

BCMC

BC Mountaineering Club



Newsletter

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JOHN BALDWIN RECEIVES LIFELONG HONOURARY BCMC MEMBERSHIP NOVEMBER 10, 2015

The Board of Directors of The British Columbia Mountaineering Club (BCMC) are pleased to announce that club member John Baldwin has been granted a lifelong honorary membership in the BCMC. John's honorary membership is being granted in recognition of his services to the ski mountaineering and wider backcountry enthusiast communities. His guidebook *Exploring the Coast Mountain on Skis*, his photo and essay book *Soul of Wilderness* co-authored with his partner Linda Bily and his earlier photo book *Mountains of the Coast*, in addition to his excellent ski touring and coastal hiking maps and website, will serve as an enduring legacy. Each will certainly continue to help John achieve one of his primary goals - to help people connect with wilderness.

John Baldwin got his start in the mountains when his teacher from St Georges, Mr. Fenz, took his 14 year old Grade 10 students up Mount Baker. Mr. Fenz also took his class skiing at Diamond Head, which was John's first time skiing. Further opportunities for adventures in the mountains were presented by the UBC Varsity Outdoor Club (VOC), which invited students from St Georges school to come to an open house in an effort to try to recruit potential new VOC members. John was the only person who showed up at the recruitment event. Knowing about the VOC was the deciding factor for John to attend UBC and he did not consider another university in Canada.

In 1977, John read about John Clarke's solo traverses in the Canadian Alpine Journal (CAJ) and saw John Clarke's slide show at a VOC banquet. The stories and presentation left a lasting impression on John.

So inspired, John started doing longer and more ambitious trips with his friends. In 1983, at the age of 26, he led a 220km ski traverse across the Monarch and Ha-Iltzuk Icefields. John Clarke read about this trip in the CAJ and was impressed that someone else was doing long, challenging mountaineering trips on the BC Coast. He was determined to meet John Baldwin and soon after arranged to meet him at an Alpine Club meeting where John was giving a slide show. As soon as they started talking, they each instantly recognized a kindred soul. They both felt the same fascination with exploring the Coast Mountains.

Shortly after meeting, the two Johns embarked on an ambitious ski expedition in the spring of 1984 to the Ha-Iltzuk Icefield, including the massive Klinaklini and Silverthron Glacier. This trip marked the first of twelve seamless years of climbing together – perhaps the closest partnership in the history of exploratory mountaineering in the Coast Mountains. John has said about John Clarke, “we got along instantly. We were totally on the same wavelength and wanted to do the same things. It was fantastic”. So began an epic journey through the Coast Mountains, a journey documented in the many presentations that John has graciously given to the BCMC and other clubs as well as in his books and maps.

John Baldwin was born in Burnaby, BC. He has two kids who share his love of skiing and wilderness. John's story cannot be told without mentioning his partner, backcountry companion and co-author Linda Bily. Since they first met at a slide show and on a backcountry ski trip, John and Linda have gone on to form another extraordinary partnership in the mountains. As for his contributions to the mountaineering community, in the early 1980s, John realized that there was no guidebook for backcountry skiing (only a few climbing guidebooks) on the BC coast. He felt that a guidebook would be a great way to encourage people to get out and enjoy the mountains and to explore new areas. To this end, John published the first edition of his award winning guidebook *Exploring the Coast Mountains on Skis* in 1984. Revisions and other books, his maps and his website followed.

We invite you to be inspired and guided by John's books, to tuck his maps into your pocket and to make it a key priority to get out and experience the magic of the mountains and other wilderness areas.

-Doug Lonsborough





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SUBMISSIONS: We want you to write for us! Any submitted news, events, trip reports, letters relevant to the BCMC will be published unless the club executive decides otherwise.

Contact bcmc.editor@gmail.com to submit material.

ABOUT SUBMISSIONS: For photos, high resolution is appreciated. 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 BCMC.



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CLUB EQUIPMENT FOR HIRE

The club maintains ice tools, which are available for rental by members only.

