ski slope in the afternoon, and we very quickly descended down to the meadow, and thence back to camp, arriving 10 hours after we'd left. Our timing was excellent, as shortly after arriving back at the tent, an impressive storm arrived and pounded the tent for 20 minutes. As the rain beat against the tent wall, I considered, with very mixed emotions, the fact that I had now climbed all the Mulvey Peaks.

The next morning we broke camp and grunted up to around the 8000' foot level on the south side of Asgard. We dumped our packs and nipped up the east side of Asgard. The views were splendid and the summit register full of entries from famous people. After we'd had our fill of the view, we returned to our packs and made our way back to the truck by the way we'd come in – this time Thor left us alone, although the skies were looking very threatening as we descended into the valley.

Summary of the roped pitches:

P1: Up short vertical crack to ridge, then 4<sup>th</sup> class, 35 m, 5.5.

P2: Up steep section of ridge, then airy descending traverse on south side, then short climb up to base of smooth wall. 40 m, 5.5.

Scramble up easy ground to ridgeline, then scramble up 3<sup>rd</sup> class chimney-come-tunnel exiting on north side.

P3: Exit tunnel, climb ledges on north side to ridgeline, follow ridgeline with one small step to belay, 5.5, 30 m.

Four raps on descent.

Doug Brown

### **PONTIAC PK. (2536m. 8320'), July 3**

Pontiac Peak was a fairly common club hike before an avalanche closed the road and Parks did not clear it.... about 5 to 7 years ago. We wanted to see whether the hike would still be feasible for a day hike, worthwhile, and the state of the road and trail.

Drive the road to Kokanee Park via the Woodbury entrance and travel to where you would branch off to Sunset Lake or to the Woodbury Hut /Silver Spray Hut trailhead and parking lot. Park here, being careful not to block any vehicle that wanted to travel to the Woodbury trailhead or wanted to try the Sunset Lake road. We tried, but turned back after a short distance and returned to the junction. The road is in bad repair and closed in by bush. A large deadfall also impedes progress not very far up the road. It's about 4 to 5 km. Hike up the road to the trailhead and about another 4-5 km to Sunset Lake on the trail. The trail is in fairly good condition because people still hike in to fish. Once at the lake, continue on the trail above the lake to near the end of the lake where the trail climbs to an old mine site. From here, look east...to a river of large rocks. Hike to these (about 150 feet) and start climbing up.

The best time to hike here would be in late June or early July when you could follow a snow line to the top of a saddle. When in doubt, stay slightly east or to your left to avoid bands of rock. At the saddle climb up about 100 to 150 feet to find a wide rock ledge that will lead you around an unnamed peak on your right (West). Follow this (about 20 minutes) until you are around this peak and ridge. You will see

Pontiac Peak straight ahead (Southwest). We stayed high and worked our way around lower peaks and climbed the remaining elevation to the peak. This year it would have been an advantage to have your ice axe and follow the snow to the peak. We started at about 9am and were out around 5pm. If the weather is good, the views are fantastic.

We were Dave Cunningham, Gene Van Dyck, Mary Woodward and myself, Ray Neumar.

### **MT. EVANS (2734 m., 8970') Map: St. Mary Lake 82F/9, July 11**

Mt. Evans, the second highest Purcell peak south of Gray Creek Pass, is located 9 km. southwest of St. Mary Lake and 15 km. east of Snowcrest Mtn. This peak appears in the index to the 1971 *Climber's Guide*, but not in the text. There is no reference in the subsequent edition. Despite the peak's seeming distance from Nelson, Sacha Kalabis, Leanne Lindsay, Kyle Ridge, and I scaled it from a car camp and still caught the 6:10 pm ferry from Kootenay Bay on the way home.

