

# BC MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

OCTOBER 2002

## NEWSLETTER

VOL. 80 NO. 8



### EVENING SOCIALS

Evening socials are usually held in the ANZA club, upstairs room (corner of 8th Ave. and Ontario, Vancouver) starting at 7:30 p.m. Cookies, tea, and coffee are provided

**Tuesday, 8 October - Special General Meeting** (see p. 3)

Entertainment will be a slide show by Ragil Chamgoula on mountaineering in Russia.

**Tuesday, 12 November** - Entertainment will be a slide show by Kathryn Bridge on Phyllis Munday, whose biography she has just written (see p. 4). Phyllis and her husband Don were active BCMC members during the 1920's - 30's period.

**Autumn snow on the Lucky Four Group.**



**Base camp near Pik Kummunizma**



**HONORARY PRESIDENTS - Esther and Martin Kafer**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND CLUB OFFICERS**

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<b>PAST-PRESIDENT -</b>	ANDERS OUROM	604-228-1798	<b>CABIN / TRAILS -</b>	IAN HOPPER	604-929-3720
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<b>CLIMBING -</b>	DAVE MORRISS	604-732-9896		KIT GRIFFIN	604-736-8462
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The **BC MOUNTAINEERING CLUB NEWSLETTER** is an official publication of the B.C. Mountaineering Club and is published 10 times per year (every month except July and September).

**Submissions** - of any written, drawn, or photographic material relevant to the B.C. Mountaineering Club are welcome. If possible, submissions should be sent to the editor by email or on a diskette. Deadline for submissions is the first Tuesday of the month preceding the publication month. Send submissions to Michael Feller (email - feller@interchg.ubc.ca, ph. 604-270-4050).

**Editorial policy** - All submitted material relevant to the B.C. Mountaineering Club will be published unless the club executive decides otherwise. Submitted material may be edited for clarity or brevity, or for consistency with club policies.

**Opinions and comments expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the B.C. Mountaineering Club.**

## SCHEDULED TRIPS

Participation on club trips is open to any person with adequate skills and experience, subject to the approval of the trip organizer. All non-member participants must sign a disclosure and waiver form relieving the club and all other participants on the trip from any liability. A trip organizer is not a certified guide. The function of the organizer is to organize the trip, ensure that it gets underway, know the access to the area, and know a route or routes on the climb.

It is expected that each person on a club trip has the necessary skills, experience, fitness, and equipment. The organizer may specify certain equipment mandatory for participation in a trip. Any person who attempts to participate in a club trip without such mandatory equipment, may be requested to withdraw from the trip. Each person on a club trip is responsible for his or her own safety and for checking the equipment used. Please be considerate and call the trip organizer by Thursday evening for weekend trips, and by Friday for Sunday trips.

**If you are given a ride, please remember to pay the driver your portion of the car costs. If you decide not to go on a trip for which you have previously registered, please be courteous and inform the trip organizer.**

		<b>ORGANIZER</b>	
<b>October 5:</b> Mt. MacFarlane Hiking and scrambling in the Chilliwack Valley area.	B2/2099 m	Ilse Rupners	604-222-3720
<b>October 5:</b> The Black Tusk Hiking and scrambling in Garibaldi park. Joint trip with the ACC.	C3/2315 m	Mirella Lioce	604-736-5079
<b>October 5-6:</b> Mt. Lytton Another fall Coquihalla region classic.	B2/2044 m	Karl Ricker	250-938-1107
<b>October 5-6:</b> Mt. Weart Challenging mountaineering in Garibaldi park, ascending via the N Face.	C5/2870 m	Anders Ourom	604-228-1798
<b>October 11:</b> The Black Tusk Another trip to this well known Garibaldi park peak.	C3/2315 m	Aki Nagai	604-986-2756
<b>October 12-14:</b> North Creek cabin Trail clearing and cabin maintenance in the upper Lillooet valley area.	B2	Michael Feller	604-270-4050
<b>October 19:</b> Nak and Thar Pks. Scrambling in the Coquihalla area in the beautiful fall.	B3-4/ m	Peter Gumplinger	604-733-8264
<b>October 19 or 20:</b> Trail clearing Again you can do your bit to help maintain trails that you use. Contact the organizer for further details.	B2	Paul Kubik	604-876-0764

## MEMBERSHIP

### **Mary Willis - In Memorium**

We were recently saddened to hear that the club's most recent honorary member - Mary Willis - passed away on August 15th. Mary's considerable contributions to the club, which resulted in her being appointed an honorary member this January, were described in our March 2002 newsletter. Her daughter, Virginia Brynjolfson, writes -

"I am sad to say that my mom, Mary Virginia Willis BA 32 BEd 33 passed away on August 15th, 2002. She is survived by her loving daughter,

Virginia (Sigurd) Brynjolfson, four grandchildren, Kristine (Shawn) Van Kleef, Leif (Andy) Brynjolfson, Reid (Karyn) Brynjolfson in Perth, Australia, & Kyle (Sharee) Brynjolfson, her brother Bob (Merle) MacDonald, and 3 nephews. My mother was an Honorary Life Member of the BCMC, of which we were very proud. She truly loved the outdoors and nature. She did many climbs and ski trips with the BCMC which she talked about so fondly. Her husband Clare, predeceased in 1980, was also very active in the Club. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her."

## SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING - PROPOSED MEMBERSHIP FEE INCREASE

The executive has declared the October 8th social meeting a Special General Meeting in order to consider the following motion:  
 "Annual Club membership fees are to be as follows:  
 Single active and associate - \$45  
 Active or associate couple - \$68  
 Junior - \$20  
 Life - \$800"

This represents an increase of \$5 for single and \$8 for couple memberships. Membership fees for other categories are to remain unchanged. Of the increase, \$3 per person is necessary to pay our annual dues to the Federation of Mountain Clubs of B.C., which has recently increased its membership fees by \$3 per person. The remaining \$2 per single or couple is to go to the club to assist paying our expenses. While inflation has continued, the club has had no membership fee increase since 1995.

## BCMC NEWS

**Executive Positions** - A slight reshuffling of the executive occurred recently when Mirella moved from secretary to assist with membership so she could continue her studies. Carolyn Hart was appointed by the executive to be secretary.

The Annual General Meeting of the club will be in November. At this time several executive members will be stepping down. We need your assistance to

serve on the executive. Please consider helping out and contact Dave Hughes, your club president, if you are interested.

**Satellite phone** - Telus has decided to discontinue their HF service so the executive recently decided to replace the club's single side band radio with a satellite phone. This phone should be available for member use by Christmas.

## NEWS

### **New biography of Phyllis Munday just published.**

Kathryn Bridge, an archivist with the B.C. Archives in Victoria, has recently written a biography about Phyllis Munday, with the assistance of our club archives. The press release states - "In 1924 Phyllis (Phyl) Munday did what no other woman had done before - reached the summit of Mt. Robson. She climbed 100 mountains in her lifetime, many of those first ascents. Her physical prowess legitimized her in the largely male world of mountaineering and inspired generations of women to follow

in her footsteps. Her extraordinary legacy includes a lifetime of service to others as a Girl Guide leader and member of the St. John Ambulance Brigade. Throughout the 1920s and 30s, [as members of the B.C. Mountaineering Club], Phyl and her husband Don Munday pioneered exploration into the heart of the Coast Mountains as they undertook an 11-year quest for "Mystery Mountain".....

The book "Phyllis Munday: Mountaineer" has an ISBN of 1-894852-01-X, sells for \$16, and was published by XYZ Publishing.

## CLUB MEMBERS AND RESCUES

### **Alberta Creek rescue & recovery**

*Take this pack off me*

*I can't lift it anymore*

*It's getting cold, it's freezing me*

*My body lies broken in this draw*

*Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door*

*Feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's door*

Alberta Creek drains the west slope of Mount Harvey into Howe Sound at Lions Bay. It is just north of Vancouver on the extreme south coast of BC. Mid-December, 1998 saw a good snowpack building in the mountains surrounding the Sound. There was good powder skiing close to Vancouver. Then, the week before Christmas, what is termed a "pineapple ex-

press" or a trough of warm, very moist air that originates in the Pacific Ocean, near Hawaii (hence, the pineapple) hit the coast. The result of this weather system is that the freezing level goes up several thousand meters and there is heavy rain on the local mountains all the way to the summits. An arctic front followed the pineapple express and the weather turned clear and very cold. The deep powder snow had been transformed into wet concrete and then frozen hard. The crust was unbreakable.

I took a few days off work before Christmas and used the opportunity for a little trail work in Harvey Creek, which drains the valley between The Lions and Mount Harvey. Harvey Creek is a kilometer south of Alberta Creek. An old logging road winds its way up from the village of Lions Bay, crosses Alberta Creek near

an elevation of 600 m and curves south around Mount Harvey into Harvey Creek.

I parked at Lions Bay, put on heavy climbing boots and packed a handsaw and brush cutters in my day pack. The road climbs steeply from the parking area for 400 m and then levels off as it swings south towards Harvey Creek. My two dogs were with me and we encountered our first skiff of snow on the road at the shallow crossing of Alberta Creek.

The creek crosses the road below a waterfall, which was now well frozen. A trail leads up the SW ridge of Mount Harvey and branches off the road a couple of hundred meters before the creek. The temperature was pleasant for a winter's day- a few degrees below freezing in the sun. It was just enough to make you feel cool in your sweat-dampened clothes if you stood around for too long. The day was cloud-free.