Ice Tool - \$5 per day per tool

Fees are non-refundable and payable in advance and a refundable deposit may be required, at the equipment custodian's discretion. Instructional Programs are exempt from rental fees, all other uses are subject to the rental fees.

Ice climbing axes are rented from Werner Grzimek.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

On November 10th, 2015, the BCMC membership attending the Annual General meeting voted down the motion to approve the release of \$50,000 of Club funds to build a hut at Watersprite Lake. Prior to the vote, a constructive discussion between Club members took place - some members outlined the benefits they saw in the project, others voiced concerns they felt about the BCMC constructing a cabin in the location. Generally, the majority of the concerns fell into one of three categories: Lack of alternate funding for the cabin; winter access; and avalanche risk. The Watersprite Lake Cabin Building Committee is continuing its efforts to address these issues and, as a result, the most recent information can be found on the BCMC website forum, and at www.waterspritecabin.ca.

The Board of Directors of the The British Columbia Mountaineering Club hereby gives notice of the following Special General Meeting to after discussion, have the membership vote "to release from the general fund up to \$30,000 towards the construction of the Watersprite lake cabin" on at the January BCMC Social Meeting to be held at 7:30pm on 12 January 2016, at the ANZA Club, 3 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C

BCMC SATELLITE PHONE DISCONTINUED

As a result of higher usage rates from our service provider and decreasing usage by members, the BCMC has decided get out of the satellite phone rental business. Even prior to the service rate increase, the satellite phone had begun to run a deficit, costing the club over \$500 annually.

The BCMC Executive will consider subscribing to a 'Northern Lights' program for the summer month in the spring of 2016 as majority of our rentals happen in summer in BC/Yukon/Alaska.

Club members looking for phone rental can contact **Ralph's Radio (220 East 1st Ave., Vancouver. Tel: 604-879-4281)** which has rental rates very comparable to the BCMC rates.

NEWSLETTER FORMAT & PUBLISHING CHANGE

Members receiving the printed copies of the BCMC Newsletter will notice a few changes this month. First, this is the first edition of the new bi-monthly publishing schedule. With the increasing costs of publishing software, printing, and postage, it was agreed at the November Executive meeting to decrease the issues to 6 per year. However, despite the loss, it is my hope that you will also gain. A longer publishing cycle provides an opportunity to find better, and more unique content for the newsletter. The idea is to have the BCMC Newsletter as a document for the Club activities of the preceding few months, while using the enews as the primary tool for upcoming events and courses, new discounts, and Socials announcements.

☐----->

ANDREW WONG - 2015 PHOTO CONTEST WINNER "HIKING & SNOWSHOEING"

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TRIP REPORT: BACKCOUNTRY SKIING A SKYLINE DIVIDE DIARY

Participants: Steve Pollak, Michelle Hyun, Roger Barany, Aaron Snider, Brad Riffal, and Alison Homer

NOVEMBER 19: We drove as high as we could in Michelle's jeep, put chains on the front at 1050 m and parked in a wide spot along the road at 1130 m. From there we skinned all the way up starting at 9 am. During our one hour skin to the trail-head (1317 m) we saw this abandoned pickup truck from Colorado (1256 m) that had come off the road and got stuck on the sidehill.

There was a 4" rain crust which thinned to 1" by 1700 m. Yoyo-ing on variable snow a couple times, our high point was 1845 m. The crust thickness varied but was generally strong enough to support our weight without breaking through. Ski crampons helped skinning back up east of the Little Bump where it was a bit steeper. We tried to avoid some avi debris from activity there a few(?) days ago. Snow stability seemed really good.

It was a good day with clear sky, views of Shuksan and Baker and temps down to -8 C. We started back around 3 pm.

Roger skied all the way back down, while Michelle and I elected to hike the last bit of the trail down to the road where the snow was thin. The only bit of thin snow on the whole trip was the bottom portion of the trail. We were at the jeep by 4 pm.



