



B.C. Mountaineering Club

Newsletter



June-July 2008. Vol. 86, No. 6

Near the head of the Athabasca River, Jasper National Park.

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, 10 June - Entertainment will be a multi person, multi media presentation, featuring 1) Craig Romano, guidebook author, talking about day hiking in NW Washington; 2) a short video of a rock climb on Nursery Pk. in the Chehalis area; and 3) Todd Ponzini on some best kept secrets in SW B.C.



A best kept secret which appears on the trip schedule in this newsletter, for the first time in many years. Peak on the right was first climbed in 1980, but does not appear in Fairley's guide.

HONORARY PRESIDENTS

Esther and Martin Kafer

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND CLUB OFFICERS

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CLUB EQUIPMENT FOR HIRE

Avalanche transceivers - First day - \$5 per day for members, \$7 for non-members then \$3 per subsequent day .

Snow shovels - \$3 per day.

Avalanche probes - \$3 per day.

VHF radios - \$8 per day, \$40 per week

Satellite phone - \$60 per week or \$10 per day plus \$300 refundable deposit, all payable in advance, then \$2 per minute use.

If the phone is returned damaged, the renter will be responsible for repair costs. If the phone is lost or damaged beyond repair, the renter will be responsible for reimbursing the club the \$2000 cost of the phone. Trip organizers should request a deposit from trip participants to cover this cost.

First priority for equipment rental is club camps and trips.

Equipment is rented from Kit Griffin at 604-736-8462, who should be contacted at least 2 days prior to the day the equipment is wanted, except for the satellite phone, which should be arranged at least 2 weeks prior to the day it is wanted.

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). All material within this newsletter is copyright © British Columbia Mountaineering Club.

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. Please note that images should be at least 60 pixels/cm (150 pixels/inch) for successful printing. Images with a lesser resolution will probably not be printed. Deadline for submissions is the first Tuesday of the month preceding the publication month.

Send submissions to Michael Feller (ph. 604-270-4050, email - feller@interchg.ubc.ca).

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. 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 more than 1 day prior to the trip. 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.

Trip Schedule

June

7-8: Mt. Marriot **B-C3/2750 m**
Darlene Anderson 604-789-8020

Scrambling off the Duffey Lake road approaching on skis or snowshoes.

8: Sky Pilot Mtn. **C3/2025 m**
Helen Habgood 604-357-3094
Extended climbing above Howe Sound, approaching via Mountain Lake. Joint trip with the ACC.

14: Vicuña and Guanaco Pks.
B3-4/2100 m

Jane Weller 604-988-3618

Scrambling in the Coquihalla area.

21-22: Mt. Sloan **C5/2723 m**
Cameron Long 604-789-9789

Scrambling and rock climbing near Bralorne, ascending the E Ridge.

22: Capilano Mtn.

B2/1685 m
Peter Oostlander 604-451-4585
Hiking in Vancouver's North Shore mountains.

23: Midweek summer scrambles **B-C2**
Kevin Swanson 604-943-4364
Scrambling somewhere. Contact the organizer for further details.

28: Gabbro Mtn. **D3/1498 m**
Alastair Ferries 604-329-1637

Extending hiking and scrambling east of the Coquitlam River in the Lower Mainland. Joint trip with the NSH.

28: Mt. Harvey **B2/1652 m**
Serguei Okoutsev contact by email

Hiking and scrambling above Howe Sound.

28: Mt. Fee **C4/2130 m**

Climbing on the Squamish-Cheakamus divide. Joint trip with the NSH.

28-30: Wedgemount Lake area **C3**
Alena Dzujkova & Andrej Dobos 604-708-5385
Mountaineering in northern Garibaldi Park, possibly climbing Wedge Mtn. and Mt. James Turner.

28-July 1: Mt. Olympus **C3-4/2389 m**
Peter Gumplinger 604-733-8264
Extended hiking and mountaineering in NW Washington.

28 July 1: Organizer's choice **C5**
Margaret Hanson & Tony Knight 604-873-2276

Mountaineering possibly to Mt. Vayu, near Bralorne. Joint trip with the ACC.

July

1: Organizer's choice - Squamish area
B2?

Anders Ourom 604-228-1798
Hiking, scrambling or climbing in the Squamish area, depending on the party, followed by a barbecue at Murrin Park.

2: Midweek summer scrambles **B-C2**
Kevin Swanson 604-943-4364
Contact the organizer for further details.

5-6: Hozomeen Mtn. **C4/2459 m**

Jos van der Burg 604-824-5676
Hiking and climbing south of Manning Park just inside Washington.

5-6: Mt. Garibaldi **C3/2678 m**
Radmila Jaksic/Alena Dzujkova 604-602-0468
Classic mountaineering in Garibaldi park. Max. party size is 9.

5-6: Sky Pilot Mtn.
B-C3/2025 m
Andrej Dobos 604-764-0174
Climbing above Howe Sound, with a long bicycle approach.

