



The Kootenay Mountaineer

The newsletter for people with year-round pursuits.

Winter 2012

President's message

from Peter Oostlander

I am honoured to be elected as your new President for the next two years and would like to thank our past President, Dave Grant, for mentoring me in the inner workings of the club.

Please extend a warm welcome to our new executive members: Bryan Reid (website), Doug Clark (VP), Mark Hatlen (hiking camp), Will Neustaedter (mountaineering school) and Tim Clinton (newsletter) Thank you for stepping up to the plate!

Message from the Editor

My name is Tim Clinton, and my wife Judy and I are thrilled to be new residents in the Kootenay mountains. We have enjoyed the club trips we've been on, especially the warm welcome by long time members and the great introduction to the local mountains. It was while getting a tour of one of Sandra McGuinness's secret stashes on the back side of Mt. Beattie that she twisted my arm and asked if I would like to be a newsletter editor. How could I refuse? It was either that, or she'd have to kill me, having revealed that special slope...

Seriously, there was no threat regarding accepting the position of editor. There was one regarding never revealing that slope, however. You'll have to go on your own trip back there with her. My lips are sealed. I'm hoping that editing the newsletter will keep me fully informed on all the wonderful mountain areas to

explore here in our new home. Keep those trip reports and photos coming!

One wonderful discovery for us

since arriving is something we never had back in the Rockies — grilled cheese sandwiches on the stoves of the Rossland Range cabins!



2012 membership fees are now due!
If you have not renewed, this is the last newsletter you receive.

Article submission guidelines:

Plain text is great. No need for PDF or Microsoft Word files. Simply cut and paste your text into an email to tim@watervalleystudios.ca. Attach your full resolution photos to the email

Submission deadline for the next issue is
April 16, 2012

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Kokanee Cabin Winter Trip

by Ed Beynon

Dear members.

Membership interest in the KMC Kokanee Ski Week has decreased in the past two years. This year we filled the last two places in December and nearly half of the 2012 participants are non voting members. The club risks a possible financial liability once we pay our non-refundable deposit in mid March and we do not fill all 12 spots. To avoid this potential liability it is desirable that we have all places filled by March 15 of 2012 for the 2013 week. Hopefully, with this notice we will be able to book all 12 spots again. The Kokanee Cabin is very much sought after by the back country skiing community and our club receives a week in the best part of the season without participating in a lottery to obtain the week. This is a great benefit that we would like to keep for our members but we shouldn't be risking the clubs funds so a few of us can go to Kokanee Ski Week.

Applications are invited for Kokanee Ski Week 2013

Date in: Jan. 26, 2013 — Date out Feb.02, 2013

The Kokanee Ski Week is a ski touring trip for 12 KMC members. All applicants must be suitably equipped and must have avalanche skills training or equivalent experience in avalanche rescue and route finding. Cost per person is estimated to be \$875 and includes accommodation at the Kokanee Glacier Lodge plus helicopter transport in and out from Nelson. Information about the lodge can be found on the Alpine Club of Canada web site at

www.alpineclubofcanada.ca. This is a self-guided and self-catered trip. One of the successful applicants will be appointed trip coordinator. This coordinator will deal with specific trip details, issues and needs.

Participants will be selected by a draw on March 15, 2012. To apply, send a non refundable deposit cheque for \$175 made out to Kootenay Mountaineering Club along with your name, address and phone number to the address below. A final cheque for \$700 (or the balance if there is a change in price) will be required by November 15, 2012. Post dated cheques will not be accepted. People may apply as couples. Cheques of unsuccessful applicants will be destroyed. It is necessary to join KMC, once your application is accepted, if you are not already a member. Members

who apply and are not selected for 2013 will be given priority for 2014 if held.

*Ed Beynon, KMC Winter Trips Coordinator
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The Coles Notes To Bivouac.Com

by Sandra McGuinness

As a long time www.bivouac.com member, I am happy to see more people in the West Kootenay (and KMC) joining this excellent site. I do find, however, that the Bivouac site (<http://bivouac.com>) is anything but intuitive. If you knew the eccentric Robin Tivy (some KMC members have met Robin) this would likely be self-explanatory. For those that either don't know Robin or are having trouble finding the information they seek on the Bivouac site, here are a few Coles notes.

There are two basic ways to find information on Bivouac, both of which I'll illustrate using sample trips. First, lets say you have a yen to ski up Commonwealth Mountain in the Bonnington Range (by the way, this is a very good ski trip with an 800 metre descent). The easiest way to gather information in this case is to simply type "Commonwealth" into the search field at the top of the main page. If you do this, you'll see that a list of mountains, trip reports and photo essays featuring the word "Commonwealth" is returned. From this search page, you can either click on "Commonwealth Mountain" or go straight to the two trip reports which feature Commonwealth Mountain. The mountain page for Commonwealth Mountain is probably the best place to go, as this page gives route and access information, as well as giving links to trip reports and photos featuring Commonwealth Mountain.

