



# Kootenay mountaineer

The KMC Newsletter Sep-Oct 2009 Issue 5 Next deadline: November 23<sup>rd</sup>

## Inside

► **Conservation:** The Loneliness Of The Redneck Environmentalist

► **Information:** BC Liberal Government Looks To Establish "Anti-Forest Protection Zones", or Commercial Forest Reserves,

Without Any Land Use Planning Process,  
Mountain School Tech Tips: Three Strategies  
for Successful, Stress Free Trips

### ► **Socials/Activities:**

#### **AGM: November 20, 2009**

Club Trip Reports: Bonnington Traverse,  
Wakefield Trail, Kane Peak, Mt. Brennan,  
Texas Peak, Columbia River Trail, Mt.  
Kitchener

Other (non-club) Trip Reports: Unnamed  
Peak West of Silvertip Lake, Gypsy Peak,  
Redtop Mt., Hermit Mt., Needle Peak,  
Maple Pass Loop, Yak Peak.  
Hiking Camps 1, and 2 Reports

## KMC Annual General Meeting And Election of Officers/Directors

Date:

**Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup>**

**Time:** Social 5pm. Dinner 6pm.  
Business 7pm.

**Where:** Selkirk College. Faculty  
lounge and conference center.  
Castlegar campus.

**Dinner:** Salad, roast beef with all  
trimmings, vegetarian entree, dessert,  
tea and coffee.  
Bar service.

**Cost:** \$23.00 per person, which covers  
dinner and taxes.  
Gratuities appreciated.

If you plan to attend, please contact  
Jill Watson, 250-362-5660 or email  
[jdwatson01@shaw.ca](mailto:jdwatson01@shaw.ca)  
by Monday November 16th.

## BC Liberal government looks to Establish "Anti-Forest Protection Zones", or Commercial Forest Reserves, without any Land Use Planning process

The Wilderness Committee is preparing for a major battle with the BC Liberal government as they plan to establish new "anti-forest protection zones" on Crown lands, known as Commercial Forest Reserves, which would primarily obstruct the creation of new protected areas and where key environmental protections would be removed.

In recent weeks Forest Minister Pat Bell has been increasingly promoting the government's new proposal, which is similar to their previous, unpopular Working Forest Initiative, proposed in 2003 and killed by a major public outcry by 2004. Bell wants to implement a major land-use change without any land-use planning process - or any public process for that matter.

See the new Vancouver Sun article and forward it to your friends, at:  
<http://www.vancouversun.com/business/Plan+guaranteed+logging+zones+riles+environmentalists/2027440/story.html>

See the Wilderness Committee's media release response, "BC Liberal government looks to Establish 'Anti-Forest Protection Zones...'" on our website at:  
<http://www.wcvcvictoria.org>

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## Vacant and ready to be filled Executive Positions are:

Newsletter, Membership, Hiking Camp, Climbing Camp, President, Vice President, and Social/Entertainment.

# The loneliness of the

Essay - From the March 31, 2008 issue of High Country News by Drew Pogge

I don't have that many friends. I'm not a bad guy; I call my mother, eat my broccoli, and pay my taxes. But I'm a country-music-listening, PBR-drinking, rusty-Jeep-driving good ol' boy - and I love the environment.

I grew up rural in the Rocky Mountain West and Midwest, where farming and ranching still reign. It was, and is, a culture that values hard work, family, and the land itself. It's where the land is a tool, used to produce. Farming and ranching are about bottom-line crop yields - pounds of meat and milk. Hunting and fishing are discussed in production terms - herd, harvest, trophy - and environmentalists are "city people."

Back then, my friends and I were gearheads. The scent of gasoline mingling with amber hues of gear oil and sickly sweet antifreeze was exciting, intoxicating. We took our powerful ATVs "boggin'," leaving a wake of ruts, scarred tree trunks and petroleum-slicked puddles. And it was fun. Yep, I said it. The thrill of whipping through trees, the challenge of climbing a sandy cutbank, the hazards of crossing a silty-bottomed oxbow and churning its delicately balanced micro-ecosystem into frothy, froggy goo - it was exhilarating. The gratification was immediate and powerful; we bent nature to the will of our machines, and it felt good. We'd return home happy, caked in mud, and wash our machines - sending countless invasive plant seeds down the street.

There was never a question about the consequences of our casual destruction. Even my well-educated parents rarely questioned our forays; at least we were outside, they said.

But I left my all-terrain vehicles and all my buddies behind when I went to college. There, between reading all night and climbing Montana's mountains all day, my relationship with the outdoors changed. Instead of dominating the natural world, I wanted to immerse myself in its nuances. I enjoyed the physical work it takes to travel overland on foot or skis. I liked how clearly I could think in the quiet, distraction-free vacuum of wilderness. I loved looking at the world, and actually seeing. But this realization - and my growing awareness of my own environmental hate-crimes - left me estranged from my hometown buddies. And my new friends, mostly environmentally conscious outdoor types, found my confused ideals difficult to understand and viewed me with suspicious tolerance.

I was left with clashing values, a tragic love of both the mechanized world and the natural world - as well as a certain contempt from both sides of a passionate issue.

Now, I'm an editor for a magazine dedicated to backcountry skiing, a sport dominated by the green ideals of human-powered travel, quiet wilderness and a healthy environment. At a fundamental level, global warming threatens the future of my sport and my livelihood. Yet I still crave the sound of a throbbing V-8, still find off-road vehicles fascinating, and still sometimes find myself daydreaming about a new ATV or snowmobile. I'm stuck somewhere between a progressive redneck and a cynical environmentalist. It's like driving a Toyota Prius in a tractor-pull. I just can't win.

The thing is that there's far more overlap than either side wants to admit. Many of my old redneck friends spend far more time in the natural world than the self-proclaimed environmentalists bent on protecting it. They farm, ranch, hunt and fish, and intimately understand how natural resources relate and interact. The conservation movement, on the other hand, often seems to be tainted with hypocrisy. Many activists' only activity outside the air-conditioned comfort of their policy headquarters is to take in nature at a manicured city park, or on the IMAX screen. Does anyone really know what they're talking about?

I believe this question is the source of my social problems. No one wants to recognize the fallacy of their own thinking or the flaws in their own actions; it's always the opposing group, the "greenies," or the "rednecks," causing the problem. I'm a backcountry skier and quasi-environmentalist, but I'm also a gearhead good ol' boy. I empathize with both, and by both I'm almost magnetically repelled, if for no other reason than my empathy with its rival.

That's how I came to be without friends. And for now, that's OK. One day, I believe, the people in my redneck past and my environmental present will mingle harmoniously. I hope it's at a wedding and not a funeral years from now. Until then, I guess I'm destined to be stuck in the middle, between cultures, and between friends.

*Drew Pogge is an associate editor of Backcountry magazine and splits his time between Fort Collins, Colorado, and Jeffersonville, Vermont. Printed with permission of The High Country News.*

**“We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time” T.S. Eliot.**

## Notice: Kokanee Ski Week (Jan. 30 – Feb. 6, 2010)

The kokanee ski week is intended as a ski touring trip for 12 KMC members. All must be suitably equipped and have the skills and knowledge for safe travel and rescue in avalanche terrain. Participants should also have completed a recent avalanche awareness and rescue course. The cost, per person, will be \$900.06 and includes accommodation at the Kokanee Glacier Lodge and helicopter in and out from Nelson. Information about the lodge can be found on the Alpine Club of Canada web site at [www.alpineclubofcanada.ca](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca). This is a self guided, self catered trip. Ken Holmes has agreed to be the trip coordinator to deal with specific trip details, issues and needs. Names can be submitted to Dave Watson via email at [jdwatson01@shaw.ca](mailto:jdwatson01@shaw.ca) or call 250-362-5660 up to and including **October 15<sup>th</sup>**. Successful applicants and those placed on a waiting list will be notified within a few days following the draw. Full payment is due by October 30<sup>th</sup>. You can apply as a single or a couple. However, couples applying must indicate if you're willing to split up if your names are drawn last creating an odd number (13). Those on the waiting list for last year's trip will be given priority but must still apply.

Good Luck,  
Dave Watson, Director, Winter Trips

## Welcome to the Winter 2009/10 at Wildhorse Catskiing

We are now accepting Bookings and showing current Availability for catskiing at [www.skiwildhorse.com](http://www.skiwildhorse.com). Prices have once again remained the same as last winter. We continue to offer the best value for powder skiing anywhere from 200-400 per day. The rustic style of the Ymir Palace and the Ymir Hotel continue to offer unique apres-ski accommodation, food and entertainment. Wildhorse Catskiing has ordered up lots of fresh snow and the steep and deep terrain you know and love. You can book [online](#) or by email reply or by calling 1-888-488-4327. Our marketing campaign is once again your word of mouth. Please forward this email to your ski buddies and bunnies so that we can all benefit from great skiing at awesome prices.

### Welcome to the Winter 2009/10 at Ymir Yurts

Remote backcountry accommodation for ski touring groups of up to 8 people. Yurtopia Yurt is accessed by snowcat or helicopter for 7 day bookings. Qua Yurt is available for 4 and 5 day bookings accessed by ski touring and snowcat or helicopter. The skiing is phenomenal and the accommodation is basic and priced at around 25 per person per day. Guide available for your group to make the perfect vacation.

**Avalanche Courses** We are offering two avalanche courses this winter on the weekends of Dec 12-13th and Jan 2-3rd. The focus is on ski touring decision making in avalanche terrain. We can also offer custom avalanche courses for ski touring groups staying at the Ymir Yurts or Catskiers. Ask for more details.

Book early to avoid disappointment.  
Trevor Holsworth, Lead Wrangler

## **KMC Library News: 2009 Canadian Alpine Journal**

The 2009 edition of the Canadian Alpine Journal is now in the KMC library and available for loan. Loads of great articles this year, including local lad, David Lussier, writing about two new routes in the Valhallas. I'm sure you'll rush out to climb them - just brace yourself for some solid 11d pitches. It's a great climb, you should do it. Email or call me, Sandra McGuinness, 250-352-3545 or [dog\\_house@shaw.ca](mailto:dog_house@shaw.ca) if you want to borrow the latest, or any other issue, of the CAJ.