11-14: Lone Goat / The Frost Fiend **C3/2620 m**

Daniel Carey 604-731-4048
Extended mountaineering near Bralorne.

12: Organizer's choice **B3**
Ilze Rupners 604-222-3720
Contact the organizer for further details.

12-13: Slesse Mtn. **C4-5/2375 m**

David Hughes 604-980-6484
Rock climbing in the Chilliwack valley area, ascending via the SW side.

13: Baby Munday-Stewart Pks. **B3/2230 m**
Clemence Tatin-Jalera 778-329-2629
Climbing in the Lucky Four Group of the Chilliwack valley.

16: Midweek summer scrambles **B-C2**

Kevin Swanson 604-943-4364

Contact the organizer for further details.

19-20: Skagit valley-Manning Park B1

Brian Wood 604-222-1541

Hiking traverse in the Manning Park area.

19-20: Mt. Webb - MacDonald Pk. B2/2225m

Alena Dzijukova 604-708-5385

Hiking and scrambling in the Chilliwack valley area

~~**26-27: Stonerabbit Pk. B-C5**~~

~~Reinhard Fabische 604-462-9638~~

~~Rock climbing in the Chehalis area.~~

26-27: Alpha and Omega Mtns. and Mts. Niobe and Pelops D3-

Summer Camps

Southern Chilcotin Mtns. 31 July - 6 August (B2)

Hiking and scrambling in the Taylor Basin area.

Organizer - Kathy Nemis 604-254-1170

Jasper National Park – North-South Traverse, 1-12(?) August (B-C2)

The Skyline-Endless Chain-Nigel Pass traverse is a classic trek through this national park, located east of the Columbia Icefields Highway and west of the Maligne Lake drainage basin. Beginning near Jasper townsite the trek terminates about 130 km to the south near Panther falls in Banff national Park. Seven passes are traversed in the 10.5 day trip, and six days are at treeline or higher, with several scramble ascents available along the way. Camping areas are dictated by the National Park Service according to a rigid time-table set at time of registration. Maximum party size is 10. We are aiming for a start day on August 1st but will have to take any day available thereafter. Fees include registration (\$15) and camping (\$10/night/person). The former is non-refundable and repayable if the start date is changed. The list of potential takers will be closed off at our social on June 10th.

Phone Karl Ricker at 604-938-1107 (evenings) if you are interested.

Garibaldi Park Traverse, 2-10 August 2008 (C3-4)

This is joint trip with the Kootenay Mountaineering Club, and the party will be limited to 12 people. It will be a self-supported trek across a portion of Garibaldi Park, with the first few days being based

4/2305 m

Alastair Ferries 604-329-1637

Extended mountaineering around Lake Lovely-water, NW of Squamish.

26-27: North Cascades National Park C3

Clemence Tatin-Jaleran 778-329-2629

Mountaineering in northern Washington. Max. party size is 8.

August

2-3: Mt. Matier B4/2770 m

Randy Enomoto 604-224-6184

Mountaineering south of the Duffey Lake road.

2-4: Organizer's choice C4

Andrej Dobos 604-764-0174

Contact the organizer for further details.

9: Tricouni Pk. B3/2130 m

Valerie LeBlanc 604-722-2690

~~Hiking and rock climbing on the Squa-~~

~~mine Campsite permit day trips and to lighten our loads. Experience in, and gear for, glacier travel and camping are required. We hope to do some Class 3-4 scrambling up easy peaks if the circumstances permit, but this trip is not for high angle technical rock climbers or obsessive peak baggers. We hope there will be time to smell the roses.~~

Similarly to last year's Valhalla traverse, it is expected that all participants will register for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness (CPAWS) Big Wild Challenge, and will be expected to make a financial contribution to this program. Details of the Big Wild Challenge can be found at www.bigwild.org, where you will find that this is a joint project of CPAWS and MEC whose prime purpose is to raise funds for publicising and protecting Canada's parks and wilderness areas. Remember, freedom from undesirable exploitation or conflicting uses of wilderness is not free - hence the financial request. For further information contact Brian Wood at tel/fax (604) 222-1541, or by email at: bjwood@telus.net

North Ck. cabin, 9-17 August (B2-4)

A long week at the club cabin in the upper Lillooet valley where a variety of climbs and scrambles are possible. Gear will be flown in but everything will be packed out.

Snowcap Lake area, 23-30 August (C3)

A week of extended mountaineering with at least 10 hours fast travel per day to attempt all the peaks in this area in eastern Garibaldi Park. Participants must be fit and competent. Organizer - Alastair Ferries 604-329-1637

Wednesday night climbing in Squamish

Weekly Wednesday evening top roping at Smoke Bluffs (weather permitting). Depending on the experience of participants and group size some evenings we may climb on the Apron instead.

While I'm sure the more experienced climbers will be happy to share their knowledge, this is not a climbing course. Every participant must be able to belay and is expected to have some top roping experience (indoors or outdoors).