If you go choose to go straight to the trip reports for Commonwealth Mountain, you'll find two further useful links on the trip report page. First, is the <GMap> link at the top of the page. Clicking this will open a topographic map (1:50,000) with the route taken in the trip report drawn on, as well as other roads and trails in the area. All these roads, trails can be clicked directly from the GMap page so you can get the latest road/trail information. The other useful link on the trips page is found at the bottom of the page where GPS gadget freaks can download the GPS waypoints for any trip and take them along with them.

Let's say, however, that you simply want to find some new ski (or hiking/scrambling/climbing) trips in your local area that you haven't done before. The best way to find new trips to do is to use the "Trip Lister". To find the Trip Lister, click the <trips> link on the main page. At the top of the big list of trips that appears, you'll find a link to the "Trip Lister". Click on this link and a form will appear that says "Trips in Radius".

You'll see that there are various fields to fill in on this page to get useful information out of the system (the default seems to be Whistler). On this page, you can specify the town you want as the center for a search for trips (say Nelson or Rossland), the radius around the town (think about how far you are willing to drive), the number of days, the difficulty of the trip (using the standard YDS grades), the access required (regular car, 4 wheel drive, helicopter) and the season.

Let's assume you want to find a couple of new trips to do within 20 km of Nelson during the winter season that are one day long and are accessible by regular car with any level of difficulty. Typing Nelson, 20 km radius, 1 day, 1 for access and choosing winter for season and leaving difficulty blank into the form fields, I get a list of 16 trips (strangely they are all my trips).

Click on any of the trips that interest you. Peruse the topographic map available through Gmap, download the GPS waypoints if you choose, get out there and have fun.

What's in your pack?

by Shaun King

A snow covered landscape opens endless possibilities for winter travel, but with avi hazard, poor visibility, cold temps and short days, a lot can go wrong. Experience, training and good decision making are key, but planning and preparation are essential. A part of good preparation includes packing the right stuff.

Apart from the personal items that everyone should carry (avi gear, eye protection, extra clothes, headlamp, boot & binding specific replacement parts) there are some group items that could make all the difference to your enjoyment and safety. With lightweight, compact versions of these items it is possible for one pack to have it all, but dividing the gear between group members makes it easy.

Extra Clothes – balaclava, extra mitts or shell over-mitts, insulating jacket & pants. An ultralight sleeping

bag/overbag (about the weight of a down jacket) may also be an option.

Map & Compass – set the declination and always know where you are! An altimeter watch is a fantastic navigational aid.

GPS – this can help confirm your location but never rely solely on anything electronic. Set the appropriate map datum.

Communication – Cell phone if you have coverage. FRS radios may work near populated areas like ski hills. VHF radios work if you have the correct frequencies, are in range of repeaters and know where the radio shadows are. Personal locator beacons like the SPOT or rented SAT phones may be the only option in many places.

First Aid Kit – Splint, triangulars, dressings, gloves, pocket mask, disinfectant, antibiotic ointment, painkillers, anti-inflams, chemical heat packs, pencil & paper to record vitals.

Repair Kit – duct tape, T-grip screwdriver, Heli-Coils, ski pole basket, hip belt pack buckle, ski scraper, skin wax, extra sunglasses, long zap straps, rubber ski straps (for skins that won't stick), fire starter, turbo lighter, flagging tape.

Insulated pad – for comfort, injury, evac. or unplanned bivy. An ultralight 3/4 length Thermarest is a bit bigger than a can of tennis balls.

Tarp – for shelter, injury, emergency evac, or unplanned bivy. A lightweight Siltarp is the size of a tennis ball can. Take 1 or 2 5m x 6mm cords for the sled/tarp.

Rescue Sled – A vehicle for moving an injured person off a steep slope or to a clearing that doesn't exacerbate their injuries is a good idea. Homemade versions are possible but something like the Rescue Tarp/Sled by alpinethreadworks.com is two items in one.

Snow / Wood Saw – for snow study, trail blazing, firewood, splints, shelter.

Lightweight Stove & Pot – For big days that take you far from safety, something like the MSR Pocket Rocket (or your turbo lighter in a pinch) & a small metal container may be a good idea to melt snow and heat a snow shelter.

Shaun King is an ACMG Mountain Guide and owner of Mountain Sense Guiding & Instruction in Nelson, BC.

