The Kootenay Mountaineer

The newsletter for people with year-round pursuits.

September 30th, 2013

Message from the President

It was a great 2013 summer, excellent weather and lots of outings. You organized 70 trips so far with over 500 participants in total. Thank you all who put these trips on the schedule and made it happen!

The Kootenay Mountaineering Club also grew to 336 members this year with many younger folks coming on board. This makes us the largest mountaineering club in the province outside the lower mainland. In the next few weeks, our Winter trip director Chris Cowan will start working on the 2013/2014 winter trip schedule, and the hope is that the members who volunteered following up on trips will again help him out this year.
KMC 50 years old

The KMC will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2014. If you are interested in joining our little sub-committee to brainstorm ideas of what we would like to do, or have some ideas, please contact me.

We would like to fill the following vacancies on the KMC executive:

- **Conservation** : we need to provide comments to the Ministry of Forests and Lands on a pending catskiing application in the region of Silverton Creek/Maurier Creek/Fennel Creek and Alwyn/Westmount Creeks.
- **Vice President** : basically not too many duties for two years until you are voted in as President.
- **Webmaster** : we need help in writing a quote request to give the KMC website a much needed facelift and provide ongoing maintenance.

Hope to see you at the October Fall Social!

Message from the Editor

Please excuse me. I indulged myself a bit for this issue.

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Article submission guidelines:

Plain text is great. No need for PDF or Microsoft Word files. Simply cut and paste your text into an email to newsletter@kootenarymountaineering.bc.ca. Attach your full resolution photos to the email. Lots of photos, please.

Submission deadline for the next issue is November 16, 2013

Trip Reports

Paddy Peak, 8002 ft and Texas Peak, 8050 ft

Our group left Nelson at 6 am, July 6/2013.

We proceeded up the Stenston Creek Forest Service road and arrived at the basin below Mt. Reco at about 8 am.

Total Trip time about 8 hours. Distance 16 km and total elevation gain 5070 ft. Trip classification was D2 but should have been D3 given the exposure getting up Paddy Pk. Trip organized by both Bill McNally and Vicki Hart.

In short, an epic day led by the intrepid Vicki Hart, who picked her way carefully through gnarly debris and loose rock on the ridge to the summit of Paddy Pk.

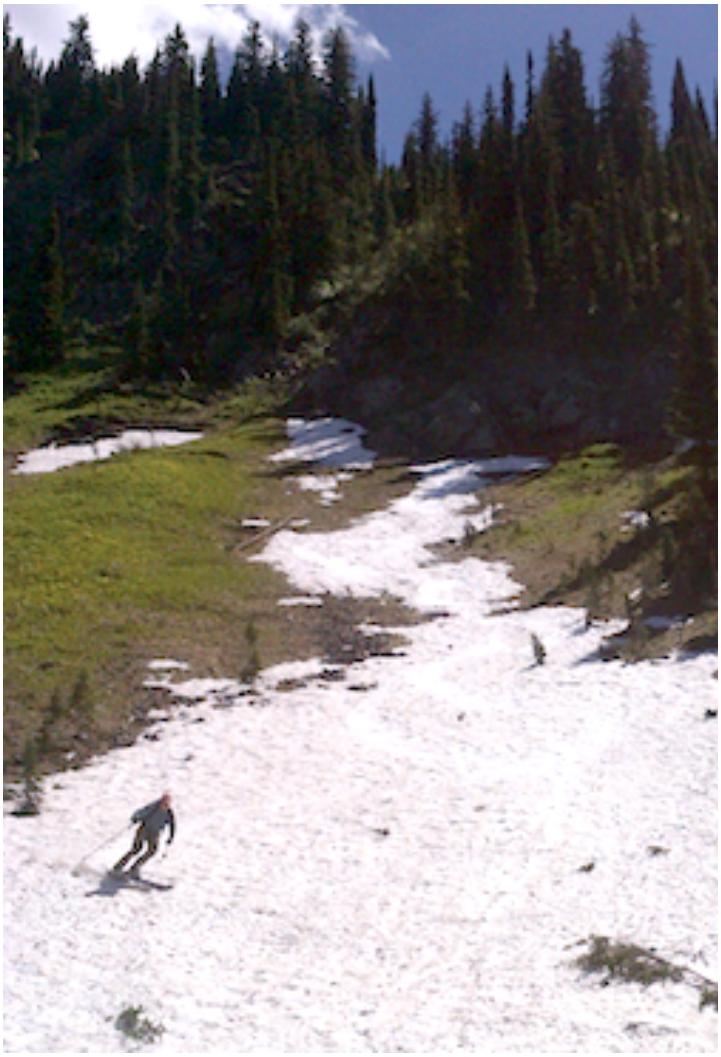
Then we returned back down the ridge to the col between Texas and Paddy and got a second peak in for the day.

The Glacier Lilies carpeted the meadows leading to the col. The weather was also cooperative, with mainly clear skies and reasonable temperatures.



Trip Participants: Vicki Hart, Gene Van Dyck, Joanne Segur, Bill McNally, Valerie De Pauw, Alex Yamashkin, Dustin Rippendale and Nadine Ebner.

The *Heroic* Pursuit of Snow



Peter Jordan, Idaho Peak, 7th of July

Photograph by Elena Cigala-Fulgosi

Mt Faith – July 17, 2013

One week later, Mt Faith (of the Hope, Faith and Charity group) was on the schedule. We had some trouble generating sufficient interest, so Doug helped me out by sending a reminder out to the club members. Elaine and Steven Miros led a trip to Mt Faith on October 7, 2009 and I was impressed by the remoteness, yet easy access to this mountain in the extreme North part of the Provincial Park.

Since there were only four of us, we piled into the little 4WD tracker with a just-in-case chainsaw (we did not need it) and drove to the Faith road landing at 5560 ft. Heading due West we gained the bottom of the ridge (NAD27 112 692) after 45 minutes of walking through forest and moderate bush. From there we walked along the standard ridge route to cow pie lake in beautiful weather. I had promised Doug that the area would be free of snow and no hands were required to ascend the

mountain. We did have a little left over snow near the Col on the base of the mountain but pretty much walked all the way to the summit from the South side.

We enjoyed the great views from the summit a mere 70 ft higher than Mt Gladstone 15 km to the South, the Granby river to the West and the Lower arrow lake to the East. The summit register at the top indicated no visitors since the last October KMC trip.

After about a half hour lunch stop, we worked our way down by the same route contouring a little below the ridge, being careful not to be suckered into the game trails leading into the valley below and reached the car after a five hour return trip.

Here are the road instructions again:

Km 0: Rail grade and Paulson detour road intersection
6.5: Left on Dog Creek FSR 16.6: Sharp left
21.0: Ignore right branch
22.1: Straight (not left) on signed Faith Rd
22.5: Ignore Faith 100 branch
23.7: Straight
24.0: Straight on Faith 310 – Ignore Faith 300 at right
25.2: Landing – end

Participants: Doug Brown, Karen Pharand, Dagmar Smatandvay (who drove to the meeting place from Kelowna!) and Peter Oostlander (organizer and reporter)