Meeting: 4:50 pm, parking lot at Taylor Way & Hwy 1. Departure: 5 pm sharp; Arrival back to Vancouver: around midnight (during the longest days of the year)

All participants must bring their personal climbing

Membership

New members

The club welcomes the following new associate members: Ray Bedard, John Berring, Grant Bullington, Johnpaul Burbank, Kyeema Burns, Jenn Burt, Adam Cormier, Tim Dickson, Samantha Drove, Jonah Eckert, Melissa Faulkner, Stephen

gear (harness, belay device, locking biner, climbing shoes) and a headlamp (we may be returning to the parking lot after dark). Also highly recommended is a helmet, prussic for rappelling, water, and snacks.

Ropes & anchor material for this event are provided by participants and not by the club. If you have a full strength climbing rope and anchor material, please do bring it.

For further information, contact Justin Bennett at 604-813-4666 or Andrej Dobos, by email.

France, Marc Hewitt, Michelle Hyun, Braden Kelly, Melissa Kelly, Sean Killen, Michael Lim, Jim McDonald, Regan McNeal, Elaine Naisby, Brendan Saunders, Douglas Summers.

Centennial Video - A tribute to Ross Wyborn

As many of you know, the Club's centennial video (the original full length version as viewed at the Banquet and recently distributed to members) was considered to be too long (about 73 minutes) for showing at the VIMFF and at most other mountain film festivals. Ross Wyborn, our long time honorary member, survivor of many epics and expeditions, and founder of Serratus Mountain Products (RIP), has, in yet another re-incarnation, morphed into our resident video editor and techie guru. With infinite patience, admirable sagacity and amazing technical expertise, Ross managed to "rip" the original DVD into an editable format. He made a very short (6-7 minutes) version of the video which was shown at the VIMFF, but this version told only a little of the BCMC history, and was too short for submitting to other film festivals. So, with help from Alice Purdey, our secretary and now a budding film editor, he made a 37.5 minute version which captures the essence of the longer original version. The Executive thanks Ross for his Herculean efforts

in producing this half length version, and hopes that this work took his mind off the frustration of waiting for his knee to recover from surgery. Ross also recently helped Peter Gumplinger produce very professional subtitles to the German language video of Mt. Dresden shown at the club's May social evening.

The newly formed Video Distribution Committee (VD Committee!) will submit this half length version, plus the full length version, to a couple of relatively low profile and newer film festivals to gauge their reaction, before submitting it to larger and older film festivals such as Banff and Telluride.

If anyone has any knowledge of film festival procedures and film submission strategies, perhaps they could pass on their advice and contribute to the work of the VD Committee, namely Dave Scanlon at (604) 572-5051, or Brian Wood at (604) 222-1541.

Be a part of an 2008-2010 expedition to circumnavigate the British Isles in a 13 m canoe

As many of you know, club member Chris Cooper has embarked on an epic three-year circumnavigation paddle of the British Isles in a 13 m wood and fiberglass replica of a Montreal (cargo carrying) canoe. For safety and comfort the canoe can be fitted with a rigid spray cover with sealable individual cockpit openings, and also sails when appropriate. Some details of this and previous expeditions can be found at www.spiritdancercanoejourneys.ca, but exact itineraries of the trip will not be available until Fall, 2008. The route is divided into many sections having different access locations, and the canoe has a team or crew of 10-12 paddlers who are expected to paddle for a two-week section along the coast. New fresh teams will relieve old tired(?) teams at particular access locations around the coast. Chris expects that those interested in paddling will have some appreciation of the loss of creature comforts that can occur with long distance ocean paddling. He would be interested in having 4-6 BCMC members helping to make

up the team for paddling a Scottish west coast section, which should finish about the end of May 2009 on the Isle of Skye. He feels this section should be of most interest to BCMC members as it will involve some possibly more rugged open water sections and will finish at one of the most spectacular coastal and scenic mountaineering areas in the British Isles - the Cuillins.

Crew members are expected to pay their own travel expenses and accommodation to get to, and to return from, the entry and exit locations. The trip registration fee for each participant is expected to be \$1000, which covers use of all specialised gear, including dry bags for clothing, tents, safety gear, etc, and will cover most basic expenses incurred during the two week paddling section. With airfares and other travel and accommodation expense, one should budget for about \$3000 per person for this trip.

As the contact person for our club, I will be taking names and experience details of those interested, and will try to answer questions.

Contact Brian Wood at tel/fax (604) 222-1541, or email at: bjwood@telus.net

News

China takes politics and pollution up Mt. Everest

– The torch for the 2008 summer Olympics in Beijing has left a trail of protest and ugly scenes throughout the world. When it arrived in Beijing it was split, with one part taken to the summit of Mt. Everest in early May. The torch was taken to the summit by a 31-person team, while almost 300 people, including media people and weather forecasters, created a circus at base camp. Extra guards were with the circus.