Trip Reports

Berry Ridge Cabin, Nov. 27, 2011

Eight of us met at the Nancy Greene Summit on Sunday, November 27, introduced ourselves and headed up Mount Lepso. The original ski trip was slated for the View Point Cabin on Crowe Mt., but logging activity in the area, with a lot of plowed logging roads, prompted the change. Snow conditions were good for this early season ski, with a firm base (recent melt and refreeze) and some recent powder on top to give a nice glide. We passed three of the lower cabins on the way up: Surprise Cabin with its grizzly bear head still in the wood shed, newly rebuilt Eagle's Nest, and Sunspot cabin.



Following the Seven Summit trail to the Lepso Basin, we traversed the upper field. Most of us took one run in the upper field before heading into the Berry Ridge Cabin. After a hot sandwich, we managed to save a few friends who had been caught in a make-believe avalanche outside. The early season practice is great for speeding up our search times. For the last burial, I forgot to turn the beacon back on, so we did a little extra field digging. All ended well. We were: Elena Cigala-Fulgosi, Ken Holmes, Tim Clinton and Judy O'Leary, Dave Watson, Dianne Polini, Eric Ackerman, and Bob McQueen co-ordinator.

Porcupine Cabin, Dec. 7, 2011

A fine day with powder snow and sunshine. Starting a few km west of the Paulson summit, 15 KMC members came on this adventure in the Mitchner Creek drainage. The trailhead parking area was not plowed forcing us to park 2Km further west and bushwack back to the

“start”. From the official start the trail was tracked by previous skiers, but to our chagrin, only for about 3 km. No worries, taking turns, breaking trail was



relatively easy until the dreaded alders. We persisted on the “official” route arriving at the cabin at lunch time. Soon a hot stove and the smell of grilled cheese sandwiches perked everyone up.



After lunch we took a shortcut to the main trail, emerging at “Ken’s tree” and missing the worst of the alders. We then backtracked to the Grizzly Cabin turnoff.

GPS in hand we found the cabin in unmarked forest thanks to the keen eye of Diane. A quick look and smell revealed the presence of a packrat. Resetting the GPS and starting to worry about daylight, we then took a very pleasant alternate route through “moose swamp” back to the vehicles. A great group with everyone managing to keep up and keep smiling. Total time, including lunch, just over 5 hours. Total distance about 15 k.

We were: Dave and Jill (leaders), Bob, Ken, Diane, Terry, Maureen, Dan, Liz, Tim, Judy, Dave G., Jan, Peter and Eric.

Mt. Beattie, Jan. 4, 2011

What a great day for a snowshoe trip! After days and days of no precipitation, and hard brown ice in Nelson, we finally got a couple of inches on Jan. 3. Five of us met at the hitching post, with evidence of a sunny day ahead, and lots of powder in which to plant our snowshoes.

Our destination was any of the summits known as Mt. Beattie. I have been on this trip at least seven times, and not once have we followed the same route or arrived at the same summit, so there must be more than one of them. Once we arrived at the old mine site, the weather began to change, with clouds coming in from the Northwest. The higher our elevation, the windier it became. On this occasion, from the old mine site, we continued straight ahead, hiking through two flat open areas with an ascension between the two. We were able to follow previous ski tracks, which handily led us to a view point overlooking Five Mile Creek drainage. From there we headed up and north to our summit, although we did not locate the traditional Mt. Beattie sign.

After lunch, our decent was fast, taking only half an hour to return to the old mine site. We were back at our vehicles by 1:30. It was great to have one person along who was a first time snowshoer. We were Joan Posivy, Mark Hatlen, Leon Arishenkoff, Eric Ackerman and P'nina Shames (trip leader with lots of help).

Mitchener Creek, Jan. 7, 2012

We had a beautiful sunny day for a cross country ski trip into the Grizzly cabin up Mitchener Creek on January 7th. Although the temperature was cold, the full sun soon warmed us and scattered diamonds on the snow. Emco kindly cleared the parking lot to accomodate a half dozen cars.

At the first road to the right, we skied past George's cabin and up the road, over the bridge and climbed the hill. The view was worth the climb. Snowmobiles had made a fine track up a few kilometers. Eric, Leon and Chuck skiing on fat skis, continued upward, to have a good run down the open hillside to the swamp.

Retracing our tracks back to the Mitchener Creek road, we turned off to the right to cross the swamp and find the Grizzley Cabin clean and warmed by snowshoers. 15 KMCers crowded together for lunch, stories, and one of John Forest's poems read by Hazel. Old friends renewed acquaintances, relaxed and visited.

The Kootenay Mountaineer

There were two things we didn't expect in the cross country cabin: a telephone and champagne.

We were Joan Harvey, Mike Brewster, Roy Hopland, Renata Belczyk, Ross Bates, Hazel & Ed Beynon, Eric Arkerman, Doug & Linda Clark, Chuck Maclon, Ted Ibrahim, Leon Arishenkoff and Muriel & John Walton.



