The Kootenay Mountaineer

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

Spring Equinox, 2016

Message from the Editor

The new club badge is available. You see it just above in the page header. Peter Oostlander is overseeing the distribution.

It's a meagre amount of message this issue.

Tidbits

I probably spend too much time wandering around on the web. The ACC NewsNet points to interesting things…

MOOC in the news

"If you've ever wanted to know more about mountains, you're in luck. In partnership with Parks Canada and The Alpine Club of Canada, the University of Alberta will be offering Mountains 101, a free online course that's open to anyone with an internet connection. Starting this fall, you can either binge on all 12 lessons or take your time with them."

15 Canadian climbers to follow on Instagram

"Instagram has become one of the most-used social media outlets by climbers. This list is composed of leading climbers who use their Instagram accounts for climbing-specific photos."

The history of down jackets

In 1922, when Australian mountaineer George Finch showed up to attempt Mt. Everest in a down jacket, his British teammates laughed at him and his crazy new invention. It wasn't long before they stopped laughing and started envying Finch's feathers. Read about the history and current state of this essential piece of mountaineering clothing.

These were offered by Christine, who sent them after finding a stale link on the website.

More Avalanche Safety Links

- http://www.avalanche.net.nz/education/Online-Avalanche-Course/Intro.asp
- http://avalanche.org/tutorial/tutorial.html

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Article submission guidelines:

The newsletters is published 4 times a year, roughly in line with the solar seasons.

Submissions accepted up until quite close to the Solstice or Equinox date.

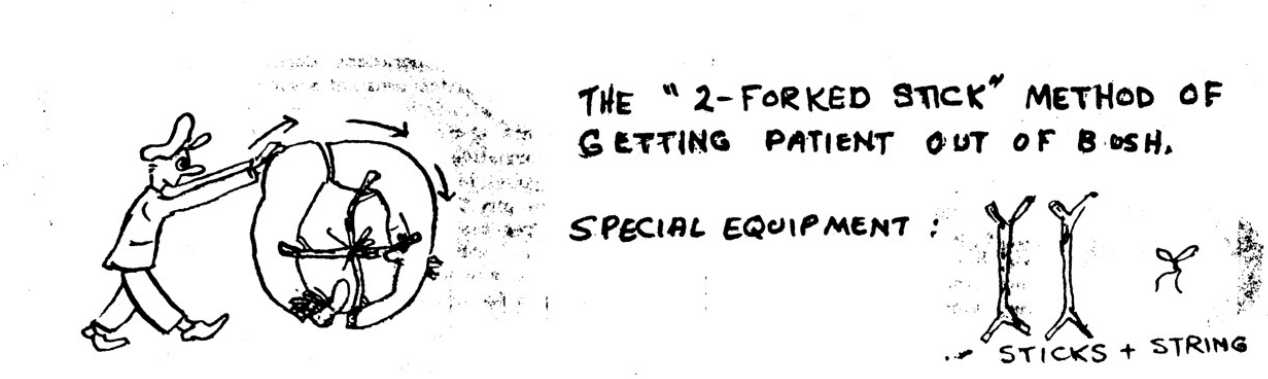
Plain text is great. No need for PDF or Microsoft Word files. Simply cut and paste your text into an email to newsletter@kootenarymountaineeringclub.ca. Attach your *full resolution photos* to the email. Lots of photos, please.

Wilderness Survival 101

Linda Johannson

Winter accidents occur, even if you've read the bulletin, dug a snowpit, and are travelling on mellow terrain. Recently there have been some great advances in small, light, portable gear that you can add to your pack to increase your chances of survival should there be an unexpected accident, injury, or illness among your group. Here are a few basics that you really should have with you every trip.

1) **Communications**. If someone has a broken bone, there is no way you're going to be able to build a sled from his skis and pack and drag him out before nightfall. Similarly, there won't be time for one of your party to ski out and drive down to make a phone call. A Spot – type personal locator beacon, or, better yet, a satellite phone, is your only chance to get Search and Rescue to you before nightfall. Lucky for you, the Club owns a small, light, very easy to use sat phone that you are welcome to borrow for your outings. Contact Graham Jamin at gjamin@telus.net to arrange pick-up and a lesson. Or look at mec.ca or local shops for the different locator beacons available.
2) **Hypothermia Prevention.** While that friend and you are waiting for SAR, or if you just decide you need to bed down for the night, you'll need to stay warm. An injured person loses heat remarkably fast, so you need to act ASAP to prevent further heat loss. Any bleeding injuries or broken bones will fail to clot with just a few degrees loss of core body temperature, which can spell disaster if you're out overnight. First priority is to get the patient off the snow, and dress them up with everything you have (that means you have to carry warm emergency layers). Also consider adding to your pack a tiny bivy bag or shelter (Silbothy from Integral Designs (MEC), or Black Diamond's Mega Light shelter). These can be quickly tucked around the group, and if anchored under your bottoms, can raise the temp inside by 20 degrees C. In wilderness medicine we always set up this "microclimate" and work on the patient underneath. It becomes uncomfortably hot for the rescuers, but life-saving for the injured. Another great product to consider is the Ready Heat vest. It's like disposable hot shots for your gloves, but embedded into a single-use, paper vest which activates when you open the package, and provides 8 hrs of heat. Placed inside the victim's jacket, it's very effective at keeping the core warm. Of course, you're also digging a snow shelter, cutting wood with your avalanche saw, and making a cozy fire with your fire starter, super matches or lighter, and keeping the shelter warm with a small candle. (a length of cut bike inner tube makes an effective, light fire starter). If your patient is able to eat, they need to take in a lot of calories to stay warm while injured. Lucky thing you've got that extra emergency food that stays in the bottom of your pack all year (yum!).
3) **Hemorrhage Control – quick clot**
4) **Splints**
5) **Lights**



Kootenay Karabiner, Volume 11, Fall 1969

Above The Tuscan Sun

Eliane and Steven Miros



We visited Italy's Cinque Terre and Tuscany this past December and would like to share some of the hiking we particularly enjoyed. Our plan was to drive to Tuscany from the south of France, appreciate Florence, Pisa and several of the smaller cities in the region, eat prosciutto, anchovy laden pizza and spaghetti, drink Chianti wines and then visit the Cinque Terre and Portofino on our return. Due to Tuscany's proximity to the Mediterranean we also hoped to get in a few hikes in the Apennines. We didn't know exactly where or whether there would be snow at the upper elevations, but some internet sites did acknowledge possibilities of lower elevation winter hiking.