All climbing on Everest was banned while the torch was taken up. This occurred on the Tibetan and Nepal sides, Nepal's government being apparently subservient to China's government. According to Prem Rai, Nepal's tourism ministry spokesman, pro-Tibet protests are banned and armed soldiers will remain on Everest for the whole of the spring season. "Security forces will continue to search all the expedition teams and strictly monitor the activities of each individual", said Rai.

And mountaineering is the freedom of the hills?

Reports from parties on Everest this spring should make for interesting reading.

Yellowstone snowmobile update

Snowmobilers apparently won some court victories over attempts to kick them out of Yellowstone park. However, all snowmobiles in the park must meet certain emission and noise level requirements, and must be commercially guided. The number of snowmobiles allowed in the park per day is to drop from 720 to 540. And we think we have problems!

Land use agreement with Lil'wat nation released

comment by

M. Feller

The provincial government has been negotiating with several first nations bands over land use in the Squamish Forest District in order to finalize the Sea-to-Sky LRMP. Previously, agreements with the Squamish In-Shuck-ch, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations had been finalized and released (see BCMC November 2007 Newsletter). With the release of the Lil'wat agreement, covering the

northern part of the Squamish Forest District, the LRMP could be finalized although, as of mid May, backcountry recreation zoning has still not been finalized due to the persistence of a small group of ignorant, vociferous, and generally red-necked snowmobilers unable to accept any restrictions on their activities.

The Lil'wat agreement covers all the land that they claim, which extends out of the Squamish Forest District into the adjacent Lillooet Forest District. It appears that the BC government was anxious to get some type of agreement so they could finalize the Sea-to-Sky LRMP because the Lil'wat agreement is anything but final. Repeatedly throughout the agreement is wording to the effect that the government and the Lil'wat agree to discuss issues further, so future land use in the area is anything but clear. On the subject of winter recreation, for example, the agreement states that the government and the Lil'wat "will develop a process to address issues associated with management directions for winter recreation", whatever that means. It is rumoured that the Lil'wat don't like restrictions on motorized recreation, so the government has agreed to discuss the issues.

The agreement is full of attempts by the Lil'wat to take control over everything that happens in the land that they claim which differs somewhat with the previous 3 agreements which display greater acceptance of the needs of non-natives.

The Lil'wat want to jointly develop and implement management plans for protected areas, and review and provide recommendations for park use permits. Within protected areas, including the northern half of Garibaldi park, they want 1) access to resources for "cultural and traditional purposes", and 2) opportunities for commercial recreation and other economic opportunities.

The Lil'wat are allowed to protect up to 1000 ha of old-growth forest currently available for logging, and up to 2000 ha of forest land. Eight new protected areas are to be created, of which 3 – Callaghan, Elaho, and 100 Lakes Plateau – are already given in the Squamish agreement but the Lil'wat and Squamish land claims overlap here. The other 5 are Upper Soo, Upper Birkenhead, Twin Two, Cerise Ck., and Duffey Lake park addition (to the east of the park). These are apparently not to become parks but rather conservancies in which logging and mining are banned, but commercial developments,

including roading, are to be allowed. They are to be "protected" under Section 13 of the Forest Act. This section allows the government to specify an area as a designated area for a period of up to 10 years only. It allows the minister to cancel any logging permits for the area although, using the BC government's blinkered economic logic which assumes that logging has no impact on any other values in a forest, the owners of any logging permits must be compensated after 4 years.

The primary management intent of the conservancies is the "maintenance of social and ceremonial and cultural uses by the Lil'wat Nation, the protection and enhancement of any cultural and heritage resources to enable the expressing of a connection to the land, and the protection and maintenance of the biological diversity and natural environments, including wildlife habitat values."

The overall goals of conservancies include –
"–enable sustainable economic development consistent with the Lil'wat Nation's social, cultural, and ceremonial uses.

– provide for continuation of Lil'wat cultural activities and traditional renewable resource harvesting activities, including hunting, trapping, cutting selected trees, construction, and use of shelters and longhouses.

– increase opportunities for Lil'wat Nation participation in commercial recreation and tourism enterprises (new commercial lodges and facilities are permitted for cultural purposes)

– motorized access and use are not permitted except for pre-existing uses".

Two areas of particular interest to the Lil'wat are upper Birkenhead and Owl Ck., for which detailed management plans are to be drawn up. In addition, the Lil'wat have been given 1 year to come up with plans for their own commercial recreation use of Owl Ck. and 3 other areas – Meager Ck-Overseer, Joffre-Spetch Cks., and Ryan Ck-Mt. Petersen. These areas are of particular commercial interest to the Lil'wat.

Many small sites have been listed as being culturally important to the Lil'wat, and therefore requiring sensitive management. Interestingly, the Battleship Lakes area, of great importance to the Lil'wat when the club wanted to build a cabin there, does not rate one mention in the agreement. Numerous other cultural and economic opportunity issues are discussed in the agreement, but their significance

will probably remain unknown for some time.