"simply decadent series - #3" - Jan. 14, 2012

For our "simply decadent series - #3", we selected to snow shoe into the Gordon Keir cabin in the Bonanza recreation area, between the Paulson summit and the bridge on the South side of highway 3. There was only a slight logistical problem: Ed and Hazel Beynon organized a Kootenay Naturalist club snowshoe hike to the same location, same time and day! They were 12, we were 11, so that was not going to work. Delicate negotiations on the highest level of both clubs resulted in our group taking possession of the cabin after the naturalists. This worked out perfectly with our group continuing on the No. 6 Pleiades trail beyond the Orion Lakes lookout, returning to a cozy warm cabin, courtesy of the vacated naturalists.

Out came the decadent treats: Dan's Granma Beach's "Decadent Brownie" treats, Ingrid's freshly baked ginger bread and Swedish shortbreads and the famous Keto blackberry fruit rolls. After the hike, I invited the whole gang to my house to hang some more drywall, but there were no takers. It was a nice day out with great company!

Doug and Linda Clark, Glenn and Susan Keto, Dan Derby, Alex and Kathleen Nichol, Leon Arishenkoff, Mark Hatlen, Ingrid Enns and Peter Oostlander (organizer and reporter)

Gordon Keir Cabin

Mr President,

As assigned, my trip report and a couple photos from today's KMC trip to the Gordon Keir Cabin.

January 14, 2012, 11 KMC members meeting at the Nancy Greene Junction were informed that their president had been negotiating thru the night with the Kootenay Region Naturalists organization (not to be confused with the naturists) as our two groups had double booked the Gordon Keir Cabin. The negotiations resulted in a win/win arrangement with the Naturalists using the cabin for the first hour. Confucius say "first person to cabin must light wood stove".

Parking at the Bonanza pull out some of KMC's bravest members set off to conquer the trail into the Gordon Keir Cabin. The trail was in good shape, a little more snow would have been great. When we arrived at the cabin the Naturalists were enjoying the cabin with smoke rising from the stove pipe. A couple from our group stayed at the cabin while others continued on to see the sights of Bonanza Hill. Upon returning to the cabin we found only our trail mates waiting to dive into lunch with us. The cabin was warm, the fire was perfect for toasting our grilled cheese and the desert was simply DECADENT. After refuelling we headed back down the trail. I had never been four wheeling in snowshoes until the last "short cut" back to the truck.

Thanks for sharing a great day!

Dan

Your Humble Hiker!

Ama Beaches Simply Decadent Brownies

For those of you who asked below is Ama beaches simply decadent brownie recipe.

1 cup melted margarine

4tbsp cocoa

2 eggs

2 cups brown sugar

1-1/2 cup nuts

Mix above in margarine pot

Add 1-1/2 cups flour to mixture

Spread in a 8-1/2 x 11 pan and bake at 325 for 30 minutes

Ice while hot with:

2 cups icing sugar

3 tsp cocoa

2 tbsp margarine

Few drops of boiling water

Let cool then pack into some remote cabin to share with your friends! Enjoy



What happens when 12 KMC'ers drop into the Moose cabin occupied by 7 other skiers? An excellent time!

Simply Suffering Ski Tour Series I: Toad to Red Mountain Traverse Dec. 17, 2011

Inspired by Peter Oostlander's Simply Decadent Series of ski tours and to keep the KMC from being unfairly accused of prejudice towards those who want to suffer on their ski tours, I came up with the idea of a Simply Suffering Ski Tour Series. The inaugural tour was held on Saturday, December 17, 2011 and was fully subscribed (with a waiting list - thus proving that there are many out there willing to suffer) with an even split between male and female suffragettes.

In December, ATCO was logging up around the old Silver King mine site near Toad Mountain and it was possible to drive to about 1800 metres in a new clearcut Northeast of the start of the summer trail (thanks to Kim Kratky for road beta) and within easy access of both Toad and Red Mountains.

We met in Nelson at 7.30 am, allowing plenty of time for suffering, and drove in two vehicles up to the highest clearcut. An old mining road leads almost due west from this clearcut to a junction with the road that leads to the summer hiking trail. At this T junction, the simplest route is to take the (not intuitive) downhill fork and follow the road down past some of the old mining buildings (people who have hiked the summer trail will soon recognize where they are) to about 1700 metres.

We got onto a previously broken trail (courtesy of Kim and Howie), which led up the mostly gentle valley east

of Toad Mountain and followed this up through some minor avalanche terrain to gain the southeast ridge of Toad Mountain and on to the summit. The fact that most of the cairns marking the summer route were still visible will give you an idea of the depth of the snowpack on this windblown ridge. Unfortunately, although skies were fairly clear, it was frightfully windy on top, and, although we had signed up to suffer, getting wind-blasted did not figure in our plans, so we stripped off skins and skied breakable sun crust down the southwest face of Toad to the pass between Red and Toad Mountains for our first lunch break.