We have not read the book, Under The Tuscan Sun, nor have we seen the movie; we really didn't know what to expect, but were very excited to see what Tuscany was all about. How can one possibly go wrong with Medieval and Renaissance Italian architecture and art? We should note that the very long day spent on the cobblestones of Florence was by far the hardest and longest "hike" of the trip!

The northern entrance into Tuscany -shortly after driving through Genoa on the A12 coastal autostrada- immediately surprised us with high and craggy mountains not too far off the coastline. These mountain scapes looked as if they had glaciers running down their slopes. We had read that Tuscany had diverse landscapes, but coastal mountains appearing to be topped with snow, at only 2000m and so close to the Mediterranean Sea? Our tour book informed us that the "glaciers" we were seeing were actually pure white massive marble quarries! A few minutes later we were driving through kilometers of Carrera's industrial area that were unbelievably stocked with cut marble blocks of all sizes. Leonardo Da Vinci was born on the slopes of these mountains and many sculptors including Michelangelo frequented Carrera to pick their marble. The quarries have supplied the statue-quality white marble for over 2,000 years. The marble façades of many ancient Roman buildings, and the great cathedrals throughout Europe, have all used marble from these quarries. We would make a point of visiting this area on the way back!

Croce di Pratomagno (1594m)

Our first walk in the "backcountry" was up onto the Croce di Pratomagno, located not too far southwest of Florence. "Prato" means grassy, grassy topped mountain. Sounds familiar? "Croce" is cross in Italian and there were a lot of these on the mountains over there. The Protomagno's highlight is its 10+ km grass ridge which provides views in all directions. Roads wind nearly to the top from several small towns therein giving several access routes to the ridge. Pratomagno is the highest mountain in the area and its grassy ridge is very characteristic of other several other Tuscan mountains. The lower elevations are surprisingly heavily forested with Mediterranean scrub, beech, oak and fir trees. We also saw numerous signs of small deer and wild boar as well as cow dung.



Snow Tipped Pratomagno above Loro Ciuffenna



Pratomagno's inviting ridge

We accessed Pratomagno by an easy hour drive from the town of Loro Ciuffenna located near the city of Montevarchi. The very scenic, steep, narrow and winding road to the trailhead parking is well marked from Loro C. We drove the road until snow stopped our car. From there we walked our way up the road (not plowed in winter) to a pass where a small tunnel descends to the villages on the mountain's northeast side. The trail starts a few meters beyond the tunnel and to the right. After several hundred meters we were off the mountain's snow covered northern slope and up onto the ridge. Another 2km had us at the Croce di Pratomagno.

Our day started out very sunny but the fog began rolling in as we approached the summit. Apparently this is common for Tuscany and even more frequent for this mountain during the winter months. Through the clouds below we did however get some occasional good views of the surrounding countryside. After a nice long lunch "Above the Tuscan Sun" we worked our way back, minding our compass, to the car.

Our second trip to Pratomagno started via a forestry road near the village of Anciolina which is at the foot of Mont Lori. Anciolina is at the mountain's eastern end. Again, the route was well marked for Croce di Pratomagno. This approach is a 7 km ridgewalk with about a 600m elevation gain. We worked our way up the mountain from Loro Ciuffenna starting with the same access road. The well marked trailhead starts in a pine forested picnicking area. Significant logging on some good sized evergreens was going on along this road, the scale and stewardship of which actually impressed me who am a forestry worker.

Eliane and I hoped that this clear sunny day would provide us with better views than before. Wrong, the fog rolled in again and didn't roll out during the entire hike. Views from the high elevation road and below the fog were much better than what we saw from the summit. We think we might have passed another hiker on the ridge. Maybe even a ghost. The Pratomagno is the site of Australian Bert Hinklers 1933 fatal crash site while en route to Australia. There is a monument and trail dedicated to him near the summit. Hinkler was the 1st person to fly solo from the UK to Australia; the 1st to fly solo across the South Atlantic and the 2nd person to fly solo across the Atlantic after Charles Lindbergh.

If you want to do a mountain in Tuscany, we would recommend this one as the ridge is long, easy, not difficult to find and offers great views of the Tuscan landscape... fog cover permitting! For more information on mountains in this area: http://www.piudimille.com/en/pratomagno-alpe-di-catenaia-alpe-della-luna-ranges-north-east-toscana-region/

Alpi Apuane and the Pania della Croce (1,858 m)

The Alpi Apuane is noted as being one of the most original relief areas in Italy. The Alpi Apuane contains the "marble mountains" that we saw while on the autostrada as we entered Tuscany. The peculiarity of this mountain range is its rugged peaks which sets it apart from the Appenine. It is argued whether the Alpi Apuane is part of the Appenine due to their very inclined slopes, deep valleys, karstic formation, veins of marble, mineral water springs and numerous caves. The Grotto del Vento "Wind Cave", located across the valley from Barga is apparently a spectacular and bizarre landscape of caverns and lakes. It was closed for the winter. We have our Selkirks; the Tuscans have the Alpi Apuane. Come to think of it, we have our Grassy Mountain and they have their Pratomagno.

Though the elevation of these mountains is less than 2000m, the steepness and sharpness of the mountain faces, some being almost 800m make them interesting for mountaineering. Their proximity to the mild Mediterranean makes them accessible for most of the year. Many hikers often find themselves in one of the 300 marble quarries that exist in the region.

For our day hike we picked the Pania della Croce as it appeared to be relatively clear of snow and deemed a local favorite. Though not the highest summit of the

Alpi Apuane (4th), the Pania della Croce is noted as being one of the best lookouts around. We began the day by driving from our accommodation in San Romano di Garfagnana (600 m.) to the opposite side of the Serchio valley. Though an extremely sunny and cloud free day was in the forecast, we had to descend into the fog shrouded valley below. In fact the fog was so bad that we were unable to see the highway signposts. When we stopped for orientation we found ourselves parked by 2 Polizia cars. And, when we asked them for directions, though initially surprised/ annoyed, they very nicely gestured for us to follow them. They escorted us several kilometers through heavy fog and Italian morning rush hour traffic to where we emerged above the fog and onto the road to the mountain! This appeared to be developing into quite a day!

