

BC MOUNTAINEERING CLUB NEWSLETTER



Below the Black Tusk in autumn

EVENING SOCIAL MEETINGS

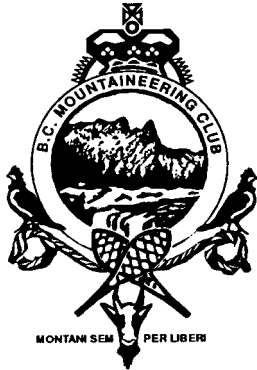
Evening socials are usually held in the ANZA club, upstairs room (corner of 8th Ave. and Ontario, Vancouver) starting at 7:30 p.m. Cookies, tea, and coffee are provided.

Tuesday, 14 October - Entertainment will be a slide show by Megan Berault on rock climbing in Australia.

Tuesday, 18 November - NOTE CHANGE OF DATE TO THE 3RD TUESDAY IN NOVEMBER - The Annual General Meeting. Entertainment will be provided by your executive and by Marcus Dell who will give a slide show on a recent climb of Mt. Logan.



Australian rock (Mt. Arapiles)

	HONORARY PRESIDENTS - Esther and Martin Kafer		
	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND CLUB OFFICERS		
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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 written 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. The club has a satellite phone available for hire. This may be obtained by contacting Kit Griffin at 604-736-8462 prior to the Thursday before the weekend the equipment is wanted. 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.

ORGANIZER

October 5: Mt. Urquhart Rock scrambling in the Fraser Canyon area, east of Harrison Lake.	C3-4/2100 m	Jos van der Burg	604-463-7582
October 11-13: Cathedral ridge Fall hiking in Cathedral Park, east of Manning Park.	B2	Ellen Woodd	1-250-494-0527
October 18-19: Meslillooet Mtn. A bicycle approach to this mountain southeast of Squamish.	C3/2001 m	Albert Souza	604-253-4832
October 18-19: Elaho R. - Meager Ck. An extended hiking traverse northwest of Pemberton.	C2	Peter Gumpfinger	604-733-8264
October 18: Mt. McGuire Hiking and scrambling in the Chilliwack valley.	B2/2032 m	Emanuele Porra	604-533-7723
October 19: Ashlu valley Hiking northwest of Squamish.	B2	Peter Oostlander	604-451-4585
October 25-26: Stryen Ck. Your editor will organize this trip to the Stein valley area, but will be unable to actually go on it.	B-C2	Michael Feller	604-270-4050
November 1: Elsay Lake Extended hiking in Vancouver's North Shore mountains using the Indian Arm trail.	C-D2	Peter Gumpfinger	604-733-8264

MEMBERSHIP

Membership fees for 2003/2004 are now

due - Membership fees for 2003/2004 are now due. If you do not pay your dues, THE DECEMBER NEWSLETTER WILL BE THE LAST ONE YOU WILL RECEIVE. You should fill out the yellow renewal form accompanying this newsletter, indicate if you would like to receive the newsletter by email, read and sign the waiver on the reverse side, then send the form with the appropriate dues to the club.

Membership dues are -

Single	\$45	Junior	\$20
Couple	\$68	Life	\$800

New Members

The club welcomes the following new Associate members: William Davis, James Hardy, Pauline Joly de Lothnière, Jennifer Nageli, Anja Marlene Pakendorf, Sean Payne, Garry Russell, Perry Staniscia, Jordan Wilson.

BCMC NEWS

New executive members needed - recent departures from Vancouver have resulted in the need for a secretary and another conservation chair. If you wish to serve the club in either of these 2 positions, please contact Kit Griffin (604-736-8462) or any other member of the club executive.

Note also that all executive positions will become available at the Annual General Meeting in November, at which time you can volunteer to serve the club in any executive position.