I had done this trip the weekend before with Jen Kyler, so it was simple matter to rebreak our old trail up the



northeast ridge of Red Mountain. Conditions were a little softer than last time and I thought we might make it on skis to the top, but, the ridge proved too narrow and steep so we ended bootpacking the last section. Doug had some fun on this section kicking off small slabs on the steep east side of the ridge. Once again, it was windy on top, so we booted back down, skied a short distance along the ridge and soon found a pleasant wind sheltered spot for our second lunch.

After lunch, we skied a very nice east facing run down through glades to a tributary of Hall Creek and then broke out the old trail back up to Toad Mountain. From slightly below the summit of Toad, we had a very good 500 metre run down northeast slopes to emerge on the old mining road slightly lower and to the west of where we had left it. One last snack, and we plodded back up the road, essentially retracing our steps back to the vehicles.

Suffragettes: Fred Thiessen, Bert Port, Doug Brown, Annie Taiatini, Jocelyne Martin, Sandra McGuinness

Simply Suffering Ski Tour Series II: Sandon Peak, Jan. 14, 2012

Sandon Peak was the destination for the second tour in the Simply Suffering Ski Tour Series. This little peak lies at the southeast end of Silver Ridge about 7 km



south of Sandon and is relatively easily ascended via the south ridge. This tour starts with a 6 km ski up Carpenter Creek and West Cody Creek FSR's. We managed to cut this 6 km road slog to 3 km as Guy kindly brought along his snowmobile and towed us up Carpenter Creek FSR. The sled had some trouble with the big load getting up West Cody Creek FSR, which is steeper than Carpenter Creek FSR, so we skinned up this section. Along the way we met up with the usual friendly Sandon bunch of ski tourers, some of whom use sleds for access and others ski all the way in.

At the end of West Cody FSR (about 1600 metres) we stopped for a short snack break as breakfast had been eaten many, many hours ago. Then we skinned up the headwall through the "dog-leg" on an established track, finally contouring west to end up in the west fork of Cody Creek at about 1800 metres. All the other Sandon skiers had disappeared to other locations and we were on our own.

Sandon Peak is not visible until you are almost on the south ridge, so we used a compass (head generally SW) to skin up towards the base. Two or three large avalanche paths are crossed and finally, a steep climb leads up to the south ridge at about 2160 metres. The summit is a further 200 metres up the south ridge. By the time we got to the south ridge, we were in a full-on snow storm with blowing snow and poor visibility.

The ridge was heavily wind-rolled, seeming much worse to me than last year when I skied to the summit

at about the same time of year. Also, the snow on the ridge was very faceted, trail-breaking was quite arduous. At this point, the group decided that skinning to the top of Sandon Peak was not worth it in the current conditions, so we decided to ski a run or two in the 35+ cm of new snow that had accumulated instead.

The first steep section we skied one at a time, beyond that, we linked together the lower portion of several slide paths to hit our original track traversing up from the headwall. We zoomed down this until we needed to climb back over to the "dog-leg". Skins were put on and we skied around to the "dog-leg" and followed an established trail up until we could traverse right and ski down the "dog-leg" enjoying a pleasant 200 metre run in some of the Kootenays' best powder snow.

The ski out down West Cody Creek FSR was fast, but Carpenter Creek FSR is relatively flat and travel was slow with all the fresh snow, so we again took advantage of Guy's snowmobile to get towed down the road to the vehicles. The last section of the road, cut by a big creek saw all of us, apart from Keith drop the tow rope to save ourselves, while Keith managed to hang on to the very end.

A huge thank you to Guy Lupien for bringing his snowmobile along. Also thanks to my companions on this adventure: Keith Houghton, Nancy Selwood, and Doug Brown. Chris, we missed you. Coordinator: Sandra McGuinness

Powder Pirates. Jan. 22, 2012

The Powder Pirates raided the goodness of mother nature's powder bounty in the tall timber of Five Mile Basin. Considering the high hazard yet cold temperatures the gods allowed us to play unharmed in the pillows of winter's glory. We were Bill McNally, Evan Mackenzie, Spirit of the West and Curt Nixon.

The Way of St. James

The first time I heard of this pilgrimage route was from Renate Belczyk who did it 2 decades ago. My interest was rekindled after talking to a New Zealand man who started walking in Le Puy, France and highly recommended this as the most beautiful part of the many options available. Known as the Camino de Santiago in Spain and the Chemin de St Jacques in France, this is the most popular walk in the world with at least 250,000 doing it every year. It's popularity is growing by leaps and bounds. By walking the last 100 kms to Santiago to get your compostela, one can

bypass purgatory entirely in anniversary years, or get half time off in other years.