First, the road access. Drive the Gray Creek Pass "highway" to the junction with St. Mary River Road. Turn right onto this mainline and follow it 14 km. south and east to the east end of St. Mary Lake. Re-set your odometer; turn right onto Lakeside Road, and cross a wooden bridge over the St. Mary River. At 600 m., take the second right turning, the signed St. Mary/Hellroaring FSR. At 1.6 km., turn right onto the signed St. Mary/Meachen FSR. Stay on this for 15.7 km. from the St. Mary River road until you reach an unsigned road on the left just before the km. 14 sign (if you cross a bridge, you have gone too far). All driving has been 2WD to this point. Switch to 4WD LR and crawl up this unsigned Fiddler Creek road for 1.1 km till you encounter the signed Mt. Evans Trail head on the left. We should warn you that, although the grade is not steep and the roadbed is solid, it is so badly overgrown with alder that you can scarcely see your way. A scant 100' beyond the trailhead, the road miraculously clears and widens to yield good campsites and a turnaround spot. Bring your own water.

I discovered Mt. Evans and its superb trail through reading Janice Strong's excellent book *Mountain Footsteps*. Once again, her directions were accurate, and the outing well worthwhile. Starting at 6:10, we wended our way up the wide, well-graded trail from 4600' to the ruins of a cabin in the so-called Evans or Pollen Basin. After crossing a creek, we followed the track past two open-trench copper workings and up a gentle rise to the west to gain the west ridge of Mt. Evans at 7,200'. From this point the trail grew fainter as we followed the wide, gentle ridge through burns and some bushwhack terrain before reaching scree slopes. Staying on the narrowing ridge, we finished with 200' of good scrambling on solid granite to reach the summit (big cairn, no record) at 10:50 for a 4 hrs. 40 min. ascent. During our 50 min. stay on top in mild temperatures and under sunny skies, we easily identified Snowcrest, Haystack, White Grouse, and Loki. However, this new perspective was disorienting, and it was only after some time that we picked out the impressive snow peak to the right of Loki as Mt. Brennan. For the return, we re-traced our steps without incident in 3.5 hours, arriving at the truck soon after 3:00 pm. Mt. Evans Trail was built by Bill and Charlie Evans of Marysville, who mined and trapped in this basin, 1915-1940. If you enjoy a superb trail, attractive larch-studded terrain, a bit

of mining history, and a strenuous but technically easy outing to a major southern Purcells peak, this is the outing for you.

Kim Kratky

## EAST FACE OF MIDGARD, July 15

On a beautiful and sunny Saturday July 15, 2006, René LeBel and I climbed the East Face of Midgard Peak 34 years after Bert, Howie, and Peter first climbed it. For me, the day started with a couple hours of wind sprints trying, in vain, to keep up with Monsieur LeBel. We reached the Gimli bivouac site in 1:20 with me coughing up bits of lung as we stopped for a wee break, as I think René feared I was about to have a coronary. We continued around to the Gimli-Nisleheim col and descended a short distance down on the north side, from where we traversed to the Nisleheim-Midgard col. From the col we followed Midgard's SE ridge up for a bit before skirting around on a cairned ledge on the south side that delivered us to the base of scramble section of the SE ridge. Here we traversed north across moderate snow to under the middle-right of the east face.

The route was easy to find - the highest snow ended directly below a very obvious light-coloured left-facing corner in the middle-right of the face. We scrambled up a short corner that proved harder than it looked – René educated me in the fine art of dry-tooling – to a big ledge where we had some more food before roping up.

Seeing as René had the hardest leads of our last two climbs, I gave him the first lead this time as it looked easy. Beautifully clean slabs of wonderfully textured and decorated Valhalla gneiss led to the base of the aforementioned corner, which René climbed for 20 m to a belay stance under a big roof – the pitch was fun, but harder than I thought it had looked.

I took over the rack as I looked up at the roof overhead that had suddenly grown to an enormous size – and I seriously questioned my sense of fair play. René, the joker he is, told me to get a piece soon as he wasn't totally happy with his anchor. I suspect he just wanted to see me whimper (which usually takes far less than such a remark). Luckily for both of us, I did manage to quickly place a tri-cam on this hard to protect pitch. A few moves up to the base of the roof, and I was able to traverse left and pick up another left-facing corner. I climbed the enjoyable corner with rock that alternated between solid and compact, and a bit on the loose side, neither of which was conducive to good gear placements. It is amazing how a bit of a run-out can make 5.5 feel considerably harder. I called this the kaleidoscope pitch, as there was an amazing range of the colours in the rock; this was probably the first time I've climbed on pyrite. When the corner tilted to the right and began to fade into a gully-like feature, I moved right in the hope of finding some pro and maybe eventually a belay stance. With a little effort I was able to find both and brought René up.