Mountain Lake cabin maintenance - The club cabin near Mountain Lake, above Britannia Beach, has seen limited use in recent years as a result of access problems. Improved access in Furry Ck. has seen numerous trips by club members to the cabin this year. **Dave Scanlon** has been on many of these and has organized several maintenance trips, painting walls and reconstructing the outhouse. He has also organized trips working on a new access trail from the Furry Ck. logging road network.

Winter trips - The club has begun work on developing its winter-spring schedule. If you wish to organize any trips during this period, please contact your climbing chair - Peter Gumpfinger (604-733-8264).

Some library materials to be added to the club archives - The executive, at their September meeting, decided to move some valuable

old books from the library to the club archives, where they would be offered greater protection.

Articles wanted for the 2004 B.C. Mountaineer - We will be producing the club's biennial journal next year. Articles about extended, more unusual, different, exotic, etc., trips are wanted, together with photos. Deadline for submissions is 31 January, 2004. Please submit your articles to the editor.

NEWS

Lower Malemute rock climbing closure

Climbers should be aware that B.C. Rail refuses public access to its right-of-way at the lower Malemute; it considers anyone on its property to be a trespasser, subject to arrest or a \$115 fine. B.C. Rail's property is all land within 8 m horizontally of the centre of its tracks, on both sides. About half the climbs at the lower Malemute, and access routes, are affected. B.C. Rail recently placed a warning sign where the main lower Malemute access trail reaches the tracks, and is considering other action.

B.C. Rail has placed three metal signs at the lower Malemute. One is on a post where the trail leads onto

the tracks. The second is bolted on at the base of Clean Crack, and the third is bolted on near the base of Hand Jive. The signs say "No Trespassing. Trespassing on Railway Property is Illegal and Extremely Dangerous. Trespassers will be Prosecuted."

Lions Bay access to the Lions trail remains a problem.

Lions Bay village has continued to restrict access to, and block parking at, the base of the Binkert trail to the Lions. This was exacerbated by recent fire hazard closures.

CLIMBING EQUIPMENT/TECHNIQUE

Nylon and Ropes conference - Gordon Esplin has recently provided the club with a copy of a summary of a recent conference on nylon and ropes, held in Turin in March, 2002, and obtained from an Alpine Club of Canada website.

Several scientific papers were presented, discussing mathematical modeling of belay techniques and analytical models for the analysis of textile ropes. Water absorption in polymers is much better understood now than over 30 years ago, when tests established that a wet rope loses much of its dynamic performance. Today it is known that water causes the nylon to plasticize, drastically changing its mechanical and physical properties.

1. Material facts about polymers (nylon) of interest to

rope users:

- polymers consist of macromolecules,
- where crystal parts, perfectly ordered chain structures, alternate with amorphous parts, disorderly structures with tangled chains,
- the temperature at which the amorphous parts are modified is called the glass transition temperature (T_g), because the material behaves similar to glass.
- the addition of water lowers the T_g of the material and has the same effect as heating the material,
- thus the mechanical and physical properties of nylon change with, among others, temperature and moisture,
- with increasing temperature the material goes from very hard (glassy) to flowing (rubbery), the material is similarly plasticized when it is wetted,
- testing a wet rope is similar to testing a dry rope at a temperature of 70 - 80 ° C.

2. Rope making facts:

- energy capacity is principally given by the core (multiple twisted strands),
- to improve dynamic performance increase core and reduce sheath
- sheaths are constructed with 32, 36, 40, 48 bobbins (spindles) and, generally, two-on-two construction,
- abrasion resistance is more or less proportional to the amount of sheath,
- a thicker sheath resists abrasion better than a thin one, all things being equal,
- increase bobbins, diminish thickness of yarn (twine) and get a thinner sheath, for similar abrasion resistance
- for a 10.5 mm rope 48 bobbins are used for a sport rope and 32 for a gym rope,
- tight sheath vs. loose sheath. A tight sheath produces a rope, which is more rigid, has more resistance to abrasion and cutting, kinks more, has a higher elongation, is less supple and has less resistance in the knot than one with a loose sheath.