St James, one of the apostles of Christ, proselytized in Spain for a few years after the crucifixion. With only seven conversions, he returned to the holy land in 44 AD and was promptly beheaded by Herod.

Mysteriously, his body was placed on a stone boat without oars, sails, or crew, crossed the Mediterranean, came ashore on the north west coast of Spain and was buried 20 km inland. It was rediscovered in 813, and St James was adopted as the patron saint of Spain by the king. During the Reconquista, the 700 year war against the Moslems, Santiago appeared in spirit form before many battles and became Santiago Matamoros, the Moor Slayer.

After the bishop of Le Puy did the first pilgrimage from Le Puy to Santiago in 961, and with the other two great pilgrimage sites, Jerusalem and Rome, not as accessible, Santiago became the most important pilgrimage for people from all over Europe. Between 1000 and 1200, about 500,000 people walked to Santiago and then walked home again. As a brilliant piece of medieval marketing, it was, and still is, an important part of the economy of northern Spain. The pope declared Santiago de Compostela a holy city in 1189. The trip declined in popularity until the 1970's and since, its popularity has increased every year. When St James' birthday, July 25, falls on a Sunday, it becomes an anniversary year, and most churches hold special festivities. 2010 was an anniversary year but was not as busy as 2011. It appeared that people avoided 2010 as it was predicted to be too crowded. Spring and fall are the most popular seasons to miss the heat in northern Spain over the summer.

The Camino starts all over Europe - Italy, Hungary, Krakow and Gdansk in Poland, Denmark and the United Kingdom. These routes converge on 4 ways through France, 3 of which join north of St-Jean-Pied-de-Port, before crossing the Pyrenees into Spain. From here runs the Camino Frances, one of the five main routes leading to Santiago from various parts of Spain and Portugal. It was the favorite route in ancient times and the way traveled by the vast majority of pilgrims today. Consider doing other routes to miss the masses. Some liked the Camino Norte that follows the north coast of Spain or the way from Portos, Portugal. Occasionally we met people going the other direction.

The Camino is travelled in every possible way. Some spend only a week finishing over several seasons, while a few walk or cycle from as far away as Wales, Holland, Germany and Switzerland. Some have done it multiple times and some spend a whole life time doing all the routes. Most have backpacks but there are a few carts and donkeys. Most walk but there were many more bicycles in Spain. The most common nationalities in order are Spaniards (over half), Italians, French, Germans, and then Canadians (most from Quebec).

Everyone has their own motivation for walking the camino. Few seemed to be doing it for religious reasons. Most were aging baby boomers who liked to walk, wanted to experience France and Spain in an up close way, and travel in a very safe environment. The program for the day is set and one feels the need to walk every day. Meeting new people from all over the world is a major attraction. One of my goals was to lose weight and get in the best shape I have been in many years. Retired with nothing better to do, what better way can there be to spend 2 months.



Dead tired walking into the next town in the heat of the day

I started in Le Puy France, the original pilgrim route and the most popular route through France. Le Puy is easily reached by train from Paris via Lyon and St Etienne. With cobbled streets, a medieval church and a huge virgin and baby Jesus statue perched on volcanic cones and a historical cathedral, it is a great place to spend at least one day. After mass and a blessing of

pilgrims in the cathedral, I started the 740 km walk across SW France to St-Jean-Pied-de-Port. This part of the way in France is called the Via Podensis and is very hilly, crossing many river valleys. I averaged 24 kms per day and walked that distance between April 1st and the 30th. We had spectacular weather with many days up to 30 degrees, and virtually no rain at a time that is usually quite wet. It is a walk through the lovely, hilly French countryside - fields, valleys, pastures, vineyards, forest, and small farms and villages built entirely of stone. The Aubrac, a treeless high plateau strewn with rock walls and pastures is one of the highlights. Brimming with history, the hamlets have old churches, towers and tons of history. There were many castles, medieval walled towns, and villages like Conques with spectacular cathedrals and church museums.

The route in France follows the long range hiking trail, the GR65, on a combination of pavement (mostly), gravel roads and trails. It is well way marked with a white over red bar but beware that all the other long

range trails, which are occasionally crossed, have the same way marking. We took a wrong turn, didn't realize it until we walked all day, and eventually took 4 days to return to the original camino. But we took a much prettier alternate following the river Cele. This route also took us by Peche Merle, a spectacular cave with prehistoric cave paintings.

The entire tenor of the trip changed at St-Jean-Pied-de-Port, the beginning of the Camino Frances. The town was packed with pilgrims, accommodation had to be booked a week ahead, and hundreds were registering daily to get their credencial and have it stamped. I was up early to begin the big climb over the Pyrenees into Spain and the major pilgrim town of Roncevalles.