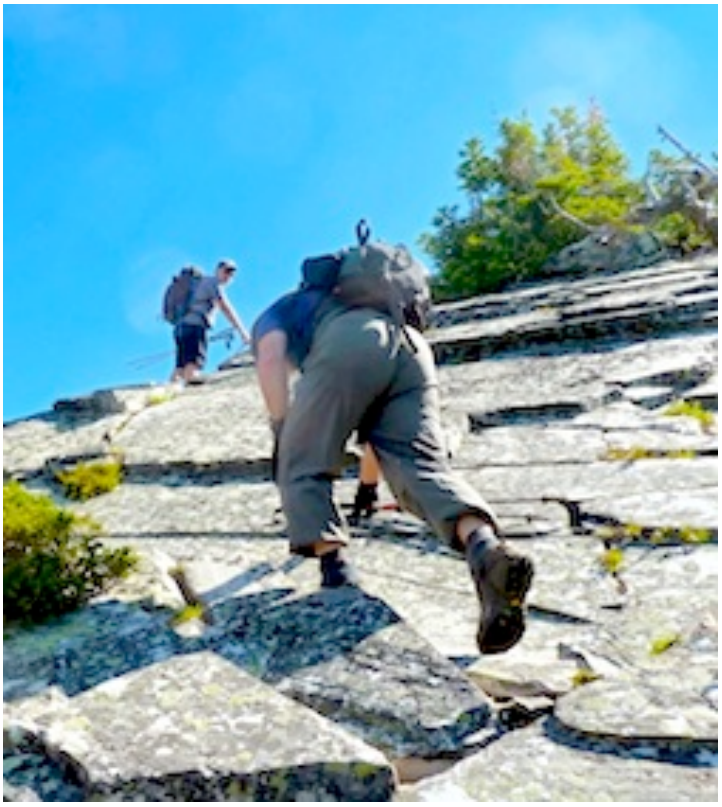
The Mount Loki – July 18

The hike planned for Wed July 17 had to be postponed due to lightning in the forecast. We set off the following day with intermittent cloud cover that made the day cooler and dry. After packing all five of us into Doug's vehicle for the ferry ride and trip up the Portman FSR to the trailhead we started hiking about 8 am.



We arrived at the summit almost exactly four hours later. We signed the register, had a leisurely lunch and view of world from Loki's perspective. Another four hours and the return was made by driving directly on to the 6:10 ferry. Visiting on the ferry, looking at our recent accomplishment, what a great way to finish a day.







Participants: Dave St Denis, Dave Toews, Doug Clark, Chris Cowan and non-member Beth Deresseaux.

Grassy Mountain – July 21, 2013

Ten members made the trip to Grassy Mtn. We drove 15 km from Bombi Summit up the Munson forestry roads to the north side of Grassy Mountain. From there we walked through a forest of flowering bear grass, bushwhacked up a rhododendrum covered slope, and were on the summit of Grassy in just over an hour. In spite of the heat, most of us continued to the cabin where we had lunch. We evaluated the condition of the cabin and its contents to assist Graham in cabin maintenance. The hike back up to the ridge was very hot but was made bearable by a fairly persistant breeze which cooled us.



We were: John Bargh, Murray Bennett, Bob Dean, Don Harasym, Rick Mazzocchi, Dani McTaggart, Alex & Kathleen Nichol, and coordinators Ed & Hazel Beynon.

Mt Vingolf – July 28 2013



I met 4 hikers in Hills at 8:00 am. Unfortunately the other three I was expecting had informed me that they were delayed by over an hour. It was too long to wait, so I left them a map and a radio (neither turned out to be very reliable) and we were on our way. The road to the trailhead is in very good shape and can be negotiated in a high clearance 2WD.

We had a pleasant hike up to Shannon Lake, around to the south end of the lake and then up the boulder field to Upper Shannon Lake. At this point we decided to traverse Vingolf and to ascend via the west ridge. This involved walking up to the col west of Vingolf (One Goat Pass) and then scrambling up the west flank to gain the ridge. The ridge has a few serrations; all but one of which can be negotiated by staying on the ridge. The deep serration can be avoided by going around it on the south side of the ridge.



After lunch on the summit we descended the north ridge which is much easier with minimal exposure. A somewhat hidden sandy gully takes you from the ridge down to the grassy flats above Upper Shannon Lake.

Meanwhile the late group had arrived (with a flat tire) and quickly hiked up to Shannon Lake. Spotty radio communication and their unfamiliarity with the area then led them to pioneer a new route to the upper bowl south of Shannon Lake. They then took a challenging path to the col above Upper Shannon Lake. At this point our group of 5 was leaving the summit, so they wisely decided to forego the summit for another day. The 2 groups met on the grassy flats.

Next was a short ugly descent through the trees to Upper Shannon Lake where we met some of Mary Woodward's extended family. Mary was in a group (which included a …..dog!) returning from One Goat Pass.

From here Don raced ahead to fix his flat, and Alex to go swimming in Shannon Lake. The rest of us had an uneventful walk to the parking lot.



Thanks everyone for a wonderful day.

We were Ray Neumar, Chris Beck, Jeff Ross, Alex Slvetsov, Brenda Haley, Don McLachlan, Ross Bates and Bill Sones.

Mt. Buchanan – August 21

This was an exploratory trip with the goal of climbing to the top of the Mt. Buchanan forestry lookout. One can drive to the top to enjoy the spectacular vistas, but I wanted to make a day of it. Consequently we started the hike from the Wardner trail-head in Kaslo. Our route took us up the lookout trail, and then across the connector to the Buchanan Fire Access trail. This well maintained trail passes through shady forest with occasional views, and contours across the steep slopes to the base of the climb. Unfortunately it also loses a fair bit of elevation, so an alternate route is to start at the other end of the Access trail off of Hwy 31. In a little under two hours we reached the bottom of the "Monster" which is a mountain biking trail that drops over 4000 feet from the top of the lookout.

This is not a hiking trail – mountain bikers going downhill don't use switchbacks, just lots of ramps/ jumps. My estimate of a B2/3 rating turned out to be C3/D3. It is unrelenting up, most of it steep. We often marvelled at the insanity of some of the sections for biking down – I wished that I had my ice-axe on several bits. The trail did not show a great deal of use from bikers, which could either be a sign of self-preservation or merely that they were airborne most of the way. The trail parallels a creek for half the climb, so there is a ready water supply, and there was lots of shade from the forest to keep us cool.

We emerged at the summit lookout in another 2.5-3 hours and had a late lunch. The views are unsurpassed, with Kootenay Lake and Kaslo below. The Purcells to the east are dominated by Mt. Loki. We viewed Mt. Brennan to the west, Kokanee Park to the south, and to the north we could see the Four Squatters & MacBeth ice fields with Howser Towers looming out of the smoke drifting in from the Idaho fires. There are alpine meadows to enjoy, and the site has many picnic tables/ fire pits for those days when you want to drive your visitors to the top to enjoy the scenery. There is a road that winds its way 12km up from Hwy 31 for those that don't want the exercise. We then descended via the same biking trail, but continued down past the Access trail to join in to the Wagon Road trail. This loop took us back to Kaslo in about two hours. Some of the locals are missing a few windfall apples that the thirstier amongst us could not resist.

It was a long day of 20 km, 8 hours, and 4500 feet elevation change, but we all enjoyed ourselves. We finished the day with some Kaslo ice-cream before driving home.

Participants were Diane Langille, Jill Watson, Peter Oostlander, Steve Fountain, Chris Cowan, and coordinator Ross Bates.

Slocan River Paddle – August 24, 2013



This was the second consecutive year for a joint Kootenay Mountaineering Club and Columbia Canoe and Kayak Club paddle on the Slocan River. There was another good turn out with 11 participants in two canoes and seven kayaks. All were KMC members with two of us belonging to both clubs.

The route was the same easy-going route as last year. We put in at Winlaw and paddled upstream in the very slow current about 11 km to the bridge at Perry's Road, where we had lunch. After lunch, several paddlers chose to continue upriver another km to tour an oxbow. Unlike last year, we entered the downstream end of the oxbow rather than try to fight the increasing current to get to the top end. This went quite well and was a nice a bonus to the excursion.

All boats regrouped at Perry's road and paddled downstream to Winlaw in about half the time it took to travel upriver. The weather cooperated being neither too hot or cool and an enjoyable paddle was had by all.

Participants were Frank Fodor, Jill and Dave Watson, Jocelyne Martin, Diane White, Chris Cowan, Chris and Helen Hatch, Ian Smith, Steve Fountain and Doug Clark.