3. Why ropes have gone thinner and hold more falls.

- fifty years ago an 11 mm diameter rope barely held two falls. Now we get a rope with 9.5 mm diameter holding eight falls,
- yarns: improved raw materials, production methods and quality control,
- twine: better methods of twisting of yarn and of shrinkage and dying process,
- proper selection (and setting up) of braiding machines and yarn-count,
- better knowledge of balancing core and sheath construction,
- years of experimentation, research and experience.

4. Influence of sunlight on the dynamic performance of multi-fall mountaineering ropes:

- some colours in the sheath fade, while others do not,
- there is a correlation between decolourisation of the filaments and the mechanical properties: the higher the loss of colour, the higher the degradation of the mechanical properties. It seems to affect more the brilliant and "stylish" colours,

- the mechanical properties of the core degrade in a markedly more uniform way and much less than the sheath,

- a relatively low degradation of the mechanical properties of the filaments (approx. 10 % reduction in breaking strength and elongation) corresponds to a notable reduction in the number of falls held (up to 50 %). The ropes were exposed for three months at an elevation of 2550 m in the Dolomites,
- as expected, degradation at a lower elevation (1834 m) was considerably less (up to 25 % reduction in the number of falls held),
- the value of the impact force is not affected.

5. When to retire a rope; a study of rope wear:

- it is hardly any news that the principal factors of rope wear are the combined effects of rubbing against rock, mechanical reduction (rappelling and belaying devices), dust and microcrystals that penetrate the sheath and the number of meters climbed (not the time used),
- the enemy of rope wear is friction - most intense in abseiling and top roping, made worse by dirt, and the inevitable rubbing against rock,
- to weaken the sheath means to seriously compromise the dynamic performance of the rope,
- the sheath of a sport rope is about 30 % of the weight of the rope. The core alone, of such an 8 - 9 fall rope, holds only one fall,
- some abseiling devices produce much more wear damage than others,
- after only 50 descents with a figure-eight, the dynamic resistance of a rope is reduced by one third (number of drops). The descents were undertaken with extreme care
- slowly and without impact,
- rappelling with a Robot (a multi-use device manufactured by Kong) does not appear to compromise the dynamic resistance of the rope. The device functions like a carabiner brake,
- not surprisingly rope wear is much more severe on granite than on limestone,
- rope degradation is approximately proportional to the number of broken textile yarns of the sheath,
- current work confirms previously published information. After climbing approximately 5000 meters, the dynamic resistance of the rope is reduced to half

and after an additional 6000 meters it is down to 30 % (UIAA Bulletin # 146, June 1994, in German),

- see also The Journal of the UIAA #3, 2000, pp. 12 - 13, available on the Internet under www.uiaa.ch.

6. Safety Loss of Mountaineering Ropes by Lowering Cycles in Toprope Climbing.

The logical conclusion to this presentation is the use of a heavy sheath (top) rope for top roping. If the pitch has to be led to the toprope anchor, then a sport rope should be used for the lead and a different (top) rope for the lowering and subsequent top roping.

A note of caution regarding the use of the Grigri in this study: the device acts statically and should not be used to belay a lead climber. It was developed for top roping and should only be used for this purpose.

7. Claims about the benefits of dry coating of ropes (durably waterproof, improved handling, abrasion resistance and durability, etc.). First of all, there are no standard procedures. Manufacturers can do as much or as little as they feel like. Furthermore, there are no tests **specifically** for climbing ropes, which measure durability, abrasion resistance or waterproofing. No valid comparisons can, therefore, be made.

However, there is no doubt that treatments and finishing processes are known, which reduce water absorption. The aging behaviour of this treatment is supposedly good over the rope's lifetime, but it is also accepted that the dry proofing deteriorates with rope use.

A study of dry proofed ropes from thirteen different manufacturers, using a variety of test methods, shows that only a very few ropes do indeed repel water well. The rest are bunched together with much higher absorption rates. One may say that many of the claims hold no water, but the ropes do.

