



# Kootenay mountaineer

The KMC Newsletter

July-August 2007

Issue 4

Next deadline: Sep. 21st

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Other Trip Reports: Mt. Cornfield, Dennis Meadow, Mt. Brennan, Big Eddy Crk Headwaters, Ladybird Mt., Bluejoint Mt., Info on How to visit Edgewood from Grand Forks, Giant's Kneecap/Esmeralda/Cond, Kokanee Grand Traverse, Blacktail Mt., Mt. Rainier, Enchantments Lakes.

## Federation Of Mountain Clubs (FMC) Annual General Meeting

The FMC AGM was held at the Baker St. Inn in Nelson on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. The meeting began at 9am with guests from Prince George, Vancouver Island and the lower mainland. The various reports, Finances etc. were given by the delegates and Federation business was attended to. These should be in the upcoming issue of Cloudburst.

The meeting was tactfully adjourned to after lunch and after

the seminars. In this way everyone could discuss interests and concerns raised during the "Workshops" thereby giving the FMC "executive" direction for the upcoming year.

- A Special AGM will be held sometime in the fall upon the posting of the FMC reorganization resolutions that were agreed upon during the meeting.

Other issues dealt with included:

- Legal Liability and Risk management for FMC Clubs – issues around waivers, insurance, and trip planning.

- Land use and non-motorized recreation values. Lessons learned and application for Fraser Valley, West Kootenay etc. - reviewed work done in the Sea to Sky and GBRAP, and work presently being done in the Fraser Valley to help advance efforts in the Kootenays etc.

-Funding and Development options for FMC – financial issues/realities of the FMC and possible options for fundraising etc.

-Membership fees.

-FMC organization/governance structure. There is an identified need for changing or updating the organization and governance structure of the FMC. Communication and decision-making with respect to efficient and effective action on regional issues was a concern. The workshops reviewed the current committee proposal and looked at the concerns and alternatives with the aim being to change the structure this year.

-Reviewing and revising the Executive Directors scope and time use for the upcoming year. Currently a large percentage of this time and energy is spent on advocacy.

Several Kmcers and Executive were present and took part in the course of the day. The discussions on Legal Liability and Risk management for FMC Clubs (waivers, minors, insurance, and trip planning) were extremely informative and useful for the KMC.

I will relay the summation of the meeting when it is available. Thank you to all who attended.

**A SPECIAL THANK YOU:** This weekend was very successful. Several people gave up their weekend for wilderness advocacy and mountaineering. Did you know that the FMC spends about 75% of its resources on advocacy? I would like to thank the people who helped make it so.

Doug Brown did a lot of the legwork to get the event going. Bryan Reid and friend did an excellent job of setting up the locales, including getting things going at both the Friday evening Social and the Saturday BBQ. They also did a lot of the tidying up after both events. Thank you to Ted Ibrahim, Doug Brown, Sandra McGuinness and Sylvia Smyth who provided the billets. I would also like to thank the Sheppards who provided the shuttle from the Castlegar Airport on Friday afternoon.

Thank you also to the several other KMCers who offered billets and help.

Bryan Reid arranged for our Friday evening guest speaker Dr. David Paetkau from Wildlife Genetics International. Dr. Paetkau put on a short talk about Grizzly bear genetics and how genetics provides a solid foundation for future land protection and corridors. It was extremely well received by all in the group.

"Success is not counted by how high you have climbed but by how many people you brought with you." - Will Rose.

## August Library News:

### The Members Have It

If you have been wondering what people in KMC have been up to, check out three of the new books/journals in the KMC library.



*Mostly Mountains* by Mary Woodward, is an illustrated chronology of Mary Woodward's (if you don't know Mary you **really** don't get out enough) travels in the mountains from 1991 to 2003. I really enjoyed this book. It's easy reading, wonderfully illustrated and all about excellent trips in our own area. Thanks to Mary and her family for the donation of this book to the KMC library.

*The Purcell Suite* edited by K. Linda Kivi, and featuring stories by our own Hamish Mutch and Martin Carver is another one of MAA Press' exemplary productions. Every mountaineer should complete Hamish's Farnham Tower quiz.

Finally, this year's Canadian Alpine Journal features two articles by Doug Brown, one the story of the Mazola Party on Bugaboo Spire, the second a record of the KMC 2006 Gold Range climbing camp.

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## ➤ Book Review

### In Search of Ancient British Columbia

by Barbara Huck

Discover the Geology, Paleontology and Archeology of southern British Columbia. Explore B.C. like never before. From Yoho National Park's Takakkaw Falls to Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island's wild westcoast, *In Search of Ancient British Columbia* is packed with information and filled with stunning photography, dozens of maps and full driving directions for more than 130 sites.

Published by Heartland Associates Box 103 RPO Corydon, Winnipeg, MB R3M 3S3

Full color **Softcover** 304p **7x10** Retail Price:\$29.95  
Receive 40% off with orders of 5 or more [-\$17.97per book]  
To order: Tel.204-475-7720 email [hrtland@mts.net](mailto:hrtland@mts.net)  
Orders will be invoiced – Payment on receipt (Cheques or money orders).

## July Mountain School Tech Tips: How Not To Win When Rolling the Dice

I have a friend who subscribes to the “slot machine theory” of accidents in the mountains. Pull the handle and get one lemon, nothing happens, two lemons, nothing happens, but get three lemons in a row and you're a winner. The lemons in this case are bad decisions. Make one bad decision, and you'll likely get away with it, compound the first mistake with a second, and still you'll walk away, but pull three bad decisions in a row, and you could just be a winner.

Most mountain accidents result not from one wild quirk of fate, as we'd like to believe, but a series of bad decisions or judgments that build one upon another until something finally goes terribly wrong. Often, the initial errors are small and easily brushed aside, like starting an alpine climb at 9 am instead of 5 am, taking a wrong turn on the trail on the way in, or simply failing to discuss ahead of time how you'll handle a situation with your group when one member of the party gets separated from the rest.

Pretty much every mountain traveler has heard the oft repeated quote: “*Good judgment comes from experience. Experience comes from bad judgment*(1)” gaining experience and good judgment in the mountains should not necessarily entail epic escapes, near death accidents, and an increasing spiral of bodily injuries. Gradually increasing the technical and physical difficulty of your mountain trips, choosing experienced partners with good mountain sense and judgment skills, and practicing basic skills until they are second nature are all ways that climbers, hikers and scramblers can gain experience without losing limbs. Most important of all, however, is an honest appraisal of our own judgment and decisions, and the ability to admit we have made a mistake. We can then move ahead and use what mountain guides call “error correction” to move our trip back into a situation where we are operating within acceptable margins of safety(2)

(1) Evan Hardin

(2) Technical Handbook for Professional Mountain Guides

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**"Learn from the mistakes of others - you won't live long enough to make them all yourself" - Unknown**

# MOUNTINEERING & SELF-RELIANCE

Self-reliance means being able to cope with most eventualities that may befall you. You owe it to yourself as well as those with id/ improvised carries/ security on difficult or complicated ground/ rope techniques and evacuation. Keep informed of the equipment that would help you survive the conditions you may be subjected to.

**It is your responsibility to be prepared for any eventuality.**

This means being committed to self-reliance from the outset.

**Preventing Accidents** is a big part of this. Incidents largely happen due to human errors of judgment or arise from a lack of understanding or skills.

Use the following to guide you: Be aware of your level of skill/ experience/ understanding and choose routes accordingly.

Thorough route planning, including identifying alternative routes is all-important. Ensure you have adequate first aid or survival skills. Ensure you are adequately equipped for the conditions.

Make good navigational decisions and 'on the ground' route choices. Keep people informed. Rely on skills, not technology.