Darkwoods: Mt. Wurtenburg – August 13

Editor's Note: This is the only submission I received regarding this outing. Caption is by the submitter.



Picture was taken on a KMC trip this past Saturday to Darkwoods. Entitle it : "Ed and Hazel Beynon on the Blueberry Trail".

Mt. Siwash, September 2nd

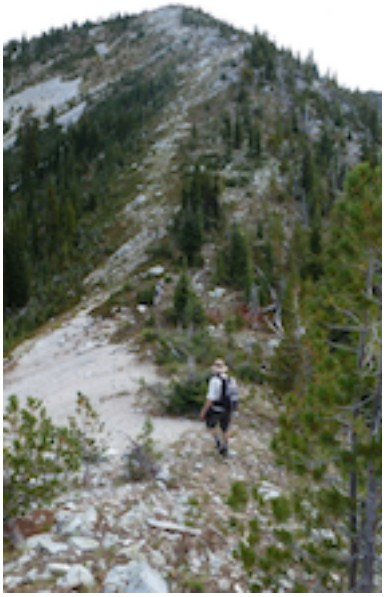
Editor's note: My goodness! We're only on page 6! I was on this trip and it's my report, so more pictures!



Chris said it was going to be an easy six hour hike. The side trip toSteed hut (on a small task for Graham) and all the harvesting and eating of berries along the way stretched it out to almost seven hours.

Trailing behind for most of the day, a lot of my views were like this…





It is a wonderful ridge walk.



Good views that-away...

Macbeth Icefield – August 24

Jennifer Cook



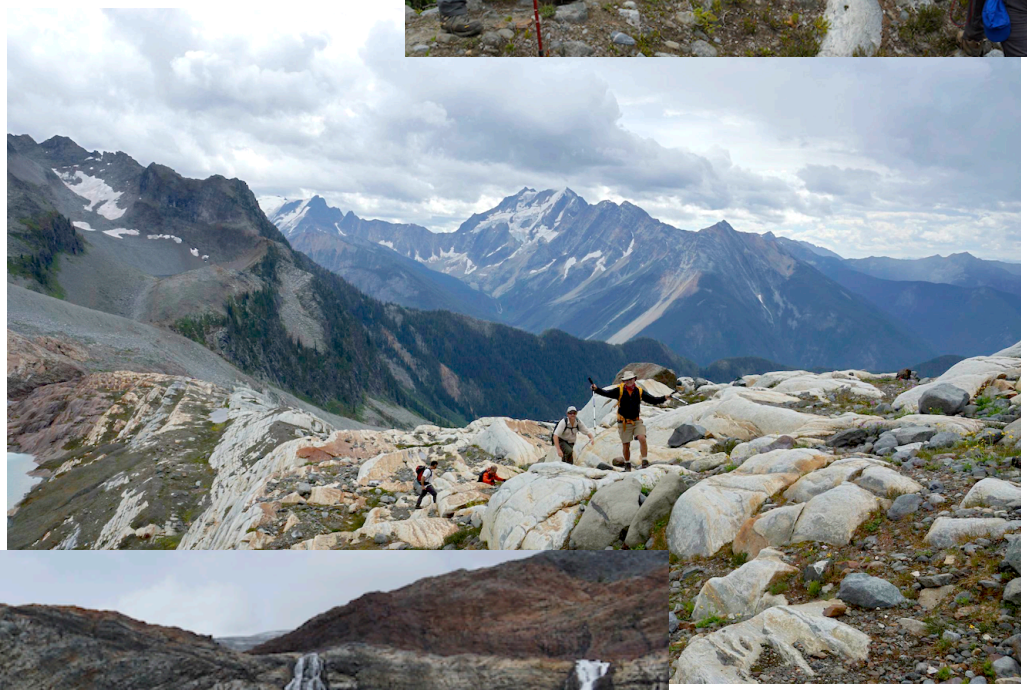
But now, turn around for the group photo, folks…

Jill, my apologies for that fly in front of my lens, blurring your face.





These people are: Chis Cowan (trip leader), Eric Ackerman, Ross Scott, Jill Watson, Murray Bennett, Ian Smith, Steve Fountain. Missing from the picture are Ross Bates (who was off picking huckleberries!) and me.





Mt. Goodwin – September 27

Bill McNally

With respect to this trip, we left Balfour on the 8:10 ferry and proceeded up the Sanca Creek road arriving at the parking area for Haystack at about 10:15 am. We decided we would attempt to summit Mt. Goodwin on Saturday and then perhaps Mt. Sherman on Sunday.



On Saturday, the weather was overcast and the bushes were wet so we donned our rain gear and proceeded on to the west ridge off Haystack. We then followed the ridge west over a couple of bumps, which presented a few challenges. There was a fair bit of up and down before we began our ascent to the top of Mt. Goodwin. The views from the summit were great despite some low cloud cover. From the register, it doesn't look like many visitors come to this mountain. This year was a banner year, with 5 people having made it to the top.

We then descended, and when we got close to the west ridge coming off Haystack we veered south and dropped in the meadows off the south ridge.

The following day was rainy and we decided to see if we could find the trail up to Sherman Lakes. After driving around on some logging roads, we found the old road, which was overgrown with bush. After about a kilometer on the road, we hit a creek coming from Sherman Lakes and located the old trail head. The path is in disrepair, but still easy enough to follow.

We were up at Sherman Lakes from the creek crossing in about 1 hour and 20 minutes. The cloud had settled almost at the level of the lake (7000 ft) so we couldn't make out the peak. (But we are determined to put it on the schedule next year as a day outing.)

Trip participants: Bill McNally, and Vicki Hart.

2013 Hiking Camps, Echo Lake

Camp 1 – July 20-27



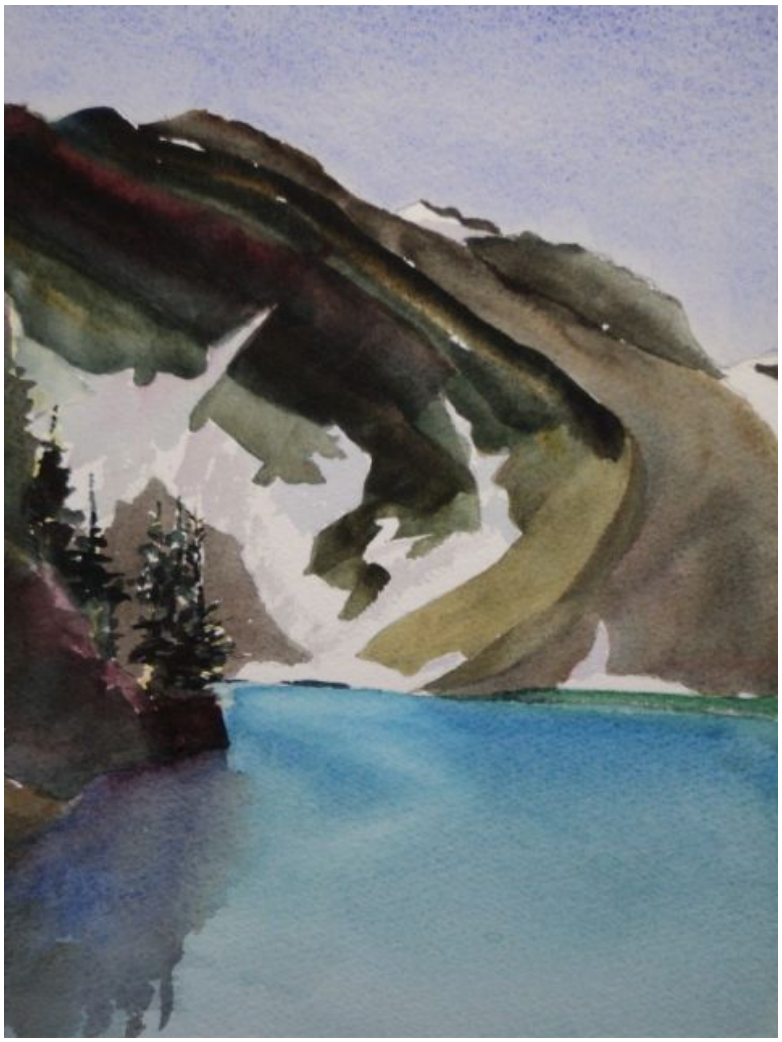
Photo of checking out our perfect campsite below cathedral dome!