The final pitch was enjoyable easy climbing on ledgy terrain, that surprised us both by ending right at the summit cairn. It was 2:20, so the trip from the truck had taken us 6:20. I felt a modern rating would probably bump the FA rating of 5.3 up a couple of grades. But I've been called a weenie more than once in the past.

We enjoyed an hour on top, studying Asgard trying to psyche ourselves up for another Howie route: the SW ridge. We started down the "3<sup>rd</sup> class" south ridge of Midgard, and as we began to scramble past several rappel stations, we started to

wonder if it had been premature to switch back to our mountain boots on the summit. We left the boots on, but did eventually rap a short exposed section using some tat that René had harvested higher up. Pretty stiff class 3, me thinks.

The rest of the journey back to the truck passed quickly and without incident. Another very fine day in the Valhallas. The blow-by-blow of the technical pitches:

**P1:** Start at large ledge a little above the highest snow that is reached by ascending a tricky left-facing corner (1 point of aid with the ice axe). Climb beautifully clean slabs to the base of the obvious left-facing corner in the centre-right of the face. Climb the corner to a reasonable station on a small ledge just below a large roof. 50m, 5.5.

**P2:** Ascend the corner to the roof, traverse left to pass the roof, and continue up the corner. Where the corner starts to fade into a gully-like feature, move a bit right for pro. Continue up a rib right of the gully to a large ledge and good station. 50 m, 5.5. Tricky pro.

**P3:** Ascend ledgy terrain directly to the summit cairn. 40 m, 5.2.

Doug Brown

## COOPER SPUR, 8500' (MT. HOOD), July 18

If you are ever traveling through the Columbia Gorge near Mt Hood, Oregon, and have a few hours to stretch your legs or de-energize the kids, try the relatively easy 6 mile round trip, 2500ft elevation gain hike to Cooper Spur on the side of 11,239 ft Mt Hood. It's definitely worth it.

From Hood River (on the I-84, 60 miles east of Portland) take Hwy 35 for 22 miles south to its junction with Cooper Spur Rd. Turn right on the road that leads to the Cooper Spur Ski Area (This section of road is surrounded by beautiful orchards) Drive 2.4 mi. to the Cloud Cap Rd. Continue straight toward Cloud Cap and Tilley Jane Campground. Drive 8 mi. up a bumpy dirt road to a junction where you turn right towards Cloud Cap. (The century old Cloud Cap was originally an Inn, but is now used as a rescue center). Another 0.6 mi. brings you to a forestry campground (Hood River Ranger District) and parking lot on the slopes of Mt Hood. You can either car camp or tent and drinking water is supplied by a spring above the campground. The trailhead is located at the back of the campground.

After a short distance of hiking one meets up with the 40 mi. loop trail called the Timberline Trail ( a short section of which is part of the Pacific Crest Trail) that encircles Mt Hood. A few hundred yards later you are above the treeline. The route to Cooper Spur is well marked and switchbacks gradually up the volcanic slope on a dirt/small scree (lava rock) path. There were some snow patches for us to cross. There are soon great close up views of Elliott Glacier and its crevasses on the right and the snow covered summits of Mt Adams, Mt Rainier and Mt St Helens to the north. Parts of the Columbia Gorge can also be seen. You pass the Cooper Spur refuge, one of several built in the 1930's around the mountain. The smell of sulfur emanates from the earth below and volcanic rubble is at your feet. Very different than what we're used to! Once on Cooper Spur you have a great view of several more volcanoes to the south. Besides being a great vantage point, Cooper Spur is also a camp for climbers attempting the not too far off summit of Mt Hood.

After a long and pleasant dinner in the setting sun we descended by almost the same route. Our only detouring was to get some great glissades to the dirt path far below. We returned to the truck in less than 3 hours total. Ice axes or ski poles would be recommended earlier in the season.

We were Eliane, Jean, Francois and Steven Miro.

## **GATES PEAK (2779m. 9117') AND BACK**

Paul and Scott Allen, Bert Port and Steven Horvath had a very pleasant trip to Gates peak [Gold range].

We flew in to a small lake north of Gates peak on **July 22**.

Next day we climbed Gates peak, both North and the Main Summits.