The hike to the Pania della Croce begins above the very small village of Piglionico. The trailhead location at 1000m is well marked, and the information board was great including material on the Italian Mountaineering Club's Rifugio Enrico Rossi alla Pania (1609m) farther up the trail. There were 3 other cars in the parking area. The trail to the hut is steep and scenic, a one- hour jaunt through sparse scrubby beech woods, white firs, chestnut and holm oak trees. Several hundred meters of the trail before and after the hut became very slippery due to frost -on marble, and iced up snow patches from previous hikers. The refuge was closed.



Alpi Apuane mountains



The Enrico Rossi Alpine Refuge



Summit views on marble quarries and the Tyrrhenian Sea



More summit views

The hut is above treeline and the forests quickly evolved into subalpine grassy meadows and rock scree. These slippery rock and ice conditions continued for a few hundred meters more until we were out in the sun and going up a "Kokanee" style Keyhole trail to the summit ridge.

By chance, our “summiting” coincided with a hiker who was coming up a trail from the coastal side of the mountain. We enjoyed a very long leisurely lunch and the local mountaineer -and professional lifeguard- informatively pointed out the various features of the Alpi Apuane including its many peaks, the snow-capped Northern Apennines, and the peaks across the Garfagnana Valley from where we came. To the west were the Cinque Terre, Corsica and even the Maritime Alps of Southeast France which were visible across the Tyrrhenian Sea.

On our return we stopped at the Refugio Rossi alla Pania which was now open. It was the last day of the season for the hut but reserved winter accommodation can and was arranged by a group that had phoned the club. We were informed that this was a very mild fall/ winter and that normally snowshoes or skis would be required to access the hut and peak.

This was a pleasant 7 hour outing and we definitely must return to the Alpi Apuane, the Garfagnana Valley and the many other treks in the area. What a gem of a find!

Cinque Terre

Cinque Terre is an Italian National Park encompassing centuries old villages perched along 10km of Italy`s steep Mediterranean coast between Genoa and Pisa. The Cinque Terre is north of, and adjoins the well-known area of Tuscany. Cinque Terre’s villages, Riomaggiore, Manarola, Corniglia, Vernazza and Monterosso (pop. totaling aprox. 5000) are a Unesco site exhibiting "a harmonious interaction of people and nature that has successfully existed for over a thousand years". Cinque Terre and the trail/train system that connects them had been on our “bucket list” for several years.

There are several options for accessing the Cinque Terre, but cars, from our recent experience are not a recommendation because of the extremely winding, crowded road that takes hours to drive- and wait, as it is often one lane. The villages have few if any, parking areas. We can’t imagine what traffic is like during the normal tourist season! The train service to enter the park from the north or the south, and within the park, is easily accessible, frequent, cheap and well informed for English speakers. Train stations are all in the center, often under, the villages. Many people spend several days walking between and visiting the villages, eating and sleeping in them. There are however no beaches or flat spots for your beach towel.

Due to the short winter days we drove from Rapallo to the northern Park entrance in Levante to begin our adventure. We were told that Levante’s December parking and proximity to the train station would work for us. We were not sure of which direction to visit the villages, as the internet had conflicting advice. And, apparently some sections of the trail were closed. From Levante we took the 10 min. train to Riomaggiore where we confirmed what we would be doing with the Park office located in the train station. We briefly visited Riomaggiore and then started walking the “path” north.

The Sentiero Azzurro, or “Blue Trail” is part of the four connecting paths (about 11km) between the 5 coastal villages. Normally one can walk the entire route in about six hours. The few hundred meters long Via dell’Amore ("Lover's Lane") starts the trail north in Riomaggiore, to Manarola. Apparently this is one of the most romantic hiking regions in the world and is affirmed by thousands of lovy dovies who lock padlocks on the fences lining the hiking path; the keys are thrown into the sea. Something about locked together forever.

The section of the Sentiero Azzurro immediately after the Via dell’Amore was closed. This closed section of trail was made in 1926 for the railway workers creating the track section between Riomaggiore and Manarola railway stations. The closure made for some backtracking and then a significant elevation gain (200m+) detour off the immediate coast and into the terraced hillsides above. A big note about the Sentier Azzurro is that portions of the trails are susceptible to heavy landslides which can close sections for weeks or months. This adds time and elevation which most Cinque Terre’s visitors decline.











The trail down to Manarola was just as steep as the ascent, and demanding, especially considering that much of it is on large sometimes much worn slippery stone steps. The stairs made it such that we may as well have been scrambling down one of our Kootenay scree slopes! The coastal scenery, colorful buildings and the vegetation of the terraced hillsides did however more than make up for it.

It quickly became apparent that the vineyard and olive tree covered terraces of the Cinque Terre are obviously falling into disrepair. The advent of the grocery store, rail access to the cities and the agricultural economies of scale most likely brought this on. This countryside is extremely steep, rocky and obviously required superhuman efforts over generations to prepare it for cultivation and to cultivate. Not quite the cup of tea for the 21st century land caretakers.

The trail between Manorola to Corniglia was also out of service. The detour however required considerably more elevation gain, distance and time than the previous one. We paid the 3 Euros each and "trained" the 5 minutes to Corniglia. Yes, that is the approximate time and cost between all of the villages. Corniglia's train station is below the town and required some entertaining 360 steps to get to the top.





The normal trail sections from Corniglia to Vernazza and then to Monterosso were in good condition. These two sections had steep elevation gains and descents. They are considered the hardest sections of the Blue Trail but we enjoyed our time on them. We had the bonus of watching a great sunset over the Mediterranean. We arrived in Monterosso at dusk. The train station has a bar tabac with a wonderful view over the village and ocean. A great place to wait for the train. Monterosso is the largest town of the Cinque Terre. It has some parking, lots of accommodation, restaurants and tourist options. We should note that a seasonal boat ferry service does exist between the villages and to the "outside" towns.