The workday began on the road about half an hour past Alberta Creek, on the south side of Mount Harvey. The old logging road provides access to a steep bowl of poorly regenerating forest. There is often good skiing here on the open glades, if you don't mind the walk. The snow depth increased rapidly with elevation and without skis or snowshoes, I was able to walk on top of the hard-frozen snow. Using the hand tools, I walked back and forth across the road lopping off the tops of the slide alder where it encroached on the ski track. The hard crust made the work enjoyable. I tossed the alder crowns over the edge of the road and they just skittered down the side. The dogs played hide and seek in the young trees.

These were the shortest days of the year. I reached the lowest switchback in the bowl where I decided to call it a day. After finishing the tea and putting on dry clothes I headed back down the trail. All day, I had seen no one and heard nothing. The only company I had besides the dogs was a solitary eagle climbing higher on wind currents off the sound and the hourly large ferry vessels crossing to and from Sechart in the distance. I had scanned the Lions climbing route and the SW ridge on Mount Harvey but saw no one. With only a few shopping days left until Christmas I wasn't surprised and this late in the day wasn't expecting to see anyone.

The winter sun was dropping rapidly towards southern Vancouver Island across Georgia Strait. The horizontal rays of the sun had an almost liquid quality,

like a bright light shining through clear amber. It was almost as if a brief flare vividly etched the boundary between the bright and the warmth of the day and the cold and the cruel of coming night.

While the sun shone its last few rays across the western strait, I crossed the first of several frozen gullies. An icy breath displaced the warmer air on the road. When I crossed below the waterfall on Alberta Creek it was still solidly frozen- no melting had occurred. My dog companions trotted on ahead. But, as we approached the Mount Harvey trail the sounds of shouting came from behind, towards the creek. It would have been easy to just keep walking except for the lateness of the hour. These were kids' voices. I debated for a moment whether to keep on going but the dogs were curiously poised with their ears cocked back. I often study their reactions on the trail to noises or scents and decided they found it a bit odd. There was some quality, perhaps urgency, in the sound that set it apart from just a bunch of kids in the woods having a bit of fun.

I decided to check it out. The Harvey trail climbs up a steep cut bank on the road, enters a deep forest and swings towards Alberta Creek. As the voices were above me I took the trail. If the light on the road was failing, then in the woods it was almost dark. There's a decommissioned concrete dam in Albert Creek, which is accessed from the trail. It is in a canyon about 100m above the road. Heavy gauge nylon ropes are strung between the trees to prevent slipping off the trail. Where the engineer's trail drops down from the forest to the dam, a newer hiker's trail branches off and climbs up steeply for 600 m through big trees. Alberta Creek runs in a canyon the length of the trail. At the junction of the trails, a group of young hikers and an adult leader were slowly making their way down. "Man down!" cried the lead hiker, the oldest of the boys, a lad of about sixteen or seventeen years of age.

The hikers trail swings away from the canyon before cutting back in, above it, high up near the crest of the SW ridge of Mount Harvey. I was finding the footing precarious on the solidly frozen ground. There wasn't any flat ground nearby so I stayed put at a large tree and waited for the boys to work their way down.

I surveyed the scene in the failing light. The road lay below, about 100m straight down but cliff bands pre-

vented reaching it except along the trail. The trail descended to the road in a traverse but, away from the creek, it was in deep woods and difficult to follow in this light. The creek was opposite me in a deep gully and the dam slightly below. There was a frozen waterfall above the dam and below it, visible from the road was another.

The older boy repeated "Man down" when he reached me but I didn't know what he meant. The adult arrived with the rest of the boys, much younger teens, and filled me in. There was another adult leader above the second waterfall where there was a boy trapped in the creek gully. He was unable to climb up, down or out. He wasn't injured and was periodically blowing a whistle to attract attention as well as in voice contact with the adult. At some point above him was a second boy who was dead from a fall.

They were a scouting group from Coquitlam. They had left the parking lot in Lions Bay that morning for a day hike up Mount Harvey and along the trail on which I now found them. Despite the young age of some of the boys, they were engaged in a fairly challenging trip. They had reached the ridge crest but not the summit as some of the younger boys were getting tired. This explained why I didn't see them earlier.

Sometime in the afternoon, while there was still plenty of daylight, they had begun their descent of the trail. All the boys had ice axes with which they had received instruction and practice. Young Phillip, twelve years old, was tired and walked between the two adult leaders.

In a dangerous area, where their route traversed above the gully of Alberta Creek, Phillip slipped on the hard snow and was unable to arrest himself. He plunged past the older scout who was now trapped in the gully. He was in an arrest position but did not have enough strength to stop himself. He may have hit something on the way down as he was heard to cry out in pain. He shot over the lip of the gully and was lost from sight. The older scout managed to climb down to Phillip but was unable to resuscitate him. He was dead from massive injuries. Phillip's would-be rescuer was now in the gully and unable to climb back up.

It's a little unclear what happened afterwards. Somehow, the scout who attempted the rescue was able to work his way hundreds of meters down the creek

gully to the point where he was now trapped.