Taxis zoomed by carrying people to the top of the pass, but most walked. In great shape

and 25 pounds lighter, I passed over a hundred people in the gorgeous 6 hour walk. Instead of the 30 or so other pilgrims we were used to in France, there were now hundreds. To get the limited nonreservable dorm beds available in most towns, many start walking by 6 AM and some aubergues (as they are called in Spain) would have as many as 150 packs lined up outside

waiting for the early afternoon opening. All variety of other accommodation is available including reservable dorm beds, and double and triple rooms at all price ranges. Staying in dorms is part of the experience. After dealing with snorers all night, the rustling starts at 5:30 and the place is empty at 7. The 5-7 euro price tag of a dorm bed makes it an affordable holiday for just about anyone.

The camino in Spain is much more developed and walker friendly. It is also much easier due to the generally flat terrain. It is hard to get lost - just follow the yellow arrows or scallop shells at every turn. Some of the highlights are Pamplona (running the bulls - I took my only rest days here), the church in Los Arcos, walking the flat meseta between Burgos and Astorga, the Burgos and Leon cathedrals, the mountains of Galicia and finally arriving at Santiago. Storks are on every chimney and bell tower. With Spain the world leader in wind energy, wind farms line every ridge. On one windy day in 2009, over 50% of the countries power was wind generated.

Leon Arishenkoff and Mark Hatlen joined me in Saghun with 378 kms left to walk.

If one has time at the end, a worthwhile extension is to rent a car and see as much of Spain as possible. Mark and I rented the smallest economy car for 277 euros for 21 days and drove 6300 kms seeing all the highlights of Spain, southern Portugal and Andorra.

A credential was purchased at the Le Puy cathedral and was large enough to record my entire trip - you get it stamped each night at your accommodation. The only crucial guide book for the trip is the French Miam Miam Dodo. There are two books - one for the Le Puy to St-Jean portion and the second for the St-Jean to Finesterre part. They are published yearly so are accurate. Along with a schematic map, they give all the accommodation, services, and eating possibilities on the entire route making reservations easy. A useful addition would be a book that lists all the relevant history you are walking through. I liked the 2 volume "The Way of St James" by Wilfrid Alexandre for France and "Walking the Camino de Santiago from Pili Pala Press for Spain. Maps are not necessary. Avoid books (like the two from Cicero press) that give specific route instructions as these are not needed with all the good way marks. It was necessary to book accommodation every night and thus a phone and good language skills are necessary. I walked with a small

group the entire way in France but booking may not have been necessary if I had been walking alone.

Unlike Spain, all accommodation can be reserved, leaving it difficult for pilgrims especially over Easter and some weekends, when the French would come from all over the country for a few days of walking.

Carrying the absolute minimum weight is important. Only a few younger people camp. In France dorm beds are available in gites and these are the cheapest accommodation. In Spain, pilgrim accommodations are in aubergues. Ideally you should have about 8-9 kgs in a 40-50 litre backpack. A light sleeping bag is a necessity. One really only needs walking clothes and by washing every night (which many pilgrims do), one can get by with a minimum of everything. I mailed home extra clothes (including my rain jacket opting for an umbrella and very light wind breaker). The loss of 2 kgs was very appreciated. One option available everywhere were bag transfers to your next accommodation. Several tour companies even provide guided walks (this seems like a very non authentic way to do it).

Food can be interesting especially in Spain with their eating times. Purchased breakfast is white bread, butter, jam and coffee +/- juice. In Spain food was hard to find before 10 so this meal is best dealt with on your own.

Lunch was usually some bread, meat, tomato and cheese bought on a daily basis. Dinner was most often the menu of the day - a first course of salad, soup, vegetable or pasta, second course of pork, chicken or fish usually with french fries, dessert, wine and bread usually for 9-11 euros, a good value. Many cook most of their meals often sharing with other pilgrims.

Foot and ankle problems are common. Walking so many kilometers every day carrying weight is a great recipe for blisters. I escaped virtually unscathed by wearing light well broken-in low hikers that had a large toe box, double socks, prophylactic duct tape, and good feet. I did virtually no training and it took 10 days before the walking came easily.

Most people feel the camino is a life altering experience. The idea of walking almost 1600 kms seemed daunting at first but the miles go by surprisingly fast. It is an experience that should appeal to many KMCers and will become the trip of a lifetime.

Only where you have walked have you been.

Ron Perrier

2012 KMC Hiking Camp

The Kootenay Mountaineering Club (KMC) sponsors three hiking camps each summer. This year the site will be North of Elkford BC, near Carnarvon Lake on the Alberta border.

The camp fee is \$450 per person.