Coquihalla ski resort opposed by Nicola Valley First Nation bands

A coalition of 5 bands recently came out in opposition to this proposed resort/residential development. They will set up a camp at the site this summer. A major concern of the bands is the effect of the development on the quantity and quality of water in the Coldwater River drainage.

North Coast trail open to hikers

The North Coast Trail – which provides 43 km of hiking in a remote wilderness setting and links with the existing Cape Scott Trail, officially opened in early May. From 2000 to 2002, the provincial government acquired 716 hectares of private property valued at \$7 million. These lands were added to Cape Scott Provincial Park in 2004. The trail route location was finalized and construction began in September 2004.

The North Coast Trail was the first major project

Trip Reports

Mt Caspar 8-9 March, 2008

We are creatures of habit aren't we? This trip to Mt Caspar was my 6th to the area, one reason being that the access is easy, even for beginners.

It had been quite a while since I was up Caspar Creek and I was worried that the old logging road might not be passable. Two other club members, at different times recently said that the slide alder was so bad they were turned back by it. Knowing those who said this: it must be really bad!! So a second trip was made. We found that with the large snow pack this season most of the alder was snowed under. But there still were places that weren't and had to be negotiated, making the ski up a bit more difficult with having to negotiate the alder. That being said, the rest of the valley was the same. A steady uphill on the old clearcut logging road with the last 2 km being in the forest where the trees were spread out and an odd clearing appearing here and there. Camp was made 9 km in near the outlet stream from the large basin at valley's end. From this point we could carry on and ski further up the drainage. Or we could go due east to a col on the long south ridge of Mt. Caspar. As Caspar was on the agenda for the next day we went straight on towards the basin. An up track was made with all 10 of us taking turns breaking trail. Some of these guys did like

undertaken by the non-profit Northern Vancouver Island Trails Society. "The completion of this world-class trail is an example of a group of people who set a lofty goal and were committed to working with provincial, federal, regional and corporate supporters", said Al Huddleston, chair of the Northern Vancouver Island Trails Society. "As this will be the first season for the trail, we ask your patience and support as we work with BC Parks staff to further enhance what will be the experience of a lifetime. The Northern Vancouver Island Trails Society remains committed to fundraising in support of ongoing promotion and development of the trail."

making a steep uptrack. It was just at the edge of traction for my skins all the way. Oh to be young and strong again! A high point was finally reached with views opening up the higher we went - Mts Matier, Joffre, Howard, Marriot, and Cayoosh Mtn. all came into view. The weather forecast was right on for once. High wispy thin clouds and sun and we enjoyed every bit of it.

The camp was at the bottom of the long slope we had just climbed, so, no matter which way we went, the ski down would take us right back. This is always a convenience, as no-one wants to skin up at the end of the day to get back to camp. It was at this time that I became just a little bit selfish. I had a plan. That steep slope leading down to camp looked ssooo good that I wanted it for myself. The group was fairly strong with some experienced people in it so I wasn't at all hesitant to let them go off on their own. I wanted that slope for myself. I carried on up the hill for a bit, letting them all go on down. With them out of sight off I went to have that hill all alone. The one thing all of us back country users should do is watch the weather "all" winter. As well as the avalanche forecasts, "all" winter long. The past month had the snowpack settling in quite well with the then current avalanche forecast being low for all elevations. Another of the reasons that I like this

area is that most of the slopes are northerly. With many other areas having poor conditions one is almost guaranteed good snow here. And there was! The ski down was quite awesome. I mentioned the above in case someone thought that I should not have been alone. And of course the next day everyone else did the same slope.

This was also a most responsible bunch. They paired up using the buddy system, stayed spread out, stayed clear of the terrain traps, avoided those convex slopes and large open areas staying in among the trees, which was more fun anyway as they were well spread out and gave perspective and depth perception in the flat light.

Sunday morning we were awakened by Chris - at 6:10 am. The evening before the question was asked, what time do we get up tomorrow? I mistakenly answered - whoever gets up first and sees that it is light, get the rest of us up. Fine! But at ten after 6, I could have slept more!!

The early start did get us away before 8 on our way to Caspar. Once again the planning worked. Procrastinate and let someone else get ready and go first and break trail. The cloud came in, and the wind. For the next few hours the visibility was very poor and the thinking was that the next weather system was coming in early. That may be partly why most of the group turned back leaving just three of us to go on to the summit, which we did. I do have to say that my estimate of the distance to the summit was off. It was further than I remembered. I do apologise to the group for that error. While we three were going on, the others went back down to camp, then proceeded to go up the slope from the day before, getting in some yo-yo skiing on those sweet slopes.

