The Kootenay Mountaineer

A Kootenay newsletter for people with year-round outdoor pursuits.

Winter Solstice, 2014

Message from the Editor

Lots of trip reports, conservation reports, and some history!



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.

Newsletters are now published four times a year according to the solar calendar. That means that there is a whole season of stories to collect! Please, write them!

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The 50 Summit Challenge

A whole bunch of mountain activity this summer.

10 Summits

Graham Jamin
Peter Jordan
Jill Watson
Leon Arishenkoff
Ed Beynon
Hazel Beynon
Bob McQueen
Garry LaFace

25 Summits

Ross Bates
Brenda Haley
Vicki Hart
Diane Paolini
Jocelyn LaFace
Glenn Keto
Chris Cowan

50 Summits

Dan Derby
Nadine Ebner
Steven Miros
Eliane Miros
Peter Oostlander
William McNally
Caroline LaFace

Trip Reports

Bluebell Mountain

July 1, 2014
Distance: approximately 5km return
Elevation gain: !,814 feet

Everyone arrived at the Riondel Community Centre about 9am to consolidate into three 4-wheel drive vehicles before driving to Km 12.1 (5,367 ft.) on the South Tam O'Shanter logging road. The vehicles were re-positioned to avoid interference with the on-going road construction by Wynndel Box and Lumber.

We bushwhacked up about 800 vertical feet, following old blazes, blue and red flags until we located the trail that had been built by Crawford Bay school students in 1974. The trail headed north on the contour for a short distance before it curled east, southeast and south along the ridge overlooking Tam O'Shanter Creek. At the first viewpoint, cameras were able to identify KMC member Ron Stockerl on the summit of Mount Loki, 8 kms (4.8 miles) to the north. The first stop rest stop at 6,466 feet was a small campsite used by the trail builders. The leader mistakenly took a side trail that started to descend off the ridge. Rather that face possible lynching, a quick decision was made to bushwhack back up to the ridge where the main trail was again encountered.

At noon, the hikers arrived at a large outcrop of metamorphosed sedimentary rocks (6,876 feet) with a spectacular view of Kootenay Lake, the Kokanee glacier and many named peaks of the Selkirks and Purcells. Cell phone contact was made with Ron Stockerl with an exchange of Happy Canada Day greetings. After a brief lunch break, the hikers followed the partially snow covered ridge to the south and south east to the Bluebell Mountain summit (7,184 feet).

Vicki took a photo of Louis signing the official KMC register. Many of the geographic features were identified including Crystal Lake, Crawford Bay, Preacher Creek and several peaks including Sphinx, Hooker, Snowcrest, Crawford and Old Tom. A compass bearing on a large mountain in the St Marys (East Kootenay) was later identified as Hungry Peak (8,762 feet). When the group was instructed to walk to a vantage point in order to see Plaid Lake, they interrupted the privacy of one unnamed participant, who was attempting to remove a creepy-crawling from her gaunchies. This only added to the entertainment value of this special day. Two snow people were built and posed for the flag waving Canada Day group photo.



After a second lunch and a short ziz, it was time to head back. Few blue flags and blazes were seen as we bushwhacked down the final slope although we could see our vehicles as we approached the road about 4pm. Everyone arrived safely back at the community cener in Riondel about 4:45pm. After a few sweaty hugs, the group headed for the 5:20pm Kootenay Lake ferry while the leader headed to the campground for the annual Chilli Cook-off and free beer.

Participants: Anne Lavergne, Vicki Hart, Zuzana Zach, Louis-Marie Trepanier, Megan Lazaruk, Daniela Gadotti, Joan Harvey, Mike Brewster, Phil Best, Terry Turner (and the presence of Mary W.)

Esmeralda Peak

Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park

July 13



Esmeralda Peak was our objective on this true blue day. With Keith in the lead, at just under a full run, with a 20 pound pack including a 8mm rope!!

We four scooted up to the end of the keyhole trail and were met with walkable snow. Ice axes in hand we scrambled into the keyhole breach and onto the snow ridge

Esmeralda was gained in quick order and we had time to reflect on members recently passed, their spirits as free as the wind.

We returned via the same way with some boot skiing and celebrated the good day with a plunge in Gibson Lake. Cool and Refreshing.

We were: Anne Lavergne, Keith Houghton, Louis-Marie Trepanier, and Curt Nixon, trip coordinator

Mt. Carlyle

September 21



The most amazing bluebird day to Mt. Carlyle with Delia, Nadine and Steve. AND Nadine's 50th peak!!! A perfect way to end the season for me. I'm off to Nepal and Burma for 2 months and hope to see you when I get back at WH2O! KMC was an awesome adventure for me and I want to thank everyone involved and those I shared hikes with!

Phil Best



Mt Sherman

Sept. 8, 2014

2510 m. (several differing altitudes on record for this)

Lat. 49,25 Long. 116,39.

We've come to the conclusion that there is no better way to hike the wonderful east shore Kootenay Lake mountains than by car camping. At least for Castlegar people that is, as it removes about 5 hrs of travel per hike. Our September long weekend car-camping/hiking mini-holiday, and our legs, seemed to be going so well that we made a last minute decision for Mt. Sherman. Stevens previous attempt some years back was with a Wendy Hurst KMC 2 group hike around the lake and beyond. All that was remembered about it was to go up the ramp at the west end of the lake. On that trip, #2 group continued around to the far shore of the lake, climbed the ramp and then over to Mt Sherman which

once on top, it obviously wasn't. On that day Ted and Hans scrambled down into the valley via a rather precarious route, scurried across a meadow to the east foot of Mt Sherman, went around a corner for a while, and then reappeared on the obvious summit some time later. They also said it was easy.

Eliane and I felt it worthwhile to share the following directions because we couldn't find any, and apparently several outings have made the same detour. Someone celebrated the assumed Sherman with a nice blue ribbon which made us smile when we got there. Actually this sub peak is all part of the same east/west ridge, of which the high point is Mt Sherman. The ridge however is beyond the challenge of most.

Mt Sherman trail access is found by driving up the well-marked Sanca Creek FSR. After several miles you arrive at a junction pointing the directions to Haystack Mt or Sherman Lakes. The last km of the road has alder encroaching but it is vehicle passable, we however left our vehicle just before this section. A short distance along this last stretch of road there is an ATV trail veering off to the right which we ignored. The road soon ends at a parking area with a dilapidated trailhead sign. From here it is a 5 km uphill hike to Sherman Lakes (Two) along a fair trail that hopefully the MOF will someday do maintenance on.

Upon arriving at the first lake there is a trace of trail going counter clockwise around the lakes and near the shoreline. Bushwhacking is required. Sights should be set on the mid-spot of the semi-circular ridge to the west, behind the lake. As one gets closer you can discern a steep narrow grass ramp which provides the easy route. Once upon the ridge, the assumed Sherman is majestically in front of you (due west) on the other side of a small valley. Mt. Sherman is right behind that. From here it is best to line up a route that will put you lower down on the left shoulder of the assumed Sherman. If you go too high you will have to drop again because there is another similar valley after that. Too low and you will have to climb back up through brush unnecessarily.

Once you are slightly around the aforementioned left shoulder, Mt Sherman appears. The route is to once again descend westward into the next valley, stay fairly high and head for midway on the ridge which is a fairly easy scramble to attain. The hidden side of the ridge is a grassy walk to the top.

Mt Shermans views north of Haystack, Akokli and Snowcrest are grand. Kootenay Lake and the peaks of Darkwoods are easily discernible.

We returned via the same way to the ridge above the lake. From there we dropped into the basin on a feint path and then continued gradually descending through fairly open forest towards the lakes eastern end. We then stumbled upon an ATV track which led to a nice campsite on the southern shore of the lake. From here it was easy shoreline walking and then onto the trail back down to the truck.

We suspect that the ATV trail might have been part and partial to the one we saw at the trailhead. It should also be noted that the southern slopes of Mt Sherman have been logged and explored to some extent for minerals. This leads us to suspect that there may be an easier way to approach from lower down the Sanca Creek road. But then you wouldn't be able to see the lakes.



Photo is from summit looking east. Sherman Lakes are barely visible in picture centre.

Eliane & Steven Miros

Airy Mtn.

2,568 m.

September 12, 2014

Lat.49.32 Long.117.51

Airy has been a regular outing for the KMC but the reports of the road access have been not positive these past few years. By chance a workmate of mine informed me about his mountain bike attempt at the Airy access and we though it best to investigate sooner than later with such reliable information. He told us that bicycle, quad and/or snowmobile are good, otherwise it is an extra 6-7 km of walking to the last existing bridge where we last parked on a KMC hike several years ago.