**Learn the basics of map reading and compass work and use GPS navigation aids as a back up, not as a primary tool.**

**ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURE** To witness an accident can be unnerving, even for the experienced mountaineer. The more serious accidents can be very frightening and can cause shock. In this state, it is difficult for anyone to make sound judgments and decisions about what to do for the best, especially if unprepared. For this reason, it is

you to be competent at what you are tackling and to cope with any misfortune to the best of your ability. Learn the skills of self rescue - mountain first a

prudent to have a prepared set of actions that they may carry as part of an aide memoir or be adequately rehearsed in. Outlined below is a procedure, which might help you manage an incident:

First, ensure your own safety and that of the rest of your party. Attend to Airway, Breathing and Circulation of casualty. Make quick assessment of injuries - treat as necessary. Provide shelter and comfort for casualty and group - identify location and mark it with bivvy bag/ group shelter or similar. Decide whether you can deal with the situation yourself, or require outside assistance. If in doubt, always be cautious and call the emergency services. Write down the position of the accident site including grid reference, injuries, time of accident and weather.

**OPTIONS:** - In order to make difficult decisions about such situations, equip yourself with as much knowledge and skills as possible. Self Help - available resources/ available people/ limited range due to distance and or terrain. Sending for Help - who to send/ where to send to/ relevant information to be carried/how long it will take/ care for the rest of group.

**OTHER WAYS TO HELP** Go on a course to increase your skills - First Aid, Self Rescue, Winter Skills, Navigation. Make regular donations to Mountain Rescue.

Based on the Mountaineering Council of Scotland Information Sheet

## BACKCOUNTRY ROAD CLOSURES

**The road up the west side of Kinbasket Lake**, which provides access to the northern Selkirks - Adamants, Fairy Meadow, Sir Sandford, Alphabet Group, etc is badly washed out in 7 places. The pictures I have seen suggest even ATVs won't be getting up. BC Timber Sales is considering their options and will decide by July. One option will be to abandon the road, as repairs would cost on the order of \$500,000. *Doug Brown, June 15*

**Glacier Creek road** has been closed by the Ministry of Forests. The road is quite badly washed out and impassable downstream of the "Gabrowsky Ranch". Ministry of Forests is planning to restore the access to a light vehicle status (2 WD High Clearance) hopefully by mid August.

**Bugaboo Road**, The road is closed indefinitely due to several recent mud

slides. Assessments are being done and preference is that no traffic be allowed. For updates phone Daryl Crowley at 426-1700.

## CAMP STOVES AND CO POISONING

Geoff Powter, Canadian Alpine Journal editor, has an article about the deaths of Claire Dixon and Cornelius (Kees) Brenninkmeyer in the current issue of *Explore* magazine. Claire and Kees died somewhat mysteriously on the Wapta Icefield last January. As Geoff's article reveals, it seems that the initial cause of death was likely carbon monoxide poisoning from their cookstove. Anyone who camps and cooks in the backcountry should pick up the latest issue of *Explore* to learn more. Thought this article is worth reading. Remember they were in a snow shelter, not a tent.

*From Debbie Ritchie RN MN, Research Coordinator, Department of Cardiac*

*Sciences, Libin Cardiovascular Institute, Calgary.*

## FOR SALE

Feathercraft K2 Expedition  
The ultimate **2 man folding kayak** using the latest technology including radio frequency welded seams, magnesium/aluminum frame and sea socks. For specs go to [www.feathercraft.com](http://www.feathercraft.com).

Used 2 hours.  
List price including GST/PST is \$6950. Asking \$6000. Please call Barb or Ron at 250-999-9999

\* \* \*

MSR Whisperlite **Stove and gas bottle**. Used once. Call Carole at 250-999-9999

# Trip Reports

## Mel Deanna Trail, April 1

This was the first scheduled hike of the season. A group of 21 came out for the 5 km trip along this easy nature trail. We saw many glacier lilies in the sunny sections at the beginning of the trail but as we dropped to the shaded Champion pond area, patches of snow were encountered. The ponds still had ice but a few Wood Ducks, Mallards and Mergansers were sited. Many bird songs were heard as we enjoyed a lunch in a sunny spot by the first shelter. Instead of listing all on the trip, I am submitting this photo [by Gordon Meisner] of some of today's participants taken at a viewpoint. Coordinator Carol Potasnyk.



## Fry Creek Canyon, May 19

Nine of us today for this fine spring hike. It took less than three hours to the beach/gravel bar, the traditional lunch stop. Discussion during lunch separated the group. Three headed back to Johnson's Landing, two relaxed at the gravel bar and four of us went on to Carney Creek. The weather was variable but we only needed to don rain gear occasionally. A late supper in Kaslo and pleasant drive home ended the day. Mary Woodward.

## Five-Mile Basin Ridge, May 23

We met at 8:00 am in Nelson and were hiking by 8:45. There was firm snow almost from the Whitewater Lodge. We took the old Silver King T-bar route and then the White Queen ski trail near the Silver King chair lift to the ridge. This was followed nearly to Half-Dome where we traversed below it to the Five-Mile Basin ridge. Two stopped at the first peak for a break and lunch, while three of us went on to the furthest peak. We met up at the first peak and hiked to the col between Half-Dome and Ymir Peak. We made our way back to

the Lodge and our vehicles down Ymir Basin. The firm snow provided a lot of bum and bootskiing along the way. Good weather, views and companions made for an enjoyable hike. We were John Beerbower, David Cunningham, Steven Miros, Bess Schuurman, and coordinator, Ray Neumar.

## Galena Trail, June 2

This outing provided a wonderful walk with little elevation change, flowers and greenery, and the rivers running high on a sunny day. Crossing the first bridge at the Sandon end, the water was a foot below the bridge deck.

At the ruins of the Alamo mining smelter, time is taking its toll. The manager's house on the hill is pretty well caved in now. But further along towards New Denver the flumes that channelled the water for electricity are still visible on the canyon wall across the creek. Where the trail branches, the choice is to go down towards Carpenter Creek and on into New Denver, or staying on the upper trail, which ends at the trailhead by the New Denver Public Works Yard. We chose the upper route. In retrospect, we had a pleasant 2½-hour walk that included the cable car ride at Alamo and a lunch stop.

We were Joe Fyfe & Addie, Robin Lidstone & Chorie, Alex & Kathleen Nichol, and myself, Bess Schuurman.

## Ymir Mt., 2398m. 7867', June 6

In spite of heavy rainfall warnings eight hikers joined me on my annual excursion to Ymir Mt. The snow is quickly disappearing on the ski hill but still lots in Ymir Bowl. Snow conditions were good for making steps and fun coming down. It was very foggy pretty much all the way and lunch was had with no view in sight, which was unfortunate for people who had not been here before, but better than the predicted rainfall.

Hikers were Maurice De St. Jorre, Don Harasym, Joan Harvey, John Liddington, Robin Lidstone, Laura Ranallo, Nancy Selwood, Larry Wunder, and Mary Woodward, coordinator.

## Pulpit Rock and Beyond, June 9

The day was cloudy and perfect for a walk up, and up, and up. [From 555m. up to 1690m. at the CBC tower]. Definitely not a "B" hike, as much of it goes nearly straight up. The last third of the trail had several trees across the steep trail, and some snow patches that we walked through.

These were the challenges, but a very pleasant trip was had with great views looking down over Nelson and along Kootenay River and lake. It was nice to see the large Canadian flag at the "flag pole" area.

Again a lot of flowers and bushes were in bloom.

At 8:45 am we started with 6 hikers. One stopped at Pulpit Rock, a first time visit there. Five of us went on to the CBC Tower. There was a suggestion made that the party wait there for the leader to pick them up by car, as there is a road down from the tower.

The hike took 4 hours up and nearly as long to go down. We were Ted Ibrahim, Keith Stephenson, Anna Thyer, Michelle Troughton, Sherry Watson, and myself Bess Schuurman.