DECEMBER 5: We parked a bit higher than last time at 1150 m and skinned up from there. It was a great day, with visibility improving despite the blowing snow, and there was a powdery accumulation of 30 cm over a good base. We used extra caution and did some ski cuts to confirm stability. We had the Skyline area to ourselves and yoyo-ed a few times. Freezing level was at the trailhead (1350 m at 9:30 am), but my thermometer got up to 4 C at 1700 m (11:15 am). The snow started to get heavier in the afternoon, and snow turned to rain below the trailhead. We could ski down almost the entire trail. Today was probably a better choice for skiing than tomorrow given the forecasted warming trend.

DECEMBER 11 (ONE LAST TIME??): Skiing up from the truck parked at the snow line (1025 m), we were on the sunny ridge by 11:30 am. After 3 nice runs, people were making comments like “this is better than all last year”. Stability seemed really good, there were no signs of any snow movement, although we were quite cautious testing the snow and skiing conservative lines on mostly shady east facing slopes. Snowpack thickness was about 1 m of which the upper 30 cm was generally soft beyond the wind affected ridge. We had lovely unobstructed views in all directions. It remained cold the whole day. Skiing back down was fast and fun and again there was nobody else but us!

Steve Pollak

TRAIL BUILDING: THE SIGURD TRAIL WORK WEEK

By Paul Kubik - August, 2015

Participants: Paul Kubik, Doug Lonsborough, and Peter Malacarne

I would like to thank the Federation of Mountain Clubs for its financial support through the Member Club Grant of the one week BCMC work party in August. I was joined by veteran trail builders Peter Malacarne and Doug Lonsborough, who I would also like to thank for their commitment. It is noteworthy when someone is willing to spend a week of their vacation time on a project that ultimately benefits so many other individuals.

We set up at Moraine Camp below the north face of Ossa Mountain on the glacial outwash plain. We used the same site as last October's camp, which was funded by the BCMC. The site for the large canvas 10x12 tent was reused and the outhouse facility we installed last year is still intact and usable. Our primary objective was to clear a route for 1 km through the west side of the moraine to Ossa Camp — the informal, rocky campsite at a group of three small lakes on the way to the west ridge of Ossa Mountain. Rather than use the shortest distance path that has evolved over the years, we relocated a significant portion of the route to avoid a massive rock fall and swampy, wet ground. The new route is somewhat counterintuitive because it jogs 150 m downstream to avoid the chief difficulties. The new route was cleared and rejoins the existing route a short distance below the lakes where the upper camp lies.

Our secondary objective was to scout a route down into Sigurd headwaters. This objective was also met. The route roughly follows the 1,230 m contour along a heathered bench west of the moraine. The Ossa Camp trail branches off from the bench route about a third of the way along. The end of the bench is approximately one kilometre west of Moraine Camp. At its end, the route drops steeply down a vegetated gully for a vertical distance of 75 m. The gully can mostly be hiked without the assistance of hands. At this time of year the gully was dry. We stopped flagging at the bottom of the gully. Having spent numerous bushwhacks examining possible routes from Moraine Camp into the headwaters, I firmly believe the 1,230 m contour and the 75 m gully is the best option for accessing the headwaters of Sigurd Creek.

From a wildlife and environmental impact point of view, what we call Moraine Camp is clearly the least harmful campsite option on the Ossa approach. We observed no large animal scat in the camp area. Wildlife would have difficulty traversing the enormous piles of boulders east and west of the camp. Below camp is a huge slide alder swath; Above it is steep rock and glacier. A glacial stream emanates from the toe of the lower ice field only 200 m away. A prevailing wind off the glacier offers respite from annoying bugs which can be horrendous at times. The flat outwash plain provides for a lot of low impact tent sites and there is an established toilet facility.

