

December 2020

# KMC Newsletter

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*The Mountains are  
Calling and I Must Go  
– John Muir*

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## A Note From the Editor:



So much to talk about – so little time. No – scratch that – way too much time: time that should be spent hiking, climbing or skiing in the mountains and what am I doing? Writing! Why? Like everything else in 2020, I blame it on Covid – and that’s all I’m going to say about that.

No – wait – I have a bit more to say about that. One of the secrets to life is knowing who to blame (words of wisdom by moi). In this case, I blame Covid for the shortness of this newsletter, which usually consists of page after page of scintillating trip reports. We have a few, but far below our rather high standards. Following protocol, we put a cease-and-desist order on ourselves for organized trips – the cancellations, postponements, and re-schedulings were epic.

We can only hope for better things in the New Year – at least as far as trips are concerned.

And that leads me to my next subject: the newsletter format. Tim Clinton has done the most amazing, spectacular, and other hyperbolically-descriptive job with it for ages. Alas, he has handed the job over to me, so you’ll have to put up with a rather different look. The idea remains the same: lots of trip reports and other information the club might be interested in. But...

When I said *yes* to doing the job, I warned the powers that be that I was going to do it my way. “Sure,” they said. “No problem. Do anything you want!” Thus proving how desperate they were for someone to take over.

The first and most noticeable change is the format: one page instead of columns. I thought it might make the photos pop more. And besides, it’s easier. Yes, I am all about ease. The second thing you will notice is an editorial at the top of each issue; you are reading it as we speak. The purpose of this editorial is to sum up activities, write things of interest and, mostly, to allow me to spout drivel – as though I don’t do enough of that already.

Speaking of drivel, I welcome letters to the editor, comments, information, suggestions, and hot tips. I’m not saying I’ll do anything with them – just that you can send them: [goodyniosi@gmail.com](mailto:goodyniosi@gmail.com).

Here’s hoping for a much longer newsletter in the spring. Let’s get out there and tromp, shred, and schuss! Happy Holidays!

- Goody Niosi

## Ladybird Mountain

By Doug Clark

On July 11, 2020 I led a KMC club trip to Ladybird Mountain, located at the southern end of the Norns Range, between Arrow Lakes and Ladybird Creek valley on its north side.

It's been a while since the KMC had done a trip to Ladybird. The last time, the club went up the north side from Ladybird FSR. This time we approached from the east on the Rialto FSR. The road is in good shape but is beginning to narrow in a few spots in the last few kilometres due to encroaching vegetation. It is about an hour drive from Castlegar to where we parked. We hiked about 5 km on the old road before entering the forest to ascend about 2.5 km to the summit. Gaia indicated that we climbed 800m from the cars. The total trip was 15 km return involving 6 hrs of moving time, plus 2.5 hrs of stopped time. The summit elevation is 2263m.

We spent some time hiking off-trail through a cut block, which was, at times, challenging. However, the group's good spirits made this small ordeal considerably easier. At the summit, we had a nice view of the Norns to the north; we also placed a new summit register for future trekkers to sign. All-in-all, it was an enjoyable day in the outdoors.

Participants included P'Nina Shames, Laura Ringer, Gail Curry, and Ross Bates.



Some boulder-hopped across the creek; some chose not to.



Looking north from the summit. Airy is on the left (snow covered), Kamikaze Ridge is in the centre, and the Palisades are on the right (broad top). In the distant far right, a few of the Mulvey group in the Valhallas are visible.

## Mel Deanna

By Abby Wilson.



Mel Deanna is a sweet little 5km trail just outside Castlegar. It's got something for everyone: big views over the Columbia River, calm ponds full of birds, erratic boulders, and a dark scary mine shaft to explore.

The day we picked (October 24) would have been optimal for fall colours, except for all of the fresh snow that coated the trees and trail! Still, it was a lovely day as the sun came out and the landscape sparkled. We slid and shuffled through the snow and completed the loop in a couple of hours.