Preparation and in-camp activities are a cooperative effort. Each camp has a volunteer leader who coordinates procedures, implements and follows KMC Hiking Camp policies, and facilitates an enjoyable hiking/camping experience. The hiking camps uphold the environmentally friendly policies of the KMC. Camp participants are chosen by lottery. Those chosen to attend one of the camps will be asked to attend a pre-camp coordination meeting where food and logistics decisions and assignments will be made. It is also an opportunity to meet the camp leader and the other camp participants.

The KMC facilitates transportation and the set up and operation of the camps. The KMC is not a guide service. While at camp participants choose their activities based upon their experience, skills and the environment in which the camp is located. The camps are wilderness experiences with few conveniences and are not suited to the inexperienced hiker. It is strongly recommended that participants have some back country hiking experience, or, at a minimum, be a strong trail hiker. Campers must be at least 19 years of age on or before the first day of camp. All camp registrants must have an email address. All notifications and communications will be done by email only.

Camp Dates:

Camp 1: July 21-28

Camp 2: July 28- Aug. 4

Camp 3 Aug. 4 - Aug 11.

Location:

Near Carnarvon Lake north of Elkford, BC

50 21' 45.19"N

114 49' 28.69"W

The Lottery and Priority

- Only those who are resident members of the KMC as of Jan 31, 2012 and whose registration forms and fees are received on or before March 16, 2012 will be included in the lottery.

- When a camp roster is full, remaining registrations will be placed on a waitlist in the order drawn in the lottery.

- When the lottery waitlist is exhausted, vacancies will be filled by nonresident KMC members whose registration forms and fees are received on or before March 16th, 2012.

- If camps are not filled by May 15, completed registrations with fees from any KMC member will then be considered for any open vacancies.

- If camps are not filled by July 1st NON KMC members will then be considered. Applicants will be required to be paid members of the KMC to participate in the hiking camp.

A maximum of 2 people can apply with one registration form and will be drawn together for the camp of their choice. Note that if a 'pair' is on the waitlist for a vacancy, unless there are 2 simultaneous vacancies, the 'pair' will be bypassed and the vacancy will be offered to the next single person on the waitlist. Should one or the other of the 'pair' choose to be considered a single, this needs to be confirmed to the registrar in writing by each member of the pair before either will be considered for a single vacancy.

Registrants not selected for a camp this year will be assigned to the camp of their choice next year if they meet the requirements for camp participation and follow the registration instructions including the deadlines for the timely receipt of forms outlined in next year's hiking camp announcement.

KMC HIKING CAMP 2012 REGISTRATION FORM

(Must be at least 19 years of age)

KMC Hiking Camp Committee reserves the right to cancel or relocate a camp, either before or after its commencement, in response to unforeseen circumstances.

CAMP 1: - July 21-28

CAMP 2: July 28- Aug. 4

CAMP 3: Aug. 4 - Aug 11.

NAME #1 _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTAL CODE _____ PHONE NUMBER _____

E-MAIL (required) _____

NAME #2 _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTAL CODE _____ PHONE NUMBER _____

E-MAIL (required) _____

PLEASE NOTE: When two names are listed on this registration form they will be drawn as a pair in the lottery. Anyone who wants to be considered as single for the lottery must complete a separate registration form.

Preference of camp for the lottery:

First choice: _____ Second choice: _____ Third choice: _____

- 1. The beverage I (we) prefer at dinner is:

| | | |
|------------------|--------|--------|
| 5 oz White Wine | q (#1) | q (#2) |
| OR 5 oz Red Wine | q (#1) | q (#2) |
| OR 8 oz Juice | q (#1) | q (#2) |

2. I (we) will require a ride: Yes _____ No _____

3. I (we) can transport passengers: Yes _____ No _____

4. I (we) have a truck which can transport food and equipment: Yes _____ No _____

(Please note that both Camps 1 & 3 must have at least one person with a truck to carry camp gear to and from camp)

5. I would like to be considered as a camp leader: Yes _____ No _____

6. I would like to be considered as a camp cook: Yes _____ No _____

Please read and initial the following:

I (we) understand that both camp preparation and in-camp tasks are a cooperative effort and that I (we) will be required to complete tasks both prior to camp and during it.

I (we) understand that Camp 3 participants are responsible for ensuring that all camp equipment is returned to the its storage location, and that if I (we) am/are a participant of Camp 3, I (we) may be required to transport some camp equipment from the camp rendezvous back to its storage location.

I (we) understand that I (we) will be required to read and sign an indemnity and release of liability waiver prior to boarding the helicopter, and that my (our) signature will be witnessed by the camp leader or a hiking camp committee member.

| #1 | #2 |
|----|----|
| | |
| | |
| | |

Signature #1

Signature #2

CHEQUES ARE PAYABLE TO: KMC HIKING CAMP

Mail to: Jocelyne Martin, KMC Hiking Camp, 6012 Hutchins Road, Nelson, BC V1L 6Y1