Camp 1 at Echo Creek was a site to behold
Location the prettiest, I've been told
Cook tents reflecting on the shore
Sunshine each day and flowers galore
Jude our new cook was thrilled with the site
Learned all our routines and did everything right
Ken told stories of "spongy wonders"
Carl told stories of all his wanders
Mike and Joan had "the coolers" control
Elaine hurt her knee with a nasty roll
Several climbers bagged the Cathedral Dome
Along with many ridges before they got home
Glen Cameron led the camp to a perfect week
While Janet and Cheryl camped by the creek
Janice Isaac knew where to roam
Elaine's prayer flags fluttered over her home
Kristen and Joanne were good company
As was Rita and the lessons from our Emilee
McQueen painted and climbed many peaks
With Diane and Terry, most of the week
Ian Smith and John B. climbed everywhere
Sitting on ridges if the bugs weren't there
Critters were scarce, only 3 goats seen
Amazing sunsets topped off a Camp 1 dream.

We were: Cook, Jude Stralak, Mike Brewster, Joan Harvey, Bob McQueen, Emilee Fanjoy, Ken Holmes, Rita Holmes, Janet Cameron, Carl Jorgenson, Diane Paolini, Terry Simpson, Cheryl Gwillim, Ian Smith, Janice Isaac, Joanne Emily, Kirsten Apel, John Beerbower, Elaine Martin and leader Glen Cameron.

By Camp Recorder, Elaine Martin

Week One Paintings by Bob McQueen



Blue Lake: one mountain over to the south east.



Our Camp on Echo Lake.



"Castle Mountain" south of camp, which was lit up by the sun every morning. We climbed it on our second day, with an exciting escape on the other side, down a chimney and through the dungeon (which Ken called the "lemon squeezer"). The latter was a crawl space under a large rock slab.



Snowy col.



Three hikers south of Blue Lake.

Camp 2 – July 27-August 3

Week Two Report by Gillian Hurn

Camp 2 consisted of fourteen returning campers and six first timers including myself. I think it's safe to say that, like myself, several of the first timers were at times a little giddy by the many new experiences they were being exposed too. Some had never seen an alpine meadow full of flowers or a glacier that closely or walked a ridge only to pause long enough to capture some fantastic photographs of a storm in the distance.

While some of us leisurely set up our tents on the first afternoon, the group we would lovingly come to know as the A Team headed out for their first adventure. Every morning small changing groups formed effortlessly after a brief description of the proposed hike. We had 4 or 5 different groups setting out most days in different directions. I found that the experienced hikers shared their skills and knowledge with me as beginning hiker and I always felt safe.

We had 7 days of good weather and only one thunderstorm on Thursday afternoon. Strangely enough, it began whilst I was in the spiffy biffy (with fresh flowers all week supplied by Louise). I decided to try to find a short cut back to my tent only to get lost. Thank goodness my partner had insisted I always carry waterproof clothing in my day pack. 45 minutes later I arrived back at our tent to find my partner with his feet up reading a book.



During the week we had a surprise visitor who was unaware that there was a "No Swimming Rule" in effect for the stunningly beautiful Echo Lake. It was a young brown bear who ran down the mountain and jumped immediately into the cool water. However, as soon as the bear heard the voices of a couple of campers who had stayed behind to rest some overworked joints, it jumped out of the lake faster than it had entered it. Apparently, whilst running up the mountain, it was seen looking back three times to make sure it wasn't being chased. It climbed the mountain in about 3 or 4 minutes. Then there were unsubstantiated rumours of Eric doing a half gainer on the snow reputedly in order to dive into the lake and Terry trying to roll boulders onto unsuspecting colleagues below.



Mary was our amazing, hardworking, resourceful, punctual, organised, fantastic cook. She made feeding twenty hungry adults look so easy! It seems we might go down in history as the only Hiking Camp to ever run out of cookies – oh yes! – and toilet roll. Our well organised and always smiling leader 'Captain' Eric came to the rescue. For the last two days we had a sign outside the biffy that read "four to wipe and two to polish". Our wine master/dominator Steve kept law and order and the wine flowing all week with the second most desired beverage after the morning coffee. We even had a little left over so he finished off the last of the boxes with a little drink served directly from the box (into our upturned mouths) it was a lot of fun.

We also had a "whipping the cream contest" as the bowl and beater was passed around. It required an apron and determination, but the best 'beater' got to lick the beater and the bowel. Needless to say, the guys were better at it – go figure!

There was always plenty of willing helpers whenever something extra needed doing, like hauling snow on tarps and in coolers to keep our food cold.

The last evening found most people sitting around the fire pit singing. *What a fantastic week was had by all.*



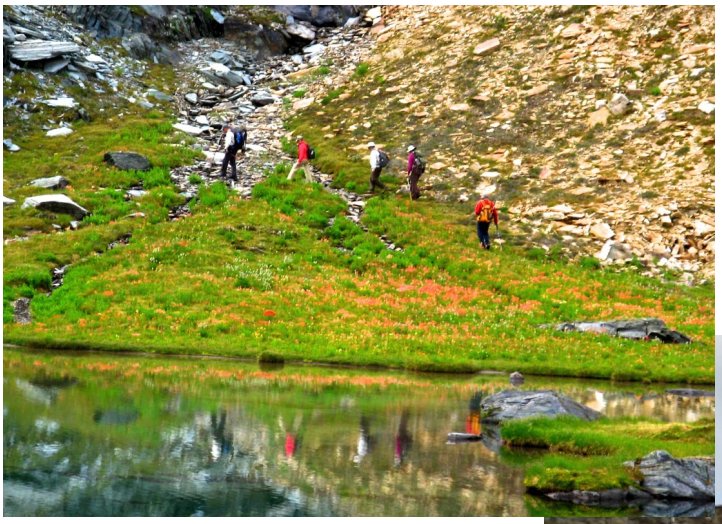
A Poem:
"Hiking Camp Two"

A grizzly bear.....where? where?
Oh darn it, missed him swimming in the lake!
Howser Spires ……..oh my God, a photo I should take.
Echo Lake, the reflections...Wow!
Hikers having fun, sharing stories and how
They climbed up to ridges, saddles and peaks.
For me it was the best of hiking weeks.
Conversations around the fire at night
About life and our experiences which were a delight.
It was amazing, incredible with a variety of hikes to do.
I give applause to my buddies in camp two.
– Louise Hammerich



The Campers were:

Marilyn Miller, Louise Hammerich, Rob Richardson, Garry Beaudry, Eric Marks, Eric Ackerman (leader), Jocelyne Martin, Tom Braumandl, Zuzana Zach, Andre Piver, Gillian Hurn, Hamish Mutch, Ted Ibrahim, Beverly Gaal, Steve Miros, Francoise Miros, Mary (cook) and Glen Collodel, Sharon and Terry Turner.





Camp 3 – August 2-9

Editor's note: This is the section with which I got to indulge myself. Imagine being camp recorder with a camp attendee who provided a DVD of well over 400 very beautiful pictures, and as a bonus, having perqs as the editor of the newsletter! Talk about the inside track!

A "Newbie's" view of the week. There were eight of us!