We were: Abby Wilson, Andrew Woodward, Nancy Suuban, Alison Etter, Andrea Vowell, Gustavo Nobrega, Ingrid Ens, Peter Ooslander, and Margie Bromley

## White Queen

By Goody Niosi



Who could possibly have predicted that the first KMC snowshoe trip of the season would take place in October?

What? October? Really?

Yes, really.

Scott Wilson organized our little outing. He's an optimistic sort and announced it as a hike with icers.

Two days later, he changed his mind. "Bring snowshoes!" he said.

We were glad we did. So, all that griping about an early winter season aside, what a spectacular day! Eight of us set off on a well-booted trail at 9 a.m. on October 27 in mist and fog that only served to make the hoarfrost coated trees that much more beautiful.



One of our team chose to turn back when we arrived at the crossroads and the White Queen sign. The rest of us headed up. Eventually we rose above the mist; patches of blue skies; views! Yes!

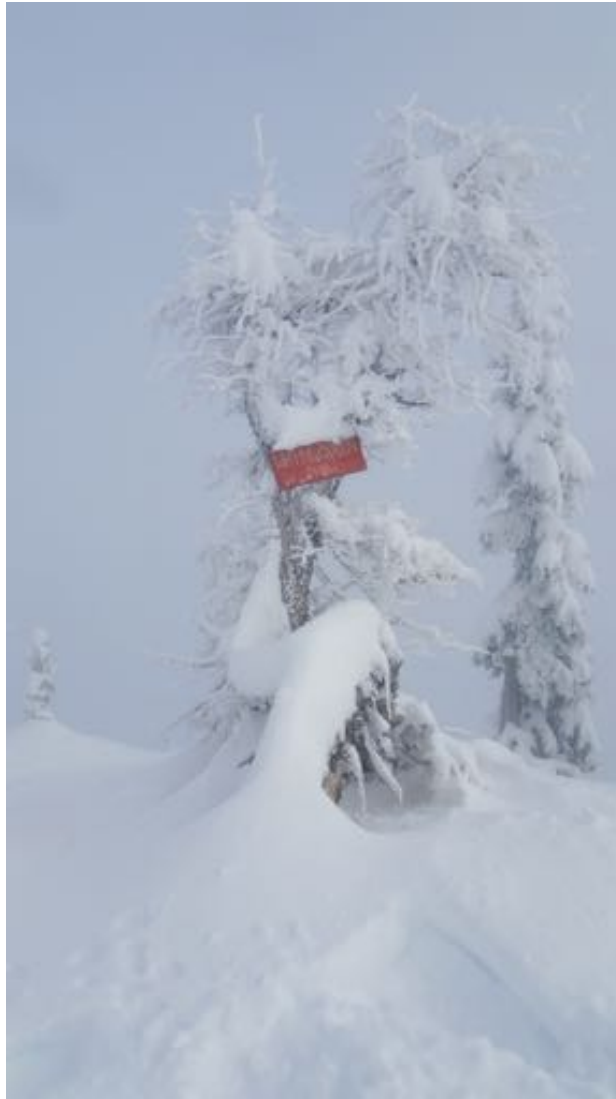
At our snack stop on the false summit, who should come barreling up the trail toward us but Gene “The Machine.” He gave us a cheery good morning and zipped on past.

Richard nodded knowingly, “Yup,” he said, “Everywhere you go, Gene is already there.”

We all nodded. What else is there to say?

Gene said, in passing, that he would see us at the top. Of course, by the time we got there, he’d already been and gone, a lone set of snowshoe tracks heading down and across to Mount Beattie.





We were rewarded with lovely views on the summit that only got better and better. We huddled out of the wind, ate lunch, and headed downhill in full sunshine. As a start to the snowshoe season, we couldn't have asked for a better day.



We were Scott Wilson, Ivy Mitch, Garry Beaudry, Richard Epton, Ken Nelson, Peter Stent, and Goody Niosi.

## White Queen/Mount Beattie loop

By Goody Niosi



Peter Oostlander and Chris Cowan had it all meticulously planned out: Peter would lead a group of eight snowshoers up White Queen, across to Mount Beattie, and back down to the trailhead. Meanwhile, Chris Cowan would take his octet in the opposite direction: up Beattie and across to White Queen, with the option for some people to turn back after summiting Beattie.