## **Mt. Faith, 2279m., June 9**

Nine ramblers turned out for what could be a soggy trip to Mt Faith. This might be the first club trip to this very worthwhile summit in the Cascades. Please correct us if we are wrong. For the Blueberry–Paulson Hwy access to Mt Faith: Drive Hwy #3 42 km past Castlegar. Go right on the Paulson Detour Rd just before reaching the Paulson Bridge. A few meters before the rail grade take the well-marked McRea Rd on the right for 6.6 km to the abandoned rail-stop of Farron. It was here that we saw a very large brown bear foraging in the brush along this section. At Farron the road crosses the KVR railbed and becomes “Dog Rd”, and heads downhill. [1.7 km later you will notice a culvert and trail going off to your left. This is the trail to Peter Lake.] The bridge across Dog Creek was rebuilt last summer after an obviously gigantic washout. The road is very good and is marked by red and white km markers. There is one more spur on a switchback. Ignore the spur and continue left up the switchback. At approximately 20 km there is another junction going to the right and marked “Faith Rd.” Follow it to the branch at 24 km. Here you are just below and east of the basin leading up to Mt Faith. You cannot see Mt. Faith, but the adjoining peak, Mt Hope, on its southeast flank. To the northwest is the ridge you will use for access to Mt Faith. Continue along the road on the right and very soon cross the South Faith Creek bridge (signed); ignore the spur on the right; and finish up at a landing in the bottom of a clear-cut at 28 km. This puts you on the north side of South Faith Creek where we parked our two vehicles. We worked our way westwards, paralleling the creek, and upwards through the cutblock. There was minor brush and snow patches en route. We sought the long southwest-northeast ridge leading to Cowpaddy Lake. As this ridge gains elevation it narrows and becomes more distinct. There are several ups and downs on the ridge. Mt Hope was pleasantly visible across the valley to the south. Mt Charity, to the northwest, has a metal green cone on its summit. Soon Mt Faith appeared. There were numerous flowers on this very pleasant ridge walk and the views to the south were good. The northern and western skies were heavily clouded. We wondered if the rain would hold off.

The small “Cowpaddy Lake”, surrounded and partially covered with snow, definitely had a browned look to it. There were a lot of cow paddies around. There was also evidence of what may be a good trail—partially obscured by the snow— from the lake up to the col and further west into the Granby valley. From the Faith-Hope col it is an easy scramble up a dirt and grass slope to the summit. There was considerably less snow on the mountain from last year’s exploratory done on May 30 and ice axes were not required on this trip. Vicky placed a register on the summit.

We were able to see segments of the Arrow Lake. Old Glory and Mt Gladstone were evident. Siwash Mtn and Grassy. A couple of large peaks, probably Bluejoint Mt and Gable were visible under black clouds to the west.

After a shortened lunch due to the cold wind we retraced our steps down the summit and along the ridge. The rain caught up to us and accompanied us back to the vehicles. The ridge slowly petered out and we continued down its treed shoulder to a clear-cut. As on the exploratory there is a tendency to go too far left but the group easily found its way to the cut block above the vehicles.

The possibility of doing all three summits in one day is interesting.

We were John Beerbower, Vicky Hart, Sandra McGuinness, Shannon Naylor, Coby Van Der Gaast, Jill Watson, Mary Woodward. Initiators Eliane & Steven Miros.

## **Esmeralda Peak 9150', Cond Peak 9190' and Giant's Kneecap 9137', June 10**

The weather forecast is “rain easing to showers in the afternoon”. We met at 7am at the Kokanee Glacier Road and it is raining. The rain lets up by the time we arrive at the Gibson Lake parking area. This is a good sign and a source of encouragement.

Our group started hiking at 7:55am. The mountains were cloaked in low cloud and the temperature was perfect for a brisk walk.

Continuous snow was encountered at the Keyhole trail junction, Firm snow made for an efficient climb to the Keyhole and then to the top of Esmeralda by 11:15am. Thick fog obliterated the surrounding mountains. A quick snack, signing the summit register, then pushing on to Cond by noon. We have lunch on Cond and cheer as the occasional opening in the clouds reveals a piece of the surrounding mountains. Brief vistas, then gone. Our original plan was to carry on to Kokanee Peak and then exit via the Kokanee/Gray’s col. We change the plan due to poor visibility and head for Giant’s Kneecap, reaching its summit at 1:30pm. {There is only room for 2 people at a time at the summit rock}.

The weather socks in again as we return to the Keyhole and them back to sunshine as we glissade [“butt-ski”] down to the Kokanee Lake trail.

A quick walk out gets us to our vehicle by 4:00pm. We are a happy, contented group who feel good about beating the weather forecast.

The group: David Cunningham, Micha Forestell, Dave Grant, Vicki Hart, Jen Kyler, Caroline LaFace, John Liddinston, Robin Lidstone, Alex Walker, Mary Woodward and Gene Van Dyck, coordinator.

## **Mt. Spiers, 2522m. 8274', June 16**

The weather looked promising for this outing in spite of a wet forecast. From the Koch Creek Road the group of 16 drove up the Grizzly Creek FSR for 37 km. There were a few deep waterbars on the last couple of km but otherwise the road was good. We took the left branch at km 37 for a half km. We parked at the first switchback. Mt Spiers shows itself completely from here. Surprisingly it was pretty well clear of snow.

We crossed the creek and headed north, through relatively easy brush and old skid trails, for what was Mt Spiers westerly rocky ridge. At the north end of this relatively young forest there begins a considerable amount of elevation gain through a steep treed slope. We followed animal trails, openings in the forest, rock outcroppings and the occasional grassy patch northeast to the ridge. From here it is rock pile and firm snow patches all the way to the summit.

There are several lakes on each side of the mountain and the views were very good with relatively high cloud cover.

Kokanee Glacier is easily discernable. Airy Mt. is off to the east. We had a long lunch and returned by the same route. It was a quick descent and took an easy 5 hours. A new summit register was placed in the cairn.

The Russel Creek valley has been used in ascents of this mountain. It would be interesting to try the mountain from this north approach. A visit to Russel Lake, which is hidden from the Spiers summit by a small knoll, could then be incorporated into the trip. From Russel it may also be possible to head over the ridge to the Shakers Cabin that is northeast of Airy.

We were Michael Brewster, Caroline Dahlen, Dave Grant, Joan Harvey, Vicki Hart, Ted Ibrahim, Jennifer Kyle, Caroline LaFace, John Liddington, Robin Lidstone, Shannon Naylor, Delia Roberts, Jill Watson, Mary Woodward, and coordinators Eliane and Steven Miros.

### **Gray's Peak, 2753m. 9032', June 17**

It was what appears to be typical weather for the day we climb Grays. It rained all night. There was a severe weather warning on the weather channel. In the morning there was a hint of blue sky so we started the hike.

Snow levels are receding fast and as this is a hike that is best done when there is lots of snow we decided to go.

There was a little snow at the Gibson lake parking lot but not until above 6500' did we travel consistently on snow.

It was raining or snowing all the way to Gray's col. At the col it was very windy and cold. Crossing the glacier the winds were so strong that at times it was difficult to stand upright. Visibility was very poor. Most of the people on the hike were familiar with the route and so navigation was not a problem. The summit was attained, touched and then we started down looking for shelter from the wind.

We considered climbing Kokanee Peak but decided that since we could not see it we should leave it for another day. Most people seemed excited by the trip and invigorated by the conditions.

We were Vicky Hart, Ken Holmes, Caroline LaFace, John Liddington, Bert Port, Gene Van Dyck, Mary Woodward, and David Cunningham, coordinator.

### **Grassy Mt., 2120m. 6950', June 17**

Seven hardy souls braved rain, fog and wind to reach the KMC hut on Grassy Mountain. We met at the Castlegar Weight Scale at 8:30am and drove up to the Bombi Summit where we teamed up with Marilyn. The group loaded into 2 high-clearance vehicles then drove in 6 kilometers on the main gravel road.