Under slightly overcast and cooler skies we drove up the regular Koch access, and after about 3 km. we turned up the traditional access road up Airy Creek. We soon found ourselves blocked off by gigantic boulders placed at the first bridge.The ATVs and motorcycles have obviously been going around the obstacles and a very short narrow vehicle might have made it but at about 2 km past the bridge there is a washout which would stop a vehicle unless there was a lot of shovelling into the bank. There is also some more boulder removing work required further up and at times the alder is significantly encroaching on the road and after 4 km it is not vehicle passable. The ATVs have however pushed through this to roads end. Soon it will be impossible for them as well. The other bridges are fairly shoddy for a vehicle. But, the roadbed is still easily passable on foot.

At roads end which is at the northern slope leading up to Airy we easily followed the snowmobile access path which goes straight up and northwards to the snowmobilers Shakers cabin. This straight up path was cut out illegally with an excavator about 10-15 years ago during the days of the commercialized versus non-commercialized discussions of this areas use. The cabin can be found by following the creek up at the point where it traverses this excavator path. Once you reach the small creek on a height of land you continue west on the path and access the talus slopes below Airys north-eastern face. We think that with the road out, no one has done any summer maintenance on the cabin accounting for the lack of a trampled footpath into the cabin.

The large bouldered slope of Airy was easily traversed laterally to the mountains south-eastern approach from where it is a straight up scramble on a grassy slope.. We had a nice lunch at the summit. The cairn on Airy is a 2 meter high angular stone piece of artwork. Sitting on Airy had us considering how we could get on the mountain once the access is totally grown in. An approach from Russell Lake (Russel Rd) or Mt. Spiers (Grizzly Cr) would be long but doable.Two days later, from the summit of Spiers, it became obvious that an overnighter to the mountain from Spiers would easily do the job. We will find out more about a Russel Lake approach next spring.

The summit register needs refurbishing/replacement. The last recorded trip in 2012 wrote that a lightning storm hit the huge cairn and obliterated the pencils graphite and the plastic bag. It was too bad that this person never left their pencil in what remained of the canister as there have probably been other pencil-less ascents since. There was one entry for 2013, (September 10) written with an ink pen.

The trip out went very well.



Photo is looking east across Russel Lake and to Mt. Spiers.

Eliane & Steven

Ripple Mountain and Lightning Strike

Kootenay Pass

Tuesday September 23, 2014

Carpooling from Waneta and Salmo, we were able to arrive at Kootenay Pass and start our trip by 08:55. The hike to Lightning Strike up the old road and along the south side of the ridge trail is easy going and straight forward. We arrived at the Lightning Strike summit at 10:20. After a short break for water, food and route planning we pressed on with the threat of an afternoon rain shower we wanted to keep moving as much as possible. As we dropped, dropped, dropped south west into the valley thru Bushwhack (BW) .5 conditions we kept our eye on the best place to access the Ripple Mountain South ramp. After what seemed like too long and to far we could see our access to the ramp and finally started to gain elevation again. Checking when we got home I noticed that we had dropped into the valley to within a 100 meters of the elevation of where we had parked the vehicles. By now the we had upgraded the Bushwhacking to a BW1 The ramp to the summit was full of beautifully colored boulders that required attention to your foot placement. We arrived at the Ripple Mountain summit at 13:12, a 4 hour ascent.



After an enjoyable lunch break we started our descent back to the vehicles. On the way back we tried a different route thru the valley bottom that had less up and down but more Bushwhacking. Once the showers set in again the Bushwhacking was upgraded to BW2. A little later with a stumble and broken branch penetrating the end of Ross's thumb we upgraded the scale one more time to a BW3 (to get to three you have to draw blood, and he did). Once atop lightning strike for the second time of the day the rest of the trip was an easy walk back out to the vehicles. Stats for the day - Lightning Strike summit 2,182 meters (7158), Ripple Mountain summit 2,334 meters (7657), distance was 17.2 km with a total elevation gain of 1,430 meters (4,695) over 9 hours and 23 minutes. Upon reflection the final Bushwhack rating for the day was BW3L, L for long. This trip would be best repeated in late spring/ early summer when there is snow to travel on thru the valley between Lightning strike and the Ripple Mountain south ramp.

We were Glenn Keto, Diane Paolini, Christoph Beck (photographer), Peter Oostlander, Ross Bates, Gene Van Dyck and Dan Derby (trip leader/reporter)

Mt. Irvine

September 28

The poor newsletter editor is stuck writing up the Mt. Irvine trip. He was on the trip, but the major problem is that he took no notes about who was along for that beautiful sunny day. Rather than miss a name or two, he is going to miss everyone's name. Rest assured that it was a good crowd of great people.

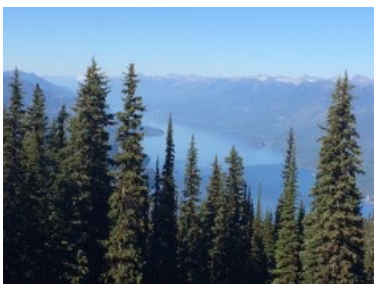
Sun, larches in full splendour, and wonderful views north and west along the lake, and a celebratory ceremony on the summit for some 50 Peak Challenge people.











Cannabis Lake / Mount Crawford

October 1



This area is located about 16 road kilometres east of the Crawford Bay transfer station. Most of the participants arrived in Kootenay Bay on the ferry about 9 am where we consolidated into two vehicles. We got within 3 kilometres of the Cannabis trailhead where a cable logging operation blocked the road. Unfortunately, the loggers did not place a "Road Closed" sign at Km7 and indicated there would be a considerable delay before they could clear the road.



We turned around and decided on Plan B, which was the Plaid Lake trail to Mount Crawford. We noticed fresh snow on Sphinx, Snowcrest and Loki. Six of us decided to climb to the summit while the others traversed the ridge.



Suddenly, a witch appeared on the summit and reminded everyone that Halloween was less that a month away.

The rest of the hike was uneventful and the transients managed to catch the 3:40pm ferry back to civilization.

We were: Bert and Sue Port, Terri and Rob Richardson, Sheila Sinkie, Alister MacDonald, Jim MacDonald, Sharon and Terry Turner

Pontiac Peak

Oct 5, 2014

2536 m. (Lat. 49.7666, Long. 117.0855)

Pontiac Peak is located in the NE corner of Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park, surrounded with beckoning mountain tops. Though our main destinations in this area are usually Silver Spray Cabin and Woodbury Hut, Pontiac Peak is their equal for a day hike, including some easy scrambling and route-finding. The area has a significant history dating back to the 1890s of mining the Scranton/Pontiac/Sunrise/Sunset vein system. Its many remains still exist today. This includes a great miners trail up to Sunset Lake. The fairly significant Scranton Mine operated into the late 70s.

The Scranton Mine actually provided for my first foray into Kokanee Glacier Park. An old-timer mining uncle of mine lured me to the area with a -first time ever- helicopter ride into the Scranton Basin to shovel off the heavy snow load from the bunkhouses. Needless to say that Waldo and I weren't too sure of what we'd gotten ourselves into considering we'd have to get out on our own. But a one way helicopter ride seemed to more than justify some snow shovelling and a cross country ski out. We had no clue about backcountry skiing and it wouldn't have helped anyway as neither of us knew how to ski. It probably wasn't all that bad as I repeated the foray, with another friend of course, about a month later. Fast forward 40 years

The Sunset Lake Trailhead is accessed by driving 12 km up the Woodbury Creek FSR. Parking for the Scranton Mine/Sunset Lake trailhead is at the junction where the road splits to the Silver Spray/Woodbury trailhead parking lot. The well-marked access road to Sunset Lake trailhead/Scranton Mine is grown in for all but ATVers. This roadbed section is rather long (about 4 km), but the pleasant miners trail up to Sunset Lake and beyond, more than makes up for it. A park sign marks the trail off the grown in road and a well-built foot bridge provides access across Pontiac creek. Someone, probably fisherman, maybe parks crew, has cleared the deadfalls. It should be noted that when you are walking the road section south and parallel to Pontiac Creek, you can see occasional glimpses of Pontiac Peak slightly UP ahead and to the right.

Once you reach Sunset Lake, which has several nice camping spots, the trail follows the east shore while at the same time gradually ascends to the mines further up. Pontiac Peak is behind (a part of) the ridge south of the lake. Though on a well-established trail base, the underbrush and lack of maintenance are taking an increasing toll on this section of the trail. Once you reach a mine at the foot of a minor headwall, the trail turns south (over the mine shaft) where it meanders

south along an agreeable ramp overlooking Sunset Lake.

Eventually you reach another small mine from where you can easily pick your way up the stream bed to the col above.



At the col the route is to go right up the small ridge a short distance, stay below, and work your way along the base of the ridge face. It is not necessary to drop into the basin as there is a narrow ramp allowing for you to basically work your way along the ridge base. Once past the narrow section it's an easy scramble on boulders and dirt in a south westerly direction all the way to the summit.