It was a perfect plan, with Chris leading the A team and Peter the B team (which I prefer to think of as Team #1).

Heck, they even had radios, which they used at least half a dozen times to check in where the teams were and at which location we were likely to converge.

How exciting!

And so, we set off on Halloween day (Oct. 31, in case you were wondering) under clear blue skies and brilliant sunshine. In other words, it didn't take us long to begin to shed layers.

The snow was crisp and crunchy, meaning a good deal of our trek was silent except for the scritch of snowshoes down the line. Our team set a pretty good pace up White Queen, making the top in just over two hours. Snack stop! Yay! Also – a photo stop. It was clear enough that we could see all the way to the Valhallas.





We left the top rather reluctantly, given the beauty of the Queen, and made our steep, steep descent to the ridge connecting us to Mount Beattie. We had just begun the uphill climb when we met up with the A team, all looking mighty happy, chipper, and pleased to be out on such a gorgeous day.

Mount Beattie! We made the top an hour after leaving White Queen and settled in for lunch in the abundant sunshine. As Peter said, it felt like spring, not the beginning of winter. We were tempted to suntan – and stay. One of our bunch pulled out a stove and fuel canister and proceeded to brew up some coffee. Why not? And we would have stayed longer if it weren't for the fact that some of us (who, me?) believe that a picnic is an eat and run situation, so we high tailed it down Beattie. When we hit sunshine lower down, the snow was pretty soft. Incredibly, we were back at the trailhead five hours after setting off, while the A team had just begun its descent from White Queen. Clearly, they had a different definition for “picnic” than we did.



Fabulous day! Big thanks to Peter and Chris for organizing this one.

We were: A Team: Chris Cowan, Tina Baldwin, Alison Etter, Helen Foulger, Tina Herman, Sandra England, Andrea Vowell.

Team #1: Peter Oostlander, Leon Arishenkoff, Brandon Bernadet, Matt Casselman, Dan Derby, Richard Epton, Rick Mazzochi, Abigail Steel, Chuck Cram, Goody Niosi

## **Trick or Treat: The White Queen Beattie Loop. Last hike on the summer schedule.**

By Chris Cowan

Peter Oostlander had the idea to have two groups do this hike because, due to Covid, our maximum participant size is eight. One group would hike counter-clockwise starting with the ascent up the west ridge trail to White Queen, over to Mt Beattie, and then back to the trailhead via the old mine site. The other group would do Mt Beattie and return, with the option to head over to White Queen and down the west ridge trail. I was to lead the more mellow “treat” option, doing Beattie first. I was treated to a group of seven fine ladies, one of whom unfortunately deserted me for reasons unknown and decided to join the all-male, hard core “trickster” group.

The trickster group had already set off when we left the parking lot at 9.30 a.m. in the chill of the morning. As usual. I was slow getting organized and several people bolted up the trail to be found later luxuriating cat-like in a sunbeam about ten minutes up the hill.

We warmed up soon on the steep shortcut and had to stop to remove toques and extra jackets. The weather was ideal, with temperatures a few degrees below zero, and the snow, having melted and refrozen, sparkling in the brilliant sunshine. We soon crossed the little creek by the west ridge trail junction and continued on our way up the gentle slopes of Mt Beattie in the well-spaced forest of spruce and fir. Several of us eyed possible ski lines for future reference. The trail was in fabulous condition, with huckleberry bushes thankfully buried under snow. The well-packed trail made for easy travel. Despite that, we treaters treated ourselves to a leisurely pace. About two-thirds of the way up we were in radio contact with the trickster team who informed us that they were already on the summit of White Queen, after hiking for about two hours.

Some of us were a little concerned by the tricksters' pace compared to our more leisurely rambling, and wondered if we would make the full circle while daylight remained. This, I think, was in large part due to a previous experience with this trip last year when the trail disappeared in sugar snow and the last couple of hundred feet up to White Queen took us about an hour, including fifteen minutes digging the leader out of a pile of snow. I assured the group that it was different this time, but was only dimly appreciated/believed.