We are glad to have finally visited the Cinque Terre. We don't know what will happen with most of the traditional fishing and agricultural lifestyle now gone. The villages however do appear very lively and bustling. What everyone does for a living here is beyond us. But it does seem to go.

Monte di Portofino

Our last hike in the area was in the rugged and relatively isolated coastline of Portofino National Park. The trail from Portofino to the town of Recco via the very small fishing village of San Fruttuoso passes through one of the most important protected areas of the north Tyrrhenian coast. This is another small gem of an area located on the coastal slope of Monte di Portofino.

The hike begins in the "perfectly coiffured fishing and resort village" of Portofino. It is said that "even the trees are handsome in Portofino." Portofino, which the Romans called Portus Delphini ("the Port of the Dolphins)" is located on its own peninsula, "in season" the village is apparently overwhelmed with the "yachty" set. Portofino is that pretty puzzle picture town with prettily painted buildings that you may have seen and/or done. Imagine, doing a hike because of a puzzle! Not that farfetched, is it? We found an air of tranquility about the place though our December visit might have had something to do about that.

We started the day by taking the 4 Euro bus from Rapalo to Portofino. From the bus stop one immediately begins a grunt out of the village (on the Via Fondaco by the police station) by following the 2 red dots markings. The well kept trail, initially a stone and cement staircase, climbs out of the fig, date and palm trees, citrus fruits- the oranges and lemons were in season- and olive groves of the coastal riviera and abruptly crosses a crest into a rugged karstic landscape high above the sea where the Mediterranean scrublands and forests of chestnut, cluster pine and Aleppo pine prevail. The view from here and for most of the trail now encompassed much of the Liguria coastline towards the French Riviera and, in the distance, the French island of Corsica.

The Portofino-San Rocco trail is located above the Portofino Marine Reserve. This pristine underwater seascape is composed of many caves that host numerous saltwater species. Apparently some fifty thousand divers each year frequent the 21 diving sites. This footprint is hard for us to imagine but then we did see several boats loaded with divers in the waters far below.

The trail from Portofino to San Rocco is approximately 15km long and has an elevation gain of some 700m with all the ups and downs. The halfway point is highlighted by the "Abbazia di San Fruttuoso di Capodimonte". The original 8th century church and its monastery were damaged by the Saracens, rebuilt by the Benedictines in the 10th century and is now maintained for visitors by the Italian Environment Trust. There was some lodging and a nice beach. Many people ferry to, or from, the halfway point in San Fruttuoso and then hike the other way. There is absolutely no road access.

The section of trail after San Fruttuoso had several WW2 "batteries" or "pillboxes" to visit. The trail continues into the little village of San Rocco which is located high above Camogli. San Rocco has an incredible panoramic terrace overlooking the sea from where we were entertained by a fiery sunset.

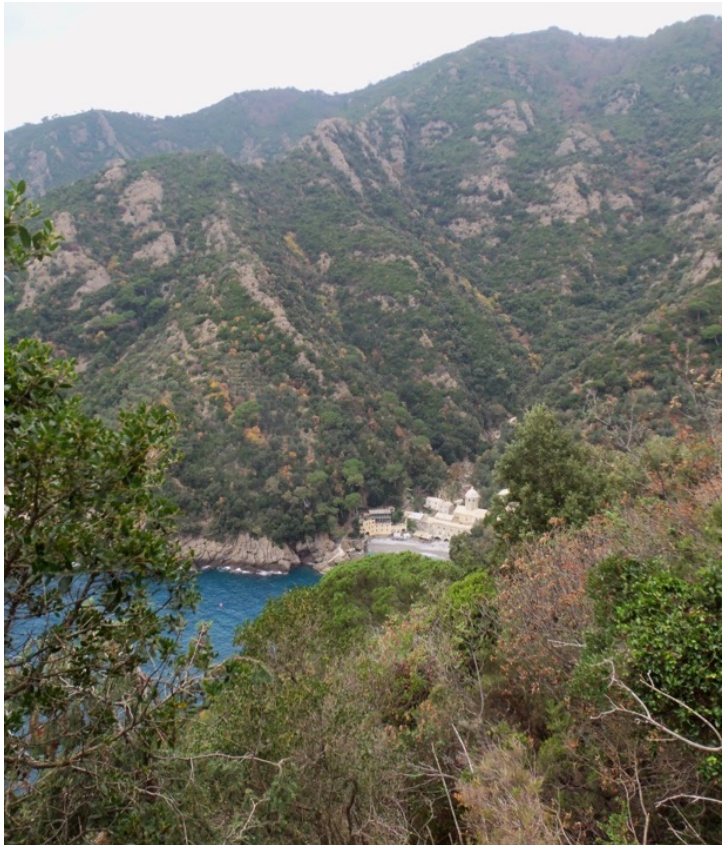
From San Rocco most people descend the 880 stairs to Camogli. We however made the hike more challenging by walking a few more kilometers on the paved road to the bus station at Ruta and then wait some hours for the bus which were few and far apart on a Sunday winter night.

See more at: http://www.liguriaguide.com/san-fruttuoso.html#sthash.34aTx6tE.dpuf

http://www.portofinotrek.com/trek/









Our notes:

The Work of Terracing - Modern socioeconomics significantly affect the "traditional" landscape of the Cinque Terre. This unique landscape took unbelievably hard work over numerous centuries to establish. Vineyards, olives and citrus fruits, the main products of the area, have been – and still are to some extent– cultivated as centuries ago. Mechanization of the agricultural work is nearly impossible due to access. It has been recognized that these irreversible landscape changes due to the abandonment of the soil retaining terraces will without a doubt significantly affect this unique area. Landslides will undoubtedly destroy sections of the land, villages and trails. To offset this, the Cinque Terre National Park has launched an extensive plan of interventions aimed at the protection and conservation of this historical and cultural heritage. These efforts include the creation of a number of micro-activities to revive the territory, while at the same time promote economic perspectives which favor the active maintenance of the land. There are also attempts to supplant many of the abandoned vegetable and vineyard terraces with low maintenance olive trees characteristic of the area so as to retain the soil.