There we took a side road for one kilometer to the trailhead on South Grassy. By 9:50am everyone was geared up and we headed up through brush on an overgrown logging road. Near the trailhead a spruce grouse strutted its fine mating plumage. The group reached the summit of South Grassy and ridge trail entrance at 11:00am. Fog and low cloud cut visibility to about 50 meters. The ridge trail had been traversed in the reverse direction earlier that morning by a grizzly bear whose huge paw prints were still evident in the snow. On the ridge and just above the cabin we met 2 hunters. They had been to the cabin and we found it toasty warm at 11:45am. We had lunch in the cabin once we rebuilt the fire. The fog lifted briefly to give us a

view of the Erie Creek drainage from the Cabin. At 12:15pm we closed up the cabin and headed back up to the ridge. We elected not to go to Grassy summit due to the low cloud and fog. On the return hike we spooked a blue grouse in the fog. During the hike we admired the fresh bear grass, paintbrush, sulphur buckwheat, valerian, glacier lily, spring beauty, larkspur, elderberry, and anemones. Just as we reached the top of the scree slope the cloud lifted to give us a panoramic view to the south. We reached the trailhead and returned to our vehicles by 2:10pm. We were wet and muddy but pleased to have enjoyed the flowers, the grouse, and each other's company. We were Ed and Hazel Beynon, Janice Gilbert, Marilyn Russell, Michelle Troughton, and coordinators Pat and Alan Sheppard.

### **Baldy Mt., 2320m. 7620', June 20**

Thirteen KMC members met at the Ymir Store & Café at 8am. From here we drove 16km up the Wild horse Creek Road and parked at an elevation of 4250feet.

The hiking started at 9am. Heading due east we gained the first 400 vertical feet by climbing up an old cut-block. Above the cut-block we entered an open cedar forest which lasted to 5300' elevation. A bushwhack through low bush got us to 5800' where we contoured right into an open rocky basin.

From the basin we scrambled to a col (6600') on the southwest ridge of Baldy Mountain. The ridge was then followed to the summit which was reached at 12:30pm. (Loose quartzite blocks on the summit ridge required caution).

An enjoyable lunch on the summit with clear sky and great views.

Departing the top at 1pm we retraced our up-route and were back at the vehicles at 4pm thus ending an enjoyable day in the mountains. "Every step was a joy"

The group: Ross Bates, Dave Grant, Ted Ibrahim, HansPeter Korn, Eliane Miros, Steven Miros, Ray Neumar, Laura Ranallo, Terry Simpson, Jill Watson, Mary Woodward, Larry Wunder, and Gene Van Dyck, coordinator.

### **Mt. John Carter, Glory basin, Enterprise Pass, Kokanee Lodge, June 24**

After a very productive and interesting Federation Of Mountain Clubs' day on Saturday, the KMC offered a couple of outings to our out-of-town guests. Sandra McGuinness led the Grohman trip. The few who didn't have to leave early on Sunday, joined us for this trip.

We signed our trip waivers at the Safeway meeting place and were off in two vehicles. Did you know that by signing at the meeting place you remove a considerable amount of the "duress" associated with the person compared to signing at the trailhead? One of the things clarified in the waiver discussion group the previous day.

The day seemed promising and we made our way, KMC pace, to Kokanee Lake. One of the participants, Dave King, had been here twice in the early sixties with the VOC (Varsity Outdoors Club). We took the usual line from behind the outhouse up to Mt John Carter. The snow was fairly stiff making for hard step making. A helicopter made a couple of trips past us. The group admired the good views (including "the lodge"), got oriented,

signed the register, had some snacks, and then had some pleasant boot skiing through Glory Basin. The trail from Lemon Pass to Enterprise was covered with snow but quick time was made on it. The weather began changing and occasional snowflakes were falling. We reached the lodge and who should be sitting on the back steps of the building but Gene Van Dyck, John Liddington and Dave Grant. This group, along with Ray Neumar, had just completed the circuit from the west Keyhole over to the Battleship and down to the lodge.

While at the lodge the hut keeper told us that a group of people walked into the lodge last night after a very, very miserable 9 hours from Gibson Lake. And, by no means were they going to walk back out!!! After obtaining special permission from Parks, a helicopter flew in to pick up the group. Wow!

The FMC Executive Director Evan obviously made some mental notes of both the lodge's "luxuries" and the need to fly ill-equipped people out of where they shouldn't have been in the first place. Suffice to note why they were there. Needless to say our guests were overwhelmed with the "presence". Being a foregone conclusion, what else could one say?

After a cheery time of socializing we all took leave of the lodge. We had a good walk back down to the vehicles with the weather continuously worsening. A good time was had by all.

We were Doug Brown, Vicky Hart, Dave King, Evan Loveless, Steven Miros [reporter], and Kelly Robertson.

## **Mt. Loki, 2771m. 9080' June 29/30**

We caught the 6:10 ferry on Friday night and camped at the foot of the trail at the end of Portman Rd at approx 4300 ft. We were up at 4 am and hiking at 4:50 am. This early start meant we could set a leisurely pace and still accomplish our objective. Most people were exhilarated by the early morning hiking. It was overcast most of the day. There was a light snow falling for the last hour to the summit. We encountered a crew from Kaslo who were working on the trail. The "good work" is gradually improving due to use and the hard work of the trail crew. There were only occasional views when the clouds parted but people seemed happy just to spend the day on what is becoming an old friend. We were on the summit around 10:30 and back to the cars around 3:30.

We were Vicky Hart, Caroline LaFace, Steven Miros, Bess Schuuman, Brian Simpson, Gene Van Dyck, Mary Woodward, and coordinator, David Cunningham.

## **Nilsik Creek - Lemon Creek Trail, July 14**

Anyone wishing to use the Lemon Creek Access Road may be interested in an update on its condition:

As Forestry advised, the road is open to high clearance, 4 or 2-wheel drive vehicles. Lumpy, bumpy here and there plus loose (small) rocks at a couple of narrow parts. The biggest hazard is halfway up, right-hand side, on a corner: a large hole/rut that would swallow a tire. It was more visible on the way down (on the left this time!). Parking is adequate at the end/start of the trail. There is more though: despite being 'hikers' we decided we should drive to the upper parking lot, so that we did not have to walk the extra. This road to the upper parking lot is NOT maintained. There is a major hole a minute or so before

the parking area. It is now marked. It swallowed a front, right wheel of one of our vehicles. There may be more holes waiting for some weight. Also a few stray branches across the road, and plenty of 'brush' to add to the scratches. We advise stopping at the lower parking lot and doing the extra mileage.

Condition of Trail: we followed the Nilsik Creek Trail, which is well marked about 10 minutes into the hike. Apart from a short stretch of abundant foliage the trail was pretty good. Remember that it does fade away once you reach the alpine. We chose to do the loop and return via the Lemon Creek Trail. The creek is running high and we crossed at the top thus avoiding problems lower down. Crossing at the top is pretty good unless you happen to be 'not tall'. Once across make sure you head far enough (right) away from the creek so as to avoid rocky, steep, cliffage. It is still a steep scramble but in grass and dirt. By continuing down, parallel to the creek you will be faced with the odd glitch e.g. not very far after the creek a mudslide has washed some of the trail away. Observe and find the best way onward and hook up with the trail. We also lost the trail a couple of times due to blow-down. There is a large and long stretch of mega-growth (bear grass, devils club, etc) and it has completely covered the trail. But the trail is there and you can see the indentation. Plus now, after the human herd, it will be more defined. All plain sailing once you hit the forest again.

Some issues that came up are:

SAFETY EQUIPMENT - of the 4 off road (or almost off road) vehicles that traveled that road not one was equipped with shovel, tow rope, axe or saw!!!!!!!!!!!! ALSO - later in the hike when it could have been handy to have a short, light, throwable rope, of course no one had one.

We were all aware of our uselessness in such a situation.

COMMUNICATION EN ROUTE - often during a hike the group will split due to preference of travel.

- It was suggested that in these instances it would be useful to be equipped with a Radio/Telephone System (ski patrol style) that would keep everyone informed of the whereabouts, comfort level etc. of both parties. Should the club buy some of these???? Should we as individuals???