When we arrived at the summit it became engulfed in fog on what was supposed to be a sunny weekend. The fairly good shape summit register was deposited by Ron Perrier and Ross Scott in 1998. The summit had seen several visits of KMCers. After lunch and more waiting, the fog cleared to about 8000 ft allowing us to get oriented amongst the surrounding mountains. Riondel is clearly visible from the summit. Views onto the Woodbury Hut area and the mountains east of Kootenay Lake were great. Kane Peak is at the doorstep of Pontiac thereby providing a very different vantage point. It might also form a long day ascent route. Kokanee Glacier likewise. The Woodbury Hut-Silver Spray Hut traverse is slightly discernible to the north.

All in all we spent a great long time at the summit and had a pleasant descent. We returned via the same route arriving at the truck by 6 pm (left vehicle at about 9 am). A triple header with a car camp at the various trailheads would be a great way to visit the area.

One photo is of the upper mine before ascending col. Second is nearing summit.

Eliane & Steven Miros

Mt. Waldie

October 8th, 2014

The group met in Salmo at 8am and proceeded 10km up Sheep Ck. road, and then a short distance along Waldie Ck. road to the trailhead. We were hiking by 8:30. The trail follows an old mining road for two easy hours, then some light bush straight up to the ridge, and a short climb to the summit. Peter brought along a new summit register for the peak (7700 ft).

There are excellent views all round, especially the peaks around Kootenay Pass. During lunch on the summit we were entertained by a mountain goat on the cliff opposite. He effortlessly moved back and forth across the steep cliff face, sometimes running, all on terrain that we would think twice about climbing.

The descent was a little bushier as we encountered more deadfall than on the way up, but once on the road it was a fast walk back to the start. We took 3 hours to the top, 6.5 hours total time back to the cars. Distance was about 18km round trip, with 4500 ft. elevation change.

Participants: Sherisse & Andrew Kyle, Caroline Laface, Jill Watson, Diane Paolini, Peter Oostlander, and coordinator Ross Bates.

Slocan Valley Bike Ride

I organized a KMC cycle trip on Friday Oct. 10. The trip was on quiet back roads and on rail trail in the Slocan Valley. It was a beautiful Fall day, clear skies with sparkling yellow and red trees and views of the river and mountains.

8 club members attended:

Marilyn Miller (coordinator), Louise Hammerich, Dave Brackett, Mary Prothro, Kathleen Nichol, Helen Foulger, Janice Isaac, Joanne Emily, and 2 guests.

Wolf Peak & Ridge West

(towards Waldie Mtn)

2130 m., Lat.49,6. Long 117,3. October 11 & 12, 2014



Great autumn weather provided the backdrop for exploring these environs. We were however unable to find detailed information regarding the Wolf even though there have been several KMC trips to it over the many years. What we did find was contradictory information from the Backroads book (whose scale vaguely identified the peak southeast of Waldie Lake) and Google satellite imagery (clearly marking the peak southwest of Waldie Lake). The contradiction appeared to amount to about 4 km of distance on the east/west ridge which parallels Lost Creek on its north.

Access was an issue. By way of the crow, or from a map, the easiest access seemed to be provided by Hwy #3 a few miles east of the summit therein following the power line road. It was then a matter of bushwhacking northwards up to Pristine Pass then continuing the same trajectory up Wolfs east shoulder. This route seemed to be somewhat dependent on drivability of the power line maintenance road.

The other route, approximately twice as long, starts at the Stagleap Park parking area. This involves working ones way along Cornice Ridge to the 3rd sub-bump just before the Camels Hump. From there it requires descending northward via a sub ridge into the Lost Creek valley, under the power lines, over the gas line, and continuing this sub ridge to the perpendicular ridges lofty heights above. Once on the ridge (which parallels Lost Creek on its north) it seems straightforward to follow it westwards to where Wolf was marked on Google Sat. Continuing further along this ridge would eventually have you on Mt. Waldie.

We decided on the latter route due to road unknowns and the attractiveness of what appeared to be a long ridge walk. On Cornice Ridge we took several minutes appreciating a moose watering itself in the small tarn below.The ridge paralleling Lost Creek on its north turned out to be great with very nice views of the surrounding area. South towards Ripple, north to the Three Sisters, east to John Bull and Darkwoods and west onto Mt Waldie. When we finally reached the cairned summit to the west, no register existed. Great large cairn though. We had a nice long lunch in warm sunshine enjoying these vistas as well as watching the hunters far below on Lost Creek Road.



We headed back along the ridge the way we came and then continued further along to its eastern craggy summit. Once again no register. This bump has a well-balanced, slim, very tall cairn topped by a large piece of quartz. We retraced our steps to Cornice Ridge and to the truck. Trip time was a fairly steady nine and a half hours.



Once at home and after an excellent dinner the cognitive dissonance created by our inability to confirm Wolf Peak set in. This prompted us to pull out the old reliable topos, Teds Lats/Longs for Wolf Peak and a few photos we took that day. It seemed Google Satellite was definitely wrong and the Backroads mapbook was pretty close. We realized that the peak was that piddly thing standing off alone, but still part of the eastern end of the ridge we had walked all day.

A better than expected forecast for Saturday, a curiosity about the possibility of a significantly shorter and enjoyable Lost Creek Road approach and Vicky's early morning email to us about not locating a register, Any chance of you not being able to find it ? prompted us into re-action.

Lost Creek road is now in good shape because they put the pipeline in along the existing power line a few years back. This road starts a few kms east of the turnoff down Nelway across from the established highway Rest Area. We drove up the Lost Creek Road 18 km to roads end which is the headwater basin of Lost Creek. Several hunters in trucks and quads were encountered along the way. At the pass, both the gas pipeline and the power line begin their descent eastwards to Creston. A high clearance is recommended and 4x4 low range worked best for the last km to the pass.

Starting at 10 am we hiked up the ridge north of the pass for a few hundred meters until the Wolf came into view (to the northeast). The long side-hilling route to it was a mixture of animal trail and fairly significant bushwhack. The last avalanche chute brought us into a nice meadow from where we tackled the peak via its relatively easy western shoulder. Low and behold, the KMC summit register!



After a nice fairly long lunch amidst the grandeur and with rain clouds developing to the north, we began our trek back. We decided to ignore all the bushwhacking and side-hilling of the morning and climb back onto the ridge to the west, that entertained us with great views the day before. It was a very good choice even though we were exposed to a brief hail storm. Descending down the wet rocks and grass went very well as the slope was not too steep. This approach took less than 5 hrs.

The summit register later confirmed that the KMC used both approaches. Now we have a third. Summing up, don't trust Google Earth too much, use the old topos, ask others, checkout if there is a register in the clubs log and write better or at least more accurate trip report directions. And most of all hike to Wolf Peak!

First photo is looking north to Wolf Peak. Second is on ridge looking west to Mt. Waldie. Third is Wolf Peak. Fourth shows Wolf Peaks double summit.

Eliane & Steven

Mt. Hoover

2269m, October 20, 2014

Mt Hoover has been on the list for some time now and the mild no-snow-weather gave us the opportunity to hike it. The blue sky and golden larch colours highlighted the trip.

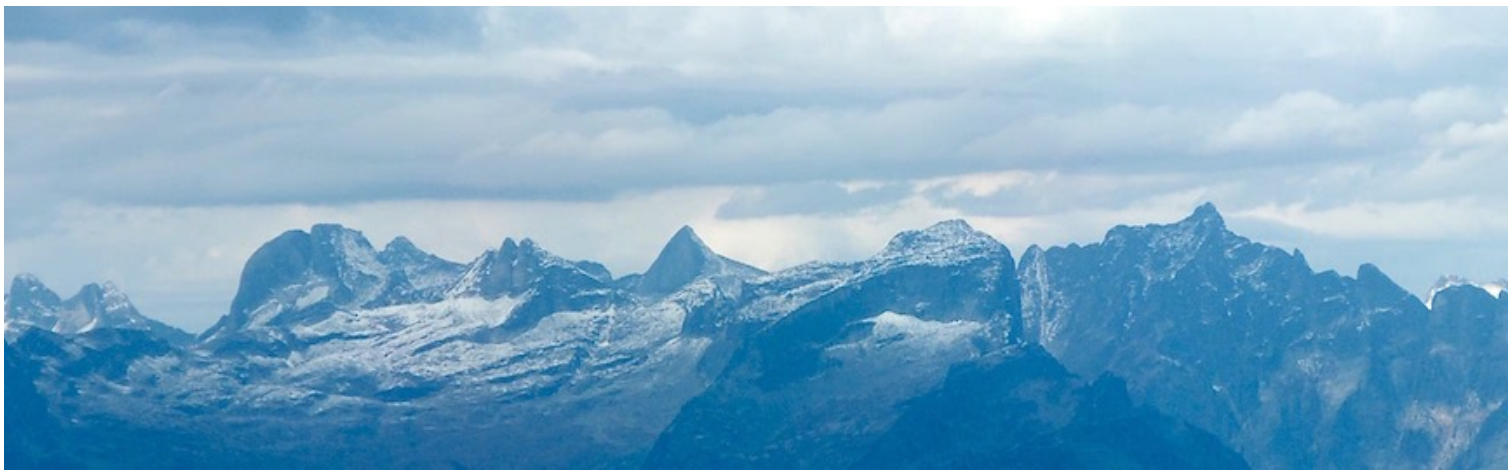


We drove up Marsden Road and continued straight past the the Baldface Lodge turnoff (i.e. don't turn right). A very good road along Baldface Creek probably due to the fact that they were logging - including that day - at roads end which is at about 20 km. We parked at a small parking spot and moved well off the road at 18.3 km. By way of the compass Hoover is approximately due north and we huffed and puffed our way essentially straight up the obvious clearcut into the burnt standing forest above. This burnt area is visible from several kms down the road. It was very steep but easy travel through little if any underbrush. Eventually we reached the alpine forest and soon after that we were on a minor summit offering grand views of the area including Kokanee, the Valhallas, the Norns Range and to the north, Mt Hoover. The route is a counter clockwise ridge with several bumps along what appears to be the cat ski cleared right-of-way all the way to the summit.