All pictures by Ross Scott

It Was A Week of Endless Highlights…

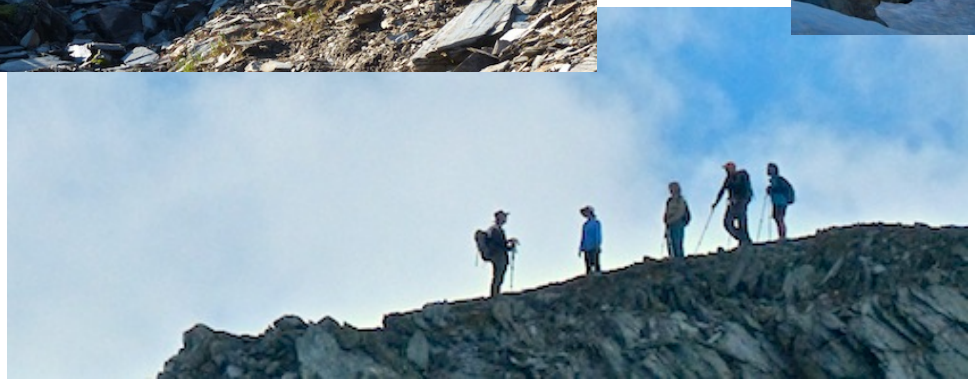
Hikes!











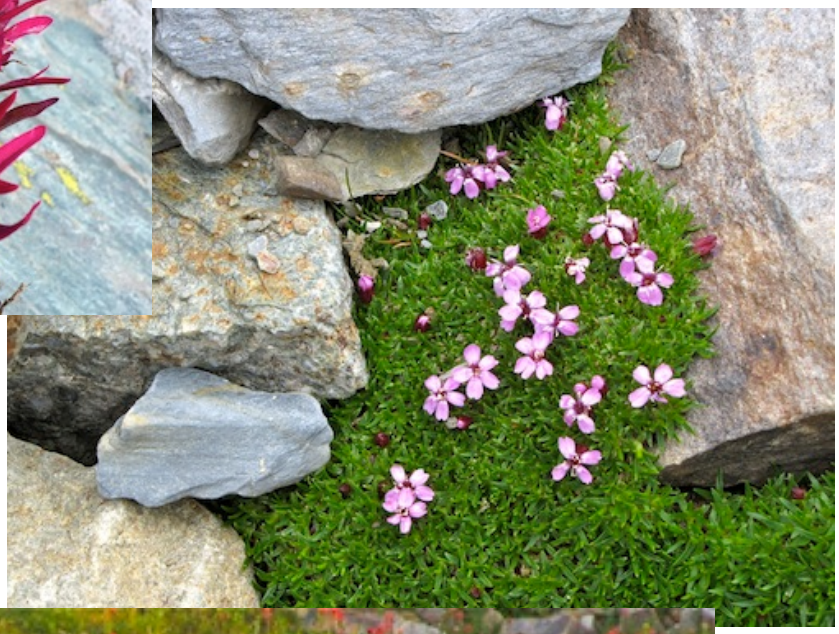
Gorgeous Vistas!

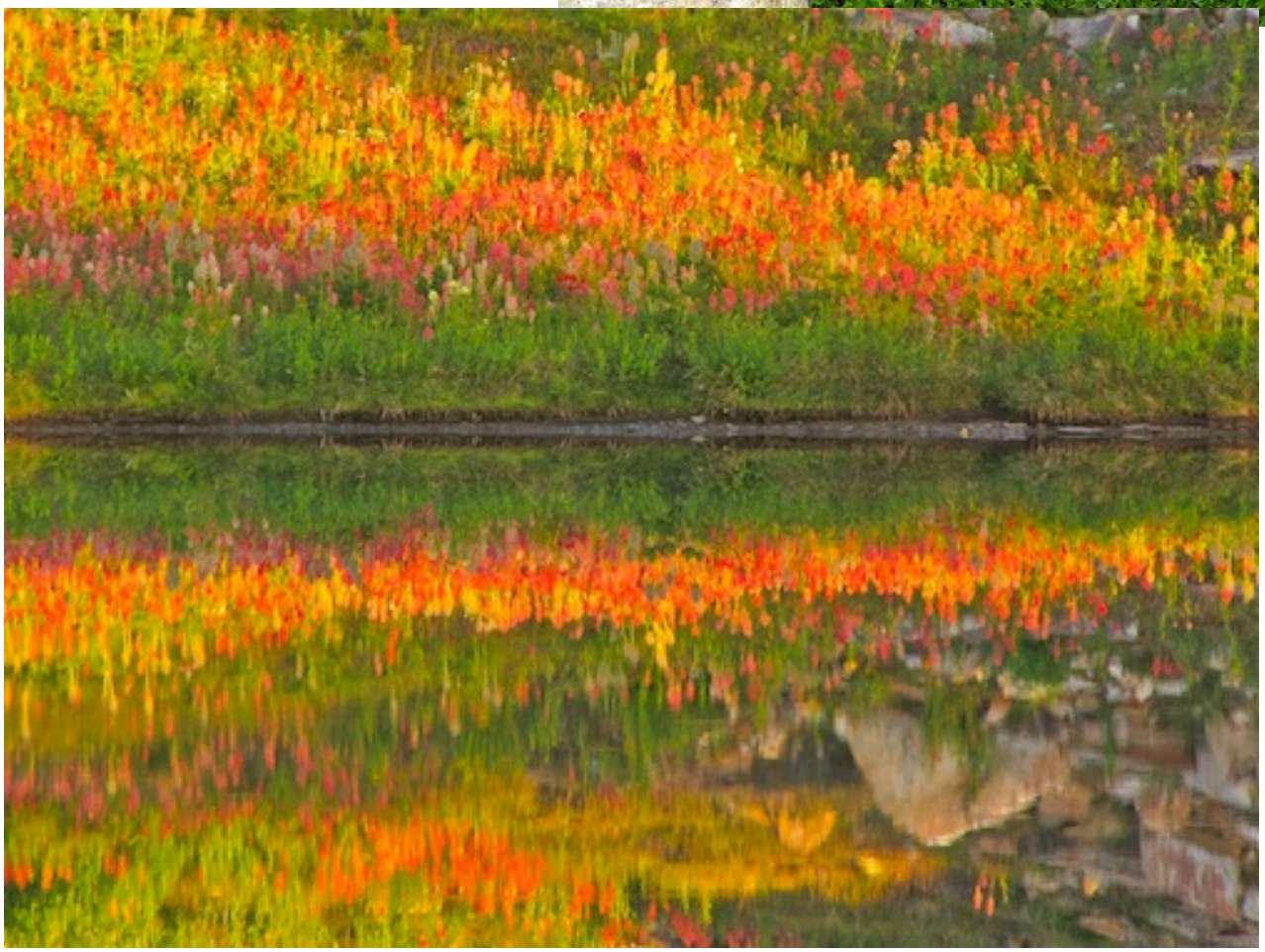




Flowers!







Relaxation!







Boardroom Conferences!





Group Effort!



Fashion Shows!



Food!







More Food!





Make sure the cook stays Happy!!!!



Reflections!





Sunsets!





Rainbow!



Ideally Idyllic!



Camp Attendees were:
Caroline Shimek, Chris Hatch, Helen Hatch, Dave St. Denis (cook), Ross Bates (leader), Don Paul, Glenn Keto, Graham Kenyon, Leon Arishenkoff, Lili Wong, Mark Hatlen, Neil Bermel, Nigel Tuffrey, Ray Moore, Paula Barnes, Peter Wood, Ron Perrier, Ross Scott, Tim Clinton, Sandra England.



Editor's note: Graham Kenyon performed this tribute/ tease for the birthday of one of our members. If you get a chance to see the video that Ross Scott made of the ceremony, it's fun!

The Knighting of Ray
Camp 3 – Echo Lake, Aug 2013
by Graham Kenyon

This quite remarkable event came to me in a kind of vision, prompting me to write it all down in case the improbability of it all leads me to doubt that it really happened. That, I shall leave to all of you to decide.