One of the presenters felt that climbers do not want ropes with water resistance treatment, because they only climb when it is sunny and are unwilling to pay for the added cost. Until there is an accepted standard, it may indeed not be worth the money to buy a dry treated rope.

8. Sharp edge testing: the aim is to find a suitable test method. An attempt to differentiate between edge-proof ropes (based on a sharp-edge test in the UIAA drop test) and others, which make no such claims, by measuring the energy absorption of the rope, failed. The results were nearly the same for all ropes. The suggestion was made to go away from the drop test and approach the problem from cutting the rope under tension (sideway action), which also reflect reality more closely.

9. New directions:

- find ways to maintain strength in a high humidity or wet environment,
- better resistance to sharp edges (a modern rope can only fail by being cut on a sharp edge),
- develop new (polyamide) fibers. This will only happen, if there are other needs. Rope manufacturers use only a miniscule amount of the total nylon production in the world.



Coquitlam Search and Rescue Calls for More Volunteers

The Coquitlam Search and Rescue Society (Coq SAR) is on a recruitment drive and is looking for a dozen or so eager, committed and healthy individuals over the age of 19.

Contacting the local media is the first step in a multi step process that Coq SAR goes through to recruit members. Along with contacting the media, Coq SAR will place notices with various hiking clubs and outdoor stores. "We are looking for individuals who already spend their leisure time in the outdoors", explains Nick Zupan, Coq SAR member responsible for the membership drive. "We have noticed a greater commitment to the team from these individuals and they tend to stay on the team longer and that is important to us."

In the second step Coq SAR hosts an informational session. This session is open to everyone interested in joining Coq SAR and was held on Thursday September 11 in Coquitlam's city hall in the Council Chamber.

"At this session we will go over what we expect from members, who are all volunteers. We want to ensure people joining the team realize what they are getting into," cautioned Dwight Yochim, Team Leader for Coq SAR. "This is not a walk in the park and there is a huge investment in training and we want to ensure we retain volunteers for at least three years."

Applications will be available online at <http://www.coquitlam-sar.bc.ca/> and also at the Town Centre Fire Hall Administration Building at 1300 Pinetree Way, Coquitlam. Questions may be directed to 604-927-3484.

The third step will be to go through all the applications received and choose 40-50 individuals for a day hike. "Last time we had 100 applications for a dozen positions," says Zupan. "The qualifications of some individuals were very impressive." It is a full pack hike where individuals are assessed along with their fitness and their gear. It takes approximately \$1,500 in outdoor gear to even consider being on a search team. This includes proper hiking boots, rain gear, backpack, and cold weather gear. Coq SAR supplies all safety gear to those who are chosen to join the team.

From this hike 15-20 people will be chosen for interviews and approximately a dozen will be asked to join the team. At this stage they will face approximately one year of intensive training even before they are considered full members.

For more information, contact: Dwight Yochim, Team Leader, Coquitlam Search and Rescue via pager at 320-3402 or cell at 351-0646, or Nick Zupan, Membership Director, Coquitlam Search and Rescue via pager at 632-2981.

TRIP REPORTS

Mt. Weart, NE Face, 7-8 June, 2003

This was the first weekend of what was billed as the club's summer 2003 alpine climbing program. The idea was to have a small group of reasonably skilled and fit climbers do one challenging weekend alpine

climb each month during the summer, and so to build skill and experience levels.

We set out at 11 on Saturday, and after four hot hours arrived at the Wedgemount Lake hut. The hut is in fine

shape, albeit a bit weathered, but sadly the glacier no longer flows into the (frozen) lake. After a siesta, we ascended a snow gully to the west end of the Armchair Glacier, then to the Weart-Cook col at 2,600+ metres. The last 100 metres to the col involved steep, loose scrambling, which was a bit scary. However, we were entertained by a sail plane circling the south side of Weart, climbing in an updraft.