This was a very enjoyable ridge walk and some time later we were on the summit. We piled a few rocks to make a home for the register and while doing so we found an old rusted sardine can under one of the rocks and $3.25 in change. The views onto the Valhallas are grand. Mt Grohman, Kubin and a peak west of Kubin (between Kubin and Hoover) are just to the east. You can see bits of the Slocan Valley as well and well up the Lemon Creek drainage to Giegerich and Sunset Mtns. After lunch, some nice pictures and orientation we began the walk back under increasingly cloudy skies. The last bit down the very steep part was tiring but straightforward and we were back at the truck 5 hours later. The loggers had left and we had a nice ride home amidst autumn gold. Though very steep at the beginning of the trek, this seems to be the best way to get to Mt. Hoover. Not including snowcat of course which seems to come less than half a km of the summit.

One photo on Hoover looking west to the Valhallas. The other is looking east over Kubin to Mt. Grohman.

Eliane & Steven Miros





Champion Lakes (A1)

November 11th, 2014

Initial Inquiries: 50 total 37 members, 13 non-members (I had hope of 50 hikers for KMCs 50th anniversary!)

Participated: 33 total 28 members, 5 non-members (all 33 hiked the lake trails, 16 did the side trip up to the overlook)

Cancelled: 8 total 5 members, 3 non-members

No Shows: 9 total 4 members, 5 non-members

The participants were coordinator Ross Bates, Gayle Buchner, Helen Foulger, Chris Cowan, Sheila Moro, Pat Bruce, Sue Gaskell, Ian Smith, Griff Richards, Carole Masse, Mary Collodel, Connie Parisotto, Eric Ackerman, Elizabeth Krebbers, Amy Sutton, Jon Dumouchel, Tina Baldwin, Lisa Galone, Don Harasym, June Harasym, Erik Marks, Marilyn Miller, Carol Potasnyk, Pnina Shames, Jocelyn Martin, Tom Braumandl, Pete Gosney, Barb Gosney, Joan Posivy, Elizabeth Cunningham, Andrea Kotillo, Sarah Simonet, and one mystery hiker who shall remain nameless since they forgot to sign in.

Four Cabin Trip

This was billed as a four cabin ski trip on Mt. Lepso. The weather had been mild until the previous day with temperatures in the plus 5 degree range. Overnight the arctic temperatures turned our snow into a crust and sprinkled some fresh snow on top. Actually this turned out to be all right, since the base was consolidated, with a crust on top that was strong enough to support us. Five of us headed up the Seven Summit trail from the Nancy Greene Summit, bundled up for the cold temperature. Our first stop was Surprise Cabin, followed by Eagle's Nest. Both cabins have short side trails to gain access. The wind was gusting at the exposed Eagle's Nest with Dave's thermometer reading -20 deg. C.



Eagle's Nest with (l to r) Diane, Bob and Jeff. Photo Peter O.

We were happy to get back into the forest, and out of the wind. Sunspot Cabin was next, the only cabin right on the Seven Summit trail. Our final cabin, Berry Ridge, took us up an old logged field, which had lynx

and rabbit tracks. We suspected the lynx had been out looking for a midnight snack. We hooked up with Terry's Trail at the top of the field, which took us to Berry Ridge cabin and a fire. The small cabin warmed up quickly and we soon had five grilled cheese sandwiches cooking on the stove.



Entrance to Terry's Trail. (l to r) Peter, Dave, Jeff and Diane. Photo Bob McQueen



Aprés lunch chit-chat in Berry Ridge Cabin. Bob photo

We decided to play it safe and wore our skins on the way back. One interesting encounter was with three mountain bikers riding up the trail. They had the bikes with the big fat tires, and seemed to have good traction. Should we be putting bike trips on the KMC winter trip calendar now?

Diane Paolini, Jeff Ross, Dave Watson, Peter Oostlander and Bob McQueen coordinator.

Snow Shoe Trip to Evening Ridge

December 7

A big group of 17 headed up to Evening Ridge, just below Whitewater in a convoy on December 7th. We were at all skills levels for snowshoeing from expert to newbie, but all were keen to reach the summit of the ridge.



There were a variety of conditions as sun turned to cloud and then fog, blocking some of the nice views of Ymir and surrounding area. The snow pack was tricky with some areas where we post holed, despite snowshoes and ski poles sinking right to the ground underneath. Luckily there were some ski touring tracks to follow through Hummingbird Pass and beyond, plus Helen, Sheila, and others took turns breaking trail.



All of us made it to the top and had good fun on a fast descent. We took a detour at the bottom along an untracked cross country ski trail and came across some Whitewater workers clearing the trail of alder - just for us. As Phil said, most of the group were well behaved and all had fun.

We were Brandon Hughes, Angela Germaine, Helen Foulger, Joan Posivy, P'nina Shames, Phil Best, Janis Gilbert, Sandy Sinclair, Carilia Horning, Anne Lavergne, Stefan Lehmann, Jennifer Lehmann, Brad Howard, Sheila Sinkie, Ann Jensen, Rob Haggar, and Wendy Haggar.

"Are we having fun yet?"

October 14, Lahia Odar, Dolpa region, Nepal

Terry Simpson

(EA-1)

What started as a gentle sprinkle in the evening had turned to steady downpour overnight, and by morning, the sound of rain was overpowering the roar of the waterfall nearby. Anything that touched saturated sides and groundsheet of our tent immediately soaked up water. On day 12 of trekking, our camp was located in a narrow valley at 3,370m.

The previous day began with a gradual downhill from the village of Sahartara. The relatively flat and wide trail by the river became narrow and rocky, ascending steeply on a hillside. We came to an area where the trail was washed away and had to detour on a gnarly path. Some people from our group were held up here behind heavily laden mules which had to be coaxed through the passage with difficulty. By the time everyone arrived at the camp it was getting dark and cold.

(EA-2)



In the morning we found out via a Sat phone call to Kathmandu that the storm had moved in from India which would last all day. We decided to stay put for the day and hoped for the weather to clear. We had to move everything into the dining tent and tried to stay warm and dry (reminiscent of Hiking Camp 1 experience this summer). Sherpas were kept busy digging trenches around tents which started to collect water.

(EA-3)

In four days we would be crossing Numala pass (5,380m), the highest point in lower Dolpo. We discussed our options. If the weather did not improve, we were to backtrack the next day rather than risk getting caught in the snow.

Most of us were thinking about where we could have been and what we could have been doing (eg. relaxing on a tropical beach) instead of freezing in this god forsaken spot. Even if we wanted to bail out there was no easy way.

The deluge finally started to abate in the evening, and when we looked up at the sky we could see the stars as we walked, clutching hot "Nalgene" bottles to take to our wet tents to sleep.

(EA-4)

It did clear up the next day, and on October 18 we crested the pass with no incident. On the way we met a few trekkers who told us harrowing tales of getting caught in snow storm at high elevation and having to turn around.

We didn't find out until five days later that nearly 40 people (including 4 Canadians) had died from the storm on October 14.

Eric Ackerman

(Editor's note:These are descriptions that Eric added to the marked sections of Terry's report.)

(EA-1)

The weather had been great since a sudden hailstorm had punished us coming off our 1st high pass after leaving Dhorapatan a week ago.

October 13, 2014

As Terry indicates, after supper and right at bed time between 7 and 8 pm a nightmare was about to unfold as our tents, flies and ground sheets that *WERE* completely dry didn't stand a chance against the billion raindrops that were to test their mettle.

(EA-2)

Our day was long, hard and much cooler than our previous ones.

At the place where the path was washed out the damn mules formed a mule block. On this very steep detour and we had to squeeze our way through them grabbing onto the bags that were tied to them to keep our footing.

(EA-3)

I made the mistake of leaning my daypack against the inside of the dining tent wall my pack was soaked inside and out. Behind us was a rock wall with its own waterfall cascading down and threatening flood us out.



There was not much point returning to the indoor swimming pools in our tents so we hung out in the dining tent feeling sorry for ourselves.