It seemed to me, on reflection, the scouts had traveled unnecessarily close to the creek gully. But the trail is not well marked and is easily lost with snow on the ground. I verified this myself later in the season.

The younger boys were not yet aware that Phillip had died.

The temperature in the gully was falling rapidly and it was getting dark. The time was about 4:45 pm. There was no point in me ascending the trail in search of Phillip or attempting to rescue the second boy trapped in the gully as I had no rope. I set about convincing the first leader he should stay put with the boys and I would go to Lions Bay for help.

We took stock of the equipment. There was one headlamp in their group- almost dead too. They had a few granola bars and scant extra clothing. I had extra food, headlamp and dry clothing but not enough to distribute. I suggested they build a fire to keep warm and remain where they were. They were not familiar with the trail and it was almost inky black in the woods.

Near the creek there was enough light to see. I took out my pen and paper to write down the names and phone numbers of their contacts. I then set off but without turning on my headlamp to preserve my night vision. After gaining the road again, I was able to jog down most of the way. After stripping off my wet shirt at my vehicle I arrived at the ambulance station in Lions Bay, about 20 minutes after leaving the boys. Fortunately there were a couple of ambulance attendants on duty. When they responded to my loud bangs on the door they pointed out the doorbell buzzer on the jamb. They were almost too calm as they listened to my story but did not waste any time in contacting the rescue personnel.

Two coordinators from Lions Bay Search and Rescue arrived about 15 minutes later, having come from Sunday dinner. It was a relief to hand over responsibility to the trained members from the rescue group. One coordinator did an initial interview with me while the second prepared the command centre for the operation. Others would soon be arriving, forfeiting comfort of family and friends for what was looking to be an all-night search.

The rescue group has most of the top floor of the building that houses the ambulance, fire truck and

RCMP sub-station. There is a communications room overlooking the parking lot, a gear closet and a large briefing room at the rear. I sat at one table and studied a large composite air photo of the area. This would make pinpointing the rescue site a whole lot easier. Ron Royston of the North Shore Search and Rescue came in shortly afterwards. He and I knew each other somewhat as he is also the custodian of the Tantalus Hut for the Alpine Club of Canada. We had talked a couple of times over the phone. That connection would have been enough to let him know I was a BCMC member but I added that anyway when we were introduced. He was also the rescue leader for the operation and conducted a second interview with me. It was decided I would accompany the rescue team back up to the site. After all the team members had arrived, suited up and organized gear, I got into a Land Rover Discovery with two of them and my dogs. We headed back up and passed the North Shore Rescue's command vehicle stuck on ice above the sixth switchback. The Discovery powered by, the driver commenting, "It [the Land Rover] was worth the 40K." The Lions Bay road crew was ahead, having cleared the blowdown off the road, which allowed us to practically drive to the Alberta Creek trailhead. We set off up the trail using headlamps, my night vision ruined by all the artificial light. The boys were where I left them, but much colder now. Their fire had gone out or not really got started. The rescuers set about interviewing the leader and warming the boys. The boy in the gully was still trapped and blowing his whistle. We set off again up the trail to reach him. I was lugging what looked like a battery-powered heart monitor. All the other rescuers were heavily laden with full climbing/rescue gear and heavy backpacks. It was a slow climb up, the ground was hard-frozen and the track was steep. Gear was dumped and several rescuers began setting up a belay station at the edge of the gully. It was taking a while so I set up a roaring blaze using the abundant firewood nearby. I generally carry fire starter with me so it was easy to get it going. The second leader, realizing he was no longer needed at the gully, made his way down and I had a chance to talk to him. He seemed a bit stunned at the course of events. It did seem a bit unreal. The second boy was safe and soon to join us at the fire but another lay

dead somewhere up the mountain.

I felt my presence was now somewhat redundant so despite the offer that I could assist with locating the body I declined it. I unloaded my heart monitor and set off down the trail for the second time. The other boys were warming up in the command vehicle, which had made it up the road. I had got halfway back down the road when a vehicle caught up to me to give me ride the rest of the way down. At the bottom, a police officer with the RCMP conducted another interview with me and then I was on my way home.

I realized the next morning I had left my sweat-soaked shirt in the parking lot in my haste to get to the ambulance station. I drove back up to Lions Bay in the afternoon to get it and hiked back up the logging road to Alberta Creek. The Labrador search and rescue helicopter from Comox base was circling around. The clouds were packed in solidly around the ridge, which prevented the chopper from retrieving the body. It was still circling when I left.

There was a coroner's inquest later that spring, which was reported in the North Shore News. These are excerpts from that report:

Philip McLeod died after falling down a 23-metre embankment into a gully.

McLeod did not have proper footwear and was wearing a bicycle helmet, not an approved climbing helmet.

McLeod had a 28-inch waist and was wearing snow pants with a 38-inch waist.