INTERPRETATION OF HIKE RATING - this seems to be an ongoing problem as everyone puts his or her own take on what constitutes what. For instance, someone will read 'I' (a hike) as meaning it is a hike on a trail all the way; whereas I understand a 'hike' to mean being upright all the way, and on and on.... I guess it is up to the coordinator to be clearer as to what kind of terrain is involved. Our 'hike' on Saturday was rated as C-1. Had we not had any variations to the day it could have been just a hike. As it turned out we had plenty of scrambling - and plenty of heat so that the C could have been upgraded to a 'D' i.e. 'very strenuous'. Oh to be in the mountains!!! We did have a great day and thanks to everyone... Jenny Baillie.

## **Meadow Mountain, 2550m., July 22**

Because it was a long drive, we met at Nelson Safeway at 6:30am. It was 103 km from Nelson to the left turn off Highway 31 at Meadow Creek {opposite the hotel/store/post office}. From this junction, keep right at 3.0 km. At 4.5 km,

turn left on to Meadow Mountain FSR. At 9.6 km go left. At 15.2 km turn right {road marked "not maintained"}. There is a cabin on the right at 25.3 km and the Meadow Mountain Recreation Site is at 26.4 km. We parked at the sharp curve in the road between the cabin and the recreation site and walked from the corner up to the ridge on Meadow Mountain. There was no clear trail but it was fairly straight forward with little bush, but fairly steep until we were on the grassy ridge. At the top we had excellent views in all directions, although there was some cloud on the top of Mount Cooper. There was a cool breeze while we had lunch on the top, but it kept the mosquitoes away that we encountered lower down. We walked down by staying longer on the ridge and then taking an old road that met the access road about ½ km below the cabin. We then drove a little further to the high point in the road, and walked up the grassy ridge on our right to get better views of Mount Cooper. This was a pleasant, fairly easy day, with about 590 m total vertical, and with very rewarding views. We were Don Harasym, John Liddington, Robin Lidstone, Leah Zoobkoff, and coordinator Ted Ibrahim.

## Other Trip Reports

*These reports are from club members, they are not club trips. Feel free to submit your special trip reports from your special places.*

### **Mt. Cornfield, 2543m. 7750', April 23** 走

Our party of 3 met at the start of the Sitkum Creek FSR, 14.5km east of Nelson. We were able to drive to 7km on the Sitkum Creek Road, parking at an elevation of approximately 4500'. Skis and packs were put on at this point and we skied 8km up the road on firm wet snow to an elevation of 6400'. At this point we turned left [west] and contoured into an east-facing basin. Camp was set up at 6900' [G.R.814023] on a treed bench overlooking the head of Sitkum Creek. The remainder of the afternoon was spent exploring the basin and ridge above camp, and reconnoitring the route to Mt. Cornfield.

A pleasant night was spent in our mountain camp. It was a clear, windless night.

The next morning saw us up at 5:30am. Leaving camp at 7:00am, we skied to the base of a 7730' summit at the east end of the "Cornfield Ridge". Skis were left at the col south of 7730' peak and we proceeded on foot, kicking steps to the top of 7730' [G.R.816033].

From here one descends about 200 vertical feet then follows the undulating, corniced ridge in a northwesterly direction (for a

distance of 1¼ km) to the summit of Mt. Cornfield. We reached the summit at 9:00am.

By this time the weather was changing; gusty winds were picking up and low cloud was obliterating the local mountain tops. Ugly black bottomed clouds were moving in from the southwest.

A few photos at the summit and then we retraced our steps back to the skis. A short ski got us back to camp at 10:40am, where we had an early lunch and packed up.

Departing camp at 11:30am, we had variable skiing down to the road, followed by a gentle shuffle out to the truck. We were out at 1:30pm.

The party consisted of Dave Cunningham, Dave Grant and Gene Van Dyck.

### **Dennis Meadows** 走

On **May 21**, my dog Rosie joined me in driving 12 km up Hicks FSR before encountering snow on the road. There was only a 200m transition before reaching continuous snow. An easy 3 km of skinning gained us the height of land at Dennis Meadows, which at 7500' was about 2000' above the vehicle. Lots of nice corn to ski: first to the east down 1000' to the bottom of that valley, then back up the other side so we could enjoy a west facing run. Some more skinning brought us back up to the height of land and a steepish run west launched us back towards the truck.

This is a great area for spring skiing because of its easy access (if you time it right), and because there is a lot of varied open terrain.

Bill Sones.

### **Mount Brennan, 2902m. 9521', June 3** 走

I also like to time my ski trips to Mt Brennan. Ideally, the access road should be just free of snow. On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, Lou Chioccarello, Rosie and I, because of the hot weather, opted for an early start. The Lyle creek road was in good shape and snow free. We reached the trailhead at 5:30 and the first thing Rosie did was surprise a grizzly. Fortunately it ran the other way...eventually. We hiked up 800' and then booted up snow in the open avalanche path the rest of the way to the basin where we donned our skis (except for Rosie of course who prefers bare feet). The rest of the 5000' climb to the summit was uneventful except for another grizzly sighting- these 2 were on a high ridge about 600m away. As we were approaching the summit, there was a solitary set of bear tracks leading down right from the top! I guess these bears don't know that they are supposed to prefer low elevations in the spring.

We reached the 9800' summit at 9:00am- my fastest trip yet. After patting ourselves on the back and eating 'lunch', we headed down. The unfrozen snow was certainly heavy but our early start let us avoid major slush issues and we made it back to the vehicle at 10:30. For those of you interested, the overall Mt Brennan snowpack was just a bit more than it was on May 31<sup>st</sup> last year.

Bill Sones.



## Big Eddy Creek Headwaters, May 19-23

In the rainy summer of 1999 Hamish Mutch and I spent a pleasant week climbing the peaks around the headwaters of Big Eddy Creek. Well, some of the week anyway, as it rained a lot and we spent fair amount of time wandering in fog on various goat highways. As I was looking through our pictures I realized that this would be a great place for ski touring thus when it came time to decide on location of our annual end of the ski season fling I told Paul Allen what a great place this is.

In the end there were 6 of us: Paul and Scott Allen, Lou Chioccarello, Ken Holmes, Bert Port, and myself, Steven Horvath. Inclusion of Scott succeeded in lowering the average age of the below the old fart limit and brought a wonderful dose of youthful enthusiasm to the group.

After a brutal early morning start on **May 19<sup>th</sup>**, a bleary eyed drive to Revelstoke, a last splurge of "civilized" food at Frontier Restaurant and a longer than expected flight [due to deteriorating weather] we arrived at our campsite. The weather seemed to be coming in and we spent most of the afternoon constructing snow walls to protect our tents from the seemingly ever-present wind.

**Sunday, May 20**, the weather was perfect and after a somewhat leisurely start we made our way up the glacier below the N face of Schrund Peak. After arriving at a saddle above the Pyrite Lake we, or rather I, split. As I have already climbed Schrund Peak with Hamish [a new route] and the weather was getting warmer I opted for a ski run before snow would turn too soft. I skinned up to below Cat Peak and enjoyed hero corn most of the way back to camp. On the way back I stopped to investigate a mysterious shining object we saw from camp. Somewhat to my disappointment it turned out not to be a UFO but a food cache for one of the "luxury ski trips" conducted by a commercial operator. The rest of the party successfully made their way to summit of **Schrund Peak** and they enjoyed a rather fast descent to camp - "beats the hell out of postholing for hours" they said.

On Monday, **May 21**, all of us made our way to **Cat Peak**. We gained the backside of the summit ridge via an amazingly large wind scoop and were finally able to put our ice axes to use. The view from top was superb and the run back to camp one of the best we ever had.

On Tuesday, **May 22**, Bert, Ken and Lou climbed **Frenchman's Cap**. Paul, Scott and I opted for a ski run and skinned up an unnamed peak across the valley south of camp. The run down was amazing - several thousand feet of uninterrupted fall line corn.

Prior to flying out at noon on May 23, still not having had enough we skinned up to a saddle West of Cat Peak and had yet another fabulous run down to camp.