Finally after lunch when we couldn't hear any noise coming the kitchen tent Terry and I headed back to the two tent metropolis of Laina Odar only to find the sherpas and porters all wrapped up snug as a bug under thick woollen blankets sitting around a wood stove listening to music watching a young lady dance. They didn't need to twist our arms or ask us twice to join them

I had every piece of warm clothes I brought with me on and was not warm as the dampness really made everyones feet cold.

An hour and a half later we were warm and ready to head back to camp to the whining tent.

Even David Gluns a nineteen year veteran and our leader said this was the worst weather he had ever encountered and stated that he would never tell people again that it doesn't rain in October. This was two years in a row that cyclones demolished India and pounded Nepal.

Oh yeah, after dark tip toeing through the piles of mule outside the outhouse in the rain was, well you had to be there!

(EA-4)

Those Nalgene bottles were the next best thing to a warm naked body. Oh, it did rain some more that night even though the stars had made a brief appearance. The next morning was clear bright and everything was frozen!! I think I have a pic I took looking back down at the camp which shows how low the snow line was on the mountain back down the valley the morning we broke camp to keep trekking higher.

Conservation – recent news

Another BC government issue has arisen, which could affect the KMC and many other clubs and volunteer organizations. The government has proposed changes to the Society Act which would make it possible for developers or other private interests to sue environmental and community groups for opposing their projects. The following information is taken from the NDP's web site: (http://www.bcndp.ca/christy-clark-dont-muzzle-bc/faq)

> *What exactly are the proposed changes?*
>
> Earlier this fall, the BC Liberal government made public a series of proposed changes to the Society Act.
>
> The proposed act includes the following:
>
> "A person whom the court considers to be an appropriate person to make an application under this section may apply to the court for an order under this section on the grounds that a society is carrying on activities that are detrimental to the public interest."
>
> That means well-funded opponents of any non-profit could force them into court to defend their work, resulting in unmanageable legal bills for non-profits.
>
> *Who does this affect?*
>
> Any group registered as a society – over 27,000 organizations across British Columbia. This includes environmental organizations, anti-poverty groups, interest clubs, sports associations and community organizations of every stripe.
>
> *Why should we be concerned?*
>
> Non-profit societies play a vital role in our communities, providing a diverse range of important services and we are particularly concerned about the direction the B.C. Liberal government is taking in its decision to potentially tie up non-profit organizations with limited resources in lengthy, and costly, court battles.
>
> *What is the current status of these proposed changes?*
>
> The deadline for public submissions on the changes closed over a month ago, and the government has shown no sign of backing down. The next step could be to introduce a bill in the Legislature to make the proposed changes into law.

While I don't want to promote any particular political party, the above quote is the best summary I've seen of the issue. Another account, from a probably more objective source, is here: http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/bc-organizations-challenge-society-act-overhaul/article21083419/

Peter Jordan, conservation chair

Conservation Report

The dominating story for the last year has been the proposed Jumbo Pass development. There's not much I can add that members haven't heard in the news. The short story is, the proposed ski resort is limping ahead very slowly, and opposition from a number of groups in the East and West Kootenays continues.

Under the environmental assessment certificate that was approved in 2004, and given a 5-year extension in 2009, Glacier Resorts Ltd. was required to "substantially start construction" by October 12, 2014. At the very last moment, they replaced several washed-out bridges on the access road, and poured a concrete slab which is supposedly the foundation of a building. Volunteers maintained a monitoring camp in the Jumbo Creek valley, keeping a close eye on the progress, or lack of it. A related issue is the creation by the provincial government of the "Jumbo Resort Municipality" (population zero) with an appointed mayor and council, which has been subsidized with $200,000 of taxpayer money. A new story is that RK Heliski (whose guides have worked in the area for over 40 years) has raised the concern that the proposed day lodge location is exposed to an unacceptably high avalanche hazard.

Here are some links to information on the Jumbo controversy:

This article appeared in Explore in 2008, and remains one of the best reviews of the background to the resort development proposal:

http://www.explore-mag.com/the-jumbo-glacier-resort-mystery

The West Kootenay EcoSociety's web page: http://www.ecosociety.ca/jumbo-valley

The Jumbo Wild website: http://www.keepitwild.ca/

KMC member Daniela Gadotti wrote a very interesting article on her experiences in the area this summer, in the Town Square forum of our web site:

http://kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca/town-square/forums/topic/monica-meadows-to-be-slack-country-for-jumbo-ski-resort/

In other news, there are some recent moves by the BC government which may threaten the integrity of our provincial parks. Bill 4, the Park Amendment Act, allows for "research" in parks, which contrary to most understanding of what research means, includes feasibility studies for developments including pipelines, transmission lines, etc. Recently, Kinder Morgan applied to the government to have the boundaries of four provincial parks revised (i.e. land removed from them) to facilitate its proposed pipeline expansion. Although none of these parks are in the KMC's area of interest, it's an example of the potential future threat that may exist to parks in the Kootenays.

Peter Jordan, conservation chair
12 November 2014

Pictures that weren't used in the "*KMC? Kokanee or Kootenay*" article.

Gortex, fleece, modern ice axes, crampons on rigid boots, harnesses and nylon ropes… who needs them?





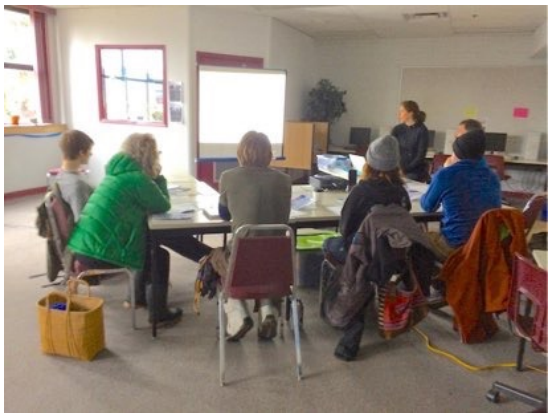


There are more for future newsletters.

AST 1 Course

December 20 - 21

Take one if you can.



Class Room!



Field Room! photo by Ian MacDonald















Field Work! photos by William Gregory

KMC? Is it Kokanee or Kootenay?

A wonderful letter arrived in the President's KMC mailbox. Doug responded to the author, cc'ing your newsletter editor. The letter drove me to first be warmed by the connection to the Kootenay that people have. Second, it created an itch of curiosity regarding the chimera of the initials "KMC" that needed to be scratched.

The letter (published with the author's permission):

Dear KMC Executive,

I wanted to introduce myself briefly as I note from your very informative website that your AGM is this evening.

After discovering your very informative website through a link on the Nelson Star, I was reminded of the fact that my maternal grandparents, Jack & Katie Argyle, were members of the Kootenay Mountaineering Club in the 1920s. For reference, they are in a Club 1920s photo, featured in the centennial publication, Nelson and The Kootenays, A History of Nelson, p. 74, bottom photo. My grandfather, Jack Argyle, former Nelson pharmacist, owner of City Drugs & Stationary [1920-1975] is standing 4th from the right, my grandmother, Katie, former Nelson telephone operator, is sitting 6th from the right.



While planning for my recent visit to Nelson and area this past September, I read again my grandfather's leather-bound hunting diary [written in pencil!] which I assume he wrote while a club member. As a child, I remember lying on the cozy black bear skin rug at my grandparents' North Shore cottage, so I know he was successful at capturing a grizzly! He was an avid hunter, hiker, outdoorsman, and also amateur photographer, and it is amazing to look at all the photos he captured of his hunting and camping trips in the Kootenay region, together with stunning photos of Nelson and area. In September, I met with the Nelson Museum archivist who expressed interest in receiving both my grandfather's diary and photos to start a collection in his name. I was also delighted to discover my grandparents again in a KMC photo featured in the permanent Nelson museum exhibit.

Perhaps you would be interested in seeing some of these photos at some point. In the early 90s, shortly before she died, my mother assembled her father's extensive photo collection in two albums which at that time consisted of adhesive pages with cellophane covering. Thus, the photos are most difficult to remove from the page, and it is a most time consuming process to reproduce or scan each one. However, I am determined to donate these historic items from my grandfather's collection [including his binoculars] to the Museum in the future. My grandparents and mother are buried in the Argyle family plot at Nelson Memorial Park, where eventually I will rest, so it is fitting that these items return to Nelson someday.

Best of the season,

Catherine Kennedy

PS After my delayed flight arrival in Castlegar this September, I was very fortunate in receiving a ride to Nelson from one of your members, I believe, Jean and Ron [Rob?] Kennedy [no relation!]. Jean and I met at Vancouver airport, and on the drive home to Nelson she mentioned she and her husband are/were KMC members and moved to Nelson [North Shore] in the late 70s.If possible, please extend my thanks again, as unfortunately I did not get their contact information.