Our total climb for the day, with big packs, was just under 1,900 metres, so we were tired. We got to the col at 8 PM, carved a sleeping platform in the snow, ate and drank, and were in bed by 11. We had a fine view of the bright lights of Whistler, and about as high a bivouac spot as can be found locally. Jeff rose at 4:15, to ensure we didn't miss our wake up time of 5:00, and by 6 we were off. It took 45 minutes to walk down the glacier and around to the base of the face.

We'd had a week of hot weather, after snow in May, and from our camp saw the sun set in the northwest and rise in the northeast. So we shouldn't have been surprised to see the face baking in the sun. The face's overall angle is perhaps 50 degrees, and the right side is dominated by a big serac band. We waded up through wet loose snow and started climbing to the left, hoping the snow would be firmer above, and that the sun would soon leave us. No such luck. We dug our way past the overhanging bergschrund lip, then wallowed for three pitches to the base of the main face. To that point we'd had some rock anchors, which made us feel a bit better, despite point released slides off to the side. But now we had four+ pitches of wet steep snow to climb, with no solid anchors. A 400 metre high, 50 degree, metre deep slurpee, resting on who knows what. The only sensible thing was to retreat - we were about a quarter of the way up, and it would have been unsafe to continue.

We rappelled, slowly, then trudged back to camp. After a break, we descended via the summit of Mt. Cook, down its west flank on scree and snow to our ascent gully, then back to the hut, and so to the cars. We were down by 7 PM.

All in all, a strenuous but worthwhile weekend. If you try this climb, some suggestions:

1. July or August may provide better conditions, or even September, though there would likely be some loose rock for the first few pitches.
2. Bivy at the Weart-Cook col, but approach via the regular scramble up Cook - much safer, perhaps a bit longer, but would take less time.
3. Its a strenuous two day trip.

Participants: Ravil Chamgoulov, Brian Kuchinka, Robert Kellington, Jeff Lemieux, and Anders Ourom (Organizer and reporter).

Cloudraker Mtn., 26-27 July, 2003

It was the Molson Indy weekend so it was time to leave town while the air was still fresh. It looked like the mountains surrounding Pemberton would be a good location to hang out. I figured if we climbed high enough we would be able to get above the automobile haze drifting up the valleys. Ironically, we needed a convoy of SUV's to get us to our destination. I was going to suggest to the troops that we take the Greyhound to Pemberton but, being familiar with most of the participant's lifestyles, I knew this would be a tough sell.

After a sunny Saturday morning drive to Pemberton, with a quick stop for chocolate cookies and coffee at the Pony Espresso, we made our way along the dusty Lillooet mainline to the Lizzie Lake turnoff. After about 8 km along the Lizzie Lake road, it then deteriorated into cavernous water bars and further up the road were some 500-pound boulders that were a Jeep Cherokee width apart, but not wide enough for a Ford Explorer (some cruel trick by Jeep to get market share over Ford). We managed to squeeze the cars by the

boulders – without a scratch – and get everyone up to the parking lot without breaking a sweat.

We had lunch with the mosquitoes at Lizzie Lake, and then the troops marched off along the trail, but not without a few wasp stings about 1km later.

About 3 hours later we were at a great campsite at Sapphire Lake – near the end of Long Lake, and within view of Cloudraker, but the climb to Cloudraker looked long and arduous and I reminded the crew that I had actually rated the trip a D2, but it was incorrectly put in the schedule as a B2 (yea right!).

After setting up camp, furious discussions centered around a early wake up time, as some of us had compulsive summit fever and a wake up time of 4 am (!) was proposed by Greg and Marco, but after we threw some cold water on them they finally came to their senses and agreed upon the 5am wake up time.

Next morning the sky looked clear, and the sun was just rising; I managed to rouse most of the hikers except for a few sleepy heads. We headed towards Cloudraker, but knowing full well we wouldn't make it all the way - but we would get a good look. We went around a few humps and then up a small steep snow chute, before ending up on Famine Peak (1960 meters), where we were able to get a good look at Cloudraker, the Rogers Creek road (Interfor has it gated at 1 km) and a few logged out valleys up Rogers Creek. The sun was getting hot, so we made an about face and within a couple of hours, with a dicey moment descending the steep snow chute, we all returned to camp safely.