Great weather, wonderful company and great skiing - another perfect trip. I guess we just have to do something similar again.

PS: I believe that this place offers a good location for a general mountaineering camp - ample and safe campsites, reasonable glacier travel, and at least 5 peaks over 9000 feet within easy distance from camp. Steven Horvath.

## Ladybird Mt., 2263m. 7425', May 31

This mountain, which is so close to home (Castlegar) unfortunately does not offer an easy approach from the north. We began this adventure without a real idea of what we might encounter or where we would actually end up. From Castlegar we drove up the Pass Creek Road for 10 km to where it junctions with the Norns Creek Road. We followed this for 10 km to a branch on the left (south) called West Ladybird Rd. After turning, you immediately cross a bridge and a few meters past, there is a very grown-in road to the left. We parked and followed it through very thick alder for at least a couple of hours. The general direction was east, then south along an unnamed creek flowing from the northwest side of Ladybird Mtn. After a while, the peak, which we refer to as Kamikaze, was visible behind us, to the north. There were 3 washouts that obliterated the road for several meters. The road base was discernable and as it seemed to be headed in the general direction we wanted, we stayed on it as the brush around seemed an implausible alternative. The road put us into a mature forest where there was enough firm snow to walk on. We did know that the peak lay to the southeast, but the raging creek prevented us from crossing until we were higher up. A visible western shoulder of Ladybird served as a most practical objective for the time being.

We followed the creek until we could safely cross it on solid snow. Being far up into the basin we thought it safest to climb the ridge that we had been orienting ourselves to. If we could make Ladybird from there, great! If not, we were ready to go home - we still had that thick brush to wade through on the way down to the vehicle! After some fairly steep step-kicking we made our way onto the ridge and then to its hump. From here it was very apparent that Ladybird was another hour away. After some greatly appreciated nourishment, we continued. The ridge dropped a few hundred feet to a small pass - that we would use to shortcut back to where we crossed the creek - and from there it was a scurry up to the summit. The views along this ridge are actually great and from the summit, excellent. The entire Norns Range appears majestic just off to the north. Through its various openings you can see the Valhallas. The sky was very accommodating and we could see far off in all directions. Kokanee Glacier, the Bonnington Range, the Rossland Range, Mt Gladstone, and Mt Faith were all up close.

After a long drawn out snack we began our descent. It was quick travel on firm snow and soon we were back at the brush road. We actually had experienced a very warm breeze blowing through the mature forest. The heat here was probably about 30c. Another 2 hours of bushwhacking and we were back at the truck.

Total time was 7 hours. There were some clear cuts to the southwest of Ladybird (Cayuse Creek?) and to the southeast of the peak (Rialto Creek FSR/Keenleyside Dam?) as well. These may provide alternate road approaches to the mountain. The one we took was horribly brushy and hopefully an easier route might be found for this very enjoyable mountaintop. With heavy brushing, this would be a great route.

Eliane & Steven Miros.

## **Bluejoint Mt., 2326m, June 14**

This was a recce for the Granby area. From our recent club trip to Mt Faith, it seemed to be the next logical point westward and a lookout tower on the top of Bluejoint Mt. would probably provide relatively easy access.

The directions start beginning with a right turn at the highway bridge just as you enter Grand Forks. Km 0. This puts you on Granby road and essentially it follows the creek north for 40km to pavement's end at Bunchgrass Hill Rd. Here you turn left and drive across the bridge. Immediately on the left is the Granby-Burrell Recreation Site. Continue northeast and soon a "Granby FSR" sign shows up. At 54 km there is a Bluejoint Lookout FSR sign. At 57 km continue straight ahead. Here the road winds up the mountainside. It is a fairly good road and we went up to the 56 km point where branches might scratch the family car.

It was 8 km of good logging road walking. At times we had dark clouds bringing considerably lower temperatures and hail/snow. The last 2 km would have been very bumpy for a 4x4. There is a parking/campout (no water) area overlooking the valley at road's end. From here it was an easy but steep 3km (approx.) to the summit on a good open alpine trail. It was partially obscured by patches of snow. The summit has a very good cement based Forestry Lookout on it. It appears to be still used in the dry season. There was a heli landing and one [actually two] of those green towers there as well.

The views here were super. To the SE is Mt Faith with Old Glory right behind it on the horizon. Gladstone was off to its south. To the SW were Almond Mtn and Gable Mtn. Both definitely in need of a visit (with cutblocks visible near their summits). The ridges north of these, and in Granby Provincial Park looked traversingly inviting. In fact the park's west and eastern mountain boundaries, formed essentially by two parallel ridges, could be seen in their entirety from here. It is a great site for orientation! To the NW one could also easily see the Big White hotels and condos. To the cloudy NE we could see Saddle Mtn. and parts of the Valhallas and Valkyres. Sangrida Peak was clearly visible. To the east were the peaks of the Norns and Bonnington Ranges.

On the descent the clouds partially lifted allowing for peeks at Gimli, Dag, Wolfs Ears and possibly Woden. It's a different perspective from here.

We returned by the same route and were back at the car in just under 5 hours including our long lunch on the sunny heli-pad. It is a 2-hours drive from Castlegar to our parking spot. The road through the Granby was a treat in itself. Had it been a bit warmer, a dip in the Granby River and Christina Lake would have been a great way to finish the trip.

We used the Boundary Forest District Recreation Map and Kamloops Okanagan Backroad Mapbook for access. Eliane & Steven Miros.

## **How To Visit Edgewood From Grand Forks?**

*Information provided by Grand Forks Tourism Office.*

- Take the Granby Road [located just across the bridge] at the east end of Grand Forks and head north.

- 17km [junction at North Fork Fire Hall/Hummingbird Bridge – turn right DO NOT CROSS BRIDGE and continue north on the east side of the Granby River.

- 44km [28 Mile Bridge] – turn left and cross the bridge over Burrell Creek. Continue on Granby FSR to approx. 45 km [Burrell Crk FSR junction].

- Burrell Creek FSR junction – turn right [north] on Burrell Crk FSR. Burrell Creek will be on your right/east side.

- 7 km – cross bridge over Burrell Creek and continue north. Burrell Creek will be on your left/west side.

- Other FSR's are signed at the junction with Burrell Crk FSR. STAY ON BURRELL CREEK FSR !

- 33.5 km [MacFarlane Creek FSR junction] – stay right on Burrell Crk FSR.

40 km [new Burrell Creek extension] – take right fork and remain on Burrell Creek FSR. Follow the road up over the height of land into logged areas on the Arrow Forest District side. Follow the main road down into Edgewood.

## **Giant's Kneecap, Esmeralda Peak, Cond Peak, June 26**

With clear blue skies overhead and a good forecast, we started from the Gibson lake parking lot after 8am. Snow obliterated most of the keyhole trail after the first switchback. The grunt up the West Keyhole was very good as we were able to use the slightly snow covered steps made by KMCers a few days earlier. We wondered if it would be this easy without snow. The views were great in all directions. We definitely didn't want to leave these lofty environs, so we changed our original goal of the Slocan Chief to a walk along the Kokanee Ridge. After a small lunch on the knoll just to the east of the col (with a view of Kokanee Lake) we proceeded over to the Giants Kneecap where we admired the Joker Lakes. The sun was taking its toll and we knew that even with suntan lotion things would be red when we got home. Frank's bandana kept the sun off his top but he made mention of that he didn't want the sun line over his forehead. We worked our way back to the ridge and up Esmeralda. We then continued the pleasant snow walking and boot skiing over to Cond. Here we finished what we had left of our lunches and reasoned that it was about time to slowly head home. No one wanted to leave but continuing over to Grays Peak would have meant bushwhacking down below. We were having just too nice of a day for that. We continued over to the notch east of Cond and had some great boot skiing down to the big mine tailings below. We unfortunately headed slightly west which made us take a few detours to get around some small cliffbands. The easterly side down to the mine site would have been much better. After replenishing our water we worked our way through the flowered hillside down to the main path. It was several great hours on the top of the world.