## Mountain School Tech Tips: Three Strategies

One of the first winter trips I did with my local mountaineering club when I moved to Canada from Australia was a winter scramble of Cirque Peak, a gentle rocky peak nearly 3000 metres high off the Icefields Parkway in the Rocky Mountains. We approached the peak on skis, crossing a fair number of large avalanche paths along the way, skied as far up the south ridge as was possible, then ditched our skis and boot packed the remaining distance to the summit in a typical Rockies gale. It was one of my first winter ascents and I remember being somewhat nervous. Nevertheless, the trip leader, a young guy, no older than myself (I was young in those days), got everyone safely up and down the mountain in good time without any untoward incidents and I recall that everyone on the trip had big smiles at the end of the day. As a somewhat green participant, this young man made running a group trip with comparative strangers seem completely effortless, but, in hind sight, it was clear that he had three clear strategies for running a successful trip.

These three strategies can help all of us have successful stress free trips, whether they are "common adventures," official KMC trips, or just groups of friends going out for a day in the mountains. First, be clear about your objectives. Second, go only with people who have the expertise/fitness to meet your objectives. And, third, limit group size.

On our Cirque Peak trip, the objective was very clear - climb Cirque Peak. We weren't heading out for an easy day of touring with no fixed agenda, nor were we out to make as many turns as possible. The goal of the trip was climbing Cirque Peak, a reasonably arduous trip that would involve over 1200 metres of elevation gain. Next time you start organizing a group trip, whether it's a club trip or a common adventure, sit down first and ask yourself "what do I want to achieve on this trip?" If your goal is to ski the Seven Summits trail in a day, be clear with yourself and other people who are coming on the trip that you'll be pushing hard all day and they better be able to keep up. On the other hand, if your goal is to ramble along a ridge just as far as

you feel like going, be clear with people who want to join your trip that you may not make the summit, you may just wander in the alpine for a few hours.

Before going on the Cirque Peak trip, I was asked very clear questions about my fitness and skiing ability. Not vague questions like "been out much this year?", but very specific questions, such as "Tell me about the last three trips you did and when you did them?" And, "What trips have you done in the past six months?" If you really want your trip to be stress free and successful you should only go with people who have the necessary fitness and skill to reach your objective. If you're off to climb Mount Dag, people who come on your trip need to have done a number of similar difficulty scrambles in the past few months. Even easy hikes, such as walking up to Kaslo Lake require a certain level of fitness, equipment and experience. If you have any doubts at all, ask for a reference, a friend or other KMC member who has done a trip with this person in the last few months who you can ask about the prospective trip member.

Finally, there were eight people and only eight people on our Cirque Peak tour. Large groups inevitably lead to wide disparities in skills and fitness levels which makes for stressful and frequently, unsuccessful, trips. In general, the more difficult the trip, the fewer people should go. A group size of 4 to 6 might be considered the absolute maximum for a difficult trip such as climbing Mount Prestley, while an easy hike along a maintained trail would be reasonable for a group of 12. Decide how many people you feel comfortable with on your trip and make the cut-off number clear before hand. Once you've decided, stick with your absolute maximum number no matter how much coercion is involved, even if your best friend calls at the last moment.

Hopefully, these three fairly simple techniques will alleviate some of the stress involved in organizing a group trip into the mountains and prevent the seemingly inevitable group dynamic issues that seem to plague both "common adventures" and club trips alike.

Sandra McGuinness

**"Walking in Circles"** Scientists from the Max Planck Institute for Biological Cybernetics in Tübingen Germany have presented first time empirical evidence that people do end up walking in circles if lost in unfamiliar terrain. The study published in Current Biology blindfolded participants and then asked them to walk in straight lines. Most participants walked in small circles, sometimes less than 20 meters in diameter. They found that these circles were rarely in a systematic direction, with the same person sometimes veering to the left and sometimes to the right.. They were confident in their conclusion that walking in circles is not caused by varying leg strength or length but the result of increasing uncertainty about where straight ahead is. "Small random errors in the various sensory signals that provide information about walking direction add up over time, making what a person perceives to be straight ahead drift away from the true straight ahead direction." From Reuters, published in the August 22, 2009 edition of The Vancouver Sun.

# New Rock Climbing Area

KMC members who are also members of the Google Group: Nelson Climbing should immediately stop reading this article, and turn the page. Other members who like rock climbing, but aren't yet hooked in to the local scene, might be interested in some new route/area development around Nelson.

First, the newly developed Squatters Bluff, courtesy of Shawn King and David Lussier, which lies about 50 to 100 metres down Government Road from the its junction with Hwy6/3A heading to Castlegar, on your right hand side as you drive (or walk/bicycle) downhill. You'll find some information about Squatters Bluff on page 69 of the new West Kootenay Rock Guide, but that short entry does not include all the current routes, which are detailed below

From climbers left to right the routes are:

1. The Cops Know All the Places, 5.8
2. Squatters Rights, 5.9
3. Why Would Anyone Pay to Camp in Nelson, 5.10b
4. Group Squat, 5.10b
5. Diddly Squat, 5.10a
6. Kootenay Junior Open Girls Doubles, 5.10a
7. BLM, 5.8. This climb exits a dirt ledge up and to the far right side of the crag, slightly around the corner.
8. The Littlest Hobo, 5.7 a top-rope route that starts off Government Road, the anchors are accessible from the far climbers right of the crag.

Routes #1 through 7 are sport routes, requiring just three or four quick-draws and a couple of extra draws for the anchor, or a few locking 'biners and a cordellette. It is possible to top-rope routes #1, 2, and 8, but the other routes require leading.

The second area seeing some new development that already had a couple of older routes is Railside Crag. I'm not sure why, but Railside Crag never made it into the new West Kootenay Rock Guide, as there were always a couple of descent climbs on the 30 metre high bluff. In any event, some new route development has been quietly going on. I don't know who the hard-working route developers are, but I suspect David Lussier and Shawn King again. To get to Railside, park at the Nelson Park and Ride on Hwy 6/3A heading to Castlegar and walk west until you get to the "90 km/hour" sign. Take a beaten in trail towards the lake which, in a minute or so, leads to the top of Railside Crag, where you will see a whole bunch of new anchors and a couple of older ones.

The best way to the climbs is to rappel - although you can whack your way down through thick brush if you want. I'll describe the approximate grade of the climbs (my guess) from climbers left to right. Note that the two furthest routes to climbers left start pretty much off the railroad tracks, so make sure you walk around that side to get oriented.

1. 5.7 sport, a little dirty with train soot at the bottom, but should clean up with more action and improves as you climb up.
2. 5.7 sport, passes a large tree on the ledge to your right.
3. The Little Engine That Could, 5.7, mixed, you can augment the bolts with a couple of small to medium cams, or just suck up the (very) short run-outs. This is one of the older climbs.
4. A Climb to Remember, sport 10a. Also one of the older climbs. The 10a moves are short-lived, but cruxy. Harder if you are short (like me).
5. 5.5/6, currently a top-rope route.
6. 5.4/5, another top-rope route.
7. 5.4/5, yet another top-rope route.

Every route at Railside is easy to top-rope and most routes have either rappel anchors or chains, although one station has bolt hangers only. As always, it's preferable to use your own gear at the anchors to save excessive wear on the rappel rings/chains.

Safe climbing and have fun. Sandra McGuinness

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*"Today is your day, your mountain is waiting, so get on your way". Dr Seuss*

## KMC Executive Notes, 10 September, 2009 meeting

It has been reaffirmed that our insurance covers all trips that are on the schedule, **including bike trips** (which used to be on the schedule but were taken off because we previously had no insurance coverage for them). **Review of insurance:** We are covered for bike trips and minors. Insurance from the FMCBC is cheaper than us getting insurance on our own. This includes the FMCBC membership fee.

There was discussion on common adventures, recognizing trip leaders and encouraging new trip leaders.

-Can we budget for leadership recognition? Winter and possibly Summer Trips chairpersons will run leader incentive program for the winter.

-Discussion regarding common adventures and why people run trips as common adventures not club trips. Some KMCers would prefer if common adventures were run as club trips. Some feel strongly that the club should **not** be promoting Common Adventures. It would be reasonable to find out why people don't run their trips as club trips. People who are running winter trips as common adventures will be encouraged to run their trip as a club trip. Some of the advantages of running a trip as a club trip:

1. Insurance coverage, 2. Executive back-up in case of a problem, 3. Policies that trip leaders can use if they want to.

-Should we note liability exposure for common adventures advertised on the KMC list-serve? We indicate clearly that common adventures are not officially sanctioned and we have no liability as per our insurance broker. To sum up, there is no insurance and no liability on common adventures as long as it is clear that common adventures are NOT official club trips. We have coverage for sanctioned trips to the US as long as the lawsuit occurs in Canada. An informational note will go into the newsletter promoting the benefits of club trips, explaining how to run a club trip, and distinguishing between club trips and common adventures.

**Minors and the KMC:** There is confusion among members and the

executive regarding  
are welcome on cl

1. higher standard of care required for children on trips, 2. no waiver signed by either the parent/guardian or child will actually stand up in court, 3. our insurance does cover minors on trips.

Our options are: 1. no minors on trips, 2. minors on trips with a guardian; 3. minors on trips with no guardian. Much discussion on whether or not minors be allowed on club trips with a lot of discussion on the higher standard of care required and the concern that KMC trips do not evidence a suitably high standard of care.

*The KMC Vacant and to be filled 2010 Executive positions are as follows. Please members, volunteer!*

1. Newsletter
2. Membership
3. Climbing camp
4. Hiking camp
5. Social
6. President
7. Vice President

-AGM –TBA see note in this newsletter

**-Policy on executive communication is in the works**

-Steve Horvath memory will be honored by extending a lifetime membership to his wife Luba Horvath.

### Committee Reports:

-Winter Trips: Dave will have the Kokanee notice in the next Newsletter. People on last years wait list will have priority for next year.

-Cabins: Graham noted that Cabin maintenance is going well. Wood is available at each cabin for the winter. Because of budget cutbacks MoTSA has not been able to provide virtually any support this year. The executive may want to consider sending a letter to the Ministry regarding how lack of funding is affecting us.

-VP and FMCBC liaison: The other Dave who acts as FMCBC liaison says there is issue as to whether the FMCBC should get involved with Jumbo.

-Web: Norm is working on the website and has uploaded various forms and also has added the link for the newsletters. He

for pictures.

-Conservation: Kim attended meeting about the Glacier Howser Project and has been sending out various letters regarding the project. Kim reports that the RDEK has turned the decision regarding Jumbo back to the Provincial Government and has recommended that the area be declared a resort municipality.

-Hiking Camp: Bill noted that the Hiking camps went well.