The walk out went quite quickly, and we didn't meet any fellow hikers. The drive home via Pemberton was hot, as the Pemberton noon temperature had reportedly hit 36 degrees C! After talking to one old-timer in Pemberton, he said this is routine weather for July.

Thanks to all the 4 wheel drivers, as we couldn't have done it without you! (unless we took the Greyhound, and had a few more extra days).

Participants: Greg Stoltman (4wd), Marco Iucolino (4wd), Marina Dodis (4wd), Blake Drummond, Jennifer Nagelin, Alex Hudson, Bernie Brandt (4wd), Antje Wahl, Liam Grimes, Mark Klaver, and Mike Peel (organizer and Greyhound marketing manager).

Five Fingers Group, 29 August – 1 September, 2003

Every once in a while you will make a trip into the mountains which will question your sanity.

The trip I organized to the Five Finger Spires was one of those trips. I should have been forewarned when I was not able to find out much information about the trail. A phone call to Joe Foy of the WCWC, who originally put in the Fools Gold hiking route, was never returned. The water taxi operator had no information either and Paul Adam who did the trail many years ago cancelled.

But curiosity about this area made me decide to put it on the club schedule and see if there were any other people as interested as I was. After about a dozen calls of interested parties, I ended up with a group of four people, including myself - the minimum number I would require to make up a boat load to keep the water taxi cost down.

On Friday, August 29, we all met at the boat launch on Pitt Lake at 7.30 am. The weather looked fabulous for at least the next week so there were no concerns there. After the 40 minute boat ride up the lake we landed at the mouth of De Beck creek shortly before 9 o'clock on a nice little beach. After some repacking we got underway just after 9 am. It didn't take long for us to realize that the trail that we had heard about was non-existent. We even had a hard time finding the road which we were supposed to follow for the next 3 km. Eventually we did pick up what appeared to be the road. We started following it and there were even some ribbons that were at least 10 years old. But it was obviously clear within minutes that nothing had been done to the road and trail for a long time. For the first 1.5 km the road was bad but acceptable. After our break at Spindle creek we continued on hoping for better. We followed some more ribbons

but suddenly all ribbons stopped and we entered hell. We followed what we believed was the road but with all the alder, Devils club and whatever else was growing we barely even touched the ground, let alone knew where we were walking. Once we reached Disc creek we were to go east, down Disc Creek to De Beck Creek, cross it and go up to connect with a road higher up. What a joke. We never found the road on the other side, just even thicker second growth to get through. But believe it or not once we reached the end of the logged area some ribbons mysteriously appeared. Again it was hit and miss. But we knew we had to cross De Beck Creek again just north of Third Creek. To that point it had taken 5.5 hours to cover 3 km. At that crossing insult was added to injury when, as I had to get from the top of a big rock down onto a log to get across the creek, something fell into the water. I had not seen a loose rock lying on top of the big rock. Once on the other side I realized I had lost my camera out of my carrying pouch. It had fallen into the water. I took my boots and socks off and jumped into the creek. The others looked downstream. But it was to no avail. We never found it. That really put a damper on it for me. But we were committed now and we felt the worst would be over. We had entered the old growth and travel should be easier. Wrong again. Now we faced steep terrain, bluffs, cliffs, thick blue berries thickets and undergrowth. It felt like it was never going to end. Energy was fading fast, daylight was running out and tempers ran high. But, finally at around 7 pm, we reached the first lake at just over 1100 m. Well short of our destination at Consolation lakes another 2 km away and 300 m higher. This was going to be our camping spot. Heat exhaustion and just plain fatigue made it a short supper for most and an early night.