Cinque Terre's Sentiero Azzurro (the Blue Route) - The Cinque Terre is about walking, visiting the villages, and using the train system. Normally the 11km distance between the villages can be covered in an 8-10 hour hike including time allotted for relatively brief visits in and through the villages. Landslides however are a problem and the washed out sections of the trail add considerable time to a traverse of the park. This is apparently common and closures can be in effect for months if not years. The park service, located

in the train stations, will inform you of these conditions and alternatives. Though winter daylight was at its shortest when we visited in December we had no trouble along the well marked route and completed it in about 8hrs. Our daytime temperature for this hike was in the mid 20s and we wouldn't recommend it during the crowded hot summers. For a description of the "normal" trail, see: https://www.walksofitaly.com/blog/cinque-terre/hiking-trails

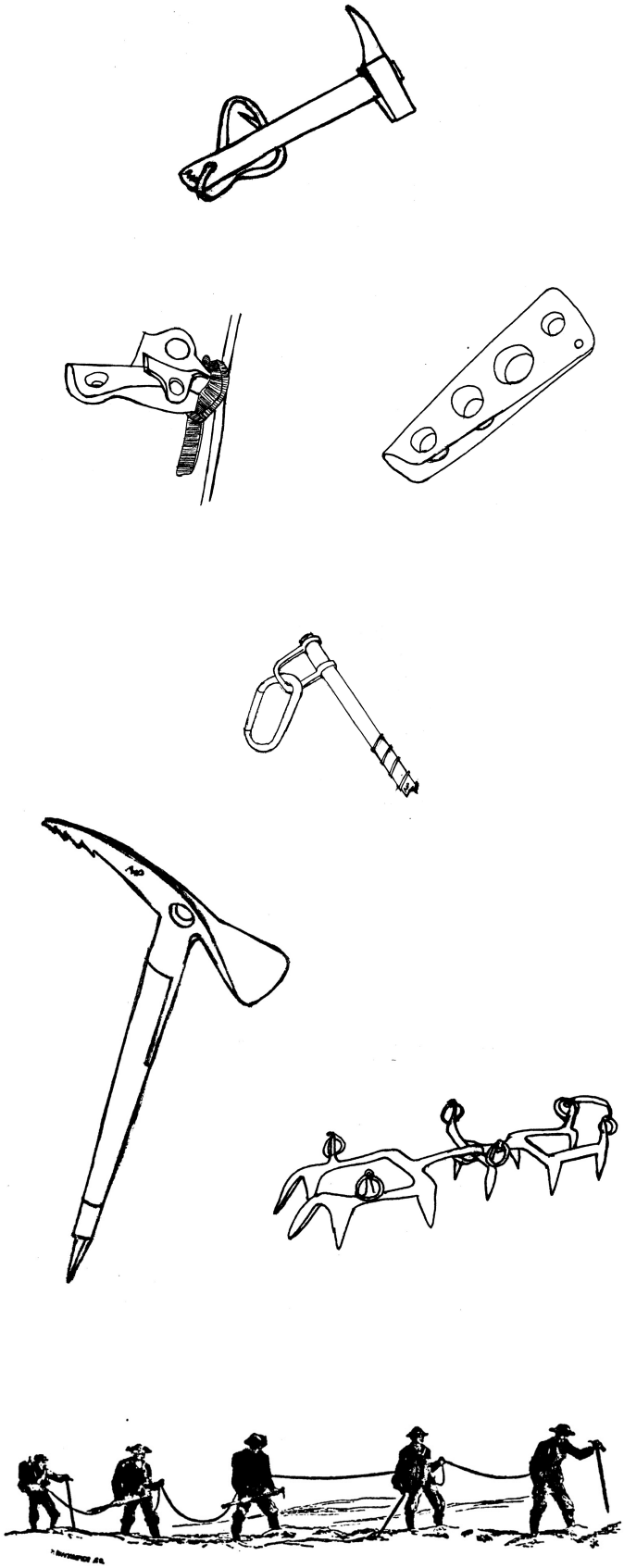
Cinque Terre High Trail and the Cinque Terre Sanctuary Trail - If you are spending several days in the area there is also the Cinque Terre High Trail and the Cinque Terre Sanctuary Trail. Though we never hiked these we came across sections of them. The "High Trail" stretches beyond the Cinque Terre and connects the town of Portovenere in the south with Levanto in the north. The hiking time is said to be approximately 10 hours. Apparently the paths are not nearly as well marked as the Blue trail.

Each town in the Cinque Terre has a sanctuary (a church or shrine) in the hills above the village. The "Sanctuary Trails" connects the 5 sanctuaries of the 5 Cinque Terre villages

Alti Via die Monti Leguri - During our stay we became aware of the Alti Via die Monti Leguri (Ligurian Alps). This is a hiking trail extending over 400 km along the "Ligurian Ridge" from Ventimiglia in the west to the Tuscan border above La Spezia in the east. The mountains, which form the connection between the Alps and the Apennines, are rarely more than 1500m – meaning the route is easy going and can be done in the winter months. Hopefully more on this some day!

The **Via Francigena** is the name of an ancient road and later pilgrimage route to Rome (All Roads Lead To...). It is considered to have its starting point some 1900km away in Canterbury. The Via Francigena crosses the Alps into Italy through the Gran San Bernardo. We came upon sections of the route in the mountains as well as in several Tuscan cities such as Lucca, San Gimigiano and Siena. An interesting note about pilgrimages was on a plaque we came upon while on a part of the Via Francigena: "II Pelegrinaggio: the route, like life, is not a competition. Never get seized by the wish to do too much: your body will soon demand an explanation. Look around, observe, stop and taste. That's what the route will teach you."

Space Fillers from Volume 15 of the Kootenay Karabiner, Fall of 1972 (for both that publication and this newsletter).



Winter Sports Via RV

February 2016

Have you ever camped in an RV during the cold winter months? Campground, electricity, hot showers, off the ground and in a real bed? We had not but we recently took the opportunity to see what it's all about. We thought we would share notes on what was learnt from the experience during our early February one-week-trip to Banff National Park (Lake Louise and Banff Year Round Campgrounds) when temperature ranges were down to about -15C. We won't comment on the skiing, snowshoeing and winter hiking because that you already know a lot about.