Ossa Camp has the greater potential to impact wildlife because there is more vegetation and the presence of a large blueberry crop nearby. It links to Sigurd headwaters by the 1,230 m contour route I described or other bush routes so is easily accessible to wildlife. The lake water sources at the camp are questionable for potable water. There is no permanently flowing stream, outhouse facility or tent sites. The camp's only advantage is that it is closer to the west ridge of Ossa. However, this advantage is lessened now that there is a decent footpath through the moraine. I estimate it is only 20-30 mins from Moraine Camp to Ossa Camp with a light pack. A reasonable party could easily camp at Moraine Camp and still make short work of the west ridge climb. It would also save carrying a heavy overnight pack the final 300 m up to the higher camp.

The BCMC would like to continue to extend the trail into the Sigurd headwaters and eventually Sigurd Lake. Two viable routes have been identified for reaching Sigurd Lake. I have requested approval of the work from BC Parks. It is my understanding it is awaiting a field visit by park staff to acquaint themselves with the proposed work and an examination of the impacts. The trail extension under proposal is envisioned in the master plan for the Esté-tiwilth/Sigurd Creek Conservancy. It will be a truly outstanding trail that will expand the appeal to the broader hiking community and continue to appeal to mountain climbers and backcountry skiers

A HOLIDAY REMEMBERED FROM THE PAST

In spite of my attempts to read through the last 100 or so years of BCBC Newsletters which I have inherited as Newsletter Editor, I have been unable to ascertain when the final "Annual Club Turkey Dinner" at the Grouse Cabin was. From what the records tell me, this event was hosted in 15 ft of snow.

The Announcement from *The B.C. Mountaineer*, January 1949:

ANNUAL TURKEY DINNER GROUSE CABIN

Jan. 30th - 1 p.m. Tickets \$1.25

Reserve early for this event, space is limited. Dead-line for members' reservations is January 24th. After this date friends may be invited, their names being taken in order of their previous placing on a separate guest list. Contact Irene Rattenbury, MA rine 4972; Nell Henderson, BA yview 1394R; or Jean Fitch, KE rrisdale 0471L, for tickets. Also, if you are feeling big and strong, 'phone Irene re packing supplies.

The Write-up from *The B.C. Mountaineer*, February 1949:

ANNUAL TURKEY DINNER

Even the weather was perfect for our annual Turkey Dinner, held at the Grouse Cabin, January 30th. The Social Committee upheld the high standards of the other years and served an excellent meal, complete with all the trimmings, to seventy-one hungry members and guests.

As to the entertainment provided, we are afraid no words of ours can do it justice. Mr. Ford delivered a humorous poem in splendid style, then a group of sing-song was held from specially prepared booklets of novelty songs. Now the ice was broken, and the Social Committee felt that their audience was in a sufficiently mellow mood to stand anything, they plunged into their skit. This took the form of a radio broadcast (for cast and writers, please consult your Social Committee list), from station B.C.M.C.; sponsors being Gilbert, Gilbert, Gilbert, Gilbert, three Roses and Gilbert. Those of you who were there will realize that this work of art defies description; as those unfortunates who missed it, we can only say that you missed a truly hilarious and original show. Bill's announcing (audience precipitation - complete with a water pistol), Clare's "Trystery Mip," Ed (Water Windshield's) newscasting, the screamingly funny singing commercials done by Irene, Nell and Edna, Ted's Long John Symphonette from Filbert Hall composed of the rest of the cast playing on horns, pan lids and heaven knows what, all done into a smoking, reeling mike - the handiwork of propman Harry - are only the highlights of a fast moving program.

Why those in charge ever had any qualms over its reception we'll never know. Irene and her Committee are certainly to be congratulated on their initiative and originality, as well as heartily thanked for all the hard work they have done to make the Turkey Dinner such a pleasant holiday for the rest of us.

Judging by the review, this may be a tradition worth revisiting? Food for thought.

Happy Holidays!



CHRIS BARTON - 2015 PHOTO CONTEST WINNER "BACKCOUNTRY SKIING" CATEGORY



ADRIAN LAZAR - 2015 PHOTO CONTEST WINNER "ROCK & ICE CLIMBING" CATEGORY