Coroner Sherryl Yeager recommended scouts carry cell phones on hikes in isolated areas.

The location of the hike was not finalized until the morning it took place.

Scout leaders should have an appropriate level of training for the activity they are conducting.

Wilderness First Aid training must be a requirement for any leader of an outdoor activity.

Older, more experienced scouts forged ahead of the main group.

McLeod had an ice axe but was unfamiliar with it, having not been properly trained in its use.

Paul Kubik

## **Darlene Anderson rescued on Ossa Mtn.**

"Hello everyone.

Some of you might be quite interested to hear this story, while others I think might find it a little entertaining. Well, so the big news is that I just broke my leg and ankle plus ripped two ligaments, on a mountaineering trip that was supposed to be a celebration of finishing my courses. Very little had gone well up to that point in the trip, so my broken ankle was just the grand finale. I was hiking down Ossa Mountain (north end of the Tantalus range) on my own, because my companions had had it with the bugs etc. Somehow my foot slipped and my left one got caught and turned outwards in a way it is not supposed to go. Crack, crack - and I knew immediately that I was walking no further. It was about 5 pm, so I knew I was staying the night. It was steep enough that moving around was not possible. I had about .75 L water and lots of food, but barely enough clothes. Where I landed after my little stumble was flat and safe for sleeping - which I did sorta; in between the wind gusts. Bad weather was forecast to come in. Thankfully it didn't. Hypothermia may have set in if it had started to rain. As soon as I landed I put a tensor on my ankle to minimize swelling and put my hiking boot back on. The tensor got too tight so I readjusted it a few times till all was okay. A little while later I realized I had broken my fibula as well. A little swelling and a little pain. I popped a couple of ibuprofen and put my leg up on my pack for about 4 hours - till the sun disappeared. Then I had to use the pack for shelter against the wind. By now, my companions would be and were worried that I had not arrived back at camp. The next morning they got up and searched for me on the lower part of the route. However, I had fallen at about 1900 m. They figured I must have hurt myself so they needed to go for help. They hiked out in 3 hours what we had taken 8 hours to hike on the first day. By 2 pm they were at a phone. At about 4:30 the helicopters (2) came to look for me - complete with search dogs etc. I was reasonably visible on a ridge and it didn't take too long for them to find me. The only time I cried was when the first helicopter flew over me and DIDN'T SEE ME!! I thought no, all that waiting for nothing! However, the second one saw me. It took them a while to rescue me because the slope I was on

was steep & slippery with grass. We left about 6:30 pm. They brought in more help and a stretcher and stretched me up to where the helicopter could land and shut down. I was very pleased with the work they did and oh so grateful... x-rays revealed that I have 3 breaks: my fibula mid shaft (closer to my knee); my tibia where it meets the ankle, and pulled off a bit of bone on my medial medula (I keep forgetting the name of this - the lumpy part of the ankle). I stayed at the Squamish hospital that night and then got transported to Lions Gate the next morning. I needed surgery because there were two breaks and it would take too long to heal. Dr. Paul Sabiston did the surgery. He told me my fracture was called a "Maisonneuve" fracture. The ligaments in my ankle have also been ripped. He repaired one of them. The other (medial side) is to repair on its own. The result is 6 weeks non-weight bearing. (4 more to go if all goes well). On Wednesday, I went to the doctor for him to change the dressing, take X-rays, and take out the stitches. Because of the swelling of surgery - he put a pin in between my fibula and tibia so it would heal faster - I have a half cast and a tensor. The swelling seems to have gone down quite a bit. It is amazing how small my quad muscles seem to be already. I dread to imagine how small everything will be by the end of Sept. Well, it was exciting to look at my foot. It looks like a balloon foot. I'm sure those of you have done this kind of damage know what I am talking about. Because of the ligament damage my only instructions are "move the ankle" and no weight bearing (that would be for the broken bones). I again have a half cast which I take on and off to move the ankle and wash. Lots of good bruising where the ligaments were ripped and the swelling amuses me. How can it get so big? Anyway, that's about it for now. If you know of any good books to read, let me know. Hopefully in a week or so I can go swimming (if the pool is even open) and after that start lesson planning for my next practicum."

Darlene Anderson

### **Alpine accidents in Canada website**

Paul Kubik informs us that the following website should be of interest to club members:  
<http://alpineclub-edm.org/accidents/provinces.asp>

## TRIP REPORTS

### **Mt. Currie, 29 March – 1 April, 2002**

**Day 1** – The south face of Mt. Currie has always beckoned as it looked to be a fantastic ski run. In 1990 I made an attempt with a friend on an Easter weekend but a combination of factors got us only to treeline. Thus, since no one ever seemed to put this mountain on the club schedule I thought that it was time to try again.