First off we sought out a drier sunny weather window in the forecast. This made for safe and quick driving. We suspect that the RVing conditions for snowy weather skiing aficionados wouldn't really be that much different, except for slower driving conditions and some shoveling. Someone will however have to confirm this for us. We definitely think this outing would be no fun during winter rain conditions.

Secondly, we had an "insulated/winterized" RV camper so we cannot comment on what it would be like in a non-insulated unit. One would suspect that the inch + of insulating Styrofoam adds about R3-5 which considering the temperatures may not make a huge difference.

We arrived late in the evening. Climbing out of that cozy and warm vehicle cab after 7 hours of driving seemed to make it colder than it really was. Or was it? We were met by a camping registry sign saying put the money in the envelope. If paying in cash remember to have the correct change on hand. We didn't worry too much about getting the site number right on the envelope as there were obviously numerous empty sites. Considering it was a long weekend, where was everyone?

Carry a good snow shovel as you might have to dig your way up to the electrical plug in. Carry an extra extension cord in case the distance is an issue. Both the normal house plug and the larger amp service were available.

The wind chill from the long drive significantly "cooled" the RV and it took a considerable time to heat up the interior. Once you get the lay of the land try to park the RV in the sunlight assuming there will be some. The advantage of having a trailer is that you can leave it parked with the heat in it during the day and drive off therein finding a cozy nest when you get back. By all means, park close to the washrooms! Park where sunlight will touch the RV the most as it does make a significant difference. If icy cold wind is an issue then park facing the wind or at least where the door is protected.



Johnston Canyon "icicles"

Once "plugged-in" we used both electric heaters. No need for the forced air propane heater in the RV. Apparently the old propane convection furnaces found in older RVs are now illegal. Those definitely worked well for years but maybe there were issues. We did not see anyone with an insulating "skirt" around the base of their RV. In more permanent applications these usually have a heater inside.

Condensation is a problem and these 2 heaters seemed to deal with any such issues. One with a fan to circulate the air works great. The other was a baseboard which also worked great, especially for the long term and for drying clothes. A place to put them might be an issue. Try it before you embark. Leaving the vent slightly (1") open, desiccant moisture absorbing crystals and small dehumidifiers also help deal with condensation.

The door did ice up and we were worried about being able to open it. Put an insulating blanket over the door interior or place a heater near it. Maybe a lock de-icer would have been a good idea just in case.

We did not use the water system in the RV. We didn't want to risk issues associated with pipes or holding tanks freezing. The water supplies in the campsites were shut off. We packed preheated water from the Parks washrooms/showers building. At Lake Louise campground all the cold water was shut off. Yes, you have to cool the water to drink it. Have a small water carrier as well as keep a couple larger water jugs with you.

We did use the toilet sewer system so as to avoid those late night jaunts outdoors. Plus it wouldn't look nice on the nearby snow. Remember to put RV de-freezing fluid in a sufficient quantity into the RVs grey water and toilet sewer holding tanks. Keep these closed until you dump and flush, otherwise solids will be left behind to freeze.

Don't forget to keep fluid in the sink and shower/tub traps. And don't forget to empty the system and re-winterize when the adventure is over. Unless spring has sprung of course. Long term winter campers challenge the cold by using RV "skirting", well placed light bulbs and heating cable/pads on their water system. They also use special sewer hoses designed for cold temperature. This semi-permanent type of arrangement needs to be foolproof. Hairdryers are sometimes a good tool to have for de-freezing!

We had considered using a "cooler" instead of the RV fridge. After all ice was everywhere. The convenience of a large fridge however was too hard to ignore. We used the fridge.

Stepping in and out of the doorway often meant brushing up against road grime on the RV body. Keep a towel handy to wipe down offending parts of your RV.

Put rugs on the floor for added warmth. Drying the shoes/boots did leave puddles on the floor. Wipe it up.

Eider downs, quilts are great. Don't turn the heat too low during the night as it takes considerable time to bring the temperature up again. Close the window coverings to keep the heat in as well. Apparently some people still use electric blankets which would work.

If you are concerned with your RV's cold weather starting, park the RV with its motor facing the road as one might need a battery jump start one morning. Don't forget the jumper cables. Consider a warming battery pad. The RV's solar/battery unit needs to be fully charged for best operation.

Banff actually had a $2 one-way bus trip fare ($1 for seniors) leaving from inside the campground to downtown and beyond. We noticed many skiers (young and older) meeting up with the ski shuttles leaving from downtown. This convenient transit system service is a nice touch from the city.

Good luck with the outdoor BBQ. It is possible. If books aren't your thing you always can try a computer and films. Nights sure are long in a confined area.

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Make sure your carbon monoxide detector is working!!!
Be careful of flammables near the heating units!!!

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Odds are you will be comfortable with winter RVing. And then there's all that skiing, snowshoeing and hiking which is really what you are there for. Who knows what else you might find out in that wintry wonderland?

For us it was quite an exhilarating experience. Good luck, have fun,

Eliane and Steven



One of many beautiful art entries seen at the International ice-carving competition in front of Chateau Lake Louise.

Introduction to Backcountry Ski

December 13, 2015

What happens when you take 13 KMC skiers into the Rossland range after a 29cm dump of new snow the previous 24hrs? Happy faces and big smiles!

This trip was designed for beginner backcountry skiers and the objective was the top of Mt. Crowe (2150m) with an elevation gain of about 600m and a 7.5km return trip. The beauty of this destination is that there are two cabins on the way: the newly renovated Mosquito cabin at 11 U 434821 5452258 and the little A-frame Crowe's nest cabin just below the summit at 11 U 435658 5452351.

I had scoped out the route three days earlier in rain soaked snow with a nice hard crust underneath for good measure and was barely able to make any turns, so the new snow was a welcome relief. On this trip a couple of skiers had broken trail just ahead of us right from the parking lot to the top AND started a cosy fire at the Crowe's nest cabin, so that was awesome! After skinning up to the summit, Terry showed us a great way to de-skin and fold them up neatly in concertina style.