-Library: Sandra said the Library is getting some use.

-Mountaineering School: Sandra will organize a winter leaders course this year.

-Treasurer: - Allison reported that we have money.

-Secretary –There are problems with resolutions regarding constitutional changes in getting them approved by the Societies Act that were passed at last year's AGM.

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An old friend of the Purcells once defined "wilderness" as "anywhere you can be eaten." Dave Quinn

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## Wilderness Y-M-C-A

Parks Canada is bringing the European backcountry signaling system to North America to help pilots and rescuers figure out who needs plucking or not. The rules are simple: ARE YOU IN TROUBLE OR NOT? If you need assistance and a helicopters buzzing overhead then just raise your arms to form a "Y" that says, "Yes, I need help"

# CLUB TRIP REPORTS

## BONNINGTON TRAVERSE, April 3-6, 2009

After several months of anticipation (I had signed up for the trip just as soon as the advance notice came out sometime in January), the 4-day Bonnington traverse was finally upon us. The weather forecast looked bomber, so all five of us were excited and rearing to go.

Impeccably organized as always, Sandra had us drop 2 vehicles off at Porto Rico Rd. and the three of us then hopped into Jeff's gigantic truck, aka the vegetable fryer. Enveloped by the smell of all good things deep fried, we headed over to Bombi Summit, where we met up with Bert, who also piled into Jeff's truck and we all headed up a full 6.5 km on the freshly graded and plowed road. The ability to drive the Munson FSR for this distance made the ski into Grassy very quick - only about 2 hrs from where we skinned up. It had snowed all day, so by the time we hit the hut, the snow was looking irresistible - light and fluffy, at least on the north aspects. We all did a lovely powder run, then the young'ens returned to the hut (we were worn out) while the slightly older contingent went for another one before dinner. Grassy Hut was just big enough for the 5 of us, so after a delicious burrito dinner, courtesy of Jeff, we all packed it in for the night.

**The next day** dawned without the promised blue-bird skies, but because it stayed cool and snowy, we had excellent conditions. As we headed up and over the west shoulder of Grassy Mountain, we got views all the way to Red/Granite mountains in Rossland and down to Hugh Keenleyside Dam in Castlegar. The snow was outstanding, more like February than April, and we all got some excellent powder turns despite the big overnight packs. After heading up and over a pass below the multiple summits of Siwash Mountain, we made good time to Steed Hut, but when we arrived, there was a surprise: no more firewood. After some searching, it was confirmed that indeed no more wood was buried near the cabin, which also explained the suspiciously tree-like logs that the previous party had "gathered". Not to be deterred, the men headed into the woods to hunt down an unwary snag, which soon fell prey to vigorous chopping. In no time, we had dry wood and the cabin warmed up nicely. After a game of Wizard, in which Sandra smoked the rest of the party, we turned in for the night.

**On Day 3**, we finally got the promised sunny weather, but temperatures were rising quickly, so caution was called for as we traversed avalanche slopes on the way down to Rush Creek. We enjoyed superb views as we ascended a pass northeast of Siwash and followed a ridge line down to Erie Creek. On the way to the pass, we got to marvel at the numerous snowmobile tracks, many of which showed evidence of high marking on textbook avalanche terrain. The ascent to Copper Hut was hot, hot, hot, making it feel more like July than April. Despite Sandra's assurances that she would not be able to find the hut and was very likely leading us astray, she located Copper Hut with unerring accuracy, significantly better than my GPS did, in fact, despite it having a waypoint and (presumed) 3-m accuracy.

of Copper Peak and made our way towards Territory, Colony and Empire Peaks while enjoying the views. The knife-edge ridge between Colony and Empire Peaks lived up to its reputation, being exposed and, well, knife-edged. All of us took our skis off, with the exception of Sandra, who was able to ski the whole bit. Bert was the intrepid trail-breaker for this portion and he not only set excellent tracks up the ridge, he even cut steps in the steepest parts, so that the young'ens could make it up without too much difficulty. On our way from Empire Peak to Barrett Lake, the snow was very, very wet and sloppy. We made our way down the steep slopes carefully, but nevertheless set off one small wet avalanche. The ski down from Barrett Lake was fast, which is just the way I wanted it to be, given the crazy avalanche slopes we had to cross to reach our destination. We reached Porto Rico Road in no time and set off on our final task: retrieving Jeff's truck from the Bombi Summit. That proved to be more exciting than anticipated, because spring breakup had started while we were gone, and the road was more of a bud-bogging fest than a road. Luckily the little Chevy Tracker we had left at Porto Rico made it up to Jeff's veggie truck without any issues (but with the chains on), and we managed to make it out without disappearing into a bottomless mud pit on Munson FSR.

In summary, this was an outstanding trip, thanks to Sandra's excellent organization and route knowledge, and thanks to the fabulous participants. On the trip were Graham Jamin, Jeff Keith, Sandra McGuinness, Bert Port, and myself Eva Boehringer.

## WAKEFIELD TRAIL, July 1, 2009

To celebrate Canada Day thirteen hikers set out for the Wakefield Trail to Idaho Peak Fire Tower. We met at Playmor Junction Park and Ride to carpool to Silverton. We arrived at the lowest mine site (1220 m) at 9:15 am and parked near the abandoned truck. Robert Farrell of *New Denver Bike Shop* had reported windfalls on the road but a recce the day before revealed that they had been cleared for firewood. It was a steady climb to the second mine (1700 m) that we reached by 10:40 am. Terry demonstrated self-arrest with an ice axe during the break to prepare us for crossing the avalanche chute at 1750 m. We found the snow so hard that even at 11:00 am on a sunny day we had to cut footholds. As we climbed higher the views of Slocan Lake and the Valhallas emerged through the trees. We reached Idaho Peak parking lot (2134 m) at 12:15 pm. The lot was two-thirds filled with snow which extended to well below the tree line towards Sandon. We reached Idaho Peak Fire Tower (2280 m) at 12:50 pm. The rotten retaining walls have been replaced by Dave Fitchett and his crew. The new timbers extend in terraces around all but the east side.

This gives an ideal series of seating spaces to eat one's lunch and to admire the 360 degree view. The flowers were still at the early stage but the air was relatively clear and the mountains and glaciers beautiful in the full sun. A leisurely descent brought us back to the vehicles by 4:10 pm.

Hikers included Susan B., Kalika Bowlby, Ted Ibrahim, Gerta Lang, Bobbie Maras, Diane Paolini, Mary Prothro, Lisa Quattrocchi, Caroline Shimek, Terry Simpson, Jill Watson, and coordinators Pat and Alan Sheppard.

## Climbing KANE PEAK, August 29 & 30, 2009

Kane Peak is an attractive rocky peak that anchors the south end of Sawtooth Ridge and commands your attention from various view points in Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park. It's also a peak I've wanted to climb for a long time. Access is somewhat longer and more difficult now that Keen Creek FSR is closed, but you can still get to Kane Peak via either a bushwhack from the Woodbury drainage or by descending Kokanee Glacier from the Keyhole.

Despite my misgivings about having to hump an overnight pack up to the Keyhole in summer when all the choss and rubble is exposed, it seemed a preferable route to bushwhacking in via Woodbury; after all, there would be no actual bushwhacking. Actually, I'd never been to the Keyhole before, except in winter skiing over from the Kaslo Hilton, which really doesn't count because it is so easy.

With all the plans in place, five of us met at Gibson Lake parking lot at 8 am on Saturday, August 29. We were equipped with standard glacier travel and overnight gear. It's a long haul up to the Keyhole, over 1100 metres, so our idea was to go at a steady, but not break-neck pace. The first part on the trail was quite reasonable, but after the official "end of trail" sign - so ominous - the trail deteriorated into a scratched out path disappearing here and there into the boulders. The final climb to the Keyhole is very loose, and despite the presence of a couple of boot-beaten paths, one on each side of the final ascent gully, avoiding the paths and just stepping up boulders and talus provides firmer footing. We had a couple of short water breaks on the way to the Keyhole, but once at the Keyhole we had a deliciously decadent break with a cup of tea brewed over Ken's compact stove.

From the Keyhole, we could look down Kokanee Glacier to Coffee Pass and I was astonished to see that not only was the glacier almost completely bare of snow, but heavily crevassed as well. Of course, glaciers in the Selkirks are rapidly shrinking and Kokanee Glacier is clearly no exception. We put crampons and harnesses on, but had no need to rope up as we were able to descend all the way to toe of glacier down near Coffee Pass on bare ice. We took an end run around a few crevasses, but overall travel was considerably easier than if the glacier had been snow-covered with suspect bridges that would have required much careful travel.

Nearing the toe of the glacier, a herd of mountain goats, on rocky terrain (old moraine) between the toe of the glacier and Coffee Pass scattered at our approach. Bert, who had climbed Kane Peak back in 1970 - yes, that is 39 years ago - recalled a goat nursery in the same location. Undisturbed by humans, this area has clearly been favoured by goats for a long time.

We debated traversing east to Coffee Pass over loose terrain to find a campsite, but, in the end, we thought that there may be no water available there and we found ourselves small, goat-like ledges on the old moraine to camp, with water provided by the copious ongoing glacial melt. Vicki and I shared a tent, and a comfortable tent platform, tucked nicely out of the catabatic winds that streamed down the glacier with Dave, who had his own

That afternoon, after fortifying myself with another cup of tea, I scrambled east over loose terrain under a couple of rock slabs to gain the old moraine that lies above Coffee Pass. As is typical of old moraines, this one is steep and loose, particularly on the south side, but a short descent down the north side, puts you easily into Coffee Pass. A small tarn, with no visible inlet or outlet lies slightly north and down from Coffee Pass and would provide water - filtered or boiled - for a campsite.

Kane Peak has a long south ridge that curls right around back to the north, and encloses a rocky basin, once glaciated, but now full of rubble and with only small patches of steep bare glacial ice clinging to the highest ridge lines. From Coffee Pass, I climbed slightly, heading northeast and gained this ridge-line somewhere between 7,500 and 8,000 feet. From here, there are two obvious routes up Kane Peak to the standard southeast face route, one is to drop 60 to 80 vertical metres down into the rubble filled valley and toil up loose slopes until you can gain the col on the south ridge of Kane Peak; the other is to hold your elevation and traverse around the basin using ledges and benches and to reach the upper basin and then continue up to the col. Which you choose, is probably a matter of picking your poison. Next day we took the traverse route which had a couple of sections of loose rock in gullies, but was technically easy and reasonably fast.