The estimate out to the cars was 2½ hours. I did want to get as much skiing in for the group as possible so a 3pm leave time was set. Members of the party went up at 2:30 for one final run. So we maximized the amount of skiing everyone had. Well it took less than the estimated 2 hours out, but trying to ski down through the alder can be described as being "interesting" at times. A few whip lashes from the branches, and a couple of us were caught, one ski over a limb, the other ski under it, making for a fall or two. No trees were injured during the ski out on this trip.

Less than two hours out. The ski in was 4 hours making this a fairly strong group. Peter, a very newby to this thing called skiing, did make it in and

out with no ill effects. He even had a smile or two or three!! And that is what we all want, isn't it? For everyone to have fun. Meet new people, maybe even learn something.

The best laugh of the trip - during the evening meal, David asked if anyone would like to try some of the dried guava that he had. Alena thought a moment, paused, looked at David and said: "Isn't that what bats drop onto cave floors???" I don't want any of that stuff!!" Well that was that.

Food now being at the forefront of our thoughts a restaurant in town was next on the agenda. Entering, there were the participants of another trip - Peter Gumplinger's trip to Cayoosh. So we all told tall tales, each saying that their trip was the best, and compared snow conditions. A great group. My thanks to you all for coming.

Participants: Denis Lalonde, Chris Trautman [good to have you back], Peter Malacarne, Svetlana Tcakova, Guy Wigham, David Perfitt, Alena Dzukova, Dan Carey, Mary Hearden, David Scanlon (Organizer and reporter).

Marriott Basin Avalanche Derby, 21-23 March, 2008

I had said from the outset: the trip to Marriott would be cancelled if the avalanche hazard rating was above **Moderate**. A stroll along its beautiful lake and meadow-edged trail in any month indicates that it is an avalanche alley. So the continual bleak hazard warnings suggested that the trip would not go. But the hazard forecasts began to reduce in mid-winter and the week before Easter the forecast dropped from **Considerable** to **Moderate**. So the prospect for our scheduled trip turned to the optimistic, although each inquiry was given the caveat – could be cancelled at last minute if weather and avalanche forecasts turned sour. The hazard forecast remained **Moderate**. Four potential participants chose to cancel out anyway while seven of us decided to ride the flaky forecast of a possible sunny Saturday and withdraw later in the day if the predicted Sunday storm arrived early. As we skied into the basin on Friday the heavy swirling snowfall had us wondering if the storm had arrived especially early. But reaching the Wendy Thompson hut, the sun broke out and several keeners, with energy to burn, were off

for their downhill run in the valley above the cabin. Suddenly, a crack propagated through the sparse tree cover on the slope to the northeast of the cabin, and a size 1-2 avalanche cascaded down to within 150-200 m of the hut, witnessed by many enjoying the view, and possibly triggered by a twosome climbing up about 50 m away from the source of the action – or was it the sun? All skiers immediately steered to the axis of the valley where slope angles were low. Discussion in the now filled cabin that evening (19 overnights) acknowledged that the hazard was not **Moderate** and a late arrival said that the authorities that day had upgraded it to **Considerable**.

On Saturday morning, at -11°C , skiers were in CAVU weather, but everyone was on edge, or so I thought. Some opted for an up-valley tour on flattish ground to the upper chain of lakes and then a circuit descent to the adjacent valley that drains into the lake below cabin. Others chose to follow four ambitious snowboarders up a steeper valley to the west of the cabin and then found a mellow slope leading into the above-mentioned valley. The snowboarders, however, stopped at the first high point offering a steep run back to the cabin. They had radios and the leader shot downslope in long arcuate turns, reporting that he had generated considerable sloughs on the way down. His mates opted for a somewhat gentler slope through open trees, with our Leonie following on her tele skis. For the rest of us, plus another party of five, it still looked too steep and we carried on with the original plan. Little did we know that two avalanches were triggered by the snowboarders in the steep trees – the first by one boarder that triggered a narrow swath while Leonie watched near a tree. Then, suddenly, a second big crack propagated through “her” trees during the next plunge by a boarder, and snow by the tree began to move as Leonie hung on in terror! The crown crack that raced arcuately through the trees was 40-50 cm high. They gingerly descended through the wide swath of debris on a hard crust now fully exposed! Still unaware of their brush with anxiety, the party of 5 dug a pit well above them, finding 3 mobile layers at 5-10, 15-20 and 40 cm depth. It was the deep zone that had moved on the boarders and Leonie.

Our safer descent route to the valley below was on a gentler slope, which led eventually back to the cabin for lunch. The slide triggered by the boarders

was obvious from there, revealing the seriousness of their escape. All slopes facing east and south were now in peril, given the sun beating down, and the west facing slopes were obviously next in line to fail. Only Mario's and Evdeyna's steep north-facing slope located above the lake below the cabin was immune to the hazard. Skiing by everyone that afternoon shredded their area; no-one was interested in going elsewhere!

Meanwhile, the four who had opted for the longer tour to the upper chain of lakes had their own scare. Well away from the base of a south-facing slope at one lake, there was a major release which descended the slope, coming to within 20 m of their track! Arriving back at the cabin, unnerved, the four packed up and left in mid-afternoon, convinced that there was no safe area.

