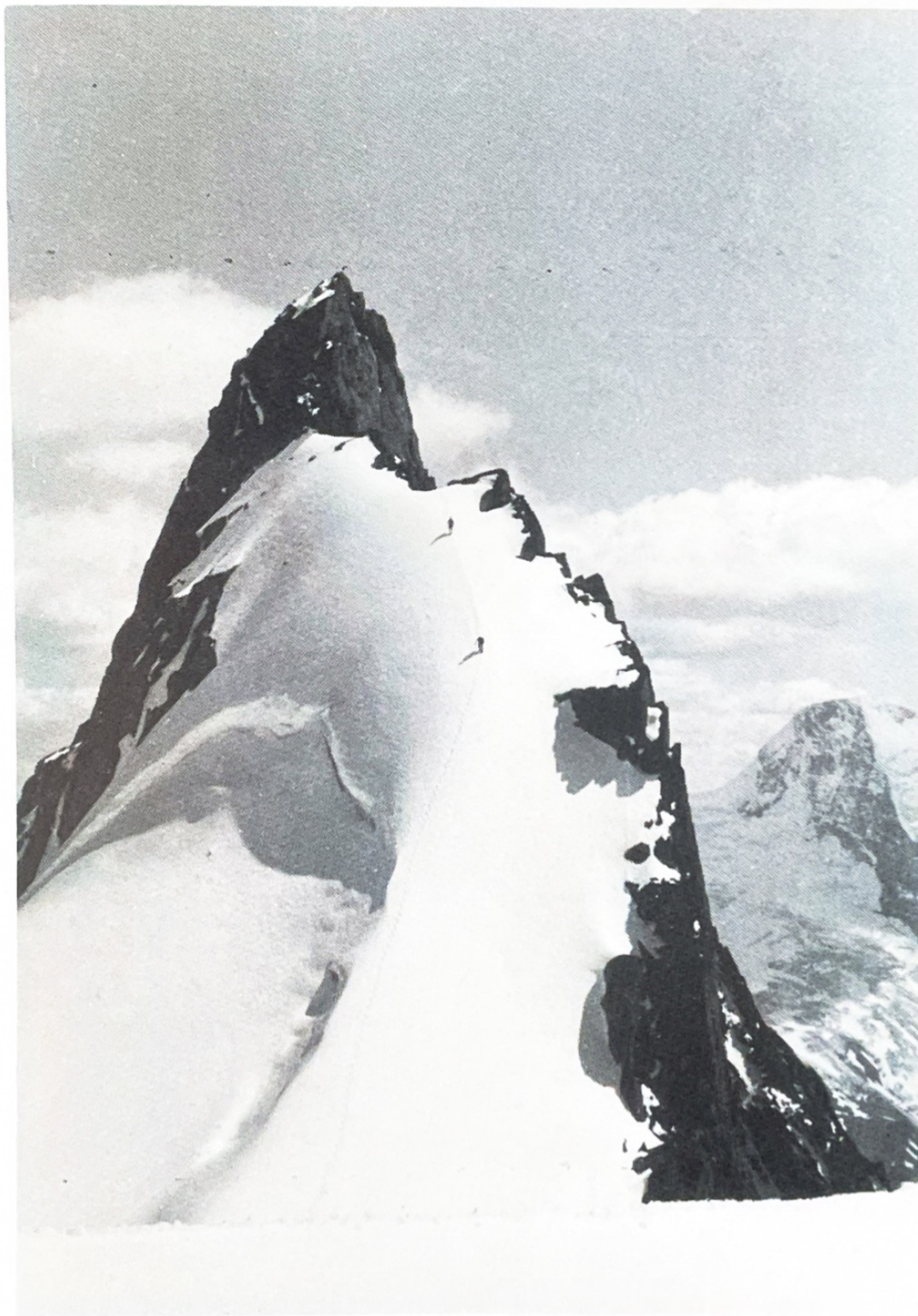


THE B.C. MOUNTAINEER



1984



THE B.C. MOUNTAINEER



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1982 - 1983

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PHOTOS

Front Cover: Descending from East Gothic (the Adamants summer camp 1982). Photo - M. Feller

Inside Front Cover: View from Camp towards Pk 2530 (m) (South Creek - Pemberton icecap ski camp). Photo - P. Crean

Inside Back Cover: Climbing up the east face of Monarch Mtn. (Monarch Mtn - Ape Lake summer camp 1983). Photo - E. Zenger

Back Cover: Skiing beneath Gog and Magog (Fairy Meadows ski camp). Photo - J. Gray

MOUNTAINEERING NURSERY RHYMES

It seems to me that mountaineering club magazines are totally adult oriented - nothing in them for children, especially the real wee folks. After all, you were all kids one day - no snide comments please. Some mountaineers are even civilized enough to have children of their own, although how they ever find the time is beyond me. Anyway, for the little people out there, here are a few nursery rhymes, with apologies to authors anon, long gone.....

HICKORY DICKORY DUCK,
You're climbing up a rock,
The rope goes ping!
You've broke a sling,
You land right on your clock.

Humpty Dumpty climbed the North Wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall,
He fell on top of one of the King's men,
Who's never been quite the same since then.

Little Jack Horniss,
Fell off of a cornice,
While ski-mountaineering they say,
He was found in the Spring,
With his neck in a sling,
And there he remains to this day.

Gaston Rebuffat,
Fell off a tuffet,
While eating his lunch one day,
He'd climbed like a tiger,
The north face of the Eiger,
But he still fell off a tuffet and twisted his ankle, which
proves once again that most accidents occur in the home.

LITTLE SNOW BEEPS has lost her Pieps,
And doesn't know where to find it,
Leave her alone,
And she'll never get home,
An avalanche's sure to find her.

Pat Crean

(The results of sitting around the tent in bad weather.)

TRIPS OUTSIDE B.C.

RAMBLING IN PERU - CORDILLERA HUAYHUASH AND SOUTHERN PERU

June, 1981

We arrived at Chiquian in the dark. The road down from the plateau zig-zagged down to the townsite. The driver seemed to disregard the hair pin bends but we arrived in one piece. He took us to the village hostel. This was a typical adobe brick building, built around a courtyard. The town had its own generator so there were dim lights. We stayed in this village at 3000m for a few days hoping to gain sufficient altitude acclimatization for the expedition. It was fun exploring markets and bargaining with street sellers. Although the town was no larger than Hope, B.C., it was always crowded and a constant hive of activity.

We left Chiquian on a trail which descended even further down into the next valley. I dreaded this part of the return trip. At the bottom, the trail followed a river for several kilometers. At one point we stopped on a gravel bed for lunch, after which the trail continued into another valley. We climbed up and over a low pass into the next village of Llamac.

In Llamac we were led to a hay field across a river, where we were invited to pitch our tents. We were told not to leave anything outside our tents because of robbers, and we were allowed to store our packs in a mud room back in the village. We locked the door both with the lock provided and with one of the locks we had with us. This village had no electricity. The villagers used candles. No-one had kerosene or propane lamps. The mud brick houses had no windows, and we were unable to find out what sanitation arrangements the villagers had. We were told to use the fields. Perhaps the villagers also used the fields, although there seemed to be little evidence of this. For obvious reasons all water was purified by tablets or boiling.

Next morning after collecting our packs, cooking our breakfasts, dismantling our camp and reloading the burros, we set out on the second day's walk. The trail led relentlessly up and over a 4300m pass to a camp area at 4000m by Laguna Jahuacocha. I arrived after the others in the dark, guided by our young Peruvian arriero.

Waking up on the shores of Laguna Jahuacocha was very exciting. We started out by reorganizing our camp. I washed some clothes in cold water from a creek, and we explored our immediate surroundings. Talking to other groups of campers, I was rather startled to find myself with climbers from Poland, Spain, Britain and France. Looking about me I was intrigued by lupin trees, yellow daisy type flowers growing directly on the ground with no stems, and spiky bushes with bright pink flowers.

A line of moraine lay between the camp area and the glacier. I had to scramble up it to see over the other side. A very colourful lake lay steeply below with chunks of ice from the glacier floating in it. The trail to the high peaks was visible following a ridge to one side of the lake, and ascending up a rock slope beside the glacier. Looking back to the camp area below, I saw that we were camped near some Peruvian shelters made of adobe brick and thatched with grass, all contained within a walled area similar to a corral.

Other groups of climbers hired arrieros to guard their camps. We agreed to take it in turns to stay behind. The first group went up to the high bivouac site at 5200m for a few days. Two of us stayed behind. We used the other arrieros to guard our camp too, and went off on some exploratory trips. When the others returned they were shattered in different ways by the altitude. I went up with the second party. Above 5000m my head felt like it was compressed in a clamp. The pressure got worse as I went higher. At about 5300m common sense made me decide not to go higher. Others in the group had altitude sickness and tired

very easily. Altitude affected us all in different ways.

After a few days we returned to the main camp. Some of the group decided to return to the high camp site and spend sufficient time up there to become acclimatized. Two of us felt we had not gone to Peru to sit on a glacier for 10 days or so. We could do that in B.C. Thus, we departed.

(Ed. Note - after Pamela and Julian left the area Brian Wood and his group climbed Tsacra (5,548m), and Kasac (6,017m), but were defeated on Yerupaja by collapsing snow bridges and bad weather.)

A few days later, having explored more of Lima, we decided to fly to Cuzco, 1,600km to the south west. The plane climbed up through the cloud from Lima airport into very bright sunshine. I had expected to see snow covered glaciated peaks. The ground below us was undulating, dry, brown and sparsely populated or even used. Much of it was a barren wasteland. As the plane circled to land at Cuzco I was reminded of Kamloops and surrounding countryside.

The local train to Machu Picchu left the San Pedro station at 6 a.m. A tourist train left later, but this was more expensive. After five slow hours on the train we reached Kilometer 88, where we got off with about 50 others to hike the Inca Trail. The railway had followed the Urubamba River for some distance. Crossing this on a cable platform was the first obstacle. Before being allowed across the river we had to pay a fee to use the trail and visit the ruins. The route followed a track through a pine forest and climbed up to a bench above the river. Here a large encampment came into view. One of the workers came over to speak to us. He was from England and working with an archaeological team excavating more ruins. We stopped by a creek soon after this encounter to eat lunch. Other workers explained how they were diverting the creek flow to provide a better irrigation system and get more water to their camp. The afternoon sun was hot. Others who had got off the train with us seemed to disappear. At one point along the track a mother and children seated outside their humble dwelling were offering drinks for sale. They were selling beer and Inca cola, a Peruvian pop similar in taste to ice-cream soda. Further along the trail at Huayllabamba, where the trail guide suggests you can stay the night, we decided to carry on. This was an unwise decision. From the village the trail climbed very fast, with steeply sloping fields below it. Finally we decided it was foolish to try to get to the next camping place. That night some of the group pitched their tents. I slept in a Peruvian field shelter made of boughs and thatched with straw and hay.

Next day we continued through a jungle section until we reached a pleasant meadow area. This was before lunch time, but we decided to rest for the day. Another trekking party, a group of Germans, were already camped there, so we spent time talking to them. They were part of an organized trip, using arrieros to carry their camping gear, food and supplies. I climbed up the sides of the valley to take photos, and to see what lay ahead.

After a restful day at the meadow campsite, we were sufficiently recovered to get up early to hike to the top of a 3600m pass. Here we were in cloud and we felt there was little point in climbing any of the peaks. They were rocky with patches of snow but no glaciers. Looking back down the trail we could see a continuous line of hikers making the ascent. The arrieros were amusing running along with their colourful bundles of tents, camping equipment and food which they were packing for the organized groups. No burros were allowed on this trail. The porters wore rubber tire thongs on their feet but still moved very quickly. They would rush pass us, then collapse to rest by the trail whilst we plodded on slowly. Soon after we had passed them they would be on our tails again, until it became an amusing game.

The trail from the top of the pass descended down to a valley, which was still cloud covered. The sun was left behind for a while. Climbing up to the second slightly lower



In the Cordillera Huayhuash, Photo - P. Mellows.

pass, we finally reached the start of the Inca Trail. It was uncanny to see carefully positioned rocks leading up to the first set of ruins. These were small and made up of a semi-circular wall of stones with a few smaller parallel walls nearby. The German camp was already set up in them. It was too early to stop so we continued on and up in the cloud to the top of the second pass. The vegetation over the top was more lush, and we began to give up hope of finding a suitable campsite. Rounding a corner in the mist, a rock wall to one side, we saw a flight of steps climbing this wall. It was a flight of Inca steps heading to ruins called Sayajmarca, which translated means "city hidden in the clouds".

From these ruins the trail descended to a creek bed, climbed up again to open grassy hillsides and continued through varied terrain of open hillsides, with patches of unexpected jungle. At one place the trail seemed to disappear. It went down into what at first sight seemed to be a cave, but in fact was a tunnel. The Incas had constructed steps through the steep part. I was quite relieved to see light at the end of the tunnel. Over the top of the last open pass, we could see more ruins, and the German tents. These ruins are noted for their water system and bathing arrangements. Some water still flowed through the troughs and bath areas. Continuing on, the trail wound around an open hillside gaining



Rondoy, from the bivouac site
at the base of Rasac.
Photo - B. Wood.

altitude. At the top we gained a fleeting glimpse of part of the Machu Picchu complex. Descending to some power lines this view soon disappeared. The power lines came from a hydro-electricity project on the Urubamba River. We continued to follow the power lines a long way down, not going towards our goal. A detour marked on the map led us to the ruins of Wiñay Wayna. These are situated in a jungle-covered hidden valley.

Sunrise was incredibly beautiful behind the ruins. The guide suggests you should get to Machu Picchu to see the sunrise, but this was still a few hours hike through a tangle of jungle and slide areas. Emerging from the jungle stretch on moss covered stone steps, we had reached Inca Bridge, a trapezoidal shaped archway. The trail continued around a steep cliff, and was constructed with stones wedged in place, using no cement. At the next gate, Intipunku, Machu Picchu lay spread out below us. I had seen other people's slides and pictures of the area but I was awestruck. The ruins we had camped in en route were overgrown and like ruins. Machu Picchu had been cleverly restored. The straight geometrical lines of the terraces and flights of steps were unreal. We wandered up to the main temple exploring various buildings built on the steep hillside. The Incas worshipped the sun, and all their monuments and temples reflect this. Much to my delight we found the old Inca trail, which leads to symbolic terraces atop a dramatic peak called Huayna Picchu, which we climbed. Back at the ruins llamas were wandering about quite freely undisturbed by the tourists.

After descending to the Urubamba Valley below Machu Picchu we found that we had missed the last train that day, so we wandered along the railway tracks for about half an hour looking for somewhere to camp. We came to Aguas Calientes, a shanty town whose name means "Hot Springs". Here we found a room in a hostel, with nine people to seven beds. It was economical.

From Cuzco, we travelled south to Puno by railway, then on to Arequipa by colectivo, a type of taxi which picks up as many people as it can. Arequipa has several volcanoes looking over it. We climbed the highest one, El Misti, which consists of a conical heap of sand over 5800m high. After much investigation we found a way to reach the base of this volcano. It involved a taxi ride and an early morning walk across the city to catch a 6 a.m. bus. The bus took us on another road back to the plateau. We were deposited on a windy ridge, still at least 79km away from the start of the ordeal. Fortunately some trucks going to a hydro-electricity project at the Agua Blanca dam took us part of the way. We had to pass the official entrance to this closely guarded area, and state our business. The guards then found us another ride to the back of the volcano, from where we could start the climb.

We knew we had to carry water, and yet somehow we arrived on the blowing sand dunes without any. My friend volunteered to scramble down to the deep valley below to get some whilst I guarded our heavy packs and prepared some lunch. Over an hour later with all our containers filled with murky water we set off across kilometres of sand dunes. Grassy tussocks dotted the lower slopes. By using these as stepping stones, we covered some of the ground without sliding back too much. In other places we just had to fight the sand. I had to give up before the suggested camp spot. I was exhausted and crawled into the tent as soon as it was up.

Next morning we got up at daybreak and set off with day packs. Within an hour we reached the corral where we had intended to camp. From here we followed a rough path through the completely barren steep sand hillside. An outcrop of solid rock afforded views of the vast barrens, and had a few minute lichens growing in some of the cracks. After 7 hours, I reached the edge of the crater. My friend had been there a while. A cross marked the highest point. Over the other side of a thin snow ridge, we found a more sheltered spot to eat some lunch, take photos and get ready for the descent. It was windy and cold. It took less than an hour to slide back to our camp place. With no water we had no choice but to pack up. We reached the road at dusk.

The driver of a truck from a mine invited us to climb on the back. It went to another part of the construction camp. Somehow the truck drove off with my pack still on the back - a result of language difficulties. I watched in horror. At the main camp we were eventually taken to see the manager who spoke some English. He understood the problem and using a radio he located where the truck had gone - to one of the tunnels into the hillside. We were taken to retrieve the pack, but unfortunately were too late to catch a ride back to Arequipa that night. Instead we stayed as guests at the camp, and ate in the camp kitchen. I was able to give the manager's son a math lesson. Math seems to be the same whether in English or Spanish. Next morning the ground was covered by a light snowfall. It was fortunate that we had not tried to stay out on the mountain.

To get back to Arequipa from the volcano, we had to hitch various rides, and walk some stretches. One ride was in an enormous grader, but it was faster than walking. From Arequipa, we returned to Lima and then Vancouver.

PARTY 1: Cordillera Huayash - Brian Wood (L), John Knight, Peter Hamilton, Mario Blasevich, Rein Raudsepp, Julian Lash, Pamela Mellows.

PARTY 2: Remainder of trip - Julian Lash, Pamela Mellows (Reporter)

WIND RIVER RANGE, WYOMING
September, 1982

For the first two weeks of September 1982 it was BCMCers vs the Real American Wilderness when Ed Zenger, Tricia Daum, Joanne Johannson, John Halliday, Wayne Saunders and Nora Layard visited the Wind River Range of Wyoming.

This range is situated very approximately 2000km ESE of Vancouver in the U.S. state of Wyoming. Most of the crest of the Wind River Range forms part of the Continental divide which rises from the surrounding flatlands, about 2000m in elevation, up to a maximum elevation of 4208m at Gannett Peak. We had a great time and did some fine climbs. It is an area to return to. Our trip consisted of excursions into two separate areas in the range: The Cirque of the Towers and Titcomb Basin.

In the Cirque, several peaks were climbed including a route of 5.2 on Pingora (3623m) and a route of 5.5 on Wolf's Head (3704m). The Cirque is a place of stunning beauty with comfortable campsites on lush meadows at 3200m. It is reached in one day from the car and offers many days of class 3-6 climbing.

Titcomb Basin requires one and a half days of hiking to reach. We had expected to climb Frémont Pk. (4190m) by the easy class 3 route. However winter arrived in the basin the same day we did. During the next two days a blizzard dropped 15cm of snow. During the first clearing, with climbing out of the question, we hiked despondently out, packed up our climbing gear and headed for Jellystone Park to see all the old geezers there.

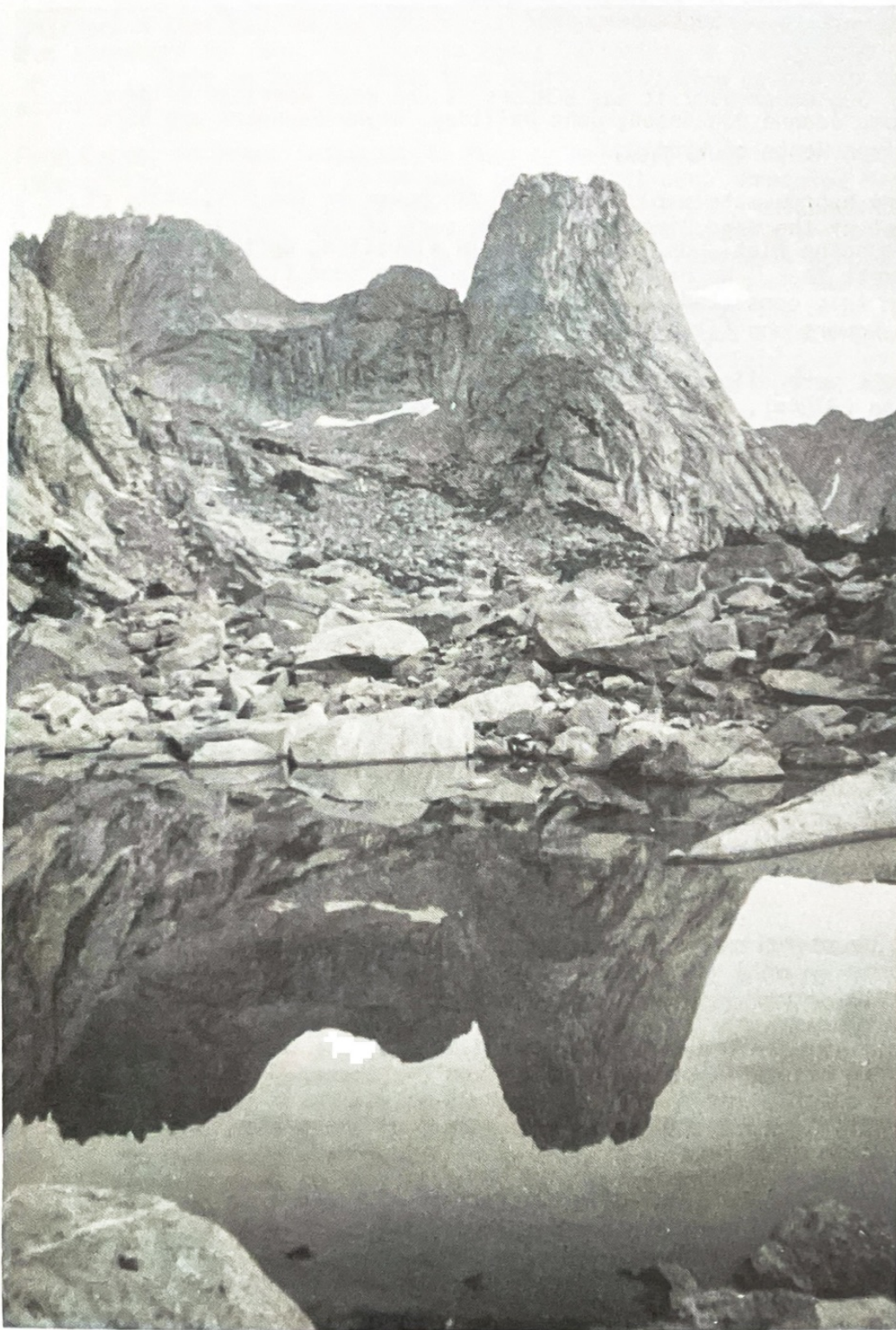
Here are some facts about the Wind River Range:

- no bush! lots of trails going everywhere, some of which are horse trails
- about half the range is granite
- very few glaciers, can easily be avoided
- closest climbing is one day's pack from cars with most areas requiring longer pack-ins
- all water must be sterilized before drinking - Giardia is present

Two "guidebooks" that we used are:

- 1) "Climbing and Hiking in the Wind River Mountains" by Joe Kelsey, Sierra Club Books. (This is the definitive guide book for the area.)
- 2) "Wind River Trails" by Finis Mitchell, Wasatch Publishers Inc. Salt Lake City, Utah

Mitchell is Mr. "Wind Rivers", the original guide/outfitter who stocked all the lakes with game fish. This book is essentially a hiking and fishing guide.



Pingora (right) and
Wolf's Head (left)
in the Wind River Range,
Photo - E. Zenger.

TO THE WORLD'S HIGHEST MOUNTAIN - IN PERU
June, 1983

According to Moore in the 1968 American Alpine Journal, Mt. Everest is not the highest mountain in the world if we use absolute methods of measurement. Similarly the Himalayas are not the world's highest range. Measuring height from the centre of the earth we find that the world's highest mountains are the Andes near the equator. Thus, Chimborazo, Huascarán and Cotopaxi all rise more than 1700m higher from the centre of the earth than does Everest. This is due to the fact that the earth is not a perfect sphere but is flattened at the poles and bulges at the equator as a result of centrifugal forces. The earth's polar diameter is about 43km shorter than its average equatorial diameter. On this basis the world's highest mountain, around 6,384,400m above the earth's centre, is either Chimborazo in Ecuador or Huascarán in Peru, calculations showing them to be within 25m of one another. Gravity observations on their summits would be required to determine which is highest. Seeking to one-up Reinhold Messner and accumulate a massive number of points, six BCMC members headed off to Peru in June 1983, to attempt Huascarán.

After the usual South American adventures the party collected itself in Huaraz, the major town in the Callejon de Huaylas, a large valley separating the snow and glacier covered Cordillera Blanca to the east from the barren rocky Cordillera Negra to the west, prevailing winds coming out of the Amazon basin from the east. Huaraz is a mecca for climbers. In our summer (Huaraz's winter or dry season) most of the hotels in Huaraz hold one or more climbing parties, usually the best source of up-to-date information on climbs. A few more adventures later (sightseeing, shopping in the markets, visiting ruins, trotting to the bano, etc.) we found ourselves on the back of a new but shot Datsun pickup heading up into the Llanganuco lakes area of Huascarán national park. After paying a special gringo entrance fee and special gringo rates for our driver we dusted ourselves off beside the dirt road and had some lunch.

Huascarán national park is a park in name only - it appears to be a good way to extract money from gringos, as the locals continue to grow potatoes in it, graze their cattle there, build roads, drain lakes, hunt, mine, and, above all rob the gringos. Theft is extremely common - we lost some food and clothes we naively cached in some rocks; other parties have had similar incidents; many parties hire people to act as camp guardians while they are off climbing.

After lunch we shouldered heavy packs and walked a good 3km to a pleasant flat grassy campsite surrounded by shrubs. The Llanganuco valley is just north of Huascarán. We planned a 7 day acclimatization trip attempting lesser peaks before going for the big one. That first day we climbed fully 100m to camp at 4000m. After caching some gear (some of which was later stolen), we headed up the valley on a well worn path, eventually leaving this to climb up some grassy slopes to find a beautiful grassy bench for our second camp, around 4500m. For the first week of our trip the daily weather pattern was predictable - clear sunny mornings with clouds appearing around noon and snow or rain later in the afternoon. Thus, when we had views from this campsite they were magnificent - from Huascarán to the huge tooth of the west peak of Huandoy to the spectacular fluted snow and ice south face of Chacaraju.

Our objective was more modest - the 5593m Yanapaccha, rising directly above our campsite. Next morning your reporter had a touch of mountain sickness and decided to stay in camp. His dutiful wife decided to stay with him. The others set off but Erich returned after reaching the edge of the glacier, he too having a touch of soroche. Bill, Cathy and Ehleen continued up into the increasing clouds but retreated from a steep corniced ridge when Cathy and Ehleen decided discretion was the better part of valour.

back at camp Bill and Cathy decided they wanted to tackle Huascarán "McKinley - style" by acclimatizing on the mountain slowly moving up it. The rest of us wanted to continue acclimatizing in the Llanganuco by trying another peak. Consequently, the next day Bill and Cathy left for Huaraz then Huascarán, while the rest of us headed up another well worn trail to a morainal basin beneath Huandoy. There we met up with an American, Bob Wilson, from Oregon, and continued up to another delightful campsite sandwiched between tall lateral moraine and a scree slope. This campsite had a large bivy rock for Bob and numerous tall grass tussocks, between which we pitched our tents. Living in the scree was a small colony of viscachas - the Peruvian ecological equivalent of our marmots. These were interesting creatures resembling rabbits with large bushy tails similar to those of squirrels. They would sit and stare at us as we stared at them. To us they didn't look right - rabbits don't have bushy tails - but I'm sure the feeling was mutual.

An early start next morning had us climbing up the moraine wall as the first sun bathed the impressive icy eastern faces of the Huandoy massive. Then down the other side to bring back painful memories of New Zealand climbing as we negotiated the black ice (moraine-covered ice) of a wide glacier. Up the other side back onto moraine then finally onto a solid snowy glacier where we roped up. After negotiating crevasses we finally reached the col between Pisco, our objective, and Huandoy. The col had an elevation of 5350m but our summit was still more than 400m higher and some distance away. The heavy cloud we were then in was sufficient to call for a retreat.

A quick trip down to Yungay then back up the main valley to Huaraz where we replenished food stocks and met up with a party of Seattle climbers. Then back down the main valley and up a side road, piled in the back of a pickup with the Seattle party, to the town of Musho where, after considerable debate and bargaining, we decided to hire a few burros to carry our packs up to base camp. This was one of the best decisions we ever made as two of us staggered upwards with assorted ailments. We followed a well defined and extremely stoney path up through vegetable gardens and eucalypt plantations which finally gave way to the native heather and grass type alpine vegetation, made colourful by flowering purple lupins. The trail just went on and on as it switchbacked up old moraine ridges up seemingly endless slopes. In reality it only ascended about 1300m but to Ehleen and your ailing reporter it seemed a lot more. Then we arrived at "encampamento de baso" (base camp), which was nothing more than a few terraces cut out of the hillside. A gully acted as the garbage dump and toilet, cows plodded around dodging stones thrown by climbers, and by late afternoon the site was occupied by a large Swiss party, the Seattle party, and ourselves going up, an English party going down, and a guardian for the camp of a French party. Base camp did offer a superb view down to Musho and across the Callejon de Huaylas to the jagged Cordillera Negra in the far distance.

Next day we took it easy climbing up the trail a few hundred metres to our next camp just below the glacier at about 4800m. The men carried loads a few hundred metres further up onto the glacier while the women established camp. Later that day we learned that (1) a Canadian girl had just fallen to her death on the peak above us, (2) a Yugoslav had fallen and was lying in a tent at the high camp with broken ribs, and (3), a German climber at the high camp had suspected pulmonary edema. All of a sudden Huascarán had become serious and menacing.

There is no mountain rescue service available but a few incredibly tough Peruvian climbers from Huaraz had formed a crude but effective rescue group. During the week we were there they were in action 3 times bringing down one body and two sick climbers. With no proper equipment they performed feats that few Vancouver climbers could emulate - such as climbing from Musho (3000m) up to 6000m and bringing a person down to base camp (about 4300m) in a day. That evening at our camp they brought down the German climber who appeared to have cerebral edema. Helping them were a New Zealand and Swiss party, all of whose members had lost the will to climb in view of the accidents which had happened before their eyes.



North peak of Huascarán from the east (Llanganuco Valley),
Photo - M. Feller.



North peak of Huascarán from the west, from the 5100m camp,
Photo - M. Feller.

It took considerable will power for some of us to continue upward under the circumstances, but up we continued the next day, another short one, as we camped just beyond our dump on the glacier, at about 5100m. The Seattle party camped about 50m below us. The next day we continued up to the 5400m camp below the icefall - the most technically difficult part of the climb. The glacier had been an extremely interesting climb with all sorts of things to look at. The route had passed through a maze of gullies and ridges, around, in, and out of crevasses, and beneath huge icicles. The 2 peaks of Huascarán looked more impressive and icy the closer we got.

A rest day was declared at the icefall camp. Despite our short hauls on the previous days, the intense sun on the glacier had been tiring us considerably, necessitating a hasty retreat to the tent each afternoon. At the icefall camp we finally met up with Bill and Cathy again. Bill had teamed up with another Canadian climber and had just climbed the North Peak of Huascarán as the standard route up the higher South peak was out of condition. We also met up with Bob Wilson again. Our plan was now for Bill and friend to climb the South Peak via the impressive west rib - down which the Canadian girl had fallen and down which 3 French extreme skiers had just skied with complete downhill gear - a toothpick would shrivel up at merely the sight of this route! The other 5 of us and Bob would go for the North Peak.

Next day we packed up through the icefall - a dangerous place with towering ice cliffs and seracs menacing the route and hidden crevasses everywhere. As the Peruvian rescue group lowered the body of the Canadian girl down the icefall we climbed up, helped by some fixed ropes put in by another party. A couple of pitches of 50-60° good hard snow and green ice then we were up. A tricky crevasse to cross, a few hundred metres more, then we were at the 6000m high camp just below the Garganta, the icy col between the North and South peaks. While we were doing this Bill and friend had climbed up the west rib to the South Peak emerging back onto the rib just before nightfall. They descended, on fixed belay, to a convenient crevasse which had been used as a bivy site by several parties. There they bivied for the night, as they had planned to do in advance.

The next day they descended to our camp while we set off early for the North Peak. At around 6300m the clouds arrived - for the first time since we had been on the mountain. The climb up from the Garganta was straight forward, but moderately steep in spots as a couple of steps had to be negotiated. Powder over ice characterized the ground. It was a crampon day. We finally got above the steep slopes onto the flat summit ridge at about 6620m. At this point Evelyn decided to react violently to the sleeping pills she had taken the night before and was unable to continue. I remained with her as the others climbed the extra 30m to the summit. We heard them on the summit but visibility was only about 20m. Frustration. Obviously a "gimme".

Back they came and down we descended to camp which had become rather crowded as the Swiss and Seattle parties had arrived. The next day we descended all the way to base camp, then out to Musho and Huaraz the following day. En route we learned that some Swiss had come down with pulmonary edema and later another solo Swiss climber had fallen to his death down a crevasse. Back in Vancouver our stories did not deter Len Soet who later climbed Huascarán, mostly solo.

A hearty whole broiled chicken con papas fritas and several deserts later in Huaraz, we furiously trotted our way back to Lima, body searches at the airport (some of us anyway), then home, except for Cathy who stayed on for a few weeks so she could be robbed of most of her possessions in the Cordillera Huayash, and be carted off to jail in Huaraz for not having any I.D. Eso es la vida.

PARTY: Ehleen and Erich Hinze, Cathy Baxendale, Bill Maurer, and Evelyn and Michael Feller (reporter).

OFF PEAK

BROKEN ISLANDS KAYAKING

November, 1981

Driving westward on November 10th, over a winding road awash with rain, through waterfalls plunging to the pavement from cliffs above, with gusts of wind rocking the car, I wondered if anyone else would show up. (And if so, why?)

Next day, in the rain, I found a VW van at Toquart Bay, with Wyborns and Kleppers inside. I joined them. By early afternoon there were seven of us, bobbing around and paddling. The weather wasn't so bad: A bit of rain, a breeze, wavelets. Paddle paddle. We camped overnight on Hand Island, after paddling around it to the least convenient beach. Excitement for the evening was provided by Koss, who went out to play in the waves and managed to capsize his klepper. He grinned sheepishly and dripped by the fire. The youngest member of the group added more excitement by casually tossing an empty cigarette lighter into the campfire. K A - B O O M !!

On the 12th, we packed up and prepared to push off in waves that rejoiced in roaring up the beach carrying loads of sand, small rocks, and broken shells, then leaping up and jumping into our boats with the whole mess just as we attempted to launch.

Kleppers are undoubtedly better craft for lengthy sea voyages, for stowing large quantities of gear, for sailing...but for short-term paddling, they prove slower than their sleek fibreglass grandchildren. The party split; the distance grew. Five fibreglass cigars sought a calm gap to duck through to approach our campsite on Turret Island, but gap after gap - as we paddled seaward over bigger and bigger swells - was filled with crashing white violence. We wondered where Wyborns' were, climbed up and slid down numerous 3 to 4 metre swells, then turned around to buck wind and current back to a reported portage, which we paddled over because the tide was very high. Wyborns' were at the campsite already, having gone there directly.

It rained a lot. It blew a lot. We had to put a roof on the campfire to keep it from drowning. We had to stand under a tarp to keep us from drowning. Your editor said "dismal" a lot.

On the 13th some of us went to visit the sea lions, large noisy creatures with halitosis, a lot of teeth, and a nasty habit of charging you in bellowing packs, then diving and eying you silently from behind - about 30cm behind - then diving again with a heart-stopping splash, and tickling the belly of your kayak.

On the 14th it blew so hard that even the keenest of us (B.W., M.M., S.G.) went out only briefly and nearly got blown to shreds. We found a boat with divers, so I climbed aboard and listened to a remarkably uninformative marine weather report.

Later, the same three wearied of standing around the campfire hearing M.F. say "dismal", so we mounted a foot expedition to the far side of the island and spent several soaking hours squelching, crawling, burrowing, and climbing over, under and through the west coast greenery. We became mildly confussed as to direction, and ultimately emerged at dusk festooned with moss, leaves and small branches.

The journey back to Toquart Bay was uneventful, being only moderately breezy. Returning to civilization we learned of the devastation wrought by the storm.

PARTY: Ross and Margriet Wyborn, Brian Wood, Peter de Visser, Malcolm MacFadyen, Michael Feller, Sara Golling (reporter)

BROKEN ISLANDS KAYAKING AGAIN
November, 1982

Two parties of intrepid kayakers arranged to meet at the bleak campsite at Toquart Bay on Thursday morning, (Remembrance Day) to spend a few days exploring the Broken Islands of Barclay Sound, on the West coast of Vancouver Island. The earlier party had camped or motelled locally and were ready to paddle by noon. At about that time, the later party arrived at the bay, having caught the first ferry from Vancouver that morning. The second party was greeted with the sight of a small armada of brightly coloured kayaks lined up on the beach, as if to pose for the front cover of a sporting goods catalogue. In the usual fashion of a BCMC climbing party, the earlier party left without waiting for the later party. Some of the inexperienced kayakers soon blended with the random movement of flotsam and jetsam of Barclay Sound as they circled about trying to get their boats to travel in a straight line. The more experienced kayakers, such as Ross and Margriet, had long since realized that there was little point in spending so much physical and mental energy going around in circles, and had fitted their boats with rudders.

The later party were not perturbed by this undue haste of the earlier party to set off, because two of the party, Malcolm and Lennie, had brought "high tech" secret aids, ie. their windsurfers. They assumed, based on last year's horrifying experiences, that the wind blows strongly at this time of the year in the Broken Islands, and so why paddle when you can sail. However, just in case the wind dropped, Malcolm had brought his kayak and Lennie had brought his open canoe. The preferred mode of transport was to sail the windsurfers and tow the boats which were loaded with gear and food for four days. The boats were intended to be paddled only if the wind dropped, at which time the windsurfer sails would be rolled up and strapped to the boards, and the boards would be towed while the boats were paddled. This provided the second possible mode of transport, which clearly could be a pleasant change after standing on a board. A third possibility, namely sitting in the boat, towing the board, and holding the windsurfer sail was not contemplated seriously, although it is questionable whether any of the three possible modes of transport should have been contemplated at all. This trip was probably going to be a "first" for the Broken Islands, and perhaps the two pioneers would be remembered forever in the Guinness Book of Records. The later party also included three other conventional kayakers, who started off with the windsurfer pioneers, although it was not known who would be fastest. The later party set off about one hour or so after the earlier party, and headed across the sound towards Hand Island via Lyall Point. After travelling only a few hundred metres from the shore the windsurfers found that there was insufficient wind, and so they paddled their boats, and towed their boards. However, they would not give up easily, and tried a different route from the conventional kayakers by keeping to relatively open water to find more wind, and thus avoiding the narrow, normally calm passages between the islands.

The conventional kayakers of the later party arrived at Hand Island for lunch, just as the earlier party was leaving. There were the usual derogatory comments between those leaving and those arriving. The later party waited for the windsurfers, but even after an extended lunch on Hand Island, there was no sign of them. It was assumed that they were travelling more slowly and searching for the elusive wind, or perhaps they had found the wind and were therefore ahead of the party. The later party set off through the relatively narrow passages between the string of islands interconnecting Turret and Hand Islands, and paddled around the northern end of Turret Island, and there met the windsurfers paddling wearily in, having towed their boards most of the way. It was almost dark by the time the later party arrived at the small bay in Turret Island, which provides one of the nicest harbours and campsites in the Broken Islands.

Friday dawned clear and sunny with a moderate breeze. After breakfast the kayakers dispersed in small groups to explore the nearby islands. Malcolm spent the day testing the

winds between the islands away from the sea. At one time he was without his kayak, and used a paddle to get back to camp through the sheltered passages. Lennie took his canoe and windsurfer and tried sailing the open ocean to the west of Benson and Clarke Islands. He was seen by several kayaking parties, a lone figure in black battling the elements and determined to windsurf rather than paddle. Unfortunately the sea was choppy and the wind was irregular and he became more and more tired and kept falling off his board into the frigid ocean. He seemed somewhat relieved when one of the kayaking parties persuaded him against trying to sail to Hawaii, and so he took the slightly easier way back to camp. The sea lion colony on one of the islands was visited by several kayaking parties, each party being welcomed with noisy barking, and the occasional close encounter with the more territorial "bachelor" sea lions, who would bark with fish-smelling breath from a few metres away. From the distance, the general barking and grunting of the sea lion colony reminded me of the sound of small motorcycles racing in the distance. The groups of kayakers headed back to Turret Island in the evening and regaled themselves with stories swapped around a huge campfire.

Saturday again dawned clear with only a light breeze. That convinced Malcolm that he should opt for his kayak, but Lennie was determined to try windsurfing again. Most of the kayakers joined the "mob scene" which paddled out to Effingham Island to visit the site of an old Indian village which has an impressive midden heap of sea shells and bones. After lunch, which was in bright sunshine on one of the small neighbouring islands, some of the party visited the sea lion island again, this time landing on the south side and following the short trail across the island to visit the sea lion colony through the "back door". It was quite amazing to see how quickly the ungainly sea lions could cross their log-cluttered beach to reach the open water, when disturbed by visitors on land. They are certainly not at home defending their territory on land, and very sensibly took to the water to bark abuse at the visitors. Saturday evening found weary groups of kayakers paddling their way back to Turret Island for the last night of the trip.

Sunday was quite cold with mostly clear blue skies and fairly light winds. The party broke camp and straggled back to Hand Island for lunch, leaving the windsurfers to track the elusive wind further out to sea. The kayaking parties would occasionally catch glimpses of their sails, but more often they would see a flash of a paddle blade as they wearily pulled their boards. Everybody finally arrived back at Toquart Bay by mid-afternoon, having spent a few relaxing days in bright sunshine surrounded by the local peaks which carried a light dusting of fresh snow. The diehard veterans of this annual trip claim that this sort of weather is typical at this time of the year, and that the previous year was exceptional. In my opinion, the best indicator of good weather for any trip on the coast is an unfavourable weather forecast, as has been proven on many occasions and documented by Michael Feller.

PARTY: Malcolm MacFadyen and Len Soet (windsurfers), Ross Wyborn, Ehleen and Erich Hinze, Evelyn and Michael Feller, Theo Mosterman, Carol and Brian Thompson, Paul St. Pierre, Sara Golling, and Brian Wood (reporter).

BRITISH COLUMBIA

MT. CUSTER
March, 1983

With bellies bloated with large helpings of soggy pancakes from a local greasy spoon, the party bumped its way along the Silver-Skagit Road towards Ross Lake in optimistic sunshine. The optimism evaporated like white gas on a hot stove when it was found that the Maselpanik Creek Road was not only gated, but also had been ploughed. Whilst the leader was trying to find excuses for relying on hearsay (rather than making a recce like any other responsible leader would have done) a pair of logging vehicles arrived at the gate. Without any ceremony, the driver of one of the vehicles, (from C & H Logging, see BCMC Newsletter May 1982) trustingly handed over the key for the gate and asked that it be returned on Sunday. Optimism immediately bounced back, and the party made its way slowly up the Maselpanik Creek Road which gradually became hemmed in with high snowbanks on each side. Lesser vehicles were abandoned in convenient recesses in the snowbanks, and the more roadworthy vehicles shouldered the extra load. Some cars were better equipped with reliable tire chains and good traction, whilst others relied on the energy of their passengers, and/or the ingenuity of their drivers to assemble a jigsaw puzzle of links and hooks into tire chains. The weekend parking place was finally decided by the Wyborn bus, which had been shedding pieces of tire chains like an exotic dancer in a strip joint. The last piece of link was thrown from the Volkswagen's tires very conveniently in a pullout near the parking place of a log yarding machine. After a late lunch in warm sunshine the party set out across level ground towards some likely looking peaks. The trip schedule said "Custer Ridge" which left a lot of room for imagination and also lots of room to cover up the leader's complete ignorance of the area. To avoid working up a sweat before afternoon tea, camp was made at the end of a level approach, about an hour or so after leaving the cars. After setting up tents in a very scenic campsite, those in the party who were riddled with old-fashioned guilt about such an easy day set off to ski a nearby logged-off area.

At this point it should be added that the party consisted of roughly equal numbers of alpine skiers, ie. refugees from ski lift areas who keep fit by lugging heavy complicated gear about, and Nordic skiers, those skiing purists who delight in overcoming the deficiencies of their simple equipment with superb technique and incredible strength. Needless to say, there had been much discussion that day about the relative merits of each type of equipment, with the discussion sometimes getting quite heated and involving irrelevant (or irreverent) political views. As a true compromising Canadian, the leader insisted on using obsolete bits of each type of equipment. The two divisions of the party felt they had to prove their point by skiing the nearby slope, but the result of the unspoken ski contest was inconclusive. This was because skiers using either type of equipment fell all over the slope, which reflected the deteriorating skiing conditions of the approaching evening. Needless to say, the inconclusive result only spurred the competitors to do better on the morrow.

After an almost alpine start (7 a.m.) on Sunday, the party made its way up sunlit, gentle slopes and gullies towards the likely looking peaks. Whilst the Nordic skiers had the usual advantages of lightness and corresponding fleetness of foot, the cunning alpine skiers deliberately set a steep track to provide unreliable grip for the skinny skins of the Nordic skiers. Nevertheless, due to strong arms developed over years of poor waxing techniques, the healthy light-footed Nordic purists managed to keep up with the elephantine approach of the alpine skiers. Mark, a Nordic skier of unquestionable skill, even had time to lose and to find his contact lens on a potential avalanche slope. Traditional mountaineers may feel that was an unnecessary risk, but it is typical of the "devil-may-care attitude" of this new breed of Nordic skiers who flaunt themselves and their puny equipment on heavily moguled downhill runs at alpine ski areas.

About half way up the peak, Tricia, an alpine skier, decided the day was too nice for skiing and that she would rather sunbathe instead. She justified this position by saying that she was recovering from a heavy cold, but the Nordic skiers seized upon this as a propaganda coup against the debilitating effects of climbing with heavy alpine gear. Because Tricia had earlier admitted that she had a pair of Nordic skis at home, the Nordic skiers could not resist reinforcing the previously argued points.

Meanwhile, back on the slopes, the gazelles at the front, mostly Nordic skiers, had arrived at a saddle overlooking steep slopes quite near to the likely looking peak. The route was disappointingly obvious - down steep slopes and then up even steeper slopes. Now readers, it is here that Nordicism was put to the true test, and it is here that it failed. Your intrepid leader was the first to break rank. One look at the steep and rocky slope downwards, followed by the steep and exposed slopes of the likely looking peak was enough. Because the leader does not regularly flaunt his Nordic gear at downhill areas, he did not fancy practising telemark turns on steep exposed slopes in the back country. This was the excuse the leader gave and, for good measure, he blamed his obsolete "mongrel" equipment. The heavies immediately seized this opportunity to prove their point. With barely a backward glance, Ross, one of the heaviest of the heavies, strode quickly down the slope carrying his skis. One by one the remainder of the heavies followed using their skis as supports on the steep and soft snow. The Nordic skiers watched them go, agreeing amongst themselves that Nordic boots would be dangerous on such steep slopes without an ice axe, and that the downhill run probably would be disappointing anyway. The Nordic skiers stayed at the shoulder whilst the heavies made their way up the exposed slopes and disappeared from view over an impressive looking ridge. The Nordic skiers had their cameras poised for the downhill run but, judging from the erratic progress of the heavies, the run was hardly idyllic. When the clatter of camera shutters had subsided, the Nordic skiers decided that they would turn around and make their "statement" on the snow slopes before the heavies arrived. The slope was rapidly transformed into a complex pattern of interwoven free curving telemark turns which resembled delicate lace work. The fleet-footed Nordic skiers ran back up the slope and completed a second downhill run before the heavies showed at the top of the shoulder. The ski back down to the camp was uneventful, except that the alpine skiers managed to overtake the slower Nordic skiers. There was even time for a snack in the sun whilst the gear was being packed. The leisurely ski back to the cars was uneventful, as was the ride back down the logging road to collect the previously abandoned cars.

The reader may wonder why the name of the peak is not mentioned. There seemed to be some discussion about which peak was climbed, and whether or not it was even in Canada! Some members of the party said it was Mt. Custer, while others felt it was Matsuac Peak. Those on the lunatic fringe even suggested it was International Peak. In the leader's opinion, it does not really matter which peak it was. This is not because the leader did not reach the summit, but because, no matter what the peak is called, he might remember how to get there again. If the name of the peak is omitted, later followers might have difficulties in locating the peak and it should therefore remain relatively unsullied which would be a rarity indeed in the ecological disaster area surrounding Ross Lake.

PARTY: Patricia Daum, Ed Zenger, Margriet and Ross Wyborn, Mark Force, Harold Rydell, Michael Feller, Peter de Visser, Albert Souza, Brian Wood (leader and reporter).

MT. COLONEL FOSTER
June, 1982

This unscheduled trip was more spontaneous than planned, which probably accounts for its success.

The three of us met at Qualicum Beach late in the afternoon knowing full well that we still had a 250km drive plus a five hour pack-in ahead of us that day. Needless to say we hustled. Once on the Elk River trail we well nigh trotted in the hope of making the campsite before dark.

Up at the crack of dawn we hiked to Landslide Lake where the beautiful sunrise announced yet another fine and warm day. Having previously attempted the Colonel via the South Col we decided the North Col to be a better approach. This involved some long and very steep snow slopes where one almost fried in the heat of the mid-day sun. The rock was just as the guidebook promised - rotten and treacherous. As the summit is practically at the centre of the serrated ridge we had to overcome three peaks before reaching it. A combination of traversing and ridge climbing got us to the top some twelve hours after leaving camp that morning. Alex, our young companion was totally flaked out by the time we reached the third peak and had to be coerced into continuing to the summit. He reacted cheerfully and thus climbed his first real mountain. As the mountain has two major peaks of similar elevation about one km apart, it was for a number of years questionable which of the two was the true summit. I was able to put my mind to rest when the precision level I had brought indicated that we were indeed 3 metres higher than the other (southern) major summit.

The log book in the summit cairn had it's last entry dated 1974. Hard to believe that such a picturesque mountain should be so seldom visited. By now we were racing against time and the sun set while we were still down-climbing roped up. Back on the snow daylight was fading rapidly and we were forced to bivouac on a rock ledge. It was the most comfortable bivouac we could have hoped for as the sky was clear and the air was warm. Of course we didn't sleep a wink that night but counted satellites instead. The sky is indeed becoming congested. A few short hours later the eastern sky lit up, as it was the shortest night of the year. Thus we continued our journey downwards at a leisurely pace.

PARTY: Alex Davidson, Geoff Mumford and Alfred Menninga (reporter).

MEHATL IN A WEEKEND
July, 1982

A long drive from Boston Bar one september weekend in 1980 had us near the end of the logging road in Kwiek Creek, where we faced a road junction. Ross decided the left fork was the one for us. This ended about 1km later. After leaving the car we spent over 1 1/2 hours negotiating dense slide alder and devil's club on almost vertical slopes. After another half hour wading through beaver swamps and dense shrubby forest we finally reached the right fork of the logging road - a mere 15 minutes walk from the junction! Ross loved it.

We soon plunged off the road into more dense bush, struggling up beside a creek. Several hours of misery later, with the 5 members of our party spread out over all parts of the valley to avoid a large beaver-caused lake/swamp, the situation began to look grim. After much shouting the party congregated in some willows on a patch of dry ground in the swamp. There we camped.



Mt. Colonel Foster with the summit in the centre,
Photo - G. Mumford.



Looking south from the summit of Mt. Colonel Foster,
with Golden Hinde the highest peak on Vancouver Island (2200m)
just left of centre, Photo - G. Mumford.

After a wet night we set off up the valley again, this time thrashing through dense rhododendron and blueberry thickets, all dripping wet. By the time we reached the meadows at the head of the valley we were so wet and cold that we had to light a fire to get warm and dry. A pleasant climb up moraine and snow had us at a col just beside Kwoiek Peak. There we saw our objective - Mehatl - for the first time, but it was already 2 p.m. on Sunday afternoon. So we retreated to the car, carefully avoiding the route we had taken on the way up and finding, in the process, a reasonable route.

In July 1982 Ross lead another party in to attempt Mehatl in a weekend. This was a large BCMC party of 18 with only one person from the previous attempt willing or able to accompany Ross again. This time we drove up the right fork near the end of the logging road, through a large clearcut, to the end of the road. The loggers are doing a great job converting the forests of Kwoiek Creek into meadows and shrublands since very few trees are regenerating after their logging. A short climb through recently burned slash and we were back in our nightmare valley from the previous trip. There we were greeted by hordes of mosquitoes and blackflies. Each person was followed by a small cloud of them. These clouds provided a strong incentive to keep moving. This, together with our knowledge of the most desirable route, saw us at our campsite from the previous trip, only 1 hour after leaving the car.

The thrash through the rhododendron thickets was just as painful as previously. Instead of being wet and cold, we were hot and being mercilessly attacked by insects. We arrived at the meadows, still partly snow covered, then scrambled up the moraine to our intended campsite - a beautiful heather and boulder bench on one side of the valley. Ross decided there were still too many insects there so took several people with him to another insect-infested campsite on a bluff about 50m higher.

Early Sunday morning we left our almost idyllic campsite to Bill and his British contingent, who had slept in, and the insects. In no time at all we were back at the col beside Kwoiek Peak, looking across the Rutledge glacier to Mehatl and nearby peaks. On the glacier we sorted ourselves out into ropes and assaulted Mehatl by 3 different routes - 2 on the north face and one on the east ridge, none of which were technically very difficult.

On the summit we found records of 3 previous ascents, the first and third by BCMC parties. Our ascent resulted in a doubling of the number of people who had reached Mehatl's summit. This is one of the results of logging road access. Unfortunately, or fortunately depending on one's viewpoint, after a few years when the logging ceases, logging roads become impassable and the areas they lead into become relatively inaccessible again.

There had been considerable controversy over the heights of mountains in the Rutledge Glacier area (see "In the Footsteps of Roy Mason" by Karl Ricker in the 1982 B.C. Mountaineer) so I took along an altimeter and a clinometer to attempt to clear the matter up. Unfortunately while we were on the summit of Mehatl, the summits of most of the nearby peaks were hidden by clouds. However, the summit of Kwoiek Peak appeared once and was found to be higher than that of Mehatl. From the clinometer reading, the known distance between the two peaks, and my altimeter reading of 2635m on Mehatl's summit, one can infer that the height of Kwoiek Peak is 2660m. These heights are reasonably close to the 1979 1/100,000 Lytton mapsheet heights of about 2650m for Mehatl and 2700m for Kwoiek.

We all descended Mehatl by the west ridge as Bill and the British contingent were on the way up. The trip back to the cars was uneventful except for numerous attacks by insects and the attempt by one member of the party to follow our first route up the valley. He left camp half an hour before most of us and reached the cars 1 1/2 hours after everyone else.

PARTY: Maria Burda, Bruce Fairley, Steve Grant, Sev Heiberg, Tom Herbst, Bill Maurer, Cathy and Pauline Baxendale, Tom Moskven, Larry Nicholas, Marcel Py, Mike Thompson, Brian Vezina, Peter de Visser, Jane Weller, Ellen Woodd, Margriet and Ross (leader) Wyborn, and Michael Feller (reporter).



Mehatl viewed from across the Rutledge glacier,
Photo - M. Feller.

NORTHERN SELKIRKS - THE ADAMANTS, SUMMER CAMP
July, 1982

Eleven of us met in the Wheeler Hut at Rogers Pass. This produced an unlikely meeting between three Illinoisians (What are nice people like you doing in a place like this?) who had just returned from an attempt to get into Fairy Meadows, but had been ejected by lousy (dreadful) weather. Horror stories of a logging road about to wash into the west side of the Columbia Reach forced us to ponder the fate of our cars, which we hoped to leave past that section of road for two weeks. Six cars x \$10,000 (two cars brought up the average value) sounded like a heck of a price to pay for a two-week vacation. Consider the alternative, said Ed. With this, a plan was devised to drive up the east side of the Reach to Bush Harbor, chopper several loads, and ourselves into Fairy Meadows, then after two weeks, hike out. The trick was then to meet a boat on the shore of the Reach (If you've ever missed the boat before, boys, don't miss this one!) and like Noah (and Cleopatra) head back to Bush Harbor. Seeing as we're here to write the story, it must have worked.

After a civilized coffee and general tourism in Golden, on day two, we reconvened in Bush Harbor, and carefully parked our cars where this man cutting trees could avoid (1) felling trees on the cars and (2) crushing them with his skidder. (Who is this man?)

The sights from the chopper ride were unbelievable. I kept watching the eyes of the pilot, who seemed to want to close them. The weather had been bad, and the flying business likewise. Now that the weather was good, they were burning rubber, so to speak. (an 18 hour day, you say?) Nonetheless, the pilot had his last pitiful moment discussing price in the middle of this remote meadow, surrounded by nine people with ice axes. Finally, he flew off into the sunset.

Fairies, you said? coming from everywhere. The attack was on. From the left. From the right. Above. Below. Man the stations! Mount the defensive! Some ran. Some stayed and

fought. But wo, the tale is not told until the battle won. The forces were now split. Those who had retreated to the Fortress reveled in peace. Those who continued to fight slowly fatigued, and in time the retreat was complete. The Fairies had won.

The weather was ridiculous. Everyone knows it always rains in the Northern Selkirks. Why was the sun shining? It must be a mistake. Nonetheless, frenzied activity ensued. Peaks were climbed, gourmet meals were eaten by some and envied by others, rain was eventually had, and a few days were spent wandering around in the fog. (Just where is Mount Dismal?)

Alas, all good things must come to an end, and eventually we walked out. This, of course, presented a problem since we had flown in. (How heavy did you say your pack was?). And, of course, trying to find a trail in the dark, while its raining, when you haven't passed that was before, is truly.....(What am I doing here?)

A race to the finish. (Where did that guy say he'd meet us with his boat?) Although the trail, then logging road, almost brought us to the water's edge, after a long day, with a heavy pack, and a number of sore feet, the last few hundred metres of near vertical bush brought wails of anguish, crys of pain, and gnashing of teeth. (Did you have a nice vacation?) After a wait, by some miracle, the boat appeared. (You can't really put us all into that?) Off we went, through the log jams, toward home.

It was a good trip. I'd go again anytime. (Fairies, you said?)

Camped: at Fairy Meadows ACC Hut, and vicinity. A high camp is recommended, however, for serious routes.

Peaks Climbed: Gothics (East Peak of Gothics) NW ridge; Pioneer from the SE, and the NE Ridge (the NE ridge of Pioneer is rated III 5.2, but you can find 5.6, with a mixture of very good and some not so good rock); Quadrant, S rib; Sentinel;



On the Granite glacier beneath Mt. Austerity,
Photo - M. Feller.

Outpost (possibly by a new variation ascending the W face to the col between Spire and Outpost, then along the S ridge to the summit, descent via the NW gully); Gog and Magog; Adamant and Austerity (both via glaciers to W ridges); Colossal S face and E ridge; Cycle; Peak 2680m (Mount Dismal).

weather: 7 days of sun, 3 days of rain, 3 days wandering in the fog.

PARTY: Ed Zenger (Leader), Roman Babicki, Gerard Clement, Michael Feller, Erich Hinze, Dave Hughes, Harold Rydell, Wayne Saunders, Albert Souza, René Torn, and Laura Jasch (reporter).

MT. CHALLENGER
September, 1982

I gazed at the billowing black clouds on the horizon, at the rain that pounded rhythm on the windshield while listening for a confirmed weather report that could justify turning around and climbing back into a cozy bed to catch up on a disrupted sleep. No such justification came. And Brian sounded determined to walk the 23km along a muddy trail in the rain to climb Mt. Challenger....

I am not suggesting that mountaineering is backwards. However, some may have considered it slightly odd had they caught sight of eight climbers early on a rainy Saturday morning looking like they actually wanted to climb something. So "Blow winds and crack your cheeks. Rage, Blow! Ye cataracts and hurricanes spout..."

"Let's go!" said Brian enthusiastically.

Reluctantly I trudged after him. The boredom of trotting along a deadly flat trail was temporarily relieved by (a) various giant Alice-in-Wonderland-type mushrooms and (b) when Brian led us up a steep bushy trail for a little exercise. Deciding that this trail was a good 25° steeper than was outlined in the route description, we returned to the flatter trail.

By 5 p.m. we arrived just below Whatcom Pass. Had the weather censored our vision, we would have been spared the hardship of traversing the giant glacier. But morning dawned surprisingly clear. We had come to an impasse. Mt. Challenger reared skywards with a kind of regal arrogance amid a primeval surf of mist. We had little choice but to go for it.

Challenger Glacier was big and long. And we weaved between crevasses that were large and deep. Peter R. found some steep ice so I laced up my crampons tightly, so they would not fall off. After a while there was no circulation left; shortly, when all feeling was gone from my feet, I was fine. Then we adopted the Euro-American technique of rock climbing in crampons. Bill was especially versed in this matter. As for me, it was ballet like how I could glance up at the proposed route, and, not watching my feet, could trip over a crampon, head first into the snow. This forced me to examine the snow for pink spots that I concluded were either some kind of fungi or tropical punch drink crystals.

After Peter R. had found yet another ice pitch, we decided that these short elevation gains were unnecessary. So we came down and found the 10m rock pitch that led to the summit. A pleasant view from the top of black storm clouds interspersed with various peaks.

The only eventful aspect of the descent was when Harry made multiple attempts at self arrest by pounding the snow with the adze of the ice axe. Apparently this failed to work. We surprised him by informing him that the pick of the axe is now the widely accepted part

of the axe for performing self arrests. Oh yes, and I walked into a wasps' nest where I was formally welcomed by a dozen wasps. My nose swelled up like a balloon for days afterwards. Monday we hiked out.

Perhaps I am suggesting that mountaineering is slightly backwards. Yet despite becoming a dipsomaniac in endless efforts to reach a mountain's highest point, despite the drudgery of long walks through the fickle environs of West Coast rain forests, and despite the bizarre crevasse fields that make every step insecure, one can always find that aerial suffocation and breathlessness after having grunted to the very top.

PARTY: Brian Vezina (Leader), Peter Ravensbergen, Michael Feller, Evelyn Feller, Ehleen bohn, Erich Hinze, Peter Jordan, "Harry", Jenny Smith, and Jane Weller (reporter).

YAK PEAK, SOUTHWEST FACE September, 1982

A short pleasant stroll through one km of slide alder brought us to the base of the south face of Yak peak. Here we unrolled our sleeping bags on a small patch of meadow beside a little pond. Directly above our campsite was a huge playground of low angle slabs. Enticed by these slabs, we spent the rest of the evening rock climbing. Margriet and I climbed up slabs to a crack which splits a short overhang and continued beyond. (Question mark crack 5.0). Peter and Ross climbed 15m to the left of us, joining us at the top of the crack.

The next morning we followed a prominent brownish water line — gully formation on the south west face. We found the climbing surprisingly easy (3rd and 4th class) and pleasant on the polished, white granite. Occasionally we ventured out of the gully and followed cracks, slabs and dihedrals to the right of the gully.

Where the gully steepened serious climbing began. My desire for a chockstone accepting crack led me to a steep left-facing dihedral. To climb it I led up a short steep face directly below the overhanging corner. A crucial #5 stopper placement behind a flake on the face allowed me to relax and study the overhanging crack. After reaching the crack and placing a more secure looking chock in it, I climbed around the corner using a combination handjam and layback technique (5.8 for a couple of moves). Not being expert rock climbers, Ross and Margriet had lots of fun trying to climb the crack. Peter, however, managed to climb it in reasonable style.

On the next lead we climbed diagonally upwards to the right across a slab to another easy left-facing dihedral. This we climbed until a hole in the rock allowed us to cross over to a right-facing diedre which we followed to a tree ledge above. Two more roped pitches brought us to easier ground where we unroped and scrambled to the top. After a leisurely lunch, we descended the easy west ridge and a tree line on the west of the face back to our camp.

Our plans for an early return home faded when someone else's pickup truck blocked our passage home. The truck was stuck in the middle of a creek which passed over the road. We reluctantly searched for another campsite, and cooked what food we had left for dinner. Luckily a tow truck appeared around 9 p.m. allowing us to return home.

First Ascent - Yak Peak, Anderson River area, S.W. face, 5.8

PARTY: Ross and Margriet Wyborn, Peter de Visser and Len Soet (reporter)



Mt. Challenger (the summit is the rocky peak furthest to the left)
and the Challenger glacier,
Photo - M. Feller.



Yak Peak. Route follows gully on face near left skyline,
Photo - L. Soet.



Len Soet on Yak Peak,
Photo - M. Wyborn.

FAIRY MEADOWS SKI CAMP March, 1983

Four skiers left Vancouver on Saturday morning hoping that our planned week of sunshine and powder snow was not going to be adversely affected by the forecast approaching warm front. A fifth member was picked up in Vernon and we made it comfortably to Revelstoke for dinner. Listening to a tape of Joan Baez we were soon over Rogers Pass and crowding into a cheap motel room in Golden. As we ate breakfast next morning, spirits lifted as sunshine lit up the surrounding peaks showing through breaks in the low cloud. We were ahead of the front! Don McTighe was ready with the Okanagan Jet Ranger and by 10 a.m., not only had all our gear in the hut, but had dropped us on Friendship Col, at over 2700m, in still clear but quickly deteriorating weather. A great way to start the week! We climbed up under Damon Peak to get warm, and dug a snow pit to check avalanche conditions. It was very encouraging to find no seriously weak layers, although the top 30cm or so of fresh powder slid rather easily from our test tower. Below that the consolidation was very good and even. Then for our first run, an exciting taste of what was to come in the following days, in powder that blew up into our faces at the low point of each telemark. Gog and Magog made a dramatic backdrop as we skied past in the last of the sunshine. It started snowing as we had lunch, so we got down to organizing the hut, but by late afternoon it had cleared enough to tempt us out on the 200m slope we called Cabin Hill, opposite the cabin. With a north-westerly exposure there was good light for skiing up to 7 p.m., well after sunset. Then in for the first of our gourmet dinners.

Monday morning was grey with intermittent snow, so we felt it best to ski known terrain, and retraced our steps back to Friendship Col. The extra 15cm of new snow was wonderful,

but we were totally whited-out about half-way down and resorted to throwing snowballs to check the angle of the slope through one section. After lunch and a little more work around the cabin it partially cleared so we skied on nearby slopes for the remainder of the day.

A rising barometer (lowering altimeter really!) indicated improvement on the way on Tuesday, so we set out to cross the Granite Glacier to Unicorn Peak; but clouds hung tenaciously over the western peaks and we were forced to stop winding our way through the icefalls as visibility deteriorated. Sunshine at the eastern end of the Adamants beckoned, so after a lunch break we headed for Pioneer Col. The steep col proved too risky to ascend due to about 70cm of fresh snow, but the run back to the hut was excellent anyway. Again we put more tracks on Cabin Hill before dinner.

A cloudless dawn got us up in a hurry on Wednesday with big plans in everyone's head. But within an hour cloud was fast forming around the peaks despite the steady high barometer. Thinking that we had learned from the previous day's weather pattern, we decided the best thing to do was to head up to the eastern peaks, and perhaps cross Gothics Glacier to Gibraltar Peak or Mount Fria. We were wrong - it was socked in at Friendship Col, but on the way down we could see the western peaks clear and sunny today! The day improved again later in the afternoon so we enjoyed some more good runs on Cabin Hill.

Thursday dawned clear and cold at -14°C , and this time it stayed sunny. with Mt. Sir William as the objective we climbed above the cabin to cross the Granite Glacier on a bench between icefalls, and up onto Enterprise Glacier. From this point it seemed better to go over Enterprise Peak as the map indicated there should be a good run down from there to the base of Mt. Sir William (the normal route goes around Enterprise Peak on the Forbes Glacier. As we neared the summit ridge the wind grew stronger and stronger, and was blowing a gale on the summit. We stayed just long enough to absorb and photograph views of Mt. Sir Donald in Rogers Pass, the Clemenceau peaks and Mt. Temple near Lake Louise, then quickly descended to the sheltered north side of Enterprise. Soon we were in beautiful deep powder, some of the tastiest of the week.

The flat glacier at the base of Mt. Sir William was warm and windless, so a leisurely lunch was taken before the climb. A narrow corniced ridge provided an interesting finish to the ascent. Then we skied the 450m face back to our packs at our lunch spot. The snow here was a little faster on this ESE-facing slope. The descent from there, directly down to Forbes Glacier led us into some tricky route finding on the south moraine in flat light, but we found the best route - still a little hairy! - down onto the Granite Glacier and threaded our way across the crevasses back to the hut. Pam had stayed behind today, and had a very welcome dinner ready for some very tired skiers!

Our last day once again dawned clear and cold, so we decided to head for the Gothics Glacier above Friendship Col. Phil and Paul, ahead of the rest of us due to Pam's equipment problems, couldn't resist dropping their packs under Gog and Magog and making an extra run on the slope below them. We joined up again at Friendship Col where some competitive telemarking and cornice jumping livened up the lunch stop. From the col, Pioneer Peak, 600m above, seemed to make the best objective, as other interesting summits such as Gibraltar, Fria or Wotan did not have the added attraction of a good ski run down, instead offering a flat slog across the lower Gothics Glacier. As we ascended, Mt. Sir Sanford finally came into view, very imposing and massive in its winter garb, bringing back memories of earlier BCMC summer camps for some of us. The second or NE summit of Pioneer Peak made the most suitable ski-mountaineering objective, and we sat on top in warm, almost windless, conditions, noticing, without concern - for this was our last day - that there were signs of the weather breaking. The final runs down to the hut were again memorable, although now we had to choose the terrain to ski a little more carefully to stay in powder as the sun and wind were beginning to form crusts on south-facing and exposed slopes.

We set up the radio that evening but were unable to make contact with anyone until Saturday morning, when we were picked up in Vancouver! They relayed our conversation to Golden, and with Don McTighe's arrival time confirmed, we squeezed in a couple more runs on Cabin Hill.

The Banff Alpine Guides group, coming in to Fairy Meadows as we left, thought we were joking when we said that the area was skied out. I hope they had some fresh snow! By early Sunday morning everyone was home, after a superb week.

PARTY: Pam Mellows, Wayne Saunders, Phil Kubik, Paul Kubik, and John Gray (Leader and Reporter).

COLUMBIA ICEFIELDS, OR "ROCKY MOUNTAIN MADNESS" April, 1983

The Ice Age glittered under a sky that was predominantly grey, interspersed with several black patches. Spilled out on that chunk of ice known as the Columbia Icefields were found a mind-boggling assortment of real world refuges and would-be mountaineers. Strangely enough, the attraction to this motley group was an assembly of vertical domes and pinnacles found within a day's march of the edge of the glacier. Stuffed into these peoples' packs was eight day's worth of food and gear. Most had mountaineering skis. The clever ones donned nordic gear. All were clothed in the latest absorbent goretex fashion - ubiquitous, reminiscent of the 80's. Some wore masks and reflecting eye pieces to scare off the mountain demons. There was no leader of the team - the original leader had gone a bit too far the previous week while testing "air time" near Mt. Overbord.

Nevertheless, an impromptu fusion of eight people set out. To say that there were a million laughs, a thousand groans, and some incredible scenes thrown in would certainly be an understatement. The act went as follows:

The air was keen, the adrenalin healthy. I resigned myself to the fact that my pack was disposed to be heavy, that the sky was disposed to be grey. Bindings creaked, wind whistled through my poles. Wayne muttered something about Hawaii. No other noise. One ski forward, then the other. Unfailing attention was required for the task. One moment we would behold stupendous ice hanging overhead, tottering seracs, yawning abyss. Then a mist would envelop all. Once the ground opened up beneath my skis to reveal a hole so black that my eyes could hardly fathom its depths. After walking a while in the clouds, we pitched camp at 2400m over a crevasse (we learned this only upon the ski out eight days later).

The next morning I got up the nerve and poked my head out into the reality. I paused and look upwards in disbelief. Still only partially believing, I eventually became aware that the whole face of things had completely changed - for me, at any rate. Absolute blue and pure white were the colours. I saw by Wayne's expression that it had changed for him too. Robbie grinned through his barbarous tangle of hair. Peter exclaimed what a good looking guy he was, Mary deigned Irish, her blue eyes flashing, while Helen's laugh bounced off the nearby mountains. Albert showed serious signs of life, and Harold emerged from the tent looking as bizarre as any objective form has been to my subjective eye. We were ready for action.

By afternoon we had established a second camp at 2840m at the base of Snowdome within sight of Columbia, Castlegar and North and South Twin. Then, as the day evaporated, we skied up that hump of snow known as Snowdome. All in all, it was a place somewhat agreeable despite the cold (-20°C), the heavy trail breaking up, and the wind slab crust which formed as soon as one wanted to ski down. Anyway, the views were magnificent. By late afternoon,

the icefields would dazzle us with strange effects (was my mind being numbed as the oxygen supply diminished?) Acoustics and hallucinations were sent diagonally across echoing peaks. The ski was clear, chilly, and blue. By evening the sun became superbly crimson.

Mt. Columbia was on the agenda the next day. Enthusiasm was stirred fairly early. I began trail breaking towards the base of the mountain, and was soon lost in the endless rhythm of the slog, only occasionally stopping to catch my breath and assess the weather. Although the sky at first was blue, imperceptible vapours soon rose up from the glacier below and turned to cloud. Mt. Columbia blinked in and out of these mists. It was a windy, lifeless place of undeniable beauty. All the while, Columbia lured us towards it. Then, like a mirage, it kept fading and blended into the distance as we approached. By about 4 p.m. we realized the summit could not be attained that day. I think I heard a sigh of relief from a few: the face certainly was fearsomely plastered with fresh snow. We turned back. Suddenly, something was going on with my body, as if the jet engine on my skis was out of gas. And the turboprops were failing.

Unfortunately, there is a certain cockyism among climbers. The "cocky" climber has been defined for us by Sir Martin Conway as "one who cares nothing for secondary peaks" I had entertained a cocky certainty of success, but fate can conspire to rob you of your ambitions. Maybe these improbabilities are what add spice to mountaineering. You can never assume the final outcome. Anyway, there I was, staggering and panting back to camp. Man! This cough is bad news! Dejected with my own sufferings, I watched my partners roar up Mt. Kitchener the following day. My summit bagging desire had lost its violence. Everything felt like an effort. I only hoped that I would recover sufficiently by the next day to ski up the Twin Spires. But by the next day my body became a living protest to what was happening to it.

For the others, marathon peak bagging was the new premise which was to propel them up the North Twin, 8 kilometres away. Stutfield if time allowed. Then South Twin on the return journey. They were an eminently rational bunch. Well, at least the summit of North Twin was found despite the white out and the tedious hours of slogging. An unforgettable ski down through breakable crust...

Eventually I decided to give up the pointless fight with pulmonary edema, and, feeling like I had just climbed Everest twice or something, decided to ski down with Wayne and Robbie. (The others would spend another day lounging around on the glacier) I smeared on the 10th coat of glacier cream, ate a tea bun and raspberry cream cheese and roped up. Skiing downhill roped up is not an enviable pastime. As I would be taking a moment's breath, Wayne would try his hand at ballet speed skiing. I would see a blur of rope and skier fly by me, then would dive after him. Ass, head, denting the snow, flying powder. We fell, rolled, and finally skied a brief but exhilarating unroped 300m to the car.

We met several Winnebago tourists in Hawaii T-shirts at the parking lot. "you gotta be nuts, you know?" I could hardly argue as I am generally agreeable by nature. After all, who but a fool would agree to go on perhaps the coldest holiday of one's life?

PARTY: Wayne Saunders, Robbie Roe, Mary Prendergast, Peter Parrotta, Helen Row, Albert Souza, Harold Rydell and Jane Weller (Reporter)



Heading forward "The Trench" with the east face of Mt. Columbia in the background, Photo - W. Saunders.



Albert Souza descending North Twin with the east ridge of Mt. Columbia in the background, Photo - W. Saunders.

SOUTH CREEK - PEMBERTON ICE CAP SKI CAMP
May, 1983

At 8 a.m. Wednesday morning we mustered at Eldon Talbot's helipad at Pemberton Meadows ready for the flight into the head of South Creek. As the machine whirled off to the north-west the lush green fields of "Spud Valley" spread out beneath us. The weather was so hot and sunny we could almost hear the potatoes growing. Flying up the Ryan River valley it was interesting to see that the loggers had already pushed a road about 28 km up the valley, giving good access to some new alpine areas. We gained elevation to get over the ridge and dropped onto our campsite at the head of South Creek, just up from a prominent rocky knoll at 1800m, on the easterly edge of the glacier. There was a flat spot for the tent and kitchen-dining area, sculpted out of the snow, and a magnificent view all round. It had taken us only 20 minutes to fly in, so we had most of the day before us. We decided to head up the glacier to the south of camp, a steady climb which brought us to a col overlooking the Ryan River. From here we climbed up the south side of a 2500m peak, grid ref. 775904. We think it may not have been climbed before and propose the name of Ski-run Peak, for which it is admirably suited. The late spring snow was enjoyable skiing, with the temperature dipping below freezing every night.

Thursday: The sun was slowly creeping down the glacier toward camp as we took off, climbing gradually up the broad snow-field to the west, swinging north around the high ridge on our right. Following up a hard icy slope we had a look at the south-east side of Overseer and decided it was a good snow climb but did not offer much skiing, so we skied back down. At this point Howard, having boot trouble, opted to return toward camp, while I pursued the standard ski route on the north side, passing Gerard on his way down. Gerard then went on to climb Spidery Peak.

Friday: The long rim of peaks on the sky-line west of camp attracted us that day as we followed our tracks up the glacier and around in the direction of Overseer again. While Howard went off to explore to the west and Gerard climbed up the snow-slope directly to the north of Peak 2470m, I could not resist the early morning hard-packed snow and skied down the glacier before turning west to climb the flat-topped peak almost opposite Overseer's west face. I then climbed the steepish ridge to Peak 2470m and connected with Gerard's tracks over to Peak 2590m. We had seen that the steep east face of this had peeled off in a slab avalanche the day before. An attempt to ski down it resulted in the face sliding again so we took the safe way and skied between the rocks on the left to the bottom. High cirrus clouds were beginning to appear from the west but it was still only lunch-time, so there was time to ski the 2600m peak to the south, grid ref: 715938. Although it was a wind-blown rocky summit there was no cairn. Gerard had already built one by the time I arrived and we wondered if this could also be a first ascent. We proposed the name Snow-Maiden for this peak because of its pristine, virginal beauty.

By now the clouds were rolling in and visibility was becoming changeable, so we enjoyed an evening run down to camp, where Howard already had the soup-pot bubbling. After supper it was obvious that we were in for some weather; our fervent hope was that it would snow and not rain.

Saturday: The one bad weather cum rest day mostly took the form of white-out periods with glimpses of sun, cold gusts of wind and light snow-flurries, with enough breaks to get out and prepare meals. A good day to let blisters heal and dry out inner boots.

Sunday: Being the last day we were determined to get an early start given good weather. Fantastic - the sky was absolutely clear; there was a dusting of fresh powder on the hard-frozen base. This was the perfect opportunity for some downhill skiing. As Gerard and I went up to the col under Peak 2530m, Howard headed south-west to explore the ridge



The North side of Overseer from Spidery, Photo - G. Clement.



Skiing down from the col below Peak 2530m with
Photo - G. Clement.
Mt. Overseer on the right skyline,

overlooking the headwaters of Ryan River. This was glacier skiing at its best. After two idyllic runs down the "South Glacier" it was regretfully time to go back to camp, eat lunch, pack and whirly-bird back to civilization.

PARTY: Gerard Clement, Howard Rode and Pat Crean (reporter).

MESLILLOET MULTI-MODAL
July, 1983

Canada Day. Raining. Robin and I ride our bicycles through skid row. The street people are performing their rituals - we are performing ours. But with a twist; we are cycle tourists looking for mountaineering adventure.

At Deep Cove we met the water taxi to take us up Indian Arm. Seeing spectacular Indian Arm for the first time was well worth the \$40 charter - too bad no one else came to share it. The weather improved to partly sunny as we unloaded the bikes at the Indian River logging road. We drifted north-west for several hours on the excellent road, meeting only a few 4 WD's .

The Meslilloet Creek branch road took us up to 450m where we hid the bikes in what's left of the woods, re-arranged baggage, and hiked on up to the end of the road. It ended even closer to where we wanted to go than was shown on the map. The rain returned. After a bit of steep slash flopping we started thrashing up the stream that drains the two lakes in the valley NW of Meslilloet. Cliffs pressed in from the left - the booming waterfalls to the right could not be forded. We prayed for a miracle. Look - a piece of survey tape in a tree! And a narrow, steep route was found up through waterfalls and under overhanging cliffs to the first lake. No flat ground, so we leveled some snow, and crawled soaked, dirty and shivering into our soggy nylon hovel.

As you know, it rained all night, and all day Saturday. But we had an altimeter that showed rising pressure, and I figured that we could climb the peak on Sunday and still catch the train home from Squamish the same night. I was almost right. The rain stopped Saturday evening, so we went to the upper lake to look for a way through the cliffs stretching between the lakes and the upper mountain. A snow-filled 300m gully directly south of this upper lake looked steep, with an impasse near the top, but possible. The next gully to the east looked possible, but the fog never cleared out of the top of it. The only other alternative was to go east onto Meslilloet's 2km square icefield - but we had no proper rope. It also appeared that there were only one or two ways onto the summit ridge itself, as it's north face is another 1km long band of impressive granite cliffs.

Sunday morning was foggy, but with an optimistic altimeter we left camp at 8 a.m. and began climbing the snow gully. It was as steep as we feared, and Robin had his first opportunity of the day to regret not bringing an ice axe. The discontinuity at the top was avoided by a narrow ledge that took us out onto the minor ridge to the west of the gully. An easy snow plod angling SW put us onto the summit ridge. Meslilloet is big. Its base is about 40 sq. km. We were still almost 2km from the top, and 400m below the 2000m summit.

Getting there was far harder than we expected. Culbert class 3 to 3+ on and on. Creeping up steep wet heather with deadly exposure. Huge cornices to stay off. Jumping from cantilevered snow over deep bergshrunds. Another and another fearsome sub-peak looming out of the clouds. The dreaded "Chin" guarded by the seemingly impassable "nose". Cutting steps part way across a steep, exposed snow slope, only to freak out and retreat; try again and succeed. More slippery ledges, hand-over-hand up the soaking wet krummholtz, having to boost one another out of a bergshrund. Every time we thought we could not go any further, there appeared some thread of a way to continue.

So eventually we made it to the excellent cairn. No summit record except for pebbles arranged to say 1978. A few views as the clouds came and went. The south ridge (standard route) looked interesting. A quick lunch, a dose of Jones Town Mix to screw up our courage and we started down. The route was so long and complex that we could not remember a lot of the dodging around, so we wasted a lot of time exploring dead-end ledges, etc. A compass helped, but the fog did not. Future parties should use marking tape - or a rope. Down and down. The gully was more hospitable with softer snow, and we reached camp, happy and relieved at 3 p.m.

A quick-pack up, as we had a train to catch. The waterfall bushwhack seemed a cinch after the terrors of the summit ridge. Thank God for the tapes. The sun reappeared as we reached the road. We wrung out our socks one last time.

Back to the bikes, re-pack, and we coasted pleasantly down to the main Indian River road. Reaching the pass to Squamish was an epic. The road climbs back up to around 800m. We were too tired to ride up the steep grades, and the gravel was too rough anyway - so we pushed the bikes for about 5km. It took so long that the goal changed from catching the train to getting out before dark. But the scenery had that special beauty it has when seen from a bicycle. Sounds of evening calls from birds and rushing water. Alpine swamps at the divide. Except for one pick-up, we had it all to ourselves. Habrich and Sky Pilot were both stunning and welcome sights in the sunset.

The road got better and better, except for steep sections we crept down, brakes jammed on, hands sore, and rims overheating. Standard 69cm (27") tires aren't the best thing for loaded 10 speeds on logging roads. A final swooshing rush down smooth clay past the Chief to the Squamish Highway at 10 p.m. and the Meslilloet Multi-Modal was in the bag. A two year old dream accomplished. We put lights on, rode laughing into Squamish, and phoned a friend to come get us with the Dogcar.

It's possible this is a new route on Meslilloet. We also haven't heard of anyone cycling from Indian Arm to Squamish before. Is there something wrong with a point system that gives 0 for this trip? It's hard to say if less snow would make the climb easier, but the bush would be much worse. During avalanche season, the route would be a death trap above treeline. The Forest Service in Squamish can tell you how the road is - they call the area "impenetrable" because the road is washed out more often than not, and is a 4WD road at best. With bicycles, you can do it as long as the main bridges are O.K.

PARTY: Robin Tivy and Steve Grant (reporter).

MONARCH MOUNTAIN - APE LAKE SUMMER CAMP
July - August, 1983

1. APE LAKE AREA

Conditions at the high camp near the base of Mount Jacobson were generally foul as wind whipped the slushy snow into thick drifts on all the ledges and several centimeters of new snow fell every night. The tops of the highest peaks were lost in the clouds for what seemed like five days of each week.

Mind you, the flying weather was always nice. The sun often shone on the lake and the 2500m peaks even as the good climbs accumulated wet cement. Some of the impatient souls who had only come for a week set off for high camp soon after they arrived. They did little more than study the insides of their tents for 48 hours before returning to the more civilized camp below. They did attach a great deal of importance to a small bump climbed in the fog but they were vague about its precise location. Our second party a week later left a cairn on the dramatic tooth that towered about 100m above the crapper.

with such spectacular weather to climb in our attention naturally turned inward to the finer details of camp life. The absence of a camp cook was repeatedly discussed in loud voices. Fortunately the warming tent was flown in along with a small stove to give us some solace on the rainy evenings as everyone spent two hours making and eating a meal. Unfortunately the special tent poles were forgotten and some stubby substitutes left everyone over 120cm tall with a slight stoop. After three straight days of rotten weather, with about eight parties hunched over cooking supper on top of each other, Robert Coupe attempted to entertain us by setting fire to himself and to Tony Clayton. Robert, who was later absolved by unanimous consent, poured white gas on a burning stove and then dramatically clamped his hand over a now flaming gas bottle. After a tiny pause he placed some gas in the wood pile, some on the ground, a good deal on Tony and a bit on the end of his nose for effect. He and Tony then exited to shouts of excitement from the dinner audience who then threw soup, wieners and sand all over the tent. Robert's dignity was severely damaged, little else.

Matters could only improve and they did. Sporadic sunshine and high cloud gave us beautiful mornings and worsening afternoons and we used them to climb every surrounding bump and to take long walks to the nearby ridges and icefields. The camp was blessed repeatedly by Rev. Gary Gordon who held a delightful looking Mass in camp from time to time and on nearby summits when he reached them. Several parties reached the north summit of Mt. Fyles by the ice falls and by the northwest ridge. The peak stands to the west of Fyles Col and seemed to blow clear of clouds more easily than the others.

On the final day of the first week Jim Craig and his son William, Rev. Gary Gordon and Denis Bruneau made an early start on a spectacular cloudless morning to try East Jacobson from the lake. They crossed over in the two borrowed canoes we were using and set a route up past the high camp, around behind the west peak into a col that lies between the two. Here they found the heavy snow in a nasty way; avalanches were frequent and the going was heavy. At five p.m. Jim and William waited about 100m below the summit while the others completed the trip. Attempting a return by a tongue of ice descending from the glacier to the northeast of the peak they were overtaken by nightfall and hiked down the snowfields instead to spend a buggy night in the bush.

Every night the glacier released a collection of seracs into the lake with a thunderous boom and an impressive wave. As the first group packed up for the flight out a wall of ice crashed into the lake raising a wave that swept away the cooking fires and collapsed the warming tent before the eyes of the two brave souls who meant to stay another week. They then and there almost didn't.

Four more climbers came in for a repeat of the first week's weather and also spent time at high camp playing scrabble. On a return trip to Fyles the south spire was climbed as well to give us what the Alpine Guide claims is the complete ascent. Day hikes to the inaptly named Poet and Musician - Michael Margolick dubbed them Mount Crumble and Tumble - gave us excuses to be happily out playing in the spectacular scenery. A bald eagle, a grizzly, a black bear and many marmots were seen. Goats were about. A herd of mice, including one that was inadvertently air-dropped into high camp, kept us company day and night.

The Monarch assault team arrived early to spend a quiet day by the lake before we all flew out to the cloudless and hot summer weather at Nimpo lake. We said hello to John Clark who had been waiting six weeks for a stretch of decent weather to do a crossover from Rivers Inlet to Knight Inlet. Joining the crossover skiers at dinner and in a campground singsong we attempted to dally as long as possible on the way out to Vancouver.

PARTY: Marsha Ablowitz, Joyce Davies, Nelie Johnson, Tom Moskven, Maria Burda, Michael Margolick, Duke Shoebottom, Tony Clayton, Jacquie Annette, Jim Craig, William Craig, Brendan Moss, Roy Slakov, Pam Mellows, Julian Lash, Rosemary Coupe, Robert Coupe, Lisa Baile, Peter Paré, Gary Gordon, Denis Bruneau, Bob Nelson, Paul Kubik, Rosanne Konrad, Audrey Winch, Albert Souza, and Gary Marcuse (reporter).



The Jacobson Peaks from the South. West Peak on the left and East Peak on the right,
Photo - W. Saunders.

2. SUCCESS LAKE - APE LAKE TRAVERSE AND MONARCH MOUNTAIN

The Cessna and Beaver float planes dropped us (10 people) off at Success Lake by 2 p.m. Sunday afternoon. Ed and Randy were chilled to the bones after completing 3 food drops, one east of Erewhon Mountain, one at Monarch - Page Col and one on the South Horseshoe glacier near Throne. On Sunday afternoon the party hiked to a swimmable pond 2 1/2 hours above Success Lake.

The next day dawned rainy, but the weather cleared by 10 a.m. and we started the approach to the high camp. Ed found a route up crumbly ice through the icefall to the North Horseshoe glacier. This icefall convinced even Dave to leave his skis behind. Doug and Bob set up an aesthetic camp in the middle of South Horseshoe glacier north of the magnificent Throne Peak, while everybody else camped near the rock ridge between the Horseshoe glaciers. When we collected the air drops we discovered that all the fuel cans had burst. Luckily some people carried extra fuel up and we found a nice water pond near the camp. On day 1 in this camp a large group hiked up to Queen-Monarch Col (view Zero). On day 2 Geoff, Tricia and Ed climbed Serf via the NW ridge (mixed visibility). On day 3 Geoff, Ed, Doug, Bob and Dave climbed Queen (view zero) about 2 1/2 hours from the col.

During these 3 days it snowed about 20cm and a strong wind ripped the McKinly tent fly which was later sewn with dental floss and thread. The weather, in the evening on day 3 seemed to improve somewhat and Dave tried to excite everybody about an attempt on Monarch for the next day. Nobody else seemed to be too serious about it because there was probably 30cm of fresh snow on the East Face glacier which was, therefore, very avalanche-prone. Anyway, the weather was clear the next morning and Dave got everybody up, but we couldn't see Doug and Bob out on the glacier. We were ready at 5:30 a.m. when we spotted Doug and Bob near the col. They had left at 4 a.m. and had made very comfortable steps! The view up on the col was super. The ridge over to Monarch was very corniced and the two rock steps plastered

with ice and snow. Geoff and Ed stopped halfway along this ridge to talk the avalanche situation over and to wait for Kandy and Dave. "Hey Dave, I think it is very avalanchey up there." "Yes it is" was his reply as he continued up. We dashed to the rocks above the glacier and felt good to clip into a solid piton. Shortly after we heard a bang as the face avalanched. The fracture came within 3m of our tracks. We used the rock for protection and climbed on snow and ice. All arrived about the same time on the peak, 8 hours from camp. The view was excellent and we could see our future route towards Ape Lake. The downclimb went very smoothly as the snow started to freeze a bit. We were back in camp at 6:30 p.m. - a 13 hour day.

Saturday was again clear. We descended the glacier, rapelled over the icefall and arrived at the pond to enjoy swimming and bathing. Dave, Kandy and Roman prepared to fly out. On Sunday morning Doug and Bob saw threatening clouds to the west and they elected to fly out as well. By 7:30 a.m. the rest of the party began the traverse by crossing 2 steep moraines to reach the Talchako glacier carrying ski equipment. By 12:30 p.m. we arrived at the snow line at 1800m on the glacier and put on skis. It was a long slog across the Monarch Ice cap, with Ed leading to a rock outcrop near Erehwon Mountain and the food cache. It was 8 p.m. - a long day.

John and Ed went to look for the food cache and then saw the camp of the party traversing from Ape Lake. Nobody was at the camp and one tent had blown away about 7m. They fixed up the tent and discovered that the food cache had been collected by the other party. The next day was stormy and snowing heavily at times. We made a trip to the other camp in the evening, but couldn't find anybody there. We started to worry. It was still snowing on the second day when the others returned from a lengthy climb and bivouac on Cerberus. On the third day it snowed again. That night the tent fly ripped again. Geoff's idea, to put it up inside worked very well. After about 30cm of snow in 3 days the weather started to improve on the fourth day so we headed towards Ape Lake. It was a gentle downhill grade to the top of Jacobson glacier and then a brief uphill to Mongol - Jacobson Col. The views of Cerberus, Chili Tower to Ogre and Jacobsons were great.

We expected to retrieve our last food cache near the col, but to our dismay and contrary to good mountaineering ethics, the cache had been raided by other B.C.M.C.er's!! We were extremely UPSET!! The next day at Ape Lake we were even more upset when we were offered our Swiss chocolate and honey by two of the Ape Lake party and were told how good our food was. From the food cache site we carried on down skiing roped up through bad snow with crevasses everywhere and with heavy packs to reach Ape Lake at 8 p.m., 12 hours from Cerberus Camp.

PARTY 1st week only: Doug Herchmer, Bob Kandiko, Roman Babicki, Dave Hughes, Randy Enomoto

PARTY both weeks: John Cumberbatch, Jan St. Amand, Geoff Mumford, and Tricia Daum and Ed Zenger (reporters)

3. APE LAKE TO SUCCESS LAKE TRAVERSE

It was 10 p.m., we had descended a few pitches below the 3000m summit of Cerberus - Our bivy site was a 2 square metre pocket at the base of a 6m gully. Above the gully the wind raged across the South ridge. Five of us squashed together, shivering, cursing the cramps in our legs. The night was desperately cold. Mountaineering so often allows us to luck out on our judgement errors. We complete ascent after ascent without difficulty. Our judgement, like protection never tested by a fall, gets sloppy. The slope didn't



The east face
of Mt. Monarch,
Photo - E. Zenger.



Monarch Mountain from the South Horseshoe glacier, Photo - E. Zenger.



On the summit of Monarch, Photo - E. Zenger.



The west face of Monarch Mountain, Photo - W. Saunders.



The Queen from the South Horseshoe Glacier, Photo - E. Zenger.

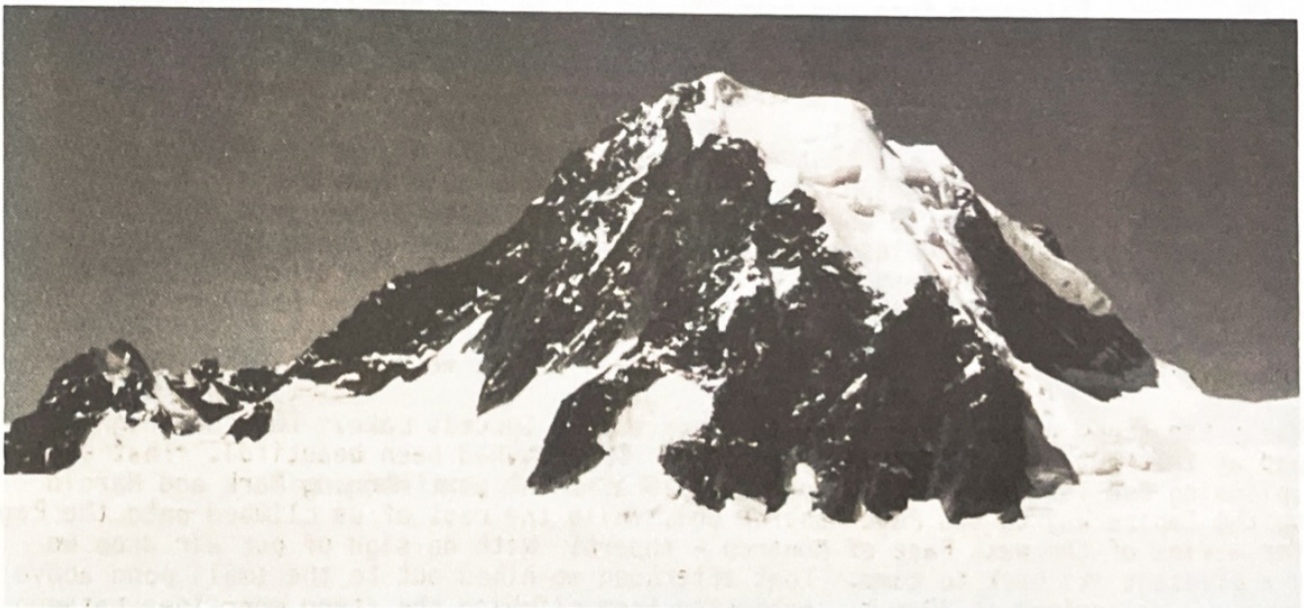
avalanche, the route did go, the weather did improve. We didn't fall into a crevasse so we really didn't need to rope up. Mountaineering is a real game where we each establish the limits of risks we are willing to take, but occasionally we are exposed to risks far beyond our intentions.

Our trip started well enough. The air drops went largely as planned with supplies dropped in the Queen/Monarch Col, Monarch/Page Col, Erehwon/Dagon Col, Jacobson/Mongol Col, and at the Griffin/Snowside col. With supplies in every col we were certain to complete the traverse and climb at least 6 major peaks. After flying in to Ape Lake we had our first night of rain. The rain subsided by mid morning and with the help of those in base camp we paddled across Ape Lake to the moraine at the foot of the Ape Glacier. The next 7 hours were spent carrying our supplies on skis up to the Jacobson-Mongol Col. We arrived at the col in a complete whiteout and camped at the base of Lucifer to wait out the storm.

Two days later Bob had had enough of our company and with the six other climbers we had joined in the col, retreated to the base camp at Ape Lake. The next day we awoke to clear blue skies. Elated we packed and set off to climb the Jacobsons. One half hour after leaving camp the clouds settled in around us. Not wanting to spend another day in the tent we continued, leaving wands to mark our way as we skied to the base of the south ridge of East Jacobson. One pitch up on the face of the ridge and the rain and heavy sleet started. We returned to camp at 8 p.m. soaked, tired, but glad for the exercise.

The next day, Friday, dawned clear. By noon we had burned all the garbage in the Jacobson/Mongol Col and were on our way to the Erehwon/Dagon Col, the site of our next air drop. It was 10 p.m. when we reached the col. You can imagine the quota of film we had had to use up after four rotten days. The air drop was nowhere to be seen. We set up camp, ate our last meal, and hit the sack.

Saturday was a super day. Up at 8 a.m., not a cloud in the sky. We heard shouts of joy from Mark and Harold as they recovered the first box of supplies. By noon we had tracked down all the boxes. They had been dropped in a straight line about a kilometre in length. While the rest of us wasted the afternoon pampering our blistered feet, Mark and Harry set off for a "recce" of Cerberus. They returned at 6 p.m. enthused by the area's potential. The South Ridge looked easy. "Lets do that tomorrow morning, and climb Basin Peak after lunch". The South Ridge looked too easy but the unclimbed North Ridge was just out of the question with all the new snow.



Mt. Cerberus - the East Face with the South Ridge on the left skyline,
Photo - W. Saunders.

Mark and Mary were up at 3 a.m. and skied by moonlight to the base of the South Ridge. With time to spare they found an interesting 5th class pitch to start off on. The route got a bit hairy so they backed off and found a somewhat easier line. Harold, Harry and I left camp at 6 a.m. on a beautiful morning with a bright red sunrise. We reached the base of the ridge at 8 a.m. Then followed a gully about 200m to the west up onto the ridge where we joined Mary and Mark. For the next hour we scrambled over extremely pleasant class 3 rock. The route was very direct, the rock solid and the climbing seductively easy.

We roped up for the remainder of the climb. Class 4 with occasional interesting moves. Sciron offered us a percussion symphony all day long, as the fresh snow avalanched from its east face. "we'll have to climb that one tomorrow." The route had a narcotic-like effect. Nothing else mattered. We had to reach the summit. Hours passed. Each pitch seemed like it would lead to the summit. At 7 p.m. we reached the foot of the corniced summit. A heavy bank of cloud descended on us. Did anyone bring any bivy gear? "No". Anyone want to dig a snow cover and bivy on the summit? "No". We rappelled down 3 pitches. At 10 p.m. we found a small gully that dropped down the leeward side of the ridge. At the base of this gully we spent a long windy night under a small sheet of plastic.

Morning finally arrived. Below us was a sea of billowing clouds. We chopped the ropes out of the frozen snow. The down climbing was miserable on rock plastered with rime. We climbed below the clouds into the rain and sleet, the slushy mess making the descent even more treacherous. We reached the base of the South Ridge at 6 p.m. The glacier was a complete white-out. The schrund we had crossed so easily the previous day had been washed open by the rain and seemed impassible in the fog. Mark finally located a solid bridge. Once across we retrieved our skis and travelling on a compass bearing, we skied into the white-out. Fortunately, Mary noticed a row of holes in the snow leading down the glacier. They were the holes from our ascent tracks. No sign of the ski grooves, just a dotted line running off into the mist. We followed it for an hour until we got below the clouds, then made a series of frightening descents down the steep slushy slopes of the icefall. Finally out of danger we began our ascent back to camp.

We were exhausted. Our minds began to play tricks on us. In front of me my partner was glowing, my skis were glowing. Gosh even I was glowing. I have often thought of the mountains as heaven but this seemed such short notice. I called a halt and pointed out my observations to the others. Everyone confirmed they were seeing the same thing. Were we all dead? Undaunted we pushed on toward camp, our pace slowed by exhaustion. As we crested the slope a kilometer from our camp it started to snow heavily. You could just about see the skier at the front of the rope. The light from our headlamps merely bounced back at us from the wall of falling snow. Somehow plodding forward with our heads down we had separated from the other rope. The sound of whistles echoed all around us.

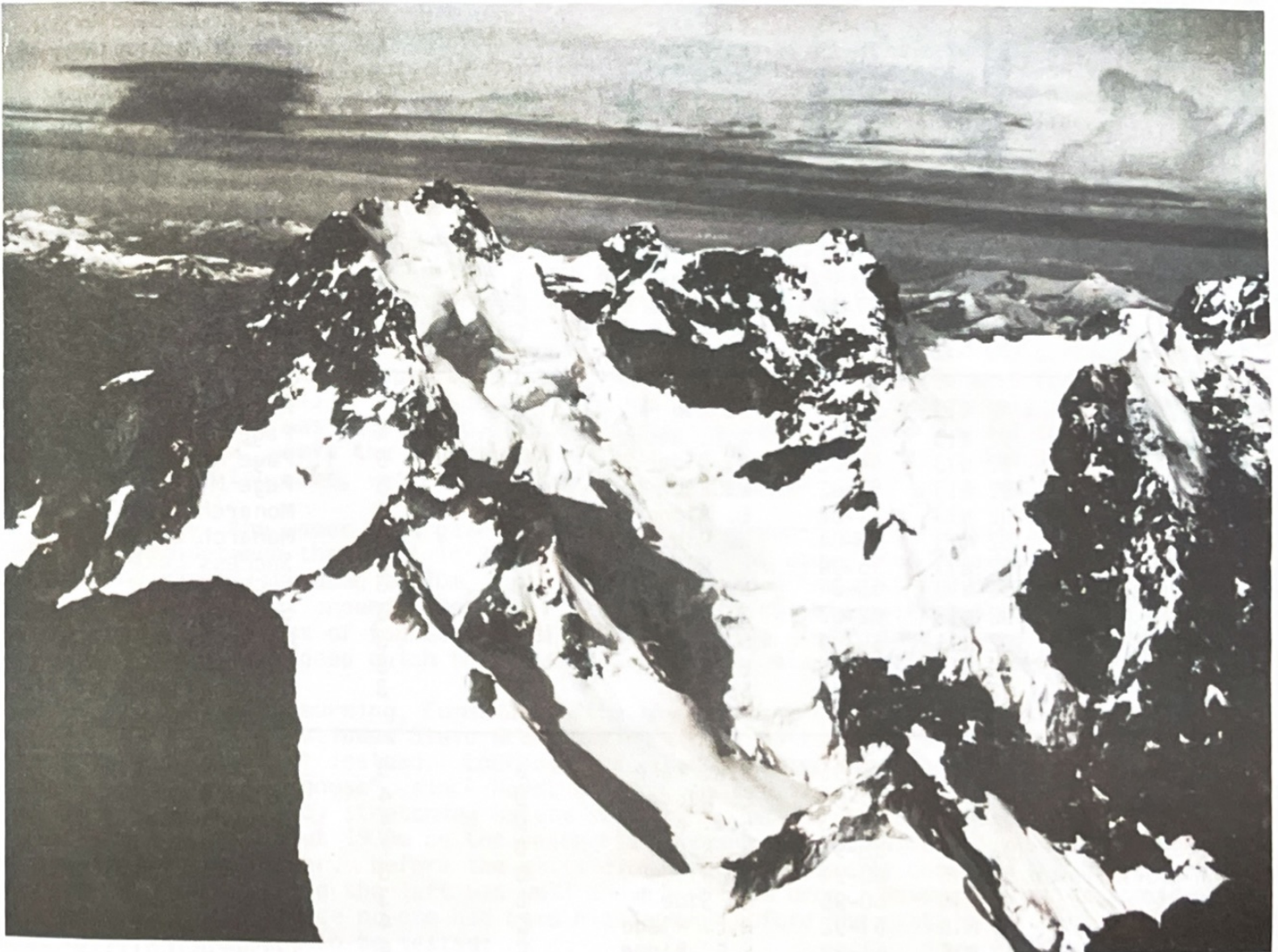
Now soaking wet we had to find the tent - the head lamp caught a dark shape in the distance. We summoned our remaining strength and plowed through the heavy snow. A light appeared in front of us. We found the others' tracks and followed them into camp. It was 10:30 p.m. Our tent was a shambles. It looked like someone had grabbed it and shaken it. As it turned out it had been blown out onto the glacier. Luckily the other BCRC party recovered it while looking for the air drop and re-anchored it. Soup, hot drinks, sausage, anything fancy was consumed. then off to sleep. That night's storm lasted two more days and dumped over 60cm of snow on us. For all our carelessness we were back and safe.

On Thursday the storm abated. We began the trek out to Success Lake. Thursday night saw us camped at the foot of the Empire Way glacier. The day had been beautiful. That evening saw us planning one last attempt at a peak. At 8 a.m. the next morning Mark and Harold skied up the Empire Way to the Page-Monarch Col, while the rest of us climbed onto the Page ridge for a view of the West Face of Monarch - superb! With no sign of our air drop we enjoyed a pleasant ski back to camp. That afternoon we hiked out to the small pond above Success Lake. We arrived at 10 p.m., exhausted from climbing the steep moraines between

the Telchako Glacier and Anarchist Icefall. Up at 5:30 a.m. the next morning we hiked down to Success Lake. By noon we were back at Nimpo Lake. Two weeks and we only climbed one peak.

I've looked at my slides of the trip a dozen times. You don't need to bag a peak every day to appreciate the incomparable beauty of this area. If I hadn't been so set on bagging all 6 major peaks I would have enjoyed it even more. I know I'll return to Ape Lake. I'll be a lot wiser next time. I'll only plan to bag five peaks.

PARTY: Harold Rydell, Mark Force, Harry Kettman, Mary Prendergast and Wayne Saunders (reporter).



The east face of Mt. Sciron, Photo - W. Saunders.

SOME PEAKS AND ROUTES IN THE APE LAKE - MONARCH AREA

PEAK NAME	MAP #	CO-ORD	ROUTE	GRADE	CLASS	BASE CAMP
Jacobson - East	93 D7	71-93	W. Face	C	3	Jacobson/Mongol Col
Jacobson - East	93 D7	71-93	E. Face	D	5	Foot of East Face
Jacobson - East	93 D7	71-93	S.W. Ridge	C	3	Jacobson/Mongol Col
Jacobson - West	93 D7	71-92	N. Ridge	D	5	Jacobson/Mongol Col
Mongol	93 D7	70-89	W. Ridge	B	4	Jacobson/Mongol Col
Oyre	93 D7	67-86	S.W. Ridge	D	4	Jacobson/Mongol Col
Rimmon	93 D7	91-68	S. Side	C	5	Jacobson/Mongol Col
Satan	93 D7	66-91	N.W. Ridge	C	3	Jacobson/Mongol Col
Pt. Denial	93 D7	78-84	?	B	3	War Drum Glacier
Iriquois Ridge	93 D7	78-81	E. Face	B	3	War Drum Glacier
Snowside *	93 D7	76-79	W. Face	C	5	War Drum Glacier
The Griffin	93 D7	72-81	N.E. Flank	B	3	War drum Glacier
Luna Peak	93 D7	85-96	N.E. Ridge	C	4	Snout Borealis Gl.
Aurora Tower	93 D7	84-95	S. Face	D	6	Snout Borealis Gl.
Helios Peak	93 D7	83-94	S.W. Side	C	3	Snout Borealis Gl.
Horribilis	93 D7	80-04	S.W. Ridge	C	5	South of Ape Peak
Talchako	93 D7	75-05	S. Face	D	3	Ape Lake - 3 days
Ape	93 D7	81-99	S.W. Face	D	3	Ape Lake
Musician	93 D7	78-94	S. Ridge	B	3	Ape Lake
Poet	93 D7	79-93	W. Ridge	B	3	Ape Lake
Atavist	93 D7	81-88	W. Slope	C	3	Ape Lake
Fyles	93 D7	72-87	E. Face	C	3	Ape Lake
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Princess	92 N13	51-94	N. Rib	C	3	Page Mt.
Page	92 N13	53-00	N.E. Ridge	B	4	Page Mt.
Monarch	92 N13	54-02	S. Ridge	D	5	Page Mt.
Monarch	92 N13	54-02	W. Face	D	5	Page Mt.
Monarch	92 N13	54-02	E. Ridge	D	5	Monarch/Queen Col
Queen	92 N13	53-04	W. Ridge	B	3	Monarch/Queen Col
Throne	92 N13	55-04	E. Ridge	D	4	Success Lake
Concubines	92 N13	59-01	E. Face	B	3	Success Lake
Migma	92 N13	62-07	W. Ridge	B	3	Success Lake
Jezebel	92 N13	63-94	N.W. Slope	B	3	Monarch Ice Cap
Belial	93 D1	66-98	E. Side	B	3	Monarch Ice Cap
Serf	92 N13	55-06	S. Face	B	3	Monarch/Queen Col
<hr/>						
Basin	92 M16	56-95	S.W. Face	B	3	Cerberus/Chili
Sciron	92 M16	57-89	E. Ridge	D	4	Cerberus/Chili
Cerberus	92 M16	58-93	S.W. Ridge	D	4	Cerberus/Chili
Cerberus	92 M16	58-93	N. Ridge	D	?	Cerberus/Chili
Chillycootin Tower	92 M16	60-94	S. Ridge	B	3	Cerberus/Chili
Erehwon	92 M16	60-96	N. Side	B	3	Cerberus/Chili
Geryon	92 M16	61-92	N.E. Ridge	C	4	Cerberus/Chili
Geryon-Poor Rock	92 M16	61-92	S.E. Ridge	C	4	Cerberus/Chili
Geryon	92 M16	61-92	W. Ridge	C	3	Cerberus/Chili
Tzintle	92 M16	61-93	N.W. Arete	B	4	Cerberus/Chili
*Snowside	93 D1	78-81	N.E. Ridge	C	4	War Drum Glacier

Ape Lake Area - 13 Class 3 Routes, 9 Class 4 - 6 Routes
Monarch Area - 7 Class 3 Routes, 5 Class 4 - 5 Routes
Chili Tower Area - 4 Class 3 Routes, 5 Class 4 Routes

Compiled by Wayne Saunders, July 1983.

PYKETT PEAK March, 1984

Although there were many applicants, the trip was reduced to 5 of the toughest men alive, packed into the notoriously expensive "Dogcar". Once in possession to the Ashlu Valley playground key, the adventure began.

It was raining heavily, as the overloaded troop carrier veered off the main road, and climbed up through the Grand Canyon of the Ashlu. The operation reached Branch A-800, and drove less than a kilometer before reaching a burned out treeplanting village, in the form of an abandoned step van. Here, Command announced that "This is IT", and the Dogcar was parked. All mountaineers are familiar with the concept of "IT", often used in tough circumstances, as in "He slipped from the face, and that was IT".

After leaving the car, the troops then proceeded up A-800 to Pykett Creek, first on foot, then on tracked vehicles (skis). Just after crossing Pykett Creek orders were received to begin climbing straight up through the heavily burned logging slash. The slash and the remaining forest above were quickly overcome, revealing a vast upper cut block covered in snow. Here Steve Grant led them way on his tracked vehicle, across the surface of the slushy snow. Soon an upper branch road was reached, and traversed west for 1 kilometer. With the rain still drifting down, there was talk of camping immediately, or turning back. However Command was maintained, and the party proceeded up into the all too familiar "runaway burn" above the upper logging slash. ("Ah, don't worry if the slash burn gets away at the top, Joe, we're not loggin' them anyway").

Eventually, the upper burn gave way to beautiful green trees, nicely spaced with snow ramps climbing between them. At 14:30, a small knoll just above tree line was reached. With ground visibility down to 10m, camp was established. The next few hours were spent probing into the whiteout around camp, and discovering several big cliffs nearby. Late in the evening, the wraps of fog were briefly lifted, and a giant ridge loomed to the north east, accompanied by a deep gulch to the west. Camp was balanced between them.

On the following morning, Command led the way across a short steep "death slope" onto the ridge, with the mutinous Steve Grant taking an alternate route over "Mount Freedom-of-Choice" instead. Looking back, Command noted that the lone freedom climber may have "cooked his goose", since Mount Freedom was heavily corniced. However, Steve was able to navigate them by stretching safety standards a bit in deciding that it was OK to walk on cornices. At about 1900m on the upper ridge, progress was halted as visibility dropped to less than one meter. Before the mists closed in, two heavily corniced towers had been seen ahead. What was to the left was well known - a 500m drop. However, what was to the right was uncertain, since no-one had been high enough before the mists closed in. Therefore two hypotheses needed to be tested:

1. There was a smooth featureless snowfield, level for several hundred meters.
2. There was a vertical drop off, plunging vertically for several hundred meters.

An experiment was devised with which the hypotheses could be tested: Command tossed a small food object to his immediate right by 2 meters, and Peter took notes. If the object

popped in the snow, then we would know solid ground existed. However, the food object was seen to be still dropping as it disappeared from view, adding further credibility to the cliff theory.

Based on the research data with falling food projectiles, it was decided to wait for the last member of the party who had the rope. The momentum of the party was zero, morale was slumping fast, and it was certain that the summit could not be reached. Troops left their packs and tracked vehicles, and proceeded on a variety of minor fact-finding missions as to the nature of the ridge. One of the discoveries was a solid snow shelf 4 meters below a cornice. This discovery was quickly put to use by Chris Kubinski who, before horrified onlookers, walked off the upper cornice in the whiteout, and pretended to plunge to his death.

Finally the rope arrived. By now it was suspected that higher on the ridge, the cliff gave way to a narrow corridor leading onto the icefield. All that was necessary was to test the theory by putting Command on the front of the rope and sending him to probe the white-out 20 degrees to the left. Later members of the party maintained the 20 degrees bearing by shouting "left" and "right" at Command, who by this time was veering wildly, and hallucinating large coloured bubbles and palm trees in the absolute whiteness ahead. After 30 minutes of blind navigation, it was ascertained that the party had indeed reached the icefield. Suddenly the mists parted, and a large snow dome loomed to the north. At this point, Command gave up the lead, and fell to last place, picking up the discarded rope on the way.

however, soon the mists closed in again, and Command passed Steve Grant and Steve Sheffield huddled on top of a minor bump. However, Peter Gumplinger and Chris were somewhere above in the white unknown. A look at the map indicated Command was presently somewhere to the south-east of the 2400m bump on the glacier. So Command set out after the new leader. It seemed certain that Peter could be caught, since he was using heavy downhill gear, whereas the Command vehicle was equipped with medium weight "cross-country" skis.

In the next two hours, the mists alternately opened and closed on parts of the pursuit route. Although Command was able to quickly pass Chris, he was only able to catch occasional glimpses of the new leader. Eventually the chase reached a wind exposed col between two rock towers. For about 20 minutes the weather experienced an improvement, and revealed a long rocky peak a further 2 kilometers to the north-east. Of course, in the light of the favourable change of events, it now became a new goal. Command believed it was Pykett itself. The leader was still somewhat ahead, but close enough to assume approval from Command. The heavily armored vehicle swooped down the dip in the icefield, with Command in pursuit. As Command stopped to remove skins for the downhill, Steve Grant, last seen huddled on a minor bump, appeared in the rear. He soon charged past, travelling at high speed, and followed by the rest of the troops. Command was once again in the rear.

By the time Command arrived at the base of the final peak, only Chris Kubinski, and several pairs of abandoned skis remained. Steve and Steve had gone straight up, and Peter had charged off around the end of the mountain to look for a better route. The two options were named "end-run" and "sky ladder". Not content with only 2 options, Kubinski suggested a third: "ski-ladder" (carrying skis up the sky ladder). The plan was to pass the leaders somewhere higher on the mountain, floundering helplessly in deep snow. However, the third option soon revealed its flaw, as the sky