Back at camp, we all had dinner and pretty much everyone was in bed soon after 7.00 pm. Dave and Vicki gave me grief for daring to use my headlamp to read my book until 9.00 pm, when I turned it out, not because I was tired, but because the loud sighs emanating from Vicki's side of the tent were intruding onto my quiet reading time!

Next morning we got up in the dark at 5.00 am and left camp at about 6.15 am, retracing my steps of the previous evening and quickly gaining the ridge. Not everyone was totally happy with my choice of route, but, in the end, we all headed off together and found the route quite reasonable with no more loose rock than is encountered on any average scramble in the Kokanee Range. Once we'd traversed into the basin the easy talus slope leading to the col was visible and with a minimum of fuss we were all at the col.

From the col, the small glacier on the east side of Kane Peak looks quite shrunken and almost totally bare of snow. A couple of large gendarmes lie along the ridge between the col and the peak of Kane, most of us descended a short distance - perhaps 30 metres - and cramponed across bare glacial ice to the base of the southeast slopes of Kane Peak, but Bert, quickly nipped across snow and rock ledges just below the gendarmes and arrived at the base of the main peak before the rest of us.

The final scramble to the summit is easy - class two - but care must be taken for loose rock as there are some large blocks lying about poised to tumble down with the slightest touch. There are actually two little summits - one more northerly than the other. We figure the most southerly is the highest (it also appears that way on 1:20,000 BC Basemap), but most of us touched both summits just in case.



HARRISON (a guest), NATALIE REID, FRED MIESSEN.

After snacks, photos, and signing the summit register (placed by Lou Chioccarello in June 2009), we returned the way we had come and were back at camp in time for lunch and a cup of tea. I used the last drops of white gas in my stove making Vicki and I a cup of tea. An event I thought bespoke excellent planning but the old mountaineers asked "what would I do in an emergency?" Luckily, my body fat stores are sufficient to see me through any such condition, at least for a short time.

I certainly wasn't enthused about shouldering my pack and plodding back up the glacier, particularly in the heat of the day, but there is no other way to get home. In the end, cramponing up from Coffee Pass to the Keyhole is infinitely easier than grovelling up the loose choss from Gibson Lake. Bert headed off first and set an excellent route back up to the Keyhole, all on bare ice and with not a single crevasse to be crossed.

We had another snack at the Keyhole and changed into shorts and tee-shirts for the baking hot descent on the other side, and then slowly, with some painful knees made our way back to the trailhead.

I had a great time on this trip, which has a real mountaineering flavour, and includes a variety of different climbing in a setting that feels surprisingly remote. A big thanks to my fellow mountaineers - Dave Grant, Vicki Hart, Ken Holmes, Bert Port - for their wonderful company and stimulating conversation - fake boobs, bonking and grooving notwithstanding.]  
Sandra McGuinness

### **MT. BRENNAN, Sept 6, 2009**

A group of the extremely hard core assembled in the Nelson Safeway at 7:30 am heedless of weather reports and ready to brave all manner of natural calamity in an effort to scale Mt. Brennan.

Our undaunted group arrived at the trailhead at about 9:30 am and got up to the cirque in about 1 hour. As we went up the trail initially, the weather was cooperative. (There were even glimpses of blue sky.) However, as we continued to ascend we got into some cloud, strong wind, snow and freezing cold. At about 8100 ft, we got onto the snow field with extremely limited visibility and decided that it would be better to wait for another day to get to the peak. (All of this was a wonderful prelude to winter and reminded me of the joys of freezing fingers as I struggled to zip up my rain pants and then temporarily lost sight of the group in the gathering mist.)

Having decided that prudence was in fact the better part of valour, we descended the mountain. We soon got under the cloud, where we were greeted by sunshine and beautiful views of Kootenay Lake. But the weather was not done with us, and as we got further down the trail, we experienced a heavy shower of rain. (This was mitigated by a plentiful crop of huckleberries that I browsed on all the way down the mountain.)

In all, this was another epic adventure with the KMC.  
(Unfortunately, the new book did not make it to the top of the

### **TEXAS PEAK, September 20, 2009**

The Labor Day trip to Texas Peak was 'weathered out' and the road up Enterprise Creek is blocked so Mt Paupo was replaced by Texas Peak for 20th September. Prior to that day the weather was far from promising but the forecast was for complete sunshine. Unfortunately the forecast didn't mention that winter had arrived in the Texas area!

Ten of us were booked for Texas: Eight met at Retallack leaving without the two late arrivals. We drove up the road to the usual stopping spot and surveyed with some dismay the wintry scene ahead. Leaving the vehicles we started hiking up the road but before long, three of the group (including the leader) decided to let the five hard-core go ahead. We three went as far as the col below Reco and then went back, meeting the late two coming up. They carried on for a little way farther, part way up Reco. The five hardy souls went a fair distance along the ridge before they, too, decided that enough was enough and turned back. We were Bob Dean (leader), Vicki Hart, Liz Huxter, Terry Huxter, Alex Nichol, Kathleen Nichol, Diane Paolini, Terry Simpson, Peter Tchir and Jill Watson.

### **COLUMBIA RIVER TRAIL, Sept 26, 2009**

Eighteen hikers met at the Brilliant Park and Ride at 9:00 am. After introductions, Lawrence Redfern, President of Castlegar Friends of Parks and Trails, gave a short talk about recent trail improvements. We carpoled to the trailhead across the river from Blueberry Creek. We hiked by the yellow road gate on along the road to the new picnic/campsite that the USCC has built just upstream of the Champion Creek Cemetery. From there we hiked to the road bridge over Champion Creek. The group passed along a well cleared path through a forest of alder trees back to the riverside. Lunch break was taken from 11:15 to 11:45 on the river bank opposite the silent Silver City Trap Club Range. Three small pleasure boats cruised upstream while a bald headed eagle flew downstream just as we finished lunch.

At several points on the trail improvements had been made by Friends of Parks and Trail volunteers, their contractor, and Katimavik volunteers. At one point the trail had been looped to the river so we stopped there for our second break. The weather was wonderful. The morning had started off cool and clear but by afternoon temperatures had reached the forecast high of 27 degrees C. The river sparkled in the bright sunlight and from a height appeared almost glacier blue. The trail turned away from the river opposite the community of Oasis. Despite a short diversion to regain bearings we reached the Trail Water Towers above Sunnydale at 3:00 pm. The shuttle vehicles were there waiting for us. Groups of hikers shuttled back to the trail head and to Brilliant Park and Ride. The 17 km+ hike had taken a total of 5 1/2 hours including the two breaks.

Hikers were Marilyn Armstrong, Pat Bruce, Vicki Hart, Mary Larmour, Marilyn Miller, Andi Morris, Hamish Mutch, Kathleer Nichol, Judy Ozeroff, George Penfold, Lawrence Redfern, Marina Richards, Holly Ridenour, Caroline Shimek, Wayne Thomas, Sherri Watson, and coordinators, Pat & Alan Sheppard. Special thanks to the shuttle drivers; Andi, Sherri, Pat B. and Pat S.

### Where in the World is MOUNT KITCHENER?

Truthfully, I'm not really sure. But, on Saturday, **September 26, 2009** our group of four climbed some rocky peak, pretty much due west of the Giants Kneecap that sported a brand new KMC register inscribed "Mount Kitchener, 9080 feet."

Our day started at the rather startling hour of 5.30 am, when, in the black of a late September morning, we met up at the Nelson Park and Ride, and piled into Caroline's ultra-comfy 4WD for the bumpy drive up the Gibson Lake Road. This road always takes longer to drive than you think, so it was about 7.00 am or perhaps a little after when we started hiking up to Kokanee Pass. Kokanee Lake was still deep in shadow and a cold wind was blowing through the pass, which turned our hands and arms into wooden lumps.

From Kokanee Pass, we hiked east up light forest and alp-lands reaching the gentler terrain of Smugglers Ridge easily. Pleasant rambling up talus and meadow brought us to the west ridge of Mount Kitchener where we finally got a glimpse of the sun, but the wind was blowing with yet more gusto so our quick snack also entailed putting on just about every piece of clothing we had with us.

The west ridge provided surprisingly good scrambling to class four on reasonably solid rock. Route finding is easy - just stay right on the ridge - this is also where the best rock is as deviations out to either side look loose and nasty. Once we'd crested the top of the west ridge, we wandered south over a broken, blocky ridge (class 2 to 3) eventually arriving at a cairned summit and finding the KMC summit register. We had some lunch tucked out of the wind, and then decided to descend the north ridge down to Smugglers Ridge and regain the Kokanee Lake trail somewhere near the Kaslo Hilton.

The north ridge also provided some fun scrambling on class 3 terrain and soon led us down to the gentle meadows of Smugglers Ridge. We wandered down the ridge, sometimes on a trail, until we could drop easily off to the west where we regained the hiking trail, and, with increasingly sore feet, wandered back out to the trailhead.

Thanks to my companions for another wonderful day out in the West Kootenays.

Participants: Doug Brown, Jen Kyler, Caroline LaFace, and coordinator, Sandra McGuinness.

These reports of common adventure trips are submitted by club members; they are not on the club trips schedule.

### UNNAMED PEAK WEST OF SILVERTIP LAKE, KOKANEE RANGE, 2486 m. 8156' MAP:

#### Kokanee Peak 82F/11 NAD 27

June 18, 2009

I had noticed this rock peak, the farthest extension south of the Grays Peak system, from minor peaks in the West Fork of Kokanee Creek, gained while ski touring. Having decided it was worthy of an ascent, I persuaded Paul and Scott Allen to join me for an attempt on a Thursday in mid June. After parking at km. 14.7 on the Gibson Lake road near a spot where several small streams cross (4800'), we started out at 8:35 am by thrashing up the bank above the road and to the east just downhill from the lowest stream. We passed immediately into steep, but moderate bush. Following the watercourse on its south side, we were relieved to reach snow after about an hour and continued along the creek as it bent south. Now in the alpine, we ascended to a notch at GR 908-055, 7100', and continued into a basin on the southwest side of our peak, all on snow.