I had initially scheduled three days for the trip (which is enough time) but everyone had both the Friday and the Monday free, so I figured that we might as well use all the time available. My initial idea of a super early start on the first day was moderated somewhat by the extra time. Thus, we met at a fairly normal 7 am at St. David's church.

After traveling up in Ron's trusty SUV we managed to get a 9:30 start from the bottom of the Wedgemount Road. The plan was to get partway into the Mystery Creek Valley which I figured was some eleven hours away.

At first we had fairly deep trailbreaking in slushy snow. After perhaps 40 minutes we took a spur road going level to the north and crossing Wedgemount Creek. I was anticipating this road to be alder choked, but it had obviously been re-activated judging by the cross ditches and a new clearcut above the road. This might eliminate the messiest part of the approach to Mt. Currie.

We utilized the new clearcut to gain elevation quickly. Above the clearcut it was either a rockslide to the right or steep tight forest to the left. We opted for the slide but in hindsight I would recommend the forest. After a lot of back and forth zigzagging we traversed north into fairly steep forest. We continued up this type of terrain for about another 100 vertical metres until we reached a cliff band at about 1150 m. I knew that a series of cliffbands provided open leads to follow and would allow us to ascend gently while heading north. At a cliffband junction we opted to follow the upper band and shortly above there had lunch. At least the weather was holding and the snow was excellent for traveling.

We continued to follow cliffband leads until they petered out and then continued to do a gentle ascending traverse heading basically north. At about 1450 m we

began to contour and simply maintained our elevation. By 3 pm we reached the creek valley one south of Mystery Creek. I now realized that we had an excellent chance of making it all the way into Mystery Creek on the first day.

We continued to contour and as we reached the outer radius of the next ridge the terrain became bluffier so it was little bit of up and down. Eventually we found ourselves curving gently into the Mystery Creek valley and reaching the first open valley flat at perhaps 5:15. After some moderately graded forest we reached the second open flat, found a place to camp and by about 6 pm began setting the camp up. This valley offers interesting contrasts with its open meadows and dead trees in its bottom and big cliffy faces rearing up on its southeast side.

**Day 2** – I got up at 7:20 and there was no sense of hurry whatsoever. All the mountains appeared be pretty socked in so we had a leisurely breakfast and just sat around and talked for a while.

Eventually we decided that we might as well ski up to Currie's treeline to scope things out. We left camp at 11:20 and skied up a moderately pitched forest slope above the open meadow. After going too far to the left and getting into tight steep forest, we backtracked a bit and lost a bit of elevation to find the going much easier. By 12:45 we were at the treeline and Currie was not to be seen. We continued up and unusual markings in the snow far off caught my eye. A couple of large natural slide avalanches had occurred, no doubt within the last week, all on southern aspects. Naturally, the "what if" factor immediately came to mind regarding Mt. Currie's south face.

We skied up to about 2000 m until we entered near whiteout conditions. We had noticed some ski tracks going into upper east Mystery Creek out of Currie's south basin. At about 3:30 we began a ski back to camp following the north fork of Mystery Creek down the fall line for what proved to be a fairly fun run. Camp was reached at 4:20 where we relaxed until dinner and then relaxed some more.

**Day 3** – I was up at 7:20 again and the weather looked

like yesterday's. Nonetheless the plan for today was to get to the treeline earlier in case the weather started to break. So after breakfast we managed a 9:15 start and set a much more efficient track to the treeline, reaching it in just over an hour. Once again we got to about 2000 m and once again it looked hopeless.

Since we had a lot of hours left in the day we decided to follow this other party's leads into upper E Mystery Creek. On the way I dug a snowpit on a western aspect and it seemed very stable. Our goal was to get up to the Mystery Glacier which I'd been on in 1992 in a whiteout.

In the upper basin somewhere below the glacier the weather began to get nasty. Strangely it wasn't bad while we were moving but the lunch stop proved to be very unpleasant. My clothes had been dry while moving but now they got soaked by gusts of wet spindrift. The snow portal that Vince and Ron huddled in was too miserable with whirling spindrift for me to want to sit in so I ate standing up while constantly turning to try to suit the wind. After lunch Ron decided to go back to camp as his boots were chewing his feet too much. Vince and I continued up into increasing wind and decreasing visibility.

We headed up to what I thought was the bottom of the Mystery Glacier but may not have been. It seemed too small somehow. The wind here was unbelievable and there was no point going higher. I actually got blown sideways while standing on my skis. While I just wanted to get out of there quickly, Vince seemed to revel in the wind's force. On the way down we groped through flat light and violent wind gusts. An absence of tracks to follow almost sucked us down the wrong draw out of the bowl. Luckily there was just enough visibility to realize this.

After exiting the upper basin it was a pleasant run back to camp for 3:30, providing plenty of time for more pre- and post-dinner relaxation.

My mind turned to the pre weekend weather forecast which had hinted that the next day might be a sunny day. With this in mind I suggested that I would get up at 3:30 am and have a look outside. If it looked pretty clear we would make one last attempt on Currie with a 5 a.m. start.