The next night we were treated to a most impressive electrical storm: the wind associated with it broke one of the poles in my tent and as we were hanging onto the remaining poles we noticed that they were outlined in green - electrical discharges. Following day Bert and I climbed an unnamed peak to south of us. As we were climbing we were treated to a puzzle - a helicopter was flying all over the place; it finally landed near summit of Gates [which by then had 4 people from the climbing camp sitting on it] and then took off and landed by their camp. The last day we walked out to Pingston Lake. It was a longish -12-hour-day that, as is often the case, ranged from sublime [lovely high alpine for first 4 hours] to ridiculous [trying to follow moose trails through thick slide alder].

Steven Horvath

## **SEVEN SUMMITS TRAIL, July 31**

The 31-km Seven Summits Trail starts at the Nancy Greene summit on Hwy 3B. It skirts Mt Lepsoe, Mt Plewman, Old Glory, Grey Mtn, Granite Mtn, Record Mtn, and Rock Nob ending at the Cascade Summit on the old Cascade Hwy near Rossland. The day started off on the cool side due to the heavy rains the previous night and remained pleasant throughout the day.

From the Nancy Greene Summit parking lot we were driven 4km up the gravel pit road (only one notable junction where you turn right) to the trailhead parking lot. The climb up Mt Lepsoe took considerable pushing. From the ridge some riding was possible up to and along the west shoulder of Mt Plewman. There was fresh snow in patches along the trail with various stages of blooming wildflowers. We had lunch just before dropping down to Unnecessary Ridge. The descent along the well-worn ridge trail required considerable braking as well as bouncing around or over loose rocks. This was the worst part of the trip and required some occasional dismounting. There has been considerable work on the bottom half of the Unnecessary Ridge Trail making this half an enjoyable bike descent. After Unnecessary Ridge we had the uphill bike-push along the west side of Grey Mtn. This part of the trail has also been improved over the past year making the pushing relatively easy. From the trail highpoint it was an easy downhill coast to Granite Mtn where we emerged at the top of the "Long Squaw" ski run. To make sure we met our ride home it was decided to go down the Long Squaw Ski run. This turned out probably more difficult than continuing the remainder of the Seven Summits Trail. It was a very steep and rough 7km downhill on a barely noticeable

ATV path. On skis this portion of the mountain doesn't look anywhere near as steep as it looks on bikes!

In total it took us approximately 4 hours to get to the Red Mountain Lodge. In less than another hour we were through the streets of Rossland, down the Wagon Road, and onto the highway into downtown Trail where Eliane picked us up. It probably would have taken another hour or two to climb Record Mtn and continue on down to the Cascade Hwy. I think walking the entire route using vehicles at both ends might be a good idea for next time. If you are biking and want to exit at Granite Mtn it is better to go down the "Southside Road." There was no water along the route.

We were Jean, Francois and Steven Miro

## **MT. ASSINIBOINE (3616m. 11864')**

Paul Allen, Lou Chioccarello and Steven Horvath (Narrator) climbed the FA route on Mt. Assiniboine. [Southwest face].

On Aug. 14 we drove to trailhead at start of Marvel Pass/Assiniboine creek trails. We walked in via Assiniboine Creek trail and after some 2 hours camped by Lunette Lake. On

**Aug. 15** we climbed Assiniboine - it was a long day as its summit is 6000 feet above the Lunette Lake. The climb took a bit longer than anticipated as the upper 1000 feet had snow, running water and sections of verglas. Also, the size of party made moving on what passes for rock in the Rockies a bit slower.

Still, after some 15 hours we reached our tents just as the night was definitely upon us.

While this route is not as popular as the north Ridge, it is of same difficulty - class 4, except in case of bad conditions - we roped up for one particularly wet and exposed short pitch. It is much easier to access, as one does not have to drive to Canmore and hump heavy packs over the horse trail to the lakes. And last, but not least, it is blissfully free of human presence. [We had the place to ourselves - not only more pleasant but infinitely safer than the more popular routes].

**DIRECTIONS TO TOAD MTN.** (Information provided by Ray Neumar)

The road to the trail head can be confusing because of all the new roads. The trail is fairly easy to follow since the work done by the club.