Our ascent route then took us up 700' of the southwest face to the right of the summit on steep slopes of dirt, rock, and heather—vertical juniper, Paul called it. Reaching the ridge crest, we turned left, passed through two easy cols, and walked up a gully to gain the summit at 1:30 (4 hrs. 55 min. up, 919-059). While Scott built a big cairn and Paul had a nap, I recorded mild temperatures with some 80% cloud cover, gazed at Rosehip Lake, and scrutinized a shattered tower below us to the northeast in the Coffee Creek valley. After a 55 minute stay, we re-traced our route down the southwest face and followed our snowy tracks down to a flat area in the timber (902-062, 5900'). At this point, we turned left or west, descending steep timber on the left bank of our unnamed creek to emerge on the road just meters from the truck at 5:20. Descent from the summit: 2 hours 55 min. Total time for the day: 8 hours 45 min. Although the rope was not used, we gauged the peak's southwest face to be class 4 climbing. Kim Kratky

### GYPSY PEAK, NORTHEASTERN WASHINGTON, 7309', July 5, 2009

#### MAP: Salmo-Priest Wilderness (US Forest Service)

Janice and I decided to help the Americans celebrate their Fourth of July weekend by scaling this minor league but scenic peak, billed as the highest summit in northeast Washington. On Friday evening, July 4<sup>th</sup>, we drove to Sullivan Lake, set the odometer, and followed county road #2220 up Sullivan Creek, before turning left onto #2212 at km. 11.6. At km. 19, we turned right onto the signed #200 and continued to a landing at road's end at 29.7 km. Here, at Bear Pasture, 5600', we car camped (plenty of level space, ample parking, no water, no toilet). Books and signage caution the driver about difficult wilderness roads, but everything we drove was 2WD with very gentle grades. I guess

they might present difficulties for your horse trailer or travel trailer.

After a warm night, we found the bugs so bad that we skipped breakfast and headed out at 0650 on the well-signed, well-maintained Crowell Ridge Trail, #515. Fifty minutes of hiking got us to the crest of Crowell Ridge; there, the trail heads west toward Sullivan Mtn. From this spot, we followed a more sketchy trail east, stopping at point 6617' for a bug-free brekky. Continuing north on the adequate trail, we descended 200', scaled a small bump, traversed u/n 6853' on the west or left side via a flagged route, and reached the top of u/n 7177', south of Watch Lake, by 0850. Continuing down, up, and down to the northwest and north, we meandered over point 7033', and plodded up the final 550' to the summit by 0950 (no cairn, 3 hrs. up). In essence, there is a trail right to the top.

During our 40 min. stay in breezy, pleasant weather, we identified Hooknose, Abercrombie, Salmo Mtn., Shedroof, Sullivan Mtn., Little Snowy Top, the three Snowy Tops, Ripple, Mt. Kelly, Siwash, Lost Mtn., and Old Glory, among others. We then made an uneventful return via the ascent route in 2 hrs. 35 min. for a 6 hr. 15 min., 3400' day.

This two-ski-pole walk-up would make an excellent autumn trip, but the road access is closed after August 15<sup>th</sup> to leave the bears to harvest huckleberries in peace. In addition to the map mentioned above, we recommend *50 Hikes for Eastern Washington's Highest Mountains*, by James P. Johnson. *Sullivan Lake Ranger District Trail Guide (USDA)* is also of some help.  
Kim Kratky

## **REDTOP MTN., TRUCE GROUP** **3156 m., 10,355' July 11, 2009** **MAP: Duncan Lake 82K/7 NAD 27**

Redtop, another of those peaks I have wanted to climb since 1976, is located at the south end of the Jumbo Creek valley between Blockhead and Earl Grey. For this outing, Paul Allen and I drove over to the East Kootenay on Thursday, July 9<sup>th</sup>, following the Toby and Jumbo Creek roads from Invermere. At km. 12.9 on the Jumbo road, just past a creek crossing, we turned left onto a faint road, re-set the odo, plunged down into a washout, and continued along the much-improved route up Leona Creek, passing R-K Heli Ski's shelter (signed "Roger's Hut/Leona Creek Lodge") at km. 1.6. After turning left at km. 3.3, we continued up switchbacks, cut out some deadfalls, and parked in a landing at 6560', GR 298-757, at 8:30 pm (4WD high clearance).

Friday morning, it was raining and looked grim. Later, as the weather improved, we made a recce for the route to Red Top. Following our logging road to its end at 7300', we then headed up and east through parkland and alps to reach the crest of a beautiful north-south ridge at 7750', 307-353, in one hour. From this spot, we had an unimpeded view of Red Top, a somewhat odd-shaped peak with a long west ridge, something of a hogback, ending in a

west ridge at a low spot, then along that to the summit. This is the route used by Conrad Kain and Albert and Bess MacCarthy on the first ascent in August 1916. In fact, part of our plan was to pick up a rock from the summit, and add it to the cairn of first-ascent rocks at the Conrad Kain fest in Wilmer on Saturday at 3:00 pm.

On the next morning in fine weather, we departed at 5:30, reached our ridge crest in 45 min., continued south to a lake, and plodded up low-angle rock to the glacier's tongue. Rope on, we ascended somewhat "manky" snow, making for the obvious col in the west ridge. Higher up, we avoided a bergschrund by moving left and scaling greasy, rotten rock to reach the col by 8:30 (9150', GR 314-738). Rope off, we headed up and east on the ridge on junky rock with ups and downs over several towers. Some time later, on reaching the highest tower, I was sobered to see how far away the summit lay (the ridge is 1.3 km. long). Continuing east, we turned difficulties on the right or south side, descending below notches and traversing on steep junk enlivened by dripping water and mud. We passed through a col with a rappel sling (left, we learned later, by Hamish Mutch's party on their ice climb of the north face some years back), descended a nasty, wet wall on the south side, and continued to the final tower. Since roughly the highest tower, we had kept the rope on, mostly simul-climbing but occasionally belaying on this high class 4-low class 5 route. After leading across a snow pillow to the west base of the summit tower at 9850', I conceded to myself that the prize was now within reach. Something to be said for grim perseverance. Still, the peak did not relent: 200' of awful scree, followed by 300' of steep broken junk on the west face, got us finally to the level summit knob. After walking past a fallen weather or communications mast, we reached the highest point, a flat expanse with no cairn. It was 1:00 pm: the ascent had taken a cool 7 ½ hours from our camp, and a whopping 4 ½ hours on that ridge.

We limited our stay to a scant 30 min., but had leisure to identify in hazy conditions Hamill, Toby, Lady Grey, Nelson, a very snowy Farnham, Truce, Cauldron, Cooper, and Brennan. As well, we noted signs of numerous lightning strikes on our summit, causing us to guess that the cairn had been blasted to rubble.

On return, we followed our ascent route, negotiating the slimy wall (Paul cheerfully observing, "That was 5.5") and continuing to the col with the sling. Here, we made a good choice and decided to head straight down a north rib/north face, Paul belaying me for four leads on steep, shattered rubbish. Reaching the glacier, I led us down and left to easy rock above the tarn by 4:30. We then continued north along the larch-studded ridge of our ascent route, stopping occasionally to admire our north-side descent line off the peak, which from this angle looked impressively vertical. Back to the truck by 6:30 after a 13-hour day and a 5-hour descent, we flung ourselves into our lawn chairs. While we each drained a Coke, Paul observed, "I hope that makes your 'best-of list'." As for the rock, we got it but were a little late to make the festivities in Wilmer.  
Kim Kratky

## HERMIT MOUNTAIN, HERMIT GROUP, ROGERS PASS, 3100 m., 10,171' MAP: Glacier 82N/5 July 18, 2009

Our appetites whetted by success on Red Top, Paul Allen and I made a journey to Rogers Pass on July 17<sup>th</sup>, intent on climbing something from Hermit Meadows. As I had long ago climbed Rogers, Tupper, and the Swiss Peaks, we agreed to have a go at Hermit Mtn., a massive block at the northeast end of the group.

After meeting Paul's son Scott in the parking lot, registering at the Visitors' Centre, and spending an inordinate amount of money on park passes, back country passes, and camping permits, we drove to Hermit Meadows trailhead on the Trans Canada Highway east of Rogers Pass. At 4:30 pm, I set out alone on the 2,500' grind up to the wooden camping platforms in the meadows at 6780'. After two hours, I reached the site and flopped down for a chat with a party of four, the only other campers in the area. Paul and Scott, having waited for cooler temperatures, arrived an hour later. We set up our tent, had a bite to eat ("bite" doesn't do justice to the ravenous appetite of Scott), and turned in.

Saturday, we were away by 6:10, bound for what was billed as the easy south face of Hermit. Heading north, we followed a faint track on glacially-scoured rock, passed along the east edge of the Swiss Glacier, and put on the rope to cross the nicely-filled-in Tupper Glacier to reach Hermit's face. Here, we took off the rope and parted company for a stretch. Paul and Scott worked their way up rocky ledges and ramps on the left, while I chose a steep, narrow snow couloir of 700'-800'. The snow made for excellent step-kicking, but near the top I had to slither up and over an arrow-shaped chockstone completely blocking the gully. Now on the snow and talus of the upper south face, we re-joined forces and continued to the crest of the southeast ridge. After some easy scrambling and a snow patch, we reached steeper terrain. So far, everything had been as easy as advertised. Here, the rope came out and Paul led up a short chimney to re-gain the ridge crest. We followed this over a step, traversed on the left around a rock bulge, and ascended another, deeper chimney (5.4) to easier ground. A short walk got us to the east summit by noon (5 hrs. 50 min.). I felt satisfied to reach the top but somewhat disgruntled at the "piece of cake" guidebook write-up.

We entered our names in the big Parks Canada summit record tube, noting that Bruce Fairley had done the Rogers-Hermit traverse in 2005. There were no entries in 2007, one in 2008, and ours was the third party to sign in this season. During our 50 min. sojourn, we picked out familiar Glacier National Park peaks and gazed over at the possibly-higher west summit hundreds of meters away along the flat summit ridge. I GPSed our summit at 3100 m., reasonably close to the summit record's 3110 m.

After Paul's obligatory nap, we headed down at 12:50. Re-tracing the upper part of our ascent route, we did a half-rope rap on the south side to avoid the upper chimney. After another short rap onto the snow patch, we decided to head down the long southeast ridge. Walking, pleasant unroped down climbing, and two rappels got us onto the lower portion of the southeast face. After a short down climb, we reached the Tupper Glacier after 4:00 pm, put on the rope, and (noting gathering storm clouds) hoofed it

meadows were swarming with campers and alpinists. After a chat with climbers from Rossland, we turned in.

Hermit Meadows is a spectacular area; whether you are a hiker or climber, it's definitely worth the sweat to get there.