After a brief snack on the summit of Beattie, a couple of people headed off northward, leaving me to hurriedly repack and get moving after them. Three of our party decided to return along our out track – something to do with trick or treating with the kids. We met Leon about half way to Black Queen. He had gone ahead early to stay ahead of the blistering trickster pace. Leon said he didn't envy us doing the hike in this direction. This was not encouraging. Still, we soldiered on. There were a couple of steep sections necessitating a little extra care, but we had to admit that Peter and company had done a stellar job putting this trail in. Even the steep section up a rock rib toward Black Queen, which I'd thought might be a little sketchy, was a breeze, in contrast to our 2019 attempt on the same route in snow. We met the tricksters about half way to Black Queen, who, after a few quick greetings and "covid hugs," disappeared in a blur of snow. Glorious views opened up on the White Queen ascent and we could see the Valhallas, Kokanee peaks, and the Norns, as well as the closer Half Dome and Ymir shimmering in its winter splendour under a mostly sunny sky. We were surprised to find ourselves alone at the top where we enjoyed a leisurely and mostly warm lunch. We took a few merry pics and headed down the trail, enjoying the lovely views as we passed the various and now familiar landmarks along this well used section. We even met a couple of familiar faces coming up for an afternoon hike.





We have to thank Peter for the idea of putting this trip together and attracting a good-sized group that enjoyed what was a most beautiful day with great scenery, company, and fun.

The “treat” group: Helen Foulger, Andrea Vowell, Sandra England, Tina Herman, Tina Baldwin, Alison Etter, Chris Cowan (coordinator)

**“A walk in nature walks the soul back home.” – Mary Davis**

**"It's not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves." - Sir Edmund Hillary**

## Trip Report – Mount Lepsoe/Elgood loop

By Goody Niosi

The White Queen/Beattie loop organized by Peter Oostlander and Chris Cowan on Oct. 31 was such a roaring success that they decided to do it again, this time in the Rossland Range: Mount Lepsoe and Elgood.

Would it be as super the second time around? Maybe even better.

We met at the parking lot at 8.45 a.m. (team A) and 9 a.m. (team B) On November 15. And why, I want to know, am I always on team B? In total rebellion, I chose to call it team #1.

Peter and his motley crew set off on the Old Growth trail toward Sunspot and on to Elgood. We took the more circuitous route on the Seven Summits Trail to the top of Lepsoe.

It was a spectacular day: we had flashes of sunshine and blue sky and the trees were coated in rime, which they later shed to down thick blankets of fresh snow. I seem to recall a good deal of picture-taking – yes, most of it was me holding up the group. In my defense, I couldn't help myself.



We broke trail to the top of Lepsoe, hearing from Peter via radio that Team A had already summited Elgood. So we headed down to the saddle between the two mountains. I'm not quite sure what happened at the top – I swore that Chris must have been nipping at a hidden flask, but there seemed to be a good many S-curves and bends and downright detours along the way. Phil finally raced ahead in a straight line until he tripped on something and snow-plowed head first for a wee bit. Shortly after he dug himself out, we ran into Peter's group. After some jolly hellos, we moved on to follow their track up Mount Elgood.



It seems that Peter had also been into the sauce, judging by the sweeps, swoops, and otherwise interesting tracks to the top.



And so we celebrated summiting. At that point, there was a small discussion about our route back. Peter's group was heading down the north ridge of Lepsoe. Some thought that might be fun. Others opined "Not enough snow yet." One person who shall remain nameless (Rick), said something about having had enough up for the day. Oddly, no one contradicted him and we unanimously chose the Seven Summits trail back.

Radio contact with Peter revealed that the trip down the north ridge was steep and "interesting." Hmmmm.

We strode out and back to the parking lot via the Old Growth trail – a six-hour round trip. And a glorious day.

We were: Vicki Hart, Phil Best, Larry Bickerton, Rick Mazzocchi, Tina Baldwin, Stefan Chobotar, Chris Cowan, and Goody Niosi

**“You’re off to great places, today is your day. Your mountain is waiting, so get on your way.” – Dr. Seuss**