We were Frank Fodor, Francois and Steven Miros.

## **Kokanee Grand Traverse, July 2**

The trip I did with Francois Miros and Frank Fodor on June 26<sup>th</sup> had me wondering how long it actually would take to visit all the peaks on Kokanee Glacier. Or, at least as many as I could get to in one long summer day. I was unable to find a similar

trip description. So with a forecast for an excellent day I left Gibson Lake at 5:30 am taking the regular route up to the Grays Peak col. I bushwhacked up the normal easterly side of the creek, then along the convenient boulder path below the mountain. I was out in the open quicker than expected and at the pass. The snow travel was excellent and I was soon on the summit. With grand views, a good rest and some snacks, I was on my way back down to the col. The sun was warm with the snow remaining firm.

I went north around Kokanee Peak and up to its summit. While eating my first lunch I was surprised by a helicopter coming straight at me at a fairly low elevation. The pilot waved. The trip over to Cond took a bit longer. I had been affirmed that it was better to go north and around, rather than follow the ridgeline. I had been on this summit just a week before and actually things looked pretty well for the rest of my itinerary. After another small snack I proceeded over to Esmeralda, signed the summit register, admired this most frequent of my Kokanee peaks, then over and up to the big “green thing”. Here I ate another leisurely lunch and dried my shirt and pack. The views from here are pretty good. Actually each summit gives a significantly different great viewpoint.

My next steps were to retrace the path we, and others had made in previous days over to the Giant’s Kneecap. From The Giant’s Kneecap it looked as if I would go over to M. Kitchener and then head back down the regular Keyhole. I didn’t feel too comfortable with open snowfield travel by myself. While having another snack, I noticed a group of three getting onto the snowfield from the west Keyhole. Ah ha, fresh tracks! They made their way leisurely over to the Battleship and down its northern flank. In the meantime I began working my way over to the west Keyhole and then walked over to Mt Kitchener.

I have only been on Kitchener many years ago and I was very impressed with the views onto Glory Basin, Kokanee Lake and the entire stretch up to the lodge. The old mine site on this peak was just emerging from its winter snow covering. It must have been a “working experience”.

I retraced my steps eastward from Kitchener until I was on the path made by the other three visitors of the day. I went down the south-western flank of the Battleship following another set of fairly recent footprints.

There were numerous markings of recent skiing all over this area of the snowfield. These were probably made on their ascent. As I got to the bottom of the Battleship I noticed that the group of three had actually cut south below the Battleship and by keeping a highline, had worked their way nicely onto Smugglers Ridge. I followed.

The tracks followed Smugglers Ridge down to a cairn. This cairn marks the old path that descends in a southerly direction to a point south of Keen Lake on the main Gibson Lake trail. I couldn’t see a trail marker.

Eventually I was back at the parking lot. The whole trip took 9 ½ hrs. The weather and snow walking were excellent. The pace, though not too fast, was fairly continuous. It was an unforgettable day on the top of the world.

Steven Miros.

## Bashing Through the Bush: Climbing the North Couloir on Blacktail Mountain

The Backroads book for the West Kootenays – that infamous publication that gets it right just often enough that you don’t put it out with this week’s recycling – shows a trail running south up Silverton Creek from Fishermayden Lake to Natanek Lake.

This seemed like it might be a good way to access Blacktail Mountain, the only other viable route being a long traverse south from the Billy Valentine Trail. Doug was extremely skeptical of the existence of this trail, given the source, but as a long-time husband, he knows when domestic harmony is best pursued by silence. With Delia Roberts in tow we set off on a hot, sunny **July day** to climb Blacktail Mountain.

The road up Silverton Creek had a fresh road collapse on it, and the resulting boulders had blocked enough of the road that we could not get around in our truck, so we had an extra four or five kilometers to walk – a distance that passed easily enough on the way up, but felt painfully long on the return trip. The start of the trail to Fishermayden Lake was very overgrown and difficult to follow. About half way along, it snakes along a very narrow tread on a steep bank above Silverton Creek, where I came around a corner to find Doug hanging onto assorted but flimsy greenery after his feet had slipped off the greasy tread and he’d almost slid right down into the creek.

Despite this mishap, the north end of the lake was reached speedily enough, but the state of the “trail” heading south was not encouraging. We clambered up and over fallen logs, bashed through thickening rhododendron, forded a couple of creeks, and reached the south end of the lake, where all semblance of a trail completely disappeared. Somewhat dismayed, we looked forward to 2.5 km of bashing through a tangle of rhododendron liberally laced with acres of deadfall.

We quickly decided that if we were going to bushwhack, we might as well make decent uphill progress. Looking at the map, we thought we could bushwhack south along Silverton Creek for about one kilometer, then head up trending southeast to enter a basin below the north face of Blacktail Mountain. After about 20 to 25 minutes of whacking, we thought we had likely made the requisite one kilometre of vertical distance. A GPS reading confirmed this, and we headed off up-slope in a southeast direction. The first 30 vertical metres went reasonably well as we happened to be beside a talus field, but after that, upward progress was significantly more demanding.

After gaining perhaps 250 vertical metres, and a whole bunch more leg gouges, we reached a flat spot among some boulders with a creek nearby. Another GPS reading confirmed that we were on target, so we continued southeast, following a creek until we reached a pretty sub-alpine basin below the north face of Blacktail Mountain. Somehow, you know it’s going to be a long day when just getting a glimpse through the trees of the peak you want to climb takes four hours.

The north face of Blacktail Mountain is steep, rocky, and, in some places, regrettably loose looking, but a prominent snow couloir runs diagonally through the north face and looked to offer easy access to the summit ridge. We hiked up through light timber, meadow and boulders to reach this couloir and then began kicking steps. At first the couloir is easy angled, but in the middle and upper reaches it steepens to between 40 and 45 degrees, and the summer snow was reasonably firm without

crampons. Doug and I kicked a few perfunctory steps but iron-legs Delia did the bulk of the step kicking, only reluctantly relinquishing the lead for the final 75 vertical metres when she could no longer see from sweat streaming into her eyes. At the top of the couloir, a final loose scramble popped us up onto the summit ridge, but it was a further half hour of scrambling along the castellated ridge before we reached the top. There was no cairn, but I know the mountain has been climbed at least once before, because Kim Kratky – he of the famous “this day in history” climbing log – had traversed over from nearby Titei Mountain in a long day. However, ours is likely the first ascent of the north couloir. We left a KMC summit register with a newly built cairn – the hundred pages will likely last until global warming kills all the humans. We gave some thought to skirting along the south side of the mountain to the north ridge and following that down, but about 15 minutes of loose, hot, groveling on the south side convinced us that simply descending our ascent route would be considerably less painful. The couloir was quite narrow, and the snow hard enough for fast acceleration so we descended facing in, with Delia going first. Always a tedious way to descend, I felt quite annoyed at one point when I saw the steps all busted out and figured Delia had decided to glissade – a questionable practice on such a slope – but when we caught up with her lower down, we found the glissade had been of the “involuntary” kind. Luckily (?), a bunch of boulders below had stopped her incipient speed descent.

Walking out was about as painful as expected with lots of knee wrenching and knacking as we slithered about descending through thickets of rhododendron. We did pick up a couple of short sections of game trails for the last kilometre of bushwhacking to the lake, but it seems that the deer that frequent this area have a penchant for river crossings as they all ended precipitously at the river bank. We spent the final 45 minute walk down the road composing all kinds of rude notes to the Backroads authors about the dubious accuracy of their maps, but, then again, had the trail existed, we might never have had the pleasure of climbing a new route on an obscure mountain after four hours of painful bushwhacking.

Sandra McGuinness.

## **Mt Rainier, July 10-11**

I have been wanting to climb Mt Rainier since the club had a trip there approx. 7 years ago and I was unable to attend. We planned to go in 06 but I injured my knee and my friends kindly postponed the trip. This year we spent several months planning the trip ie. Guidebooks, maps and practicing glacier travel and crevasse rescue techniques. On July 10 and 11 we climbed the mountain.