As some of you know, or have observed, I have a predisposition for travelling alone on these ventures. Not that I have any aversion to people in general or all of you wonderful, adventurous, fascinating people with whom it has been my pleasure to share this delightful interlude in our varied lives. However I have found that there is a time and a place for such sharing, and there is a lure in loneliness – something I wrote about previously, way back on that first camp in 1967.

The quiet communion with nature in this environment where change is measured in millennia, where wonder exists from the minutia of microscopic life to the sculpted grandeur of the mountain landscape, there is reverence to be had here that takes one beyond the normal, providing a perspective that levels our triumphs, our sorrows and our fears.

All of this is by way of preface to the strange, transcendental experience I shall now describe and which will lead me to the duty and ceremony I have to perform.

Yesterday, on the warm, sunny slopes of the farthest extent of the East Ridge, enraptured by the wilderness of mountains arrayed before me, I found myself a sheltered spot and settled down, perchance to doze, perchance to dream.

I suddenly awoke, or thought I did, but perhaps not. I was surrounded by a strange ethereal light, the breeze if that it was rose and fell in lilting tones, the distance shimmered, unfocused and translucent. A figure appeared, clothed in robes of pale orange, hair long and fair, face indistinct with the bright light behind, an aura about him that at one was both comforting and disturbing. When he spoke his tone was at one gentle yet assertive.

"I am Odin," he said, "From the far mountain kingdom of Valhalla. I have a duty to bestow upon you. I have watched your band of brothers and sisters, true spirits of the mountains they have explored and enjoyed these ancient precincts with the respect and reverence that is their due. The constant chatter is of course something to endure, but the wild creatures know that in time this too shall pass, and their world will once more be at peace."

"But I digress," he said. "I see that one amongst you is celebrating an anniversary of his birth, an event dating far, far back in the mists of time. The duration of his life so far is paltry by my standards, but nonetheless he is the oldest, and thus the most venerable amongst you. I intend to honour him, and thus bestow honour and respect upon you all for your exemplary conduct. I have chosen you, as the second eldest and almost equally venerable, to bestow this honour on my behalf."

Odin then took my hiking pole, reached out and touched the tip to a rock. There was a blinding flash like a welding arc, and a sharp smell of molten plasma. Where he had touched lay a crystal, glowing and gleaming, reflecting the billions of years in its translucent geometric facets. Odin placed the crystal into a casket carved from a juniper branch and gave it to me.

"Take this crystal, which contains all the wisdom of the ages; take your pole, which for a time holds the power of my being and the authority of the mountain kingdom of the Valhallas. With all due ceremony bestow upon your honourable friend Ray the knighthood which is his due. He shall thenceforth be known throughout the mountain kingdom as Sir Ray, an honourable Knight of the Round Circle."

With that Odin disappeared and I was once again in the warm sunshine on the East Ridge, but conscious now of the awesome responsibility placed upon me.

"Hence it is now my duty: Brothers, sisters, please attend upon our friend Ray and bring him to this place of honour within our circle.

"Let the mountains bear witness; with the authority vested upon me, as the second most venerable personage present at this gathering, in the name of Odin, the holy prince of the mountain kingdom of the Valhalla, I hereby solemnly declare and bestow upon

you the honourable rank and title of Sir Ray, Knight of the Round Circle.

"Take this holy crystal, in its casket born of nature, fashioned from the living wood, representing the eons of our past and the life that supports our fleeting existence, carry it with you always and remember this moment you shared with your friends in the mountains.



"Arise Sir Ray!"

Thanks to Chris for donating one of his precious quartz crystals and to Tim for carving the casket.

Editor's Note: Graham's mention of his article from the 1967 Centennial Hiking Camp recalled to mind that wonderfully insightful article that impressed and touched me while scanning the old Kootenay Karabiners. He has permitted me to republish it here.

For those of you who were not reading the Karabiners back in1967…

The Lure of Loneliness

By Graham Kenyon

A climbing camp is generally thought of as an occasion for good companionship and for the assault of high mountain peaks; and generally this is true. But also for those who wish there is the opportunity to be alone, to fully absorb the beauty and peace of the high country.

Mountains and wilderness are different things to different people. Only very occasionally can an exceptional writer or artist express his feelings for the mountains in such a way that others can experience the same emotions. The emotions: awe, wonder, admiration, surprise...maybe even fear, are personal feelings, varying between individuals and able to be suppressed or amplified according to circumstances. When a person is alone his emotions are at a higher pitch, and I believe it is under these circumstances that his senses are fully attuned to all that the mountains have to offer.

Of the many trips I have made, those taken alone are the ones which stand out in my memory. None were spectacular in the accepted sense of the word, but each consisted of a series of experiences so completely absorbed that scenes can be recalled to mind as clearly as a photographic print.

My hike along the east ridge above Toby Glacier was one such trip.

There were frequent distractions from the exertions of boulder hopping across the glacial moraine. Flowers were everywhere - splashes of colour amongst the grey rock. The rocks themselves occasionally glinted when a patch of pyrite caught the sunlight. Clear water streams tumbled down the valley slopes to mingle with the milky grey waters of Toby Creek which only minutes before had emerged from the cold darkness deep beneath the glacial ice.

High on the western ridge patches of white caught my eye - not white enough for snow yet too white for rock. Through glasses I saw the goats, four adults and three young, all intently watching the tiny figure who was now peering back up at them. When the figure didn't move they turned away, continuing their cautious trek across the slope, pausing frequently to inspect the man now reclining on his back in order to more comfortably observe their progress.

Later in the week I would wade across Toby Creek, experiencing the physical torture inflicted by the ice water. This time I had more sense, taking the less expedient but infinitely more comfortable route across the snout of the glacier. Melted water streamed down over the surface of the ice laced with a myriad of channels cut by the gurgling, bustling water. It was stimulating to see and hear so much activity as I crunched over the ice — and strangely quiet when I stepped on to the soft sand bordering the glacier.

The bluff facing me had obviously at one time been submerged under the ice. Although strewn with rounded stones, fine gravel and other glacial debris, the basic rock structure was massive and solid. The brown surface had the texture of sandpaper and it was a real pleasure to scramble up the innumerable firm holds from one pebble strewn bench to the next.