The cabin count was down to 14 for the second night with some interchange of departers and new arrivals, spiced up with several day trippers including Brian and Marg Ellis who had cancelled out on the overnight venue. They were moving in fine form, having left southwest Vancouver at 6:15 a.m., but not exactly relishing the descent through the steep section of the trail in the late afternoon, which was to be our concern for Sunday. Little did we know that the Saturday avalanche forecast had been advanced to **High**.

Saturday evening the altimeters suddenly surged up by 150 m, likely indicating a storm for Sunday. In the morning we departed in swirling snowfall; the well-beaten trail of the last two days had disappeared in the treeless areas during the first hour of travel. Entering the forest below, the new snowfall proved to be the perfect buffer for an easy descent to the logging road below. Without an avalanche worry, it was the most pleasant run of the weekend.

Marriott Basin again for a ski trip? Well, only if the weather is stable and the avalanche rating is a bonafide **LOW!** Our trip had ended up on the **Extreme** rating (?).

Participants: Grant and Heather Howard (ACC), Ignacio Couturier(BCMC), Leonie Knaus (BCMC-ACC), Marios (BCMC) and spouse Evdeyna (Guest) and Dimov (our Bulgarian team!), Marg and Brian Ellis (BCMC) as day trippers; and Karl Ricker (Organizer and reporter).

Mt. Goetz (2035 m), 12 April, 2008

“Listen!” someone exclaims. The group goes quiet. “Did you hear that?”

"Whumpf"

"Where?"

"There!" pointing across the valley. "Do you see it? It looks like a waterfall."

"Oh, there...I see it now. It *does* look like a waterfall."

We all watched silently as the avalanche fell into the valley. It was 1pm and lunch time. We sat on a sunny knoll away from dangerous slopes next to trees, where we heard "whumpf" after "whumpf". One senior member of the group summed it up by saying, "I have seen more avalanches today than I have seen in my entire lifetime." Today was exceptionally perilous, as the temperatures had soared to 24°C and it had rained all week. The snow was saturated and melting fast. It was "troppo pesante", so heavy that we could easily trigger mini-slides onto each other if we were not careful. A few of us were frightened as we were a poorly equipped group. We had one shovel to share amongst 23 people. Alastair reassured us that we would be safe if we stayed in the trees since he knew where the treacherous avalanche slopes were from his reconnaissance last April. The good thing about being poorly equipped is that you become acutely vigilant about your environs which can sometimes be better than having all the right equipment. Having said that, having both the right equipment and never letting your guard down would be best.

Two hikers decided to turn back to the cars; this was too much for them. I told them to hug or climb a tree if an avalanche occurred. I also felt like turning around because even without seeing the avalanches, I could still hear them and it was unnerving. I caught up with Alastair and expressed my concerns. He said: "The avalanches we have seen today have been on 70 to 80 degree slopes. We had not seen a slide on a 35 or 45 degree slope, which is what we will be mainly hiking on today." Years ago, I took the avalanche course with Canada West Mountain School and remember that the large slab avalanches occurred on 30 to 45 degree slope and not 60 to 80 degree slopes. I agreed with Alastair that staying in the heavily treed area was safer and I noticed that the trees were standing straight up with lower branches intact, reassuring me that no avalanches had occurred there.

On the way up to the col, the day's strongest two hikers - Jorge and Mark - broke trail. With a core

group of 16 people (7 dropped out), we traveled very slowly. So slowly that I was worried when the back group was left waiting on short exposed slopes while the leaders tried to force themselves through the thick forest. For protection, I encouraged people to stand behind a tree or rocks whenever possible as these provide islands of safety. Again, there were discussions amongst the group about heading back down. I mentioned that we were hiking up a southwest slope, which meant that the sun would be shining on it all day and the snow would be more unstable on the return trip.

At the col between Williams and Goetz peaks, John, Alastair and Adam decided to stay behind. Alastair and John were not feeling well as both were recovering from the flu. I was grateful to have made it this far and thought to myself that I didn't want to die today. I sat with the guys and considered not going any further. We had a good view up to the summit and could watch the group go up. Frank broke trail for the group avoiding the huge cornices on the east leeward side by hugging close to the trees. Alastair nicknamed the top of the slope the 'Hillary Step' as the hikers became bottled necked, waiting, as hiker after hiker struggled up the short steep section. Alastair and John encouraged me to go. They said it looked pretty safe. I thought, well, why not? It did look easy. I emptied my backpack, except for some clothes, food, water, first aid kit and ice axe.

When I caught up with everyone, I was surprised I wasn't on the summit. Mark asked, "does anyone want to bag the peak?" There was some mumbling - the views were probably as good here as they were up there; the cornices and slopes looked worst up there; everyone was happy just to have made it this far safely. Mark was happy to do whatever the majority of the people wanted to do, which was staying put and taking lots pictures. For a moment, the "whumpf" sound was replaced with the "clicking" sounds of cameras.