Kim Kratky

## Threading The Needle, 2105 m., August 19, 2009

I had heard about the Needle Peak Trail from Vancouver friends. On one of my return drives back to Vernon a few years ago, I had found the trailhead, across the highway from the Zopkios Rest Area. I finally reached the summit after my 3<sup>rd</sup> attempt with my friend Tom Crowley. I'd first met Tom and Connie, his ex-wife, when with my ex-husband in 1966 in the Bugaboo Mountains. Tom had phoned me in 2006, forty years later, and we have been on hikes together since then.

Our first attempt was two years ago, when we reached the col between Needle and the Flat Iron, and had scrambled further up, but not found a route. Our next attempt was in July this year, when we had reached a similar place as the first time, but there happened to be a Chilliwack lady hiker, Yvonne, with a young boy. She knew about a gully route up to the next level and warned us that we would need to scramble over a large boulder blocking the very loose steep gully at the top. She went ahead and I struggled up that same gully behind Tom. Tom used his short rope to help me get over the boulder. The trail continues up through meadows and past a small pond, then there is another steep bit, before the final rock ascent. The other two were coming down from the summit as we neared the last section. Then there were lightning streaks in the sky, so we had to return to our camp on the Coldwater River Road. For the descent we followed Yvonne and friend down an easier route. There was one steep section where I had problems getting down, even though I had first lowered my pack. Tom and Yvonne made footholds for me with their hands, and the young boy carried my pack further down the trail. When I reached the col I needed a drink, but my pack was further down the trail. Eventually the guy waited for us to catch up. We stopped to have some refreshments. The other two went down ahead of us. I had problems negotiating tree roots on the trail lower down and did have a couple of falls. Luckily with no major injuries. It rained heavily all night, so we had made the correct decision to abandon the climb.

In early August the fire situation and weather prevented us from making another attempt for a time, but eventually it was reasonable to try again. This time we drove to the Coquihalla Park Camp Area across from the Lodge. After we had parked at Zopkios we walked almost a kilometer back along the highway and found the Yak trail which we followed across a wet area. It ascends extremely steeply through the trees, reaches large boulders, but we wanted to be ready for the Needle attempt, so we only went for about an hour. Some people were coming down, so we waited for them to pass, then returned to the car.

Next morning we got to the trailhead at 8:10 am. It took me just over an hour to reach the first lookout where there is a No Fire sign. Tom could no doubt go faster, but he's willing to go at my

slow speed. We reached the col before 11 am and afterwards did not use the gully route. The very steep section was a lot easier to climb up than it was down and soon we reached what we thought was the last bit. However we climbed up steeply among meadows and more boulders to yet another meadow level that took a long time to traverse.

As we had left the parking spot two young boys were already on the trail ahead. They were coming down as we reached the higher meadows. Another party of four overtook us before we reached the final rock climb. We watched their route. Tom went ahead and I followed. He insisted I be roped up, remembering that I had been involved in a horrendous mountain accident in 1998. The first scrambly bit was steep, but then we reached the eye of the Needle. There are large slabs of rock at a 45 degree angle with a crack between which you ease your body, also negotiating the rocks and jagged boulders below your feet, with various gaps to straddle. When you emerge from this chasm, there is a short easier bit before the next vertical scramble. Tom went ahead and I was struggling up the next bit, when the other four were coming down. They simply had to wait for me to get up to the next ledge. More steep stuff and eventually we were on the summit rocky ridge. By this time my legs were shaking as I stumbled slowly to the summit cairn. It was 2:10 pm, and had taken me 6 hours. The *103 Hikes* book suggests the whole trip could be done in 7 hours. It also took me 10 hours to get down. Most people do it a lot faster than me.

The rock climb at the top was easier coming down, back near the small pond we stopped to drink tea and Ribena juice. Sadly I spilled some of my tea. Then we had to get down the steep bit, where on the previous attempt Yvonne and Tom had held my feet and I hadn't mentioned that I ripped the seat of my pants and gone down the rest of the trail with a bare behind. We reached the col at about 7 pm. The sun was a huge orange ball near the horizon, getting lower as we descended through the meadows. We met a man with a dog who told us he had come to take sunset pictures with his new digital camera. About 8:30pm we found ourselves descending through white rhododendrons, a hiker's nightmare on bushwhacking trips. The man and his dog passed us with a flashlight and asked if we had lights. Then we got out our headlamps. Somehow we hadn't noticed the No Fire sign and we were back in the trees in darkness. Coming up it had taken about an hour to reach this spot, but going down took me considerably longer. My knees and hip hurt so I tiptoed very gingerly between the tree roots. Tom walked close by, with me tied to a rope. He saved some stumbles, but it took me a very long time to get out in the dark. Back at my car I drank five mugs of Ribena juice as my mouth was so dry. We also stopped at the Britton Creek Restroom Area to fill up the water containers before going back to camp. Finally I got up Needle Peak and was back in my sleeping bag about 1:30 am after a very exciting adventure.

Pamela Jenkins

Eds note: Roundtrip 13 km. Elevation gain 890 m

## MAPLE PASS LOOP - North Cascade National Park, 7000', Sept. 23, 2009

The North Cascades National Park is part of the largest wilderness

is not really comparable to any particular area of our B.C. The park is about 300km from Castlegar and is accessed by U.S. Highway 20 from Omak, Washington.

The park is south of Highway 3 from Chilliwack Lake through to the Skagit Valley. It is bounded on the west by the Mt Baker Wilderness and on the east by the Paysaten Wilderness Area. The park can only be accessed from the north through B.C.'s Skagit Valley and via the Pacific Crest Trail (from Manning Park) that passes through the park. The North Cascades Scenic Byway traverses the area from east to west and was built specifically for tourists in the late sixties. This road closes during the winter months.

The Maple Pass Loop was recommended as a must by several people we had met on our two earlier hikes in the Cascades National Park. We had been using an old copy of Ira Spring and Harvey Manning's 101 Hikes In The North Cascades which was written before the trail was being built.

The very popular trail for the Maple Pass Loop starts on Hwy 20 at the 4855 ft Rainy Pass on the eastern approach to the Cascades National Park. The trailhead is actually in the Okanogan National Forest. Only the pass itself and the area south is within the park. Rainy Pass has a very good parking/picnic/camping area with washrooms and water. There was a \$5 user fee that an USA NATIONAL PARKS pass covers. A large information panel marked the beginning of the trail to Maple Pass and Lake Ann. From the panel it is a gradual steady climb through trees on an excellent trail. After 1.5 miles is the junction for Lake Ann (another mile to the lake). From this junction the trail continues up and onto an open eastern facing slope where you get good views down onto Lake Ann and the entire surrounding basin. Eventually you reach Heather Pass. We climbed onto the alpine ridge, left the trail and scrambled quickly westwards along a small route to a small peak. We had our lunch overlooking the entire basin. Black Peak and the stunning olive green Lewis Lake were close by to the west. To the north there were several inviting mountains of the Rainy pass area. To the southwest was a great view of Glacier Peak (10541ft) as well as numerous other 8000-9000ft mountains. Many with glaciers on their sides.

After a long lunch we descended back onto the trail and continued SEward along the ridge, slowly gaining elevation up to Maple Pass at 6,850 feet. We climbed the small bump at the eastern end of the ridge where we quickly chatted with a couple of untalkative "goat looker forers". We got the feeling we weren't welcome so we slowly began our descent back to the car. There are a few switchbacks off the ridge. All the time overlooking a tiny tarn below. Once the trail enters the trees, it became steep with occasional views onto the very pretty Rainy Lake. The trail joined onto the Rainy Lake trail and in about a km we were back to the parking lot. From the junction it is about .6 miles to Rainy Lake on a very mild paved wheelchair accessible trail.

7mile loop, 1965 feet gain, pass elevation 6850ft.

Eliane and Steven Miros

P.S. Our other recommended hikes in the area are the 10mi roundtrip Thornton Lakes trail and its associated easy scramble up Trapper Peak (5964'). This had spectacular views onto the Pickets

as well as the 3 sequential glacial lakes hanging off the side of Mt Triumph.

The 7mi up to Sourdough Mtn (4800') was a task but all the views onto peaks, glaciers and the Ross and Diablo Lakes was well worth the grueling 3900' rapid descent. The zillions of huckleberries helped ease the pain. It was our first hike in the area, it was fairly cloudy and cold, but the people we socialized with at the Heritage Lookout Cabin made it all worth it.

Other great destinations recommended by mountaineers and hikers we met were Hidden Lake Peak and the historic (used by Indians and explorers) Cascade Pass. Both are SE of Marblemount. Boulder Ridge near Baker Lake is another "to do".

### YAK PEAK, 2040m., Sept 28, 2009

Coquihalla Pass had intrigued us since our first trip through it many years ago. Yak Peak, the impressive slab of granite on the pass's northerly's Zopkios Ridge, stuck out like a missing Valhalla and, it didn't look that complicated (Yak Peak is the highest peak on Zopkios Ridge, the other two being Nak and Thar Peaks. The peaks are arranged in a horseshoe fashion which can be traversed in a long day from the highway).

The controversy over a proposed ski resort in the pass further encouraged us. Pamela Jenkins' trip report on the adjacent Needle Peak did a bit of prompting as well. The annoying part of this trip was the 500km distance from Castlegar. We decided to justify the adventure with a 2-mountain carcamp, an en route visit to family in Kelowna, and a last few September swims in Okanagan Lake. We left Kelowna at a leisurely 8am driving the 200 km -at the speed limit of 110km/h- and arriving in just under two hours. This easily gave us time to do the shorter Yak Peak scramble, a relatively new route. Needle Peak was on the agenda; weather permitting, for the next day.

Yak and Needle peaks are on opposing sides of the Coquihalla Pass (Highway 5). The Zopkios Rest Area Exit at the pass provides the access to both mountains from either highway direction you may be coming from. A surprise was a Fast Food Trailer set up in the Rest Area and serving hot food from 10am to 8pm. There were numerous places to set up for overnight, albeit a bit noisy with the road so close.

The trailhead is on the north side of the highway. Walk east from the Rest Area building, approximately 800 meters up the downramp and eventually along a concrete divider. Near the far end of the divider a large stone cairn on the left marks the beginning of the trail. At first, the trail leads down the road embankment. It then crosses a small creek and quickly enters the mature forest. The well-trodden trail climbs very steeply in the trees and then into a large boulder field. Here the cairned route takes you a couple hundred meters up to the base of the gigantic granite face.