At Crowe's Nest Cabin

We split the group amongst my two assistant guides Ross, Terry and me for the ski down to the Crowe's nest cabin where we had lunch. Not all of us fit into the small space of this cabin, but the temperature was only slightly below freezing, so some of us stayed outside.

Terry showing off proper de-skinning techinique at Mt. Crowe summit



We skied down along our track zigzag style back to the clearcut and to a point where I gave everyone a choice to ski down the road (easy, but lame) or shred the beautiful open slalom course below us (way cooler). No one was interested in the easy route and attacked the unspoiled moderate slope to the bottom road that leads to the Mosquito cabin. We met Carole and Griff on the way down; they had skied into the Mosquito cabin and skied the lower elevations. After a warm-up in the cabin, we walked out to the White Owl pass and skied out, in great conditions.

Well, in the KMC GPS course we learned all kinds of neat things about making tracks and uploading/ downloading it in google earth and the GPS. So here is an example of our rough up-track you can download into your GPS software or view it in the Google GPX viewer as well as the kmz file that opens in Google earth. okay.. I made a small error... the kmz file shows that we descended down the east face of the mountain, but that did not happen. With avalanche conditions reported as considerable at that elevation and an ATES rating of challenging it would not have been a good idea to ski down that slope. We stuck to nice and simple terrain with a moderate avalanche rating instead.

Thank you Ross and Terry for helping out; we had a great time!

Participants: Eric Ackerman, Ross Bates, Lesley Clint, Sandra Fuller, Debbie Gerrits, Cecilia Hobson, Megan Lazaruk, Carole Masse, Tatiana Petrov, Griff Richards, Andrea Vowell, Terry Huxter and organizer and reporter: Peter Oostlander.

Turkey Burner 2015

The traditional annual Boxing Day "Turkey Burner" ski tour to Mt. Plewman was a "go" this year with more and better snow than we have seen in December in the Rossland range for many years.

Ten people attended with more family and friends than KMC club members (.... 4 members and 6 non-members).

The skiing was excellent with first tracks in great powder snow and 7 people made two runs and 3 people made a third run to burn off more turkey!

The sun tried to shine on us but struggled to penetrate a thin cloud layer nevertheless it was a bright day.

Amazingly we managed to get together as a group at the start of each run so we were able to consume the brandy-filled dark chocolates that Bert generously provided …. another tradition fulfilled!

We were: Fred Thiessen, Elena Cigala-Fulgosi, Mike Kent, Eric Clemson, Bert Port and son Andrew, Ken Holmes, son Andrew and grandsons Eric and Adam (Derosa).

White Queen

December 31





Unnecessary Ridge West Side Glades

Saturday January 30

12 people signed up for the trip with a wait list of 3 people. We started off up the Old Glory trail… also known as Gibbards trail as it was called by the folks who used to man the weather station on Old Glory. The weather station was built between 1942 and 1943 and was the highest in Canada.

The trail is named after Wilf Gibbard. Wilf and his wife, Ruth, and their three children, lived at O'Brien's Camp somewhere near the base of Old Glory. Wilf was contracted to provide the men at the weather station with all the supplies they'd need to get through the winter, "from marmalade to coal." To do this, he employed a team of seven horses that each day made the seven mile trek to the top of the mountain laden with cargo. The entire winter's supplies were delivered within this three month period.



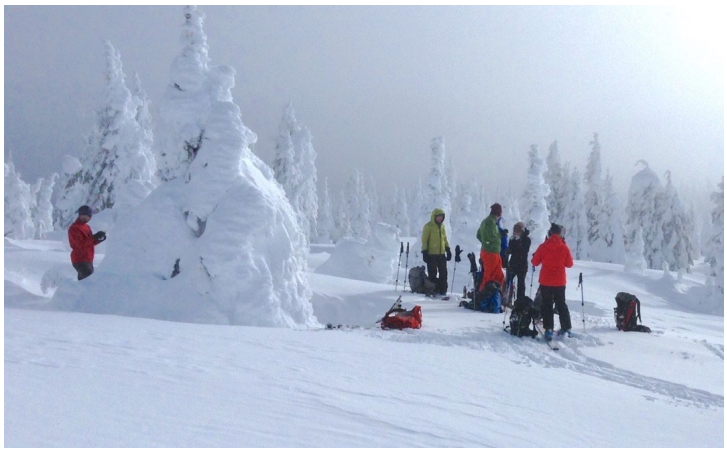


We arrived at Gibbards Junction on Unnecessary ridge and Terry found the Seven Summits Trail sign which was almost totally buried in snow. After a short break we continued on up the ridge looking for good looking glades to ski. The trip was billed as an exploratory tour as the west side glades are not often skied. We did a short downhill run down a nice glade then skinned up back to the ridge and repeated this a second time in another glade. The snow was good but in places had a crust under the fresh powder.The sun was tantalizingly close through a thin cloud layer and occasionally gave us a glimpse of Old Glory's east face which some of us skied last April on a KMC trip. It was views of the glades on that trip that prompted me to put this trip on the winter schedule.

The plan was to go up the ridge to the junction of the Plewman Basin trail with the Seven Summits trail and then ski down Plewman Basin to where we had parked the cars. Although the plan was to do more yo-yo skiing on the glades as we progressed along the ridge, time constraints limited this to the two runs. (I had a pang of conscience that my trip advertising should have had more emphasis on the "tour" part of the description!). However it did provide us with some idea of the considerable scope for many ski runs in this area, but it would require an earlier start and a longer day to do them justice.



The ski down Plewman Basin was really enjoyable, initially in variable snow, but changing to great powder snow as we progressed down into more sheltered areas. We found the skin track into Plewman Basin and followed it out to the old road through the clear-cut to the highway.





It was an enjoyable ski tour thanks to a great group of KMC'ers including

Zuzana Zach, Thom Volpatti, Jocelyne Martin, Tom Braumandl, Annie Taitini, Elena Cigala Fulgosi, Terry Simpson, Diane Paolini, Jordan Overholt, Bob McQueen and Dave Toews.