Saturday we were up before 7 am and away by 8.30 for the final leg to the upper lakes. The alpine area is beautiful and dotted with lakes in granite hollows. Again travel was slow because of the granite cliffs and bluffs that made travel in a straight line impossible. Once we reached the upper Consolation lake we were about 50m above the lake and realized right away there would be no camping at this lake as it was hemmed in by bluffs on all sides. We headed back to the last lake we had passed, above the lower Consolation Lake and found a beautiful campsite

there. After setting up camp we left at midday to do the middle and highest finger of the Five Finger group. We dropped down to the outlet of the upper lake, crossed it and started heading up the east slopes of the Thumb. It was hot and travel wasn't very fast. The scramble to the top of the Thumb was no more than class 3 but once on top we realized that the middle finger would be beyond our reach for the day. The climb didn't look difficult but getting to it was far too involved to be done that afternoon. Another let down. Again because of the time it took us to get to where we wanted to be we had to forgo our goal. The same thing happened on the Judge the weekend before. But it was a nice viewpoint, none the less, and we had a great view of the area. It became obviously clear that travel in this part of the Coast Range is not straight forward. You have to allow for a lot more time to travel a kilometer. After a while we headed down to camp and relaxed for the rest of the evening.

Before we got up on Sunday we (I) had already decided that we didn't want to go down the same way as we had come up, under any cost. The only way to that was to stay high and drop down to the road to where it was somewhat easier near Spindle Creek. From the top of the Thumb we had seen a pass through the ridge above the first camp that would take us to above Disc lake. We were hoping to camp there and get out on Monday. However, we couldn't see what was on the other side of the ridge. We packed up and left our nice camping spot at 8 am. We passed the other lakes and started up the ridge to the pass. That went without difficulty. Once on the other side of the pass, things started out well but it was not long before we realized that we were in for it again. We could see Disc lake below us, but between it and us there were a lot of cliffs and steep terrain to negotiate. It was like a puzzle trying to find a route that would work. If left didn't work than we went to the right. And if right didn't work we went to left. Otherwise it was straight down hanging from the bushes. It didn't take long to find out that there would be no camping at Disc lake. Again it had cliffs all around and a canyon as an outlet for Disc Creek. Our concern now was being able to get across Disc Creek. Maybe it was a canyon all the way down to De Beck Creek. But we were able to cross it near a small lake right below Disc Lake. Here we decided to set up camp. This 2 km distance on the

map had taken us 6 hrs. One thing was on our side - there were no bugs to speak of, despite our low elevation. The long dry summer had taken care of them. It turned out to be a nice spot to camp. We could go for a swim, relax and watch the ducks and a little dipper who kept us company for most of the evening and would come as close as to within 3 m of us.

By now it was clear that our main preoccupation was to get out again by the "easiest way". We only had the one day where we could travel the alpine without having to worry about getting out. The plan had been to go in for 5 days but the water taxi was not able to pick us up on Tuesday and Eric had to be back at work on that day anyway. But on Monday morning I really felt that a fifth day would have made the trip at least more fulfilling. An extra day would have given us a chance to explore the high ridges to Penneplain Peak and Obelisk Peak. All that was left to do on Monday was to pack up and head down and hope that it would work out. The boat would pick us up 5 pm. When we left at 8 am we had 9 hours to complete it. The route down was more of the same. The terrain didn't let up once. You had to fight it every step of the way. When we reached the second growth of the logged area we at least had gravity on our side. It helped in throwing ourselves down the slope into the thick growth. The only problem was you couldn't see your feet and they slipped. Also, Devil's club and huckleberry bushes are hidden amongst it as well. Long pants are a must. We connected up with the road 300 m west of Spindle Creek. We thought it would be a little easier but the mind plays tricks and the road was still just as bad as what we had come down. But all good things must come to an end as we reached Pitt Lake after 1 pm. That gave us time to relax on this beautiful little beach and get cleaned up. Everybody was still talking to each other and even after all the cursing and cussing about the conditions we had encountered, some were still pleased to have done it. I am not sure about the others because they didn't really say. I will not go back in the same way but I would like to go back to explore the alpine area but you will need a week to do it justice.