From here you turn right and follow the run-off trench between the granite wall and the alder. This part of the route -on Yak's southeast slope- is visible from the highway. The trail is cairned, flagged and occasionally well worn. It runs roughly parallel to the granite wall alternating between patches of alder, granite slabs and a small narrow steep creek bed. On wet days there might be some bushwhacking required to stay out of the runoff. Eventually you emerge into an open alpine area that obviously leads left

out the few bushes do not pose much of a problem). Ribbons mark the way up through the middle of the slope until eventually you are on a well-worn trail leading to the col between the two Yak summits. At the col there is a short path leading left to the top of the eastern false summit where several climbing routes end. The western higher small flat-topped summit is via an easy and short scramble up through the scrub brush. The views were great offering many up close and far away summits. Southwards are Needle Peak, Coquihalla Mtn, Tulameen Mtn. and the peaks of the North Cascades National Park and Paysaten Wilderness. The southeast had Manning Park's Mt. Frosty and the Cathedral Lakes Mountains. North and eastward is the rolling terrain of the Thompson-Nicola. To the immediate west lay the rock-climbing areas on Anderson Mtn, Ibex Peak, Vicuna and Guanaco Peaks. Our views to the west were clouded by an approaching black air weather system. The north face of the Yak summit is a daggish 500m cliff. This face was still unclimbed as of a few years ago.

We lunched on a warm sunny rock. The western sky was blackening and it appeared that we probably would make it down before the rain came. The forecast had changed to probable snow for the night. Needle Peak would have to wait for another day. Autumn had now proclaimed itself. 4 hours, approx 5.5km. Elev. gain 825m. Much of this area was untouched wilderness and relatively unexplored until surveyors made preparations for the Coquihalla Highway. It has been a mountaineering playground since the highway went in.

Other possible hikes in the area include Zoa Peak, Illal Meadows & Jim Kelly Mountain, Guanaco Peak, July Mtn., Stoyama Mtn. Eliane and Steven Miros.

"...it's more difficult to go down a mountain than to go up. A lot of people don't realize that." Glenn Ford

## HIKING CAMP REPORTS

### Camp 1 Dates: July 18 to July 25

**Participants:** Ed and Hazel Beynon, Mike Brewster, Glenn Cameron (Leader), Cheryl, Brian Cooles, Ken Holmes (Reporter), Rita Holmes, Liz and Terry Huxter, Bill McNally, Ray Neumar, Mary Prothro, Marlies Roeder, Nancy Selwood, Terry Simpson (Cook), Terry Turner, Andrea Vowell,, Mary Woodward.

Although the hiking camp was billed as Limestone Lakes we were in fact a few miles west of Limestone lakes which are now in the Height of the Rockies Provincial Park and therefore inaccessible by helicopter. The site chosen was in some open meadows at the headwaters of the North White River.

The only named feature was Limestone Lakes so a bunch of people set off on day 1 to find a way to get there. Four succeeded

by dropping down a snow slope to the east of the ridge east of camp and then climbing up through the next ridge to Limestone lakes. The view as we crested the ridge was incredible and we dropped to the lakes and spent a couple of hours taking it all in with the views of Mount Abruzzi and other peaks to the east. Mike chose to find a way through the broken ridges and succeeded in arriving at the ridge above Limestone Lakes. This route proved to be unattractive to most and all subsequent groups to visit Limestone Lakes chose to follow the lower route even though it entailed more descent and ascent.

However the area around camp posed a dilemma.... how to be a recorder for hiking camp when all the features around the camp are unnamed.... except for the people? So.... the dilemma was solved by giving names to some of the features so that we could communicate about where we were going etc.

From the ridge to the north of the camp on Day 2 we looked at the highest peak directly west of camp which had an unusual feature on the facing snowfield.... the shape of a cross in rocks where the surrounding snow had melted so Rita and I called it the "Peak of the Cross".

Later in the week sitting around the campfire...I think it was Mary W who was looking at the ridgeline to the east of camp and spotted that it looked like a sleeping giant. A rock bluff formed a beetled brow and eye, with a bump in the ridge forming a nose and a gap in the ridge forming a mouth. There was even a line of snow from the corner of the "mouth" which we called the Giant's drool. From then on the ridge and its summit were known as the "Sleeping Giant"

The peak and ridge overlooking camp to the east became known either as the Sphinx because of the rock bluffs overlooking camp or as Mt Ike... I'm not sure why the latter.

The first group to hike to two lakes to the south-west, but out of sight and up a valley called them appropriately...."Hidden Lakes" which then became a popular venue for a great day's hike as they turned out to be two beautiful lakes. The lower one was an incredible blue. The higher one took a lot more effort to reach through a headwall but proved to be worthwhile and provided a route to the summit of the Peak of the Cross from the col above the lake via the south ridge. The last 100 metres or so along the very narrow ridge were "airy". There was a summit register that showed about 4 ascents, the last being in 1999.

The ancient seabed feature to the west and over the intervening ridge turned out to be full of amazing fossils and attracted many hikers especially the two geologists...one with his trusty hammer who brought back fossil samples. This area we called Fossil Valley. The first hikers through the area found the hiking to be difficult due to the many large crevices and steps in the rock. The area became known as Canyonlands and fossil hunting became a popular pastime. We subsequently found an easy way through Canyonlands.... a green swath that made easy walking into Fossil Valley.

Cliff bands on the opposite side of the valley created barriers to travel but a couple of "green-ways" were found through them to Fossil Valley and the Peaks beyond. Goat trails through the cliff

Brian and Nancy were the only two to climb the West ridge of the peak 2-km to the South of camp which they did on Day 1. We didn't give a name to that peak which they described as a scramble with the upper section similar to the normal route up Gimli. A summit register showed that this was a second recorded ascent, the first being in 1984.

An attempt to climb the peak north of Peak of the Cross failed about 100 ft from the summit because of loose and steep rocks. From the ridge we spotted Mike doing a lone ascent of the Peak of the Cross via the snow slopes seen from camp.

There were many viewpoints on the ridges providing views and 'Kodak moments' of the Royal group, Assiniboine, Mount Abruzzi and Mount Joffre.

Hazel and Ed became the camp recorders for flowers and birds. Hazel counted 119 different types of flowers whilst Ed recorded bird sightings. The flower people gathered after a day's hike and compared notes and looked at flower books. Ed saw 20 different species of birds. The most interesting to Ed was the Brewers Sparrow (Timberline subspecies). This subspecies usually nests at high elevations and is nearly always very secretive and little is known about where it nests.

Little wildlife was seen except for marmots, squirrels, etc. A herd of elk was spotted from the first flight in and a moose and calf came through the meadows near camp later in the week.

The weather was incredibly kind to us with sunshine and cloudless skies almost every day. The only change was when a storm passed through on the Thursday evening. Andrea produced a game called "Things" which kept us occupied and amused in the store tent while the rain passed over.

Glenn was concerned about the impact of the hot weather on water supplies for Camps 2 and 3 so he built a dam that backed up the water into the meadows for storage. Not being content with his first dam he increased the height the following evening. Any higher and a water license would have been needed.

We had a lot of mosquitoes, which some claimed were due to the dam, which brought out a variety of hats, nets and lotions. Andrea's claim that Brazil nut butter worked as a repellent prompted many of us to try it instead of the usual potions. We certainly smelled better for it!

Perhaps due to the mosquitoes, the record for last to go to bed was about 9.15 except for the last evening, when a singsong around the campfire with many singers and a variety of songs kept us going a lot longer.

The week was marred by two accidents. Rita sprained her ankle but managed to walk back to camp via the goat trails and cliff bands. Her ankle ballooned after taking off her boot so she was limited for the rest of the week. (It turned out to be a fractured fibula as well as a sprain). Brian had a large rock roll on his foot, cutting through his boot and badly bruising his toes. He took a few days rest then did the hike to Limestone Lakes.

## Camp 2 Dates: July 25 to August 1

**Participants:** Eric Ackerman, Mary Baker, Paula Barnes, Kevin Forsyth, Mark Hatlen, Carl Jorgensen, Graham Kenyon, Jim Kiennolz, Charles Macklon, Jocelyne Martin, Judith Mitchell, Simon Mitchell, Ray Moore, Kathleen Nichol, Peter Oostlander, Ron Perrier (Leader), Holly Ridenour (Cook), Ross L. Scott, Barbara Stang, Vera Truant.

Beginnings are usually the most difficult part of any journey. Should I go? When? What should I take? Where will I put everything? What is essential and what is luxury? Can I do this under 50 pounds? Would we have 20 hikers? Who would they be? And so it was with Camp Two. The Camp of changes, Camp by default, Camp two began as an overflow camp, first choice of no one there. Right up to the last few days there were openings. Emails with changes in clientele came weekly, then daily. Persistent Paula was in, then out, then in again. Some of our beloved veterans like The Waltons, Marg Gmoser, and Leon were suddenly unable to join us. In desperation, the last spot went at a bargain price. But, as with all journeys, we began perhaps not with a single smooth step, perhaps it was with a hesitant limp, but that soon became a skip, a hop and a jump. Second camp filled to twenty with a wondrous mix of experienced veterans and wide eyed newbies all equal in their enthusiasm for camping and the outdoors.

Upon arrival in terminal 7500 ft., in the wilds north of White Swan Provincial Park, we noticed it was a place of close ridges made of sedimentary rock layers and caverns. Limestone slabs the size of small countries, curved and roiled commemorating primordial activity. A sphinx like face, guarded camp from the north and became a beacon and beloved landmark. The marsh directly in front of camp spawned a billion mosquitoes, drained steadily into our water source and finally fell into the waterfall we'd glimpsed on the flight up. The place was unusual in that there were no serious mountain peaks to bag and yet the hiking possibilities appeared challenging, vast and varied. And so the scene was set. Twenty campers planted in the wilderness. Subjected to the elements and at the mercy of the universe and each other. No matter that the Witch Hazel had already named 119 species of wildflower and shrub, even before they had bloomed. No matter that the castaways were out of sync with their own calendar. No matter that "testies" outnumbered women 12 to 8. No matter that knee braces were owned by more than 65% of the group. No matter that an orange jumpsuit was spotted at the recce site. Here in this place of exploration and daily testing, in this place that expects everything, camp 2 would prevail even flourish.