The Snowball Effect: Bum sliding was unavoidable. Twenty centimetre deep snow slabs were sliding with our steps flipping us onto our backside. Roman did a bum slide that triggered a 'pinwheel' shaped snowball, which grew to over a metre in diameter in a distance of 6 metres. Gren was down below and the giant snowball just missed him. We were amazed and humbled by the power of the snow. Duane observed that when we yelled "snowball",

no one blinked, but if we were to yell “rock”, he was sure that everyone would stop and look up.

On the descent, we decided to stop, regroup, and stay close together. We waited for Alastair who had had to dig Adam out who had sunk to his knees in his snowshoes. Soon after, I got stuck in the snow and Tim had to rescue me; Duane got stuck and I rescued him; John sunk too and Anna rescued him and so on and so on. The snow was incredibly soft and heavy and we were anxious to get off the slope. By 6:15 pm we reached the logging road and Alastair said that we still had 1½ hours to go. It was a six km hike back down to the cars.

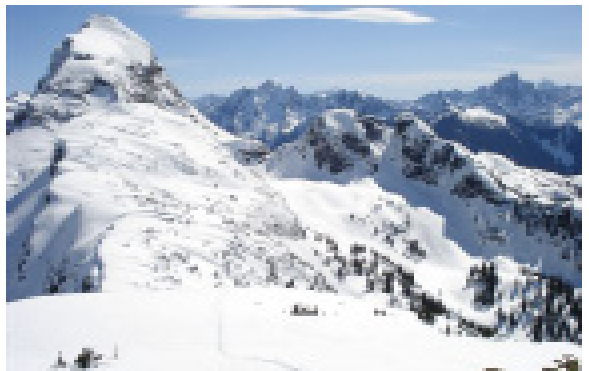
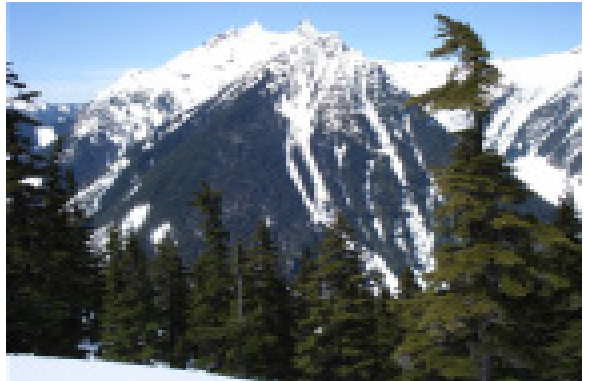
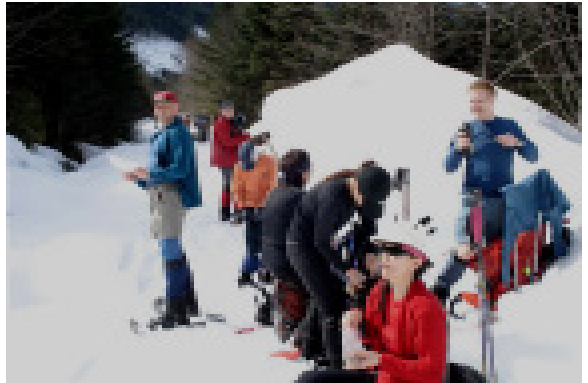
I was soaked, actually frozen from the bum sliding. Snow was going up my gaiters, drenching my socks and down my pants, drenching my underwear. I reached down my pants pulling out fist size snowballs and opening up my gaiters to remove snow deposits. Inside my pants, I had my own version of “waterfalls”, as the melting snow dripped down my legs.

We got back to the cars at 7:45 pm and changed into dry clothing. At 9:05 pm, we regrouped at Tim Horton’s for a quick bite.

We were all surprised by the large turn out for the hike. Alastair thinks it is because of the sunny mild weather coupled with being a joint venture between BCMC and NSH. My theory is that seasoned hikers are looking for new peaks to bag. We all know that Alastair is a frontiersman, exploring new or rarely climbed peaks, finding safe routes and gently sharing his sanctuaries with us. Hiking with an experienced leader is a great way to hone route finding skills, especially if route selection is discussed with the group. In retrospect, we did take the best route possible for the given snow conditions.

As for the summit, turning around from the summit is difficult for some. However, as Mark astutely pointed out, “The mountain will still be there next week, next month, and next year”.

Participants: Adam, Alastair Ferries (Organizer), Anna, Duane, Geoff, Gren, John, Jorge Parra, Kate, Marek, Mark, Michelle, Misha, Nicholai, Roman, Stephanie, Tim, five Chilliwack Outdoor club members, and Ye Chu (Reporter).



Break at Foley Lake (top), avalanche slopes across the valley (middle), and Williams Pk. from Goetz Pk. (bottom). Photos - J. Parra.