Ken Holmes, Trip Coordinator

Photos by varied participants



Igloo Cabin Snowshoe

January 1

Photos: Phil Best



New Lepsoe Basin Cabin

January 31

Rick Mazzocchi, Pat & Al Sheppard, Deb Gerrits, Ray Neumar, Tina Baldwin, Pat Bruce, Janice Gilbert, and Brenda Haley

Photos Brenda Haley

It was a three cabin day. We met at 9:30 at the parking area, passed Sunspot on the way to the new Lepsoe basin cabin and took a detour to Eagles nest (???) on the way back. It was less than two hours to the cabin. We had a nice lunch and a fire with company dropping in, and I shared some chocolate valentine hearts.







Mt. Crowe Circumnavigation

February 21

A group of 9 set out from the Nancy Greene summit parking area to circumnavigate Mt. Crowe in the Rossland Range. There was a special avalanche warning that day for at and above tree line, so our plan was to stay below tree line, however we still needed to cross a few open slopes.

Picking our route with the warning in mind we proceeded up the south face of Mt. Crowe to about mid elevation sticking to gentle slopes and ridges and avoiding the steeper sections, then east until we came to a derelict cabin called Wolfs' Den. From the cabin we skied north down into the valley formed by Mts. Crowe and Neptune.

The skiing was excellent on a mellow slope and we just beat a group of cat skiers to the untouched powder. Then, unlike the cat skiers (we were hoping for a ride but only got a wave) we skinned up to the col between Mts. Crowe and Neptune.

Another great powder run down the north west slope to the Bear Hollow cabin for a welcome lunch stop. From this half way point on the trip we proceeded north west along a snow cat track, passing across several clear cuts where we drooled over the inviting ski slopes but decided our time was too limited. The cat track wrapped around past the new View Point cabin, our most westerly point.

From View Point we climbed south east up to the old Lost Cabin clear cut with the new Mosquito Cabin in sight and de-skinned. We skied our final slope, south west facing but still powder, to a lower road which wraps around the south slope and back to the vehicles. A total just over 6 hours and still smiling.



Our hardy group was:

Annie Taiatini, Diane Paolini, Zuzana Zach, Ross Bates, Laurie Helyer, Andrea Vowell, Larry Doell (group photo), Jill and Dave Watson (leaders).

Snowshoe adventure up White Queen

February 21

Photos Joan Posivey

On a beautiful sunny day, ten folks donned their snowshoes to trek to the summit of White Queen. A reconnaissance trip a few days before confirmed that there was a solid uptrack that was probably initially created by skiers, but well used by snowshoers. Unlike last year, where the base was so hard and solid that it made more sense to hike up in icers, our trip was blessed with lovely new powder which got fluffier and lighter as we ascended.

There was certainly some conversation prior to embarking on this trip, as the avalanche rating was considerable - below, at and above treeline. But, wiser folks than me assured that if we stay off the steep slopes, stick with the existing track, stay on the ridge (which is the track route), we would be fine.



The scenery was amazing, with lots of snowy mushrooms atop bent trees, heavily weighted branches laden with hoary flat snowflakes, and terrific sunshine almost to the top. Our early start insured we weren't bumping into too many skiers (even though it was Cold Smoke weekend), with the exception of two intrepid KMC members (not part of our trip) who preferred to glide rather than crunch. At about half way up we were all given the awe inspiring experience of hearing and feeling one big "whomp" which gave us pause, wondering where or if any snow had moved somewhere on that mountain.

When we reached the summit, we were suddenly joined by groups of skiers so that there was quite a crowd of colourful folks. The sunshiney heat we had enjoyed on the way up was soon overshadowed by a whiteout that rapidly moved in. Entertaining the adventurous idea of following our fellow KMCers ski tracks down the Beattie side of White Queen were soon dashed as the visibility shrank to metres rather than the 360 degree vista we had just enjoyed. We agreed that taking in Beattie would be saved for another day when the avalanche rating and visibility are respectively, lower and higher.

Our jolly group included one first time KMC tripper, and a lot of old hands. We were:



Tony Holland, Joan Posivey (intrepid photographer), Ed and Hazel Beynan (Hazel also snapped lots of photos), Rick Mazzocchi, Sess Sakamoto (first time out with KMC and thrilled), Ben Aubin (mountain man with no poles, and leaping off high cliffs into deep powder), Dave Cunningham, Wayne Hohn, and P'nina Shames (trip coordinator).

Mt. Crowe Ski

March 9

9 of us assembled at 9 AM on a chilly morning at the Nancy Greene Summit with a view to skiing Mt Crowe. A keen wind was blowing and it was foggy, but the temperature was well below zero and the snow looked great so everyone was in a good mood. We skied up the trail towards White Owl pass.



There was a very tough rain crust from Sunday's storm which fortunately had been covered by a few inches of fresh powder making for a nice easy uphill. The wind

died down and the trees made it easier to see in the fog. When we made the top of the cut blocks and got into the older woodland, were were in over a foot of pow on a firm base. Nice!

After a brief stop and a pic at the Crowe's Nest, we plodded on up the steep slope to the top, Rosslanders David and Diane breaking trail and setting a good pace. The wind picked up again, so we decided not to linger and head back down to the Crowe's Nest, where 2 had stayed to lunch and build a fire. A beautiful run through the glades in perfect "hero snow"! Meanwhile the fog cleared off as well.



Then lunch, and another nice run through the powder filled northwest glades, dodging the trees and large late season tree wells, down to the corner of the cut block. Here we had a big open run on mostly untracked powder, only a few inches deep now but great skiing, becoming a little icy underneath right at the bottom. So much fun we had to go back up to the top of the cut blocks and do it over again.

Thence to a break at the new Mosquito shelter, and quickly down the luge runs by the Red Dog cabin, dodging later day skiers and their doggies, back to the parking lot.

Thanks to everyone for coming, for good cheer and making it a fun day.

Chris.



Participants

Andrea Vowell, Birgit Chart, Tony Holland, David Grant, Diane Paolini, Helen Foulger, Sue Port, Bert Port., Chris Cowan (co-ordinator)

Lepsoe Basin

March 11

Photos Rob Richardson