Mt Rainier is a volcano approx 70 miles south east of Seattle in Washington State. It is over 14,400 feet high. It is covered by a large glacier. Being close to the ocean it attracts many storms and so weather is a large factor in successfully climbing this mountain. We were lucky in having perfectly clear skies and a freezing elevation of over 15000ft.

Between 50 and 100 people climb Mt. Rainier on a good day in the summer. Many of these people are guided up the mountain. The guides develop a trail, which is followed by any party that

chooses to follow it. On July 4 there often is a fire works display from the top of the mountain. You definitely do not feel alone on this mountain however there are many crevasses, and jungles of crevasses with several snow bridges requiring protection and care. You also need to be aware of elevation sickness.

We left Nelson on Monday July 9 and drove the 410 miles to Paradise which is where the visitor service centre is located and where you need to purchase a climbing permit. (The first thing we saw when we entered Paradise was a paved parking lot.) On Tuesday we climbed with full packs to Camp Muir at 10,200ft. At Camp Muir there is a Public Shelter where you can stay for free. There is also an area where guided parties stay. It is recommended that you start to climb the mountain very early in the morning as the snow is firmer and snow bridges are more stable. There is also less likelihood of rock fall. We started our climb at 1:20am. on Wed. July 11, using our headlamps. Many parties were ahead of us and you could see an eerie looking line of headlamps following the trail. Using just headlamps, (there was only a sliver of a moon), you did not know exactly what was on either side of the trail but plodded on trustfully. We climbed a snowy, icy, rocky area called Disappointment Cleaver (because many people turn around here). We then traversed around the mountain through one maze of crevasses and one delicate looking snow bridge until we got to a ridge on the Emmons glacier. We then zig zagged our way, slowly, for approx. 2500ft. stepping over several small crevasses to the crater bowl which is the summit. We arrived at the crater bowl at approx. 8am and walked across the bowl to the summit arriving at 8:30. It took us 7 hours to the summit and approx 4 hrs back to camp Muir. We felt too tired to descend to Paradise that day so rested and walked down on the Thursday. After registering our successful climb at the ranger station in the visitor centre, we drove back to Rossland and then to Nelson.

We were Dave Grant, Gene Van Dyck, and David Cunningham.

## **Enchantment Lakes, 8000', July 10**

This outing was in our plans for several years and highlighted our trip to the Leavenworth area of the Cascades. We had trip descriptions for the Enchantment Basin but only one vaguely described a possible day trip approach into Colchuck Lake and up over Aasgard Pass (7750ft).

From the southwest end of Leavenworth we drove up the Icicle Road, a name well suited for the “icicle ridge” high above the valley. There were some very interesting homes built along and almost onto the creek along this road. The backpacking route to enter the Enchantment Basin, Snow Lakes Trail, is located on this road. Our route would save several hundred feet of elevation gain. At 8.5 mi we turned left onto dirt road 7601 which had signs for Colchuck Lake (The Forest Service roads in this area of Washington all have numbers on them making trailheads easy to find. They are also very car friendly). We drove up this good road for 4 miles to the trailhead where several cars were parked.

The first part of the trail pleasantly follows a creek for about a mile to a log footbridge. It is then 1.5 miles of uphill on an excellent path to the junction of the Colchuck Lake–Stuart Lake

Trails. We turned left onto Colchuck Lake Trail, immediately crossed a creek on a log bridge, and began switchbacking steeply up the headwall to the lake. There were very good views of the imposing 9415' Mt Stuart.

Colchuck Lake is beautiful, glacier blue colored, backdropped by a semi-circle of peaks including Dragontail Peak (8840') with its impressive northwest face, Aasgard Pass (approx. 2 miles by trail away) on its northern flank and Colchuck Glacier on its southern shoulder. There were numerous campsites along the southwestern shores of the lake. We followed the trail along the south lakeshore, through a boulder field below the glacier and then slowly began working our way up the rocky slope to the pass. The trail is mostly washed out in this avalanche area as the snow just recently left, but recently placed cairns marked the route very well (The route to the pass was luckily opened the day previous and surely by the end of summer it becomes a trodden path). On the very demanding ascent we passed several groups laden with heavy packs going in both directions. It was to be a 105\* F day in the valley and we were very happy to be free of those weights! We also passed a mountain goat a few feet from us, the first of several that day.

We finally reached the pass and were greeted by a spectacular setting. This basin was entirely glacier covered only 100 years ago. There are several snow covered lakes and tarns surrounded by a rocky alpine basin. Enticing peaks are very close, several of which still have small glaciers on their northern slopes. We had a long lunch admiring this landscape and panorama. Several groups were camped in various parts of the basin (100 per day/ reservations must be made far in advance)

We decided to scramble up to the northern ridge of the basin called the Enchantment Peaks. It was more of a steep walk on a large tilted plain. Goat droppings were everywhere. From the

ridge's eastern end we were treated to a close up view of The Temple, and Prusik Peak. The eastern scenery contains several lower beautiful sub alpine lakes draining easterly through Snow Creek back down to Leavenworth. As we walked the ridge westward we admired Mt Adams off to the south, Glacier Pk (10541') to the northeast, Mt Stuart to the west and a grand panorama of the north Cascades. Mt Rainier, unfortunately, was hidden by the up close 8400' Dragontail Pk - Otherwise I'm sure we would have seen Dave, Dave and Gene scaling its slopes! The name Dragontail comes from the striking miniature "tails" or rock needles on the thin ½ mile long crest SW of the summit, which are clearly visible from the ridge that we were on.

After considerable time admiring the environs we began the trek down. The temperatures were very hot, even at this elevation. We made quick time descending down to Colchuck Lake. Several groups were still climbing up to the pass in the afternoon sun. We couldn't resist trying out the waters of Colchuck Lake and actually it was great! After 2 long swims we continued our journey down to the car. The total distance was about 18 miles. We took approximately 12 hours including swimming.

In years past Aasgard Pass was the regular route however the increasing numbers of overnight visitors had the Forest Ranger encourage use of the Snow Creek entrance for backpackers. Some people arrange a shuttle and do it one way. We have to admit that the recommended 3-4 day 20mi (return) trip into the area is probably the way to do it, as there are a few peaks worthy of scrambles. The name Enchantments really does suit the place.

We were Eliane, Jean and Steven Miros.

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## Going Off Road?

When two vehicles meet on a grade and there is not a safe place to pull over, the vehicle traveling uphill has the right of way. It is safer for the vehicle traveling downhill to back up, and it will be much easier for the downhill vehicle to get under way. If common sense tells you to move left instead of right, then do so. If there is only room for one vehicle to pass, the rule is the more maneuverable vehicle should have the right-of-way.

The website Offroaders.com has recommended the following minimal list of the things you should carry when Backroadng. These are of course in addition to the 10 essentials of backpacking.

- First aid kit
- Food, water.
- Full size spare tire
- Jack and tire iron. A hi-lift jack is great as well.
- Tow straps. 2 or more, at least 20 ft long. Shackles.
- Tree saver
- Come-along
- Basic tool kit
- Spare key for vehicle
- Gloves
- Shovel
- Chainsaw and bar oil, 2-cycle oil, spare chain
- Snow tire chains.

Basic Tools include:

- Complete SAE/Metric socket set.(Deep and standard).
- Crescent open-end combination box wrenches. SAE and Metric.
- Allen wrenches.
- Standard and Phillips screwdrivers. All sizes.
- Large hammer.
- Pliers, various sizes and Vice-grips.
- Pipe wrench.
- utility knife
- Duct tape
- Pry bar
- Magnet

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▶▶ KMC President ◀◀ president@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca

▶▶ KMC (Correspondence) ◀◀ Box 3195 Castlegar BC V1N 3H5

▶▶ KMC website ◀◀ www.kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca

▶▶ Newsletter submissions ◀◀ Eliane Miros newsletter@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca

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