The editor was able to obtain a copy of the *"Nelson and The Kootenays, A History of Nelson"* publication that Catherine mentions, published by the Nelson Daily News. It does indeed refer to the "Kootenay Mountaineering Club". Helen Butling in the 1964 issue of the Karabiner referred to the Kootenay "KMC". She corrected it much later in a history of the Slocan Chief that she authored. I have also found other descriptions in several Karabiner articles about the Kokanee "KMC".

I had thought to reprint here all of the Karabiner articles. With even a few pictures, that was going to be over 21 pages long, so I took pity on you. Listed below are where you can find those stories if you are so inclined. I was obliged to pick the one story I reprint here simply because it contains the phrases *"Scots Wha Hae"* and *"Obsequies of Johnny Walker"*.

Many thanks to Laura Fortier, the Touchstones Museum archivist for helping me browse through the Museum's "Mountain" files for the images. I hope to return and find more.

Kokanee "KMC" stories:

Rose Pass to St. Mary Lake, Labour Day Weekend 1918, John Gansner. Kootenay Karabiner, Volume 15 Fall 1972, Page 30 – 36

Kokanee History, from Nelson Daily, September 5, 1932. Kootenay Karabiner, Volume 17 Fall 1974, Page 48 – 53

A Trip to Kokanee Glacier Park, Freeda Hume. Kootenay Karabiner, Volume 21, Page 27 – 39

A History of the Slocan Chief Cabin, Helen Butling. Kootenay Karabiner, Volume 29, Page 8 – 12

The Original KMC

Kootenay Karabiner
Volume 14 Fall 1971, Page 80 – 84

From The Nelson Daily News
September 8, 1921
Submitted by Leo Gansner

Mountaineers Storm Heights of Kokanee Glacier District

Returning to the city and civilization on the incoming Crow boat Tuesday night, 39 ardent climbers of the Kokanee Mountaineering Club voiced in chorus an enthusiastic tribute to the scenic wonders and beauties encountered on their four day climbing invasion of the primal solitudes and majestic heights of the Kokanee glacier district. Although weather conditions prevented the wonderful scenery of the district being viewed at its best, the memory of the enchanting glimpses of the enormous ice field, the magnificent rock buttresses, terraces and pinnacles, no less than the genial gaiety of their fellows throughout the trip, will live long with the novices as well as the veteran climbers of the party.

The party consisted of Arthur Gilker, H. R. Kitto, A. Kitto, J. E. Pierce, Harry Eperson, Howard Thaw, Fred Waldie, John Brown, Arthur Smillie, W. Cunliffe, J. Ground, Dr. Cora J. Best of Minneapolis, Audrey F. Shipman of Ann Arbor, Mich., George Palethrope, Capt. W. T. Tait, Capt. C. W. Busk, J. A. Gilker, D. Rish, Gordon Irving, Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Andrews, Miss Freda Hume, Glenn Campbell, Dr. and Mrs. C. H. Gansner, Gerald McLeary, Charles Stack, J. E. Annable, W. J. Gerbracht, Howard Bush, Reggie Bush, Hugh Robertson, Jack Hume, F. J. Astley, Jr., R. E. Plewman, Jess Saunders, Pipe Major William McLeary, Official Photographer Ross Fleming, Provincial Photographer A. D. Kean.

At Molly Gibson Camp



Leaving the city by boat and by auto early Saturday morning, the main party in several contingents, made its way to Molly Gibson landing, and from there on foot to the camp at the Molly Gibson concentrator. There, a little tired and a deal more hungry, they were cheered and refreshed by the delicious albeit substantial dishes prepared for them by John Ground, the camp cook, and his assistants, the packers, who had gone on ahead to pitch camp. There were some trifling details such as foraging for extra grub from Harold Thaw's stores at the concentrator, to be contended with, owing to the skittishness of one of the pack horses. Such incidents, however, though frequent, only gave an added zest to the trip, and provided an outlet for witticism on Packers Richard Astley and J. Gagnon. Darkness found the party engaged in a rollicking sing-song until it was time to turn in.

Belated Arrivals

Sunday morning dawned, chilly, windy and wet, and brought a feeling of injured helpfulness until someone spied an acre of blue in the skies. Hot coffee, pancakes and runners were allowed to exercise their stimulating influence, and behold, the wits of the party soon had brain mists cleared away in a barrage of repartee, humorous stories and the like. By the time three belated arrivals hove in sight all was merry and bright, except the weather. The then president, Howard Bush, with fulsome rhetoric, occasionally drowned by the music from Pipe Major William McLeary's pipes, welcomed Dr. Cora J. Best of Minneapolis, and Miss Audrey F. Shipman of Ann Arbor, Mich., and J. E. Annable to the mystic circle of Kokanee highlanders.

Hike to Kokanee Lake



By noon the situation demanded action, and the hardy determined to hike to Kokanee Lake come rain or shine. Accordingly at 1:30 o'clock, the party put their best legs forward in the direction of the lake, some five or six miles distant. The sombre beauty of the district, however, still remained hidden for the most part by the veil of heavy clouds and rain. But spirits rose with exercise and when the party landed back at the camp and fed and warm in the shelter of the bunkhouse, the business of the annual meeting of the club was conducted with more geniality born only by such conditions.

May Send Films on Tour

Officers were appointed, and the whole question of the club's activities, both in the way of wholesome outdoor recreation, with a spice of adventure, and its possibilities as a booster of the natural scenic and other attractions of this district, were gone into. Practical suggestions on such matters as a circulating photographic library between Kokanee and other mountaineering clubs, aids to publicity that can be given through photographs sent to boards of trade, tourist associations and hotels, and similar matters, were made the subject of resolutions, and will be put through, for it is the intention of the club to sustain interest in mountaineering during 365 days in the year. Mr. Kean, the provincial photographer, stated he would return to film Kokanee next summer, and that a film could be secured by the club through the motion picture department. This announcement was cordially received and schemes for sending the film on tour were eagerly discussed. Dr. Best asked to have the film sent to her, that she might lecture on it in Minneapolis. Miss Shipman also requested the loan of it to show in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

A constitution and bylaws are to be drawn up for the club, for which the only qualification necessary for membership is attendance at an annual climb.

The new officers appointed were: Honorary president, Capt. C. W. Busk; president, Ross Fleming; secretary, Jess Saunders.

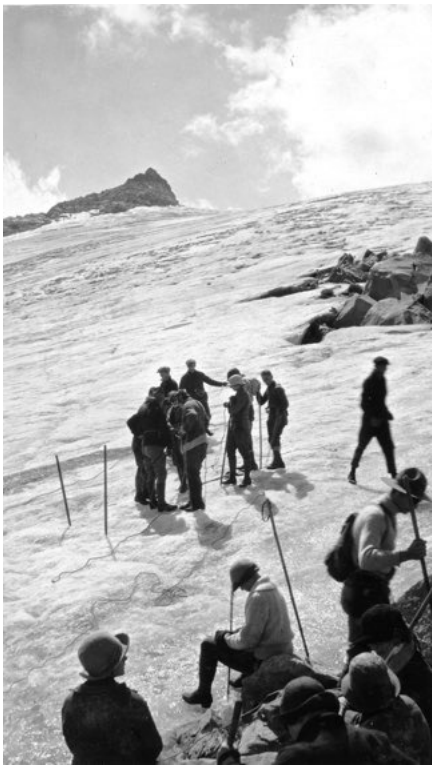
The following is the personnel of the three committees formed, on which officers of the club are ex—official members:

Route committee - A. J. Green, chairman; A. M. Black and Howard Bush.

Park committee - J. E. Annable, Capt. C. W. Busk and A. H. Green

Publicity committee - J. E. Annable, A. M. Black and J. T. Andrews.

Ascent of Mount Gansner



In accordance with an overnight decision, the whole party was aroused at 6 o'clock on Monday morning for an ascent. The day broke beautified by a promise of glorious sunshine glinting beneath fleecy little clouds floating in a turquoise sky. Elated, 20 members of the party set out from the camp, which is at an altitude of 4,885 feet, for the highest peak within the range. For the most part the climb was

not difficult, and the labor of carrying the heavy cameras was shared by the men. As the higher altitudes were reached, however, the early expectations of ideal conditions gradually faded away and as they climbed the precipitous slopes the party saw mists gathering in coils below from the Kaslo and Kokanee lakes, which, gradually rising, obscured the view. At times enveloped in these mists, they toiled ever upward, still hoping for clear views and good light effects. It was not to be, however. Fifteen topped the highest peak and in rifts in the clouds the awe inspiring sight of range after range of serried rock or snow capped crests flung with munificent profusion over the landscape in every direction. Spasmodically, the filmy veil of mist was torn aside, revealing the immensity of the Kokanee ice field as it lay set in a horseshoe of mountain peaks and disappearing in a frozen white slope to the east.