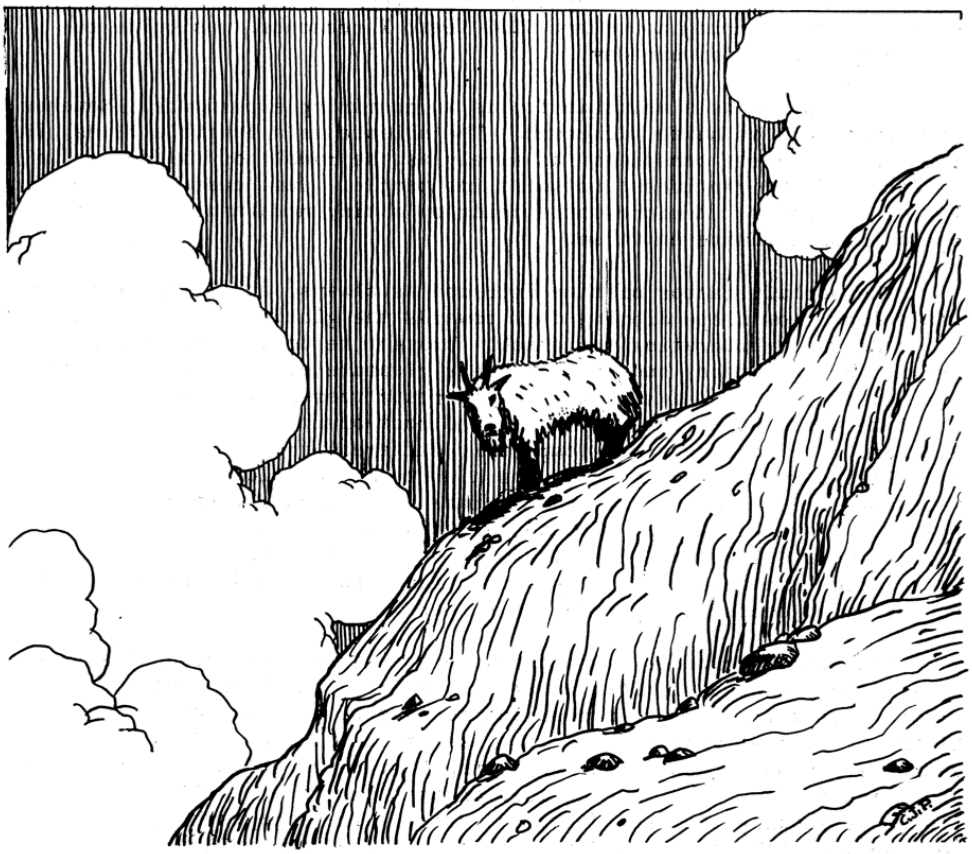


Image by Chris Penn

About half way up I met my mountain goat. Obviously just as surprised and as curious as I, he stared down at me while I stared back, neither of us knowing quite what to do next. The click of my camera left him completely unmoved, so I very slowly advanced towards him. He watched me in a rather disinterested fashion for several minutes, then to my amazement he ambled down the slope towards me. He paused to inspect me a couple of times, then climbed out on a ledge overlooking the glacier. The pose was perfect: the goat, less than thirty feet away, gazing down into the valley, backed by the snow-capped skyline of the Purcells. I had time for another photograph before he became bored with the whole business and trotted over the crest of the ridge. When I reached there, moments later he had disappeared.

The meadows above the bluff were truly beautiful. Patches of snow still remained in the hollows, reservoirs of moisture for the carpet of springy turf freckled with brightly coloured flowers. A well travelled goat trail meandered between occasional clumps of gnarled old conifers dwarfed to three or four feet high by the harsh climate on this high exposed ridge. A single cold ptarmigan's egg nestled in a hollow between clumps of heather, surrounded by broken shells discarded by the survivors of the brood. A mountain tarn caught the sunlight, the clear cold water a mirror to the distant peaks. How exhilarating to tramp across this delightful landscape, to wonder at the magnificence of the surrounding mountains, to revel in what Robert Service called: "The Freshness, the Freedom and the Farness."

I had lunch on the saddle between the rising shoulders of the ridge. Spread out literally below my feet was the awe inspiring panorama of the South Toby Valley. The eastern slopes of the ridge are extremely precipitous, falling steeply away to the winding path of the creek over 3000 feet below. Directly under my lookout were two lakes of translucent turquoise, startling in their loveliness. Beyond the creek the eye swept up the opposite slope, tracing out the paths of long gone avalanches,... up to timberline and beyond to the bare wind—swept ridge: a distant foreground to an endless procession of blurring peaks disappearing in the afternoon haze.

Lunch over and now almost reluctantly to the business of climbing up the southerly heights of the ridge. A steepish snow slope led up from the saddle, requiring occasional chopping with the axe where channels of ice encrusted the snow. Above the snow, a steady plod up a surprisingly well—compacted boulder slope: surprising because every other rock pile in the area fitted Kim Deane's description as a "Viet Cong Minefield".

I by-passed a couple of unhealthy looking crevices and scrambled along the spine of the ridge to the top -

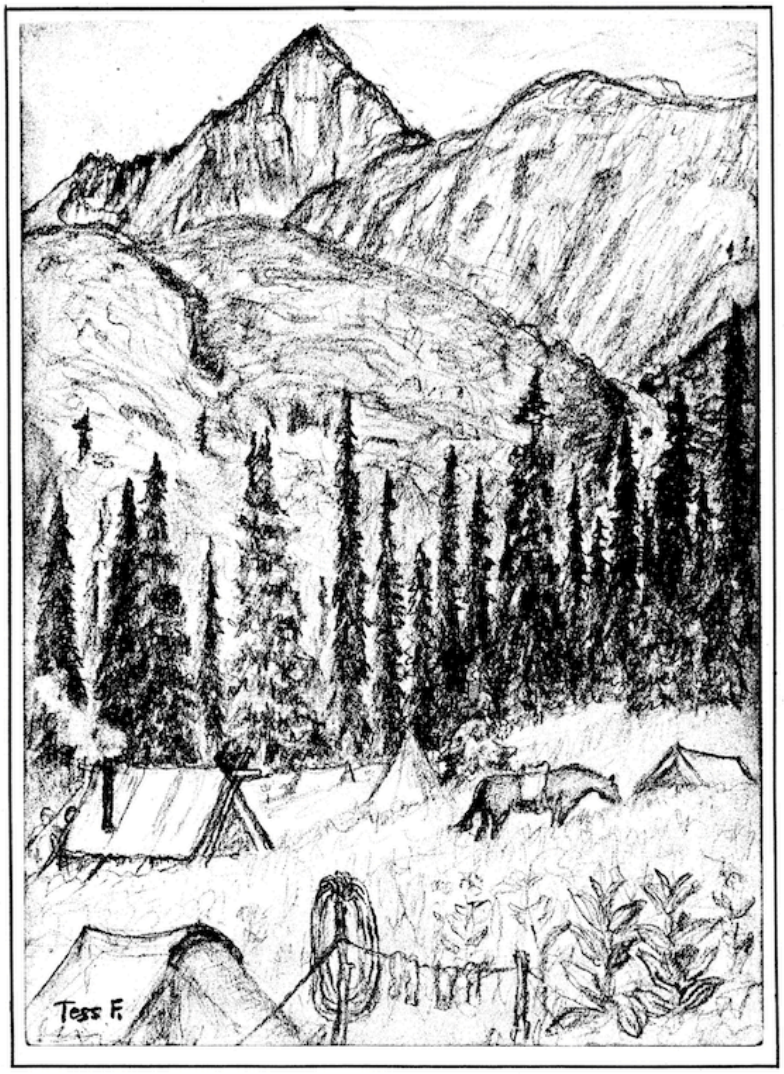
rather cautiously because of the proximity of nothing a few feet to the left! My 'summit' was, I discovered, superseded by another about a half mile further along. Taking a most un—mountaineer-like view of the situation I enjoyed a half hour of delightful relaxation, completely ignoring the additional thirty feet of elevation towering above me! 9209 feet, I reasoned, was quite respectable enough for one day.

To be alone on a mountain top is an inspiring experience. Somehow the atmosphere is quite different. The silence is a tangible thing, intruding into one's conscience as surely as the rumble of thunder. The silence and the emptiness: no sound, no people. Just oneself sitting on top of the world. A microscopic being on a tiny mountain on a small world in an infinite universe.

The worldly factor of time intruded as always, and I left the ridge via a long snow slope dipping down towards the glacier. The run-cum-glissade was exhilarating and quickly brought me down to the meadows again. For a change, and for the sheer pleasure of walking across the springy turf, I took a slightly longer route veering to the left around the lake and heading towards the second rock bluff from the end of the glacier. The rock here was completely different from the other bluff I had climbed in the morning. It was a dirty white colour, seamed with what appeared to be quartz. The surface was incredibly rough. It was possible to walk down any slab to the point of overbalancing with no fear of boots slipping. The slag-like seams projected up to three inches from the base rock and provided innumerable holds; tremendous for rubber soled boots, but painful to fingers!