The water taxi showed up right on time and before 6 pm we were back on the Lower Mainland.

I must say that I respect John, Eric and Brett for hanging

in there because there were many times on the way in and out I was about to lose my cool.

Thanks for hanging in there guys.

Participants: Erich Hinze, John Sapac, Brett McConochie and Jos van der Burg (l&r)

Sechelt Inlet, 31 Aug - 1 Sept, 2003

A sweeping backcountry travel ban was announced just a couple of days before this trip. Very luckily for us, it included Tetrahedron, but not Sechelt Inlet. Enough people for 4 tandem canoes signed up, and we were surprised no one else called, since there was not much to do legally in the backcountry on the long weekend and many BCMC members also kayak or canoe.

We got up around 5 am and rendezvoused for the 7:20am ferry from Horseshoe Bay. There was no problem making the sailing. Our launch point was Tillicum Marina, which we departed at 10, into a favourable tail breeze. The marina offers launching directly into the water, and secure parking for a very small fee. This is also the base for Pedals and Paddles, who rent kayaks and canoes, and have a web site with good information about the inlets. Smooth cruising past Salmon Inlet to Kunechin Point, where we stopped for lunch and the stunning views. Then on to Narrows Inlet and the campsite at Tzoonie Narrows, stopping only at Tzoonie Outdoor Adventures to make water taxi arrangements for a participant who needed to visit the outside world on Sunday afternoon. On this leg of the trip, we encountered challenging mid-afternoon chop and swells coming from astern, from Kunechin Point to the turn into Narrows Inlet.

The campsite has a spectacular setting, and featured unlimited quantities of blackberries. There are also a couple of productive apple trees, but they weren't quite ripe yet. In addition, there are a few pieces of old logging machinery. The day ended with crescent moon, stars and bioluminescence. Perhaps the best moment of the trip for me happened when I got our 3.5 year old daughter out of the tent to see the bioluminescence on the shore. She looked up at the sky and completely awed said: "The whole sky is full of stars".



Narrows Inlet. Photo - S. Grant

Sunday began with a breakfast feast worthy of the finest hotel. We set off through Tzoonie Narrows at slack tide, and beyond on calm water, headed for the far north end of the inlet. A few times, we approached bright green water, suggesting subsurface outcrops. These turned out to be congregations of thousands

of jellyfish, reflecting the sunlight. In a couple of hours we reached the far end, where we had lunch and practically drank blackberries from dark cascades of them. We had to meet the water taxi at 3 at the campsite, so two canoes set out for the return trip at 1 pm. A moderate to strong inflow wind had picked up, so it was tough going. We went ripping through the narrows on a favourable current, and met the water taxi exactly on time. Then we had a few hours to sloth around while the other two boats explored the north tip of the inlet and had an even more demanding return trip. The exiled member returned with news and goodies from the outside world.

Another fine long evening, with the three pre-school kids basically running amok, and the lack of a campfire prompting most to turn in early.

On the last morning, we left camp long before the sun hit the campsite, and paddled mostly glossy smooth water all the way to 9-Mile Beach. This was broken up by pattering along the shore so the kids could look at the sealife. Above the wreck of the HMCS Chaudiere, we passed over bubbles rising from scuba divers below, and meandered through Kunechin Islets complete with basking seals. Several hours at the beach gave the kids time to exhaust themselves playing in the warm water. Then the final hour's paddle back to the marina. To top it all off, we got on a ferry with only a short wait.

So the whole trip couldn't have gone any better, which was additionally amazing since it was about the only backcountry activity available, yet had been scheduled months before. The weather was perfect, the kids had a ball, and everyone had a great time. I think there were supposed to be camping fees for the Sechlet Inlet sites this year, but there was no evidence of a collection system.

Participants: Ann, Christian and Josephine (temporary BCMC fugitives); George and Jamie, Greg; Carol; Melinda (ACC guest); Jayne, Nova, and Steve Grant (organizer and reporter).