"Scots Wha Hae"

In the forefront of the fifteen who topped the peak were Mrs. C. H. Gansner, in whose honour the club named the peak Mount Gansner, and Pipe Major William McLeary, whose burly figure was no sooner exposed to the biting wind that enveloped this crest than the strains of "Scots Wha Hae" floated out in musical opposition to the forceful driving wind. Some photographs of the group, and of different scenes were taken, although light conditions precluded extensive filming. Before the descent a paper bearing the names of the party and the date was consigned to a bottle, over which a cairn was built. After singing "God Save the King", accompanied by the pipes, the party bade adieu to the crest and descended.



Obsequies of Johnny Walker

In the dead of night, with the wind wailing a symphony over the departed spirit, a ghostly procession passed hard by the camp. It halted for a moment, and the erie glow of torches lit up the features of those in the procession. Undertaker Saunders led the way, followed by Torch Bearer Eperson and Chieftain McLeary playing a funeral dirge. At a little distance stood Rev. J. T. Andrews, immersed in a volume on mineralogy. The Pallbearers, H. Bush, W. J. Gerbracht, C. H. Gansner and A. Hinitt, supported a casket enveloped in evergreens. As the procession moved on, with Chief Mourners Annable and Fleming weeping copious tears and forming a morass that sadly impeded the progress of Grave Digger Waters, the sympathetic mountaineers took up a position in the rear.

By a devious route the funeral procession arrived at the cemetery. There Rev. Andrews read an impressive address, the casket was lowered into the grave and sprigs of evergreen were thrown on. The casket cover was removed for a last view of the remains, and there, his form as unbending as ever, lay all that was left of poor Johnny Walker, label up.

A cross was erected with a suitable inscription, a fragment of "There is a Happy Land" was sung, and the procession left the spot to the tune of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow."

Sad to relate, one distressing rite had yet to be performed before the tired climbers could retire for the night after reaching camp. One member of the part, no less a person than Johnny Walker of international fame, who by a process of attrition had been laid low the night previous, had, unknown to the majority, succumbed, killed with kindness.












KOKANEE
GLACIER PARK



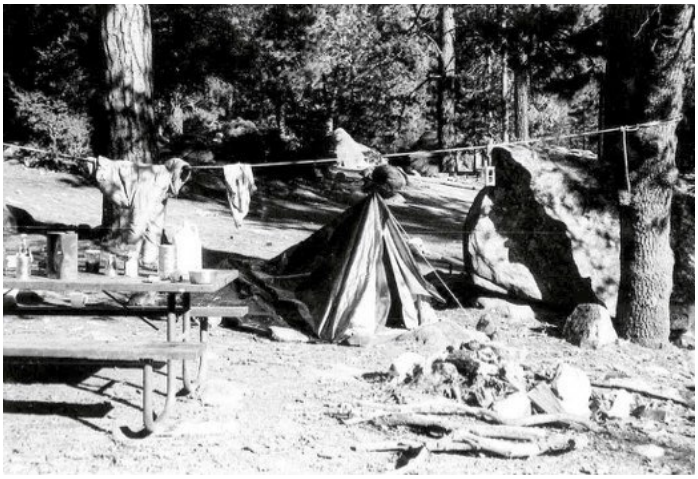

KOKANEE PARK

A Brief Encounter With The Rostrum

Fifty years ago this month (Dec. 2014)
Hamish Mutch

Background

During parts of 1964 and 1965 I spent 3+ months living in Camp 4, the climbers' campground in Yosemite Valley. Fortunately this was during a temporary truce between the resident climbers and the park wardens. This brief stand-off meant that the wardens rarely, if ever, put in an appearance. As a result we never paid the daily camping fees, and we could stay in the valley for as long as we wanted to. Good times!



Camp 4, 1964

Camp 4 was once famously described as "Never go there. It's like a leper colony over there," something of an insult to leper colonies everywhere. Times change, and it has subsequently been recognized as a US National Historic Site for its seminal role in the development of US and world climbing. For relaxation in the winter evenings we would head to Yosemite Lodge, to drink unlimited coffee in the coffee shop, and to enjoy the large fireplace and comfortable chairs in the lounge.

This short article was originally written a couple of years ago, for an on-line forum devoted mostly to climbing in Yosemite. The individuals etc mentioned here would be familiar to the readers of that forum. The events described occurred 50 years ago this month, during December 1964, the year in which the KMC began and about 10 years before I became a member. Perhaps it will remind some older members of "the good old days".

Once upon a time, a long long time ago, in a valley far far away, someone had a brilliant idea.

It was Bridwell's idea. When things go wrong, always blame your partner, especially if he is not around to defend himself. It was the middle of December, and it was getting cold. Jim's brilliant idea was to climb the north face of the Rostrum, thereby making the first winter ascent of any Grade V route in Yosemite. This would bring us instant and lasting fame, at least in Camp 4 . Jim would move up from the C team to the B team, while I would move up several places on the G team. Robbins might recognize our names,[but not us in-person], and Pratt would stop by our site to sample our wine. In the unlikely event that 100 Swedish co-eds occupied Camp 4 for a month, we might even get laid. It was a very good idea.

Warren Harding and Glenn Denny had made the first ascent of this route two years earlier, and it had only seen two or three repeats since then. Fortunately for us, Glenn was working in the Lodge every evening, and we were able to question him closely about the climb [scoopin' the beta, dudes]. In retrospect he always had that little "What are these clowns thinking?" grin....

Glenn had a car, and early one morning kindly drove us to the start of the approach. In those days you reached the Rostrum from below, using the main Yosemite access road, and not from above [by rappel] as is done today. In the dark, and carrying our bivvy gear, we headed for the Merced River. The river at this point was not deep, but it was wide, and it was cold, very cold. Back then, rockshoes were basically scaled-down versions of mountain boots, with smaller vibram soles, which we used for the approaches as well as for climbing. We took off our shoes, socks and pants and started across.

The pain was immediate and strong, as the flowing water sucked the heat from our bare feet. There were some ice-covered rocks half-way across. We thankfully sat on these and tried in vain to warm our frozen feet. Then it was into the river again. As we approached the far side we could barely walk, and our ankles began to creak loudly. Eerk, eerk they went with every step. [Some readers will no doubt be calling 'bull' at this point, but I did read of a similar event in the AAJ a few years ago.] We were both smokers at the time, so a large fire was quickly lit, a number of smokes were smoked in quick succession, and time went by as our feet slowly thawed.

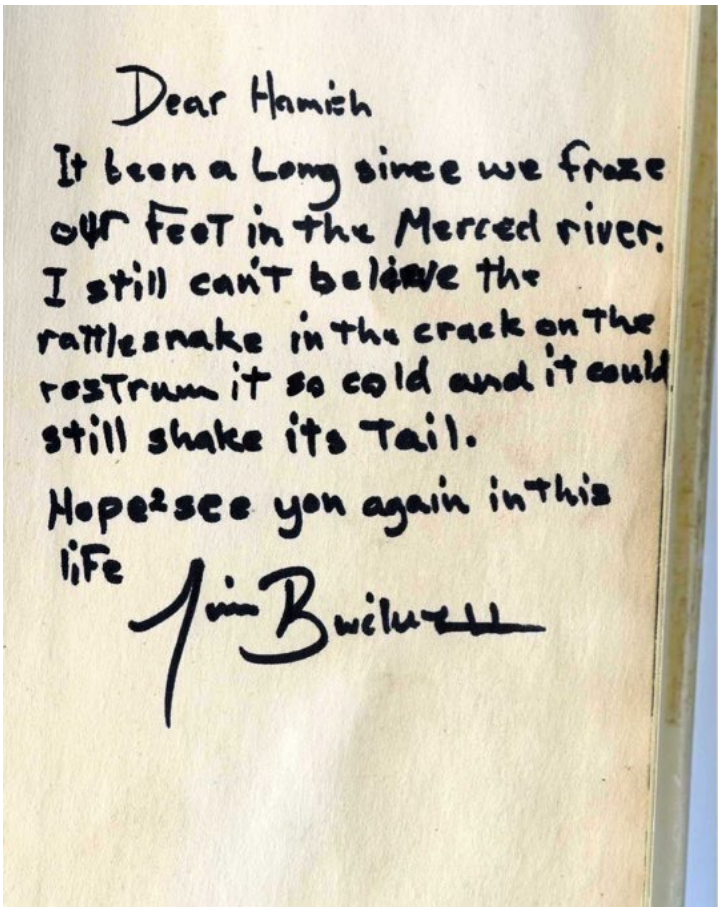


Rostrum North Face

Next, with significantly less enthusiasm, it was uphill through the poison oak to the base of the climb, where more smokes were smoked, more time went by, and more enthusiasm and motivation ebbed away. The first pitch was a mixed aid and rising hand-traverse flake kind of a thing. Amazingly there was a rattlesnake in the crack, which despite the cold was still awake. Every time we placed or removed a pin, it rattled its tail and scared the heck out of us. [More readers are now calling 'bull'] Several more pitches were climbed, but it was getting colder and scarier, and with night approaching it was only going to get even more cold and even more scary.