Back on the glacier again the water still streamed down, the volume considerably increased after a day's sunshine. The life-blood of the glacier was draining away across the surface of its own dying body. Little by little, year by year; the ice is diminishing. On a hot summer's day maybe centuries hence, the last patch of ice will dissolve and trickle away. The lone climber of that future age will stand on the ridge overlooking the deep U-shaped valley. The topography and piles of moraine will tell him that a glacier once filled the valley between the steep slopes of Katherine and Griswold, and the towering magnificence of Mt. Toby. He will wonder how it was in those long ago days, straining his imagination to picture this dry silent valley filled with a solid river of ice crushing and grinding in the frigid darkness, shaping the contours now exposed beneath him. Perhaps he will shrug his shoulders and smile to himself: "How they must have wondered what was under all that ice!"

Changes in the mountains are so slow that all succeeding generations can do is wonder how it was or how it will be. But when one is alone; when shadows are darkening the valleys below the still bright peaks; the air is still and the hush of evening rolls up the mountain slopes: then to wonder is usually enough.



1967 Camp at Earl Grey – Signed by Tess F.

Summit Registers

Did you know the Kootenay Mountaineering Club has a summit register program? Ron Perrier started this program in 1998 and it provides funds for registers to be place on Canadian mountains.

Mountains in our geographic area would generally include the West Kootenay which is the southern Selkirk Mts, the eastern watershed of the Monashees and the western watershed of the Purcells. The remoteness, height and difficulty should all have importance. Trails to peaks would not qualify for a register canister.

A mountain top is a real torture test for materials. Containers must withstand intense UV radiation, rain, hail, snow, repeated freeze/thaw cycles and possibly hungry rodent's teeth. For anyone visiting a mountain top, make sure the register canister is placed inside the cairn to avoid the elements.

If you don't mind extra weight, there are always peaks that need a register canister.

The following can be contacted for a summit register canister:

Vicki Hart	vjoyhart@hotmail.com
Peter Oostlander	president@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca
Doug Clark	vp@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca

A list of mountains with register canisters are on the KMC website. www.kootenaymountainteering.bc.ca

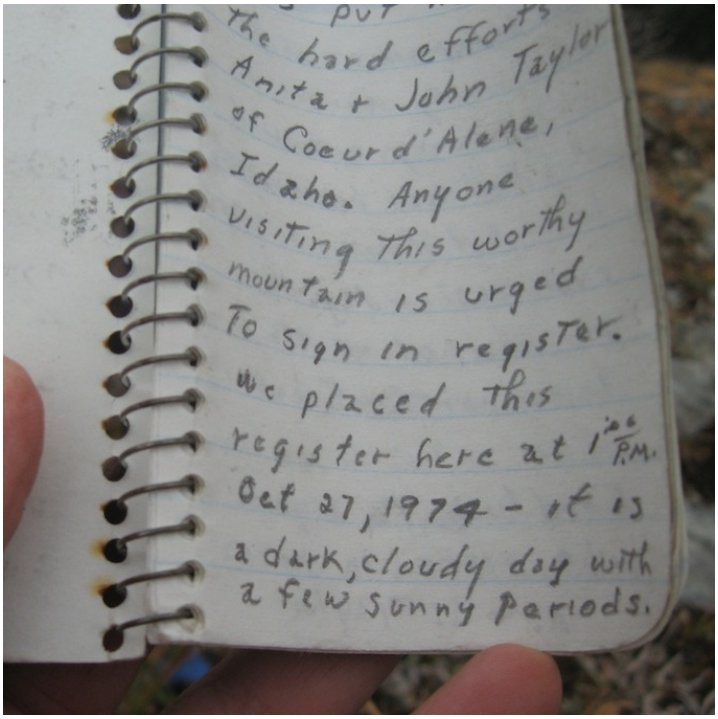
I placed register canisters on the following mountains this summer:

Grohman, Kokanee Range 7543 ft
Kubin, Kokanee Range 7362 ft
English, Valhalla Mts 8850 ft
Iron, Valhalla Mts 8250 ft
Begin, Pioneer Group 9357 ft
Bulmer, Pioneer Group 9216 ft
Wood, Nelson Range 7989 ft

The trip to Mt. Goodwin with Bill McNally highlighted another register on the summit of Mt Goodwin and I have sent pictures along.

Please notice the summit register canister on the cairn. It was placed on the summit in 1974, the book was totally dry....I found that quite amazing.





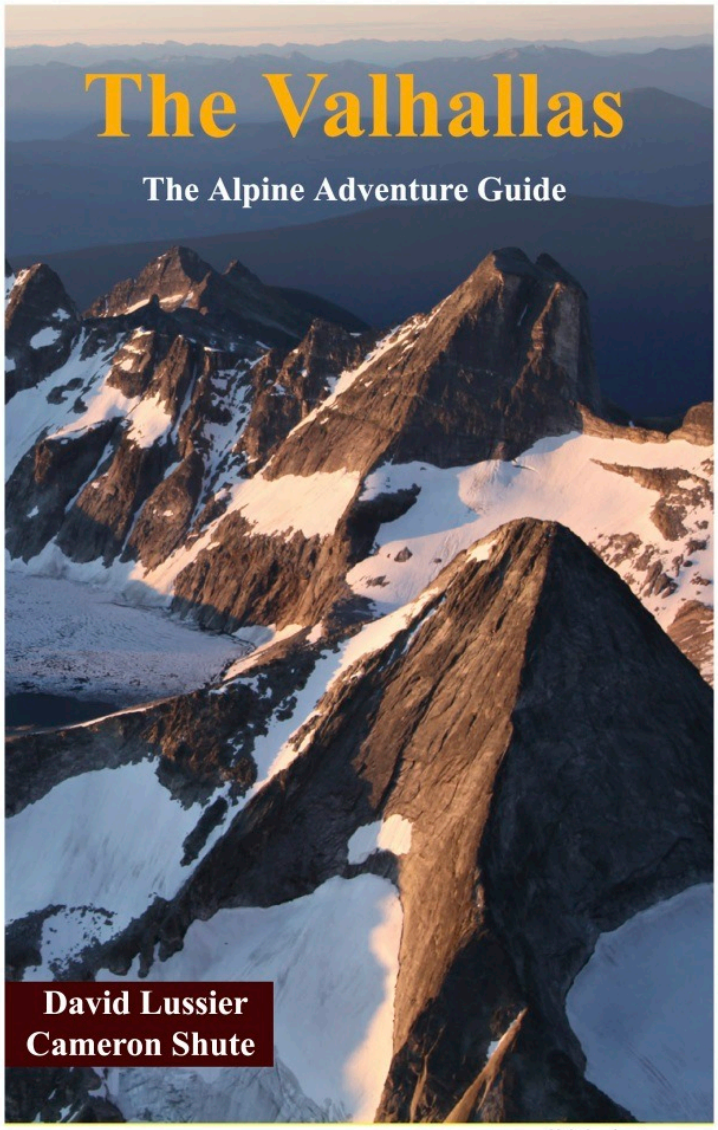
Vicki Hart

July 24th, 2013

West Kootenay climbers David Lussier and Cameron Shute have teamed up to write a new Valhalla guidebook.

This modern guidebook will be a compilation of all existing alpine rock climbs, mountaineering routes, scrambles, hikes along with select ski touring routes. The compilation will include accurate descriptions of approaches & ascent routes accompanied with modern photos & topos. They hope to have the project completed for the spring of 2015.

The Valhalla range is roughly 1800sq. km. It extends from Koch creek and the Arrow Lakes basin to the south and west, northwards as far as Nakusp and to the Slocan valley on its east side. The bulk of their work will be to climb, photograph, document and write about the routes to be included in the guidebook. In an effort to create an accurate resource they will contact climbers, mountaineers, skiers and hikers who have contributed by way of pioneering new routes in the Valhalla range.



wildairphoto.com

David and Cameron are also looking for the greater climbing community's input. They would like to hear from anyone interested in sharing information or photos which could increase the quality of the guidebook. They are looking for new route info not previously made public, erroneous descriptions or grade discrepancies of establish routes as well as high resolution climbing and hiking photographs.

If you would like to share route information, please contact them at info@valhallaguide.ca