0 - Start of Giveout Crk just South of Nelson

1.7 km - left on Gold Crk Rd

2.15- Keep right

4 - Pass cabin (with tin roof)

4.8 - Turn left

7.3 - Right turn

10.3- Left turn

11.0 - Stay right

11.6 - Turn left at the old (small) mine building

12.1 - Go right

12.5 - Park. (See some old boilers below in ravine and old mine dump site) Straight ahead on the road is a Toad Mtn trail sign. Follow this until you come to a sign that shows you the cut trail.

## Self Interest is the Answer ?

Many people are critical of economics because it readily embraces selfishness, which in many circles is automatically equated with greed (which it is not).

Since self-interest is the best predictor of people's behavior, the question is how can people's self-interest be aligned in ways that benefit the environment (and humanity more generally). There are two paths, both of which fall under the heading of "enlightened self-interest".

First, apart from any notions of altruism, the more we can demonstrate that environmental problems adversely affect people's lives the more their self-interest will drive them to support progressive environmental policies. It is no coincidence that the environmental movement was born out of both people's direct experience with the adverse effects of air and water pollution and the loss of animals and habitats that they valued. On a global scale, the more we can demonstrate the links between poverty and environmental degradation and disease, the more people will come to recognize that it is in their self-interest to promote effective foreign aid and technology transfer or to ratify and enforce international environmental agreements. The key is widening the scope of people's self-interest ever wider.

The second way that self-interest can be beneficial to an environmental ethic is a little subtler and speaks more to the altruistic and emphatic side of our nature. There are many people who are motivated to protect the environment (or promote human rights or other progressive activities) because of a deep sense that it is the right thing to do. These are the type of people who if confronted with a situation where they had to risk bodily harm to save a fellow creature would do so not because of any desire for reward or material gain, but because they couldn't imagine not doing so. They have incorporated a sense of compassion and integrity into their conception of their self-interest to such a degree that they couldn't live with themselves if they didn't act in ways that reduced suffering in the world. This perhaps is the highest form of self-interest, but it is self-interest nonetheless, albeit a highly evolved form.

How to develop this consciousness in people has been the subject of some of the world's greatest thinkers for millennia. I don't claim to have much to add to what's already been written, but my hunch is that the more people can come into contact with the myriad animals, plants, and cultures that inhabit this planet, and at the same time, understand the links between certain actions and the suffering of these same beings that they have directly shared experiences with the sooner this most enlightened form of self interest will take root.

*J.S. in Environmental Economics*

## Law without a courtroom

What is environmental law? The first thought that comes to mind might be courtroom dramas – fun to curl up on your sofa and watch on TV at the end of a hard day perhaps, but hard to see where you personally might participate – we are not a litigation-hungry nation.

The reality is that the average person can use the law to champion the environment on a life-long basis and never set foot in a courtroom.

For example, you might see something environmentally damaging happening in your community.

Did you know that you can phone West Coast and talk to one of our lawyers? West Coast can help you identify the appropriate enforcement authorities, give you information about making your voice heard effectively in the decision-making process or find out what legal options exist. And it's a free service.

You might sense that something really important could be at stake – and you should find out more.

Did you know that West Coast has over 275 publications available online to help you understand some of the key environmental challenges facing us? Whether you are a landowner who finds out that the subsurface rights to your land have been sold by the BC government (When the Landman Comes Knocking), want to protect a piece of environmentally significant land with a conservation covenant (Greening your Title), are interested in knowing how your local government can make your community more sustainable (Smart Bylaws Guide) and much more, West Coast can help you get informed.

You might feel that the issue is too important for you to walk away, but you need some support to become the environmental champion your community needs.

Did you know that if you need more in-depth legal support you can apply to West Coast's Environmental Dispute Resolution Fund to cover the costs of a legal or technical expert?

You might need a full legal analysis of available options, or an expert opinion on the long term environmental implications of the decision you wish to challenge, or help preparing a submission to a review board (or you might even need somebody to take your case to court for you). You can get support from West Coast's EDRF.

And, because the reality is, bad things can happen to a good environment – and be totally within the law – did you know that West Coast also works to reform our laws so that they stop the bad and reward the good? There's a whole lot more to environmental law than the courtroom.

Shoni Field (West Coast Environmental Law)