We baled, re-crossed the river with our shoes on this time, and hitched back to Camp 4. Later that evening Glenn smiled when he saw us back in the Lodge a day early, but did not rib us too hard. That trip was actually an outstanding success when compared with Bridwell's next brilliant idea, and the ensuing fiasco which resulted, when we attempted a winter ascent of the north face of Clouds Rest .....some people never learn, but that's another story. Jim always dreamed bigger and bolder than anyone else. As time has shown, he later added whole new dimensions to the word 'visionary'.

Epilogue: Despite these early set-backs Jim stayed on in Camp 4 for many years, eventually becoming the best big-wall climber in the world, a mantle which he wore for more than a decade. He just needed a stronger partner!


Dear Hamish
It been a Long since we froze
our feet in the Merced river.
I still can't believe the
rattlesnake in the crack on the
rostrum it so cold and it could
still shake its Tail.
Hope2see you again in this
life
Jim Bridwell

Magic in the Mountains

KMC Camp, 1970

by Graham Kenyon

Fynn Creek is a milky-grey torrent spawned in the melting glaciers of the Royal Group in the Rocky Mountains of south-eastern British Columbia. It begins as melt water streaming across the channelled surface of the ice, joining the grey, silt-laden stream emerging from the cold, blue chasms at the toe of the glacier. It meanders briefly across flower-strewn alpine meadows, then plunges down over scoured, precipitous slabs to spill its grey silt into the Palliser River in the dense forest far below. The rock that once was at the bottom of ancient seas, and now ground by the crushing weight of glaciers high in the Rocky Mountains, continues its journey to the Kootenay River, then joining the Columbia, to eventually rest again at the bottom of the sea.

Somewhere in that dense forest, a dozen or so climbers are sweating upwards in the heat of the summer sun, their route guided by old game trails that provide some relief on the steep climb up the ridge. Our goal is to make camp on those alpine meadows by afternoon, though that goal seems far away as we toil upwards, wondering at the ability of elk to inexplicably end a perfectly good trail in a morass of thick bush.

Its hard slogging with a heavy pack, and I barely notice the subtle ecological changes in vegetation through the successive layers of elevation-induced climate change, except as a measure of our upward progress. The transition from climax forest, to steep-slope bush, thinning to the lush greenery of timberline, and then, at last, emerging on to the open meadows. It is still hard going, side hilling across slopes covered with flowers and wild strawberries and tiny aromatic blueberries. I slip and stumble on the greasy vegetation, conscious of the steep slope beneath my feet; but rewarded now by the marvellous views across to the Elk Valley peaks shining in the sun.

The air is sharp and cool as we arrive at the perfect spot for our camp, situated on a level bench just below the vee-shaped hump of moraine left by the receding glacier over past centuries. Peaks are all around, huge and intimidating. A glacier curls upwards above us, blue-grey ice blending into white snow gouged with crevasses. Mt. Princess Mary overshadows the camp, and Prince Albert juts sharply upwards at the head of the cirque. To the east, beyond the massive vertical slabs leading off down the Fynn Creek valley, the skyline is filled with the distant rugged mountains of the Elk Valley. It is a spectacular place, and it will be our home for a week; our tents are already splashing colour amongst the rocks, pitched on the patches of wiry grass and heather on this little meadow freshly revealed from glacial snows.

Clouds have gathered by evening; the mountains appear grey, bleak and unfriendly now in the half-light. A cold breeze drifts down from the high ridges, and I shiver on my way to my tent. A few showers of rain spatter against the taut fabric as I slide into the warmth of my down bag. As in a cocoon I feel isolated from the darkness and the weather outside; but friends are nearby, there is comfort in that.

I awake next morning to silence and a sense of enclosure. No rain, but it feels wet and clammy. Unzipping the tent I find a dense, wet mist shrouding the world outside. It is eerie. We breakfast and speak in hushed tones, or it seems that way as the grey cloud engulfing us mutes all sounds. There is nothing to see beyond ourselves.

We have just a week, and this mist may only be temporary, so we go our separate ways guided by map and compass and the lay of the land as we saw it yesterday. Four of us choose Mt. Prince Albert as our goal, and we straggle off, plodding up towards the ridge somewhere up there in the grey mist.



There is nothing quite like the mist in the mountains. I don't mean a light mist, but the dense, clinging wet stuff that encloses within translucent walls, not with the hard materiality of physical barriers, but gradually and tantalizingly. My eyes cannot rest at the limit of vision but must always be probing into the grey ghosts beyond.

There is magic in the mist on the mountain. The myopia induced by the intolerance of the eye to accept vague shadows opens another world to the mountaineer. This meadow, in the sunshine, is merely a route to the summit, but now it becomes an experience in itself. As I travel over the meadow I am conscious of

moving within an envelope of environment that is constantly changing.

The distant goal is invisible, and gone with it is the senseless urgency of purpose that normally accompanies the ability to see and to project towards that goal. The journey to the limit of the environmental envelope becomes my goal, one that is never actually attained since the envelope moves as I do. My world is condensed, and all my senses converge on this tiny world.

The turf, saturated in a grey down of moisture, is springy under foot and spangled with the bright stars of Grass of Parnassus. The coarse-textured rock is mottled with the varied greys and browns of lichen, contrasting with the pink and white flowers in the wiry tufts of heather. Trees appear as shadowy spectres, elegant or graceless, each looming out of the mist as a living form: the alpine firs, symmetrical, tough and hard, bowed by the trials of wind and winter; the mountain larch, elm-limbed up here and strangely out of place amongst conifers.

Animals scuttle amongst the rocks. A ground squirrel pauses to watch me pass, his tail flicking nervously. A ptarmigan, still mottled half white with winter feathers, paces slowly away, one bright eye watching me. Somewhere in the mist a long whistle announces a hoary marmot.

Along the ridge's crest a wet breeze blows, moving the mist in swirling drifts. The near landscape dissolves and re-forms in the eddying currents; but still there is no sign of sky or sun.

To the east the ridge falls away, merging into a uniform grey emptiness. To the west there is nothing. Behind me is past and gone; ahead the ghosts of things to come, indistinct at first, then hardening into a gentle rise or a rocky crag. I move on through this strange, surreal world, scrambling over rocks, coarse and granular under sensitized fingers, so real to touch, yet quickly melting away into illusionary shadows. We have been climbing for two hours; the summit must be close, but still nothing beyond the limit of my vision, still this ephemeral, grey emptiness.

Then, in a moment, the mist swirls and thins. Through the brightening canopy of cloud, black, spidery tentacles twine across the distant ice of the glacier far below. My focus leaps downwards probing the translucent ebb and flow of mist towards the distant view. Neglected now, the fragile beauty of moss campion amongst the rocks at my feet, spangled with pink, pearl-like flowers sparkling with dew. Instead my eyes are drawn to an expanse of distant, dull, dirty ice simply because it is there where nothing existed before.

I am alone now, the others ahead somewhere along the shrouded ridge heading towards the elusive summit. I slip off my pack; I am in no mood to hurry, entranced as I am by the magic of this moment as the invisible sun soaks through the mist, the first hints of its nourishing warmth against my face. The veil thins and brightens, now tinged with the faintest hint of blue above.

Quite suddenly, there through the veil appears a sublime vision of a mountain, an apparition hanging in the sky, unreal as a Japanese print, in one precious, fleeting moment lovely and magnificent. This is a moment for music, for swelling chords, a choral symphony! Yet there is just the silence, and this vision before me of Mt. King George, majestic in its form.

In seconds and minutes the mountain solidifies; the gullies and black faces gain strength, melding into sculptured crags, split and overlain by hanging cliffs of ice and crowned with a shining cap of corniced snow. The mist clings persistently, ebbing and flowing, but always losing ground to the relentless energy of the sun.

I look ahead, and there is the summit of my mountain just a little way along the ridge; I am almost there. Yet one more scene remains: two figures ahead, my friends, black silhouettes against the milky void, humbled and overwhelmed they too gaze across to that grand vision of a mountain, half-formed, half-clothed in clinging veils; ethereal, yet possessing a quality of strength and power, an aura of timeless omnipotence. It is an illusion, I know, there is no power in a mountain; but reverence is a reflection of the power and inspiration of the human imagination, and that is real.

Soon it will be gone, the mystery stripped away by the stark clarity of blue sky and sunshine. As I look about me now I see the rocks and the surrounding peaks in harsh reality, still magnificent in their form and beauty, but with little left for the imagination to enhance and wonder upon. The mist has gone, and with it the mystique that transformed the ordinary into the extraordinary. I pick up my pack and trudge off towards my summit, my mind full of the images I have seen: the magic of the mist and a mountain.



Left to right, wandering back and forth:

Muriel and John Walton, Peter Wood, Graham Kenyon, Anna Dean, Roy Hopland, Ken Holmes, Sue Port, Peter McIver, Bert Port, Gloria Hopland, Renate Belczyk, Bob Dean.



It was a very good birthday cake.



Peter McIver, Ken Holmes, Peter Wood, Doug Clark, Peter Oostlander

Past and a present presidents