Upon arrival there was little to do but set up our own tents and perform a few tedious chores like biffy and slop pit digging. Dame Holly Berry Good Cook, Countess Mary of the Tea Time and Le Roi du Camp Ronald Perrier seemed to have set up well in hand. Coolers were marked and labeled, submerged in the creek and covered as always in wet blankets. It was my first camp experience with fluid refrigeration. The challenge was to keep feet dry, stabilize bobbing coolers and hold one's precious armload while smacking mosquitoes. Fortunately, as agile mountaineers, we were up to the task.

unan one camper nervous. persistent paula, one of the Lovelier than Limestone Ladies, chose to seek refuge in the lower valley to escape the din. This is no demotion in bravery. She and Lord Ray of the Regal RidgeTops were camped near the flats of the marsh, their tent a protruding nipple that beckoned the bolts. Prince Charles of Cheer also flagged somewhat in the face of such adversity, since he inhabited the highest altitude in the camp. He watched from his tent door as lightening struck in the valley directly beside us, not 2 km away. While hiking in that area several days later we found the lightning's target - a tall spruce. The tree was bisected. The entire tree top was lodged in the centre of the split trunk as if it had blown straight up and fallen straight down again. In the violence of the explosion shrapnel was flung in a 75 meter circle around the wreckage. Splinters the size of 2x4's leaned against rocks and lay on the ground. While hiking the ridge directly behind camp, Ross, Lord of the Lens, found unusual soil disruption. Chunks of soil were uprooted and flung to the ground. Not a grizzly or coyote dig. Not a ground squirrel den. He surmised that this could only have been caused by a strike from our first night's lightning storm. When lightning struck, it drilled the ground with its power and rearranged the surface in an erratic configuration of craters and mounds. As usual there were campers who slept through the danger, let us not depend on them to stand guard; some who's banal approach borders on denial, let us leave them to their fantasy; some whose pragmatism is irrefutable, let us call them to lead ; and some who's silence on the subject creates mystery, let us make them spies.

The next morning after a slow start, hikers scattered in all directions, exploring near and far; north to the fossil beds and a kilometer- long gray limestone ramp, south to the swimming lakes nestled into the base of the huge "Orange and Black Thing" which watched over our camp, east towards Limestone Lakes and west through the canyons to Lovelier than Limestone Lakes, more fossil beds and Glacier Lake. All returned enthusiastic and eager to share the day's adventure over tea. Heading in any direction one could follow distinct animal trails, presumably made by mountain sheep or goat. West the trails led into the canyon lands, a maze of broken limestone slabs, a disorienting terrain, to glacier lakes which we labeled Lovelier than Limestone Lakes and to a collection of other geological wonders.

One of the unusual features in this region was the hazardous karst belt. The karst peaks here were points which resembled a cross between white caps on a lake and a bed of nails. This particular bed had peaks 10 cm or 4 inches in height. To fall would have been like impaling yourself on knives. The peaks form when mildly acidic water acts on the limestone bedrock and because of the slight incline in this area, water has a chance to pool and happily munch before flowing on.

It seems the whole region around camp is classified as karst topography since it exists of limestone rock, caves and subterranean drainage. There were many places where streams disappeared and later reappeared blessing us with icy fresh water straight from nature's tap.

The irony of sea fossils on top of an inland mountain was lost on



none of us. The mystery of how it happened left us wishing for a geologist to tell the story of its creation. How do thousands upon thousands of marine fossils end up on the tops of mountains, 900 kms inland in the year 2009? How fortunate we were to glimpse this phenomenon of eternity. Some sections of upturn rock, hundreds of meters long, appeared to have been wallpapered in embossed coral relief. In other places one couldn't tread without stepping on the solid crustaceans and sponges of this millennium-old sea bed. We found what looked like anemone, sponges, crab, clams of various types, worms, snails, urchins, oysters and even a fish skeleton. We needed a geologist with a minor in Marine biology.

South of us was a place where the violence and power of the earth's movement was observable. The "Orange and Black Thing" the massive mountain south of camp, showed us distinct layers of orange rock curved into a U shape of perilous cliffs and unclimbed peaks abutting black rock. The whole thing looked as if it had been pressed into a curve from the bottom and then as it emerged to the surface of the earth toppled onto its side to become the obstacle mountain which the epic journey hiker had to circumnavigate.

A short excursion was anticipated to Russel Lake at the base of Russel Peak, the mountain behind The Orange and Black Thing. On the trip were Le Roi du Camp, Eric-Earl of Edema, Kevin-Earl of Lunch, Prince Charles, Sir Peter Pie Master and Lady Barbara the Bold. The clear animal trail started off simply enough, the goal was in sight. The maps spoke of trails around the side of the O&B Thing, Sir Peter left tape on some trees, so the group could retrace their steps if needed. Compass, GPS, ropes, good cheer and skill accompanied the group. At first. But it seems that Russel Lake was elusive and everywhere it was supposed to be – it wasn't. Neither was the trail which should have come off the short logging road. From their trudge along skidder trails prolific with wild strawberries, the group saw their cars and wondered if they should abandon camp entirely and drive home. They had journeyed too far to retrace their steps and had little choice but to push ahead. By now it was tea time and they were still a long way from camp. "Mutiny in the Mountains" was playing a double feature, rations were counted and lots were cast for the inside position of the overnight six person spooning. Unswerving determination, optimistic scouting, unmapped route finding, and ropes finally got the group over the base of the O&B Thing to the fabled wildlife path which led them through the wilderness, up the ravine, along the creek, past the biffy and towards the smell of supper.

Supper, of course, was long since over, rescue helicopters had not yet been called, and leftovers were spooned onto everyone's plate. A collective sigh was breathed that they were spooning food and not each other.

Since no one wore pedometers, it's hard to say who accumulated the greatest distance, but I would venture to say the contest would be between Sir Peter, Count Carl of North Meadow, The Earl of Lunch and Viscount James of the Unblazed Trail.

True Grit Awards however, must go to the three casualties of the knee surgery past and future. These three limped their way along goat trails, over dale, glen, ridge, fossil beds to see all that this remarkable place offered. Our reigning Monarch Queen J, her Lady in Waiting Persistent Paula and Sir Mark of Mirth, their knee braces padded and tightened, trudged on tirelessly.

Sunrise of day five witnessed 3 small groups venturing towards Limestone Lakes; the phantom Viscount, setting out on his own,

some circuitous route or another. It was a long day of scrambling around rocks, sliding down scree, backtracking, exploring then climbing back up the scree slope to the east ridge above camp. The phantom appeared and disappeared. The Earl of Lunch was nearly pulverized by falling rocks and Le Roi and Prince Charles nearly eaten by a wolverine. Exaggeration aside, they did encounter this illusive animal, which aside from ptarmigan, our cow bird and mosquitoes was the only wild life seen. These two also came upon a human hiker camped on the water's edge who had back packed in over the Sylvan Pass.

After this day's hiking destination, Ross, Lord of the Lens, actually having seen both Limestone and Lovelier than Limestone Lakes, could make the accurate and credible comparison. He concurred with the descriptive nom de plume. Lovelier Than Limestone really was lovelier than Limestone. The other ten hikers, led by Graham, Marquis de Sagesse, and Sir Simon of Ptarmigan followed by all his chicks, lunched at the Lovelier Lake and drank from its earth chilled waters. This is the area in which they found and photographed wildflowers including the rare Aphrodite Ciliata.

Over the span of the week the weather had become predictable with afternoon thunder showers coming from the north. This sent us into the supply tent for socialization and gave us respite from the infinite and aggressive mosquitoes. By Friday the Gods took pity on our band of mosquito-ravaged, veiled, deet-encrusted, lumpy, scratching hikers and sent us both sunshine for a whole day and a Cow bird to assist in the reduction of the mosquito population. The bird was as tame as a Mina and equally entertaining. It hopped around our feet oblivious to potential danger, performed acrobatic leaps to scoop insects from the air and gorged on dozens of pre-killed mosquitoes which it ate from our fingers tips. Cowbird quickly became the most photographed individual in camp.

On our last night at Terminal 7500 feet, we "dressed for dinner". Criteria? Wear any or all of one's hiking accoutrements in a unique way. The results? Delightful. Surprising. Hilarious. Imaginative. Creative.

One hiker was impaled by his hiking pole. Another was bound and trussed in a nylon rope. Yet another thought we said dress for bed and arrived in jammies. There was much reversed layering. (Undergarments worn on the outside of hiking clothes) This gave a revealing glimpse into the psyches of one's fellow hiker's through their seldom seen "dainties". Yet another mystery surrounding the Viscount was he dressed up? Or down? Or wearing his usual colourful garb with bared feet?

Following supper cleanup the entertainment began. One of this year's performances was a Cancan by the Knee Brace Dancers. This nimble and trendsetting group proudly displayed their braces on the outside of their pants, sang and kicked up their heels in a hiking-pole assisted choreography.

Count Carl told a horrific, yet amusing, Inuit version of how the sea animals came to be. Audience members became Sedna, Goddess of the Sea, and her family. Sedna was banished from home because of her voracious appetite and when she tried to climb back into her father's kayak, he chopped off her fingers which in turn became the seals, walrus, and whales of the ocean. On a gentler note, a belly dancer performed a silent dance while balancing a hiking pole on her head. And the piece de resistance, yet another visit from our beloved Queen Elisabeth, alias Queen J. bored with the situation in England and having heard of Her

Majeste's Club, she and her Ladies in Waiting, Jolie Route Jocelyn, Ridge Crazy Kathleen, Persistent Paula and Elvera Bru decided to make a royal visit. They rode into camp in an elephant caravan. Queen J honored each camp member for their outstanding acts after which they lumbered off to Limestone Lakes.

As always it is difficult to capture every event, the thrill of exploration, the test of one's endurance, the heart stopping swim in glacial lakes, the awe of watching a hiker work a bilingual

crossword puzzle, the ebb and flow of personal dynamics, the thrill of finding a flower not yet on Hazel's extensive list, the rescue of articles left lying in the wilds, the observance of a ptarmigan chick's curiosity and the spotting of rare animals. Camp two had all that and more on the soil and rock of a five hundred million year old beach.

Barbara Stang

"Be master of your petty annoyances and conserve your energies for the big, worthwhile things. It isn't the mountain ahead that wears you out - it's the grain of sand in your shoe." **Robert Service**

## **KMC Hiking Trip Schedule, Fall 2009**

Nov. 11 (Monday) Destination: Champion Lakes Trail A1 Leader: Ross Bates Telephone Number 304-2534

There are still a lot of good hiking days left in October and November. If you would like to coordinate a trip, please call or email Vicki Hart at 352-6145 or [vjoyhart@hotmail.com](mailto:vjoyhart@hotmail.com)