**Day 4** – After semi-sleeping/semi-watchchecking, I managed to get up at 3:30 a.m. and have a look out-

side. I saw some fairly large clear patches but a fair bit of cloud too. After a bit of debate we decided to go for it.

As time went on it seemed to clear more and 15 minutes prior to departure I looked to the north from the open meadow and there was Mt. Currie completely in the clear. By 5:15 we were moving and by 6:15 we were at the treeline where the wind really began to pick up while the temperature appeared to drop. A little higher up I had to throw on extra clothes and a toque, as it was so cold and windy. The south face was already in the sun and looked incredibly inviting. It appeared that the wind was really blasting the top, judging by the snow plumes. By 7:50, after very aesthetic ascending on the lower and shallower part of the south face, we reached the point where the slope steepens to at least 30°, though above it gets shallower again. It was time to dig a pit and it didn't take much digging to cast a negative light on this process. There appeared to be one layer 50 m down with a very unconsolidated sugar/slush mix underneath and the top 50 m didn't have much cohesion to it either. It certainly bore no resemblance to the western aspect pit dug two days ago, and helped to explain the natural slab avalanches. So on this beautiful sunny day we regretfully decided that the snow seemed too dangerous to warrant going higher. We might have been about 200 m from the top.

The ski run down was supremely aesthetic, owing to the low angle sunlight and the fast surface skimming nature of the snow. Undoubtedly, it would have been my "run of the season" if done from the top. Again we skied down the north fork of Mystery Creek to camp.

We broke camp at 10:30 and kept skins off until after the lower flat open meadow, then put them on for the hours of contouring through the forest to the next creek valley to the north, which was reached at 1 pm. After an hour lunch we headed out of the traverse maintaining approximately 1450 m elevation briefly before beginning a gentle descent following the uptrack. I de-skinned, but Ron and Vince left their skins on. Below the cliffband the skiing was very demanding owing to tight trees, poor snow and the steep grade. We did not repeat the rockslide above the new clearcut as we envisioned isothermal slope and the potential to fall into a hole. The clearcut was wet and

sloppy but halfway reasonable. Ron ripped one of his hands open in a fall about 60 m from the road. After that we were finally home free, meeting a VOC party at the bottom of the Wedgemount Road and reaching the truck at 4:45. We gave some of the VOC people a ride to Whistler and had dinner at the Klahann in Squamish. All in all it really was a good trip and the weather was for the most part cloudy rather than snowstormy though the last day did prove to be a bit ironic.

Participants: Vince Haugland, Ron Groom, and Greg Stoltmann (Organizer and reporter).

### **Intermediate rock climbing course**

The program curriculum and organization were similar to that in the last few years. Key changes were limiting the number of participants to 6, and pre-screening more thoroughly. This worked very well, and may be something to consider for other BCMC programs. There will always be more demand than supply for our programs, and rounding up consistent helpers can be a challenge. Limiting numbers makes things more manageable, and likely provides a better quality experience.

We had a keen and diverse group this year, which really helped. We covered the usual ground - equipment, anchors, belay anchors, leading, safety & environment, basic self-rescue, and so on. Sometimes it rained, so we had to be adaptable, but when it was important the sun shone. On our third weekend the participants guided the helpers up some longer, moderate climbs, which was lots of fun.

Particular thanks to Paul Miller, Kit Griffin and Robert Killington for their help!

Participants: Mark Binstead, Vienne Chan, Nina Gill, Jeanette Inglis, Mark Labrecque, James Ram.

Organizer and reporter: Anders Ourom.

### **Anvil Island, 9 June, 2002**

I knew this trip might be popular since access was by water taxi and most of us don't have one of those in our garage. So utilizing a phone, fax machine and "industry contacts", I was able to locate a departure point of Lions Bay Marina - with Cormorant Water Taxi - and a landing point at the Day Break Bible Camp.

I have to thank the Bible camp again. Without their permission this trip would have been very difficult. After the above procedures were in place, we all managed to meet up at the Lions Bay Marina. While we lounged on the wharf, under blue skies, surrounded by cool green oceans, I began to wonder if maybe the water taxi forgot about us. I pictured 12 rebellious BCMC'ers throwing me in the water. Luckily at 8:55 we spotted a shiny aluminum craft ploughing through the waves towards us.

A 20 minute boat ride brought us to the Bible Camp and we wandered through the area while some of the camp personnel gave us "who the heck are these guys" stares. Soon enough we were directed to the trail.

A moderate 3 hour climb of about 600 m, with some steep sections, (but nothing to betray the B2 rating) brought us to a great view of the last 100 m rocky ridge leading to the peak.

It looked quite intimidating - even Dick Culbert was worried! (bit of an exaggeration here). Nevertheless, we soldiered on and the actual route was quite simple as it wound around to the northeast side - just as the 103 Hikes said (that should sell a few more copies) and with a short scramble we were on the top overlooking Howe Sound, Horseshoe Bay, Gambier Island and McNab creek. After eating our lunch and baking in the sun for 1.5 hours, we trudged back down; stopping briefly while Alfred had a brief swim in a nearby pond. Within 2.5 hours we were awaiting our water taxi ride back to Lions Bay. A good trip with a good group of hikers.

Participants: Liam Grimes, Dick Culbert, Alfred Menninga, Caroline Hart, Bob Price, Zif House, Tania Zulkoskey, Trish, Michelle Martineau, Yuki Matsumura, Jim Derham-Reid, Mike Peel (Organizer and water taxi skipper and reporter)

### **Mt. Baker, 8-9 June 2002**

The north ridge of Mt. Baker is fairly challenging for an organized club trip, but seemed like a worthwhile objective. June is the obvious time, when there's still lots of snow, but its fairly consolidated. Screening participants for skills, experience, and equipment is also a bit more important than usual.

We left Vancouver at 11 am on Saturday. We had all sorts of adventures at the border - passports, packs, etc. You'd think they had never seen Mt. Baker. We were hiking by 5, and in camp by 8. It was very windy overnight, and our tents were sometimes blown flat.

Up at 3 am, when it was cloudy and raining. We postponed starting, but our Russian friends, veterans of 7,000 metre peaks, continued to prepare. Eventually the weather improved a bit, and we were off by about 4:30. The glacier was not too bad, and we were at the base of the climb at 7:30. We started via steep snow slopes to the right of the toe of the ridge. Once on the ridge, the snow was always hard and sometimes steep. There were three pitches of technical climbing, and lots more belayed. A long and fairly challenging day. It was very windy and cool, and no one had much chance to eat or drink. Two got small face dings from falling ice. The first team reached the summit about 5 pm, the last about 6:30 pm. It was whited out, and everyone got disoriented at least temporarily, but everyone was back in camp by sunset. We ate and drank and packed, hiked out by headlamp, and were home by about 3 am.

A good weekend, thanks to all the participants, especially those who drove, borrowed/loaned gear, persisted despite not feeling entirely well, and helped out in other ways.

As a bit of educational trivia, not many current members of the BCMC may be aware that the first president of our club, J.C. Bishop, died in 1913 in a crevasse fall on the Coleman Glacier. Mt. Bishop is named for him.

Participants: ?, Anders Ourom (Organizer and reporter).

### **Juan de Fuca Trail, 17 - 20 June, 2002**

Despite rain being forecasted, five of us caught an early ferry out of Tsawwassen Monday morning. By late morning we had started hiking the trail at China Beach. Fortunately for us it only rained on the first day and the weather progressively improved over the remaining three days. The trail is mainly in the trees for the first half and the endless mud I had been warned about was definitely there. The second half provided more opportunities for beach walking/exploring and more boardwalks to get us over the muddy parts.

Hiking times ranged from four to ten hours per day depending on where we chose to stop for the night. There are various options for camping - we spent two nights on the beach camping at Bear and Sombrio beaches and the final night camping amongst the trees at Payzant Creek. The trail ends at Botanical Beach, but we had to walk a further 3.5 kilometers along the road to get to Port Renfrew in order to arrange transportation back to our cars at China Beach. We easily managed to arrange a ride through a local resident. It was a great trip with nice scenery and a fun group.

Participants: Pat Whiting, Adam Rotaru, Ziff House, Ian Giesbrecht and Mirella Lioce (Organizer and reporter).

### **Sky Pilot, 27 July, 2002**

The May 25th, scheduled Sky Pilot trip was rained out, and the access road was closed because of snow. Some people wanted to try again later. A group of six of us went up July 13th and got rained off the ridge above the pocket glacier. We rappelled down over slippery rock in driving rain. Once down off the exposed part, of course, the sun came out. But it was too late to go back up.

A third group tried July 27th. We drove to the boulder blockade above the Mamquam road. At 8:30 am, 2 people biked to the Habrich spur road while the other 3 of us walked. The walkers managed to pass the bikers while they were stowing their bikes in the bushes. So the bikers blissfully waited 3/4 of an hour for us before they realised we had gone ahead. Then they had to rush to catch up.

We all met up on the pocket glacier approach around 12 noon. The trail is fairly good. At about 3pm in clear sunny weather, with Monica's encouragement, four of us reached the summit. The views were great. In the meantime the fifth group member had a nice nap on some warm rocks lower down. A number of pet lovers were up there with their dogs. One group of three people took a little blond dog named Tigger almost to the top. They towed the little dog up the steep bits in their pack. We did not report pet abuse to the SPCA since the dog looked happy, blissfully unaware of the dangers.

Participants: Monica Bittel, Meg Fellows, Rick, Jennifer, and Marsha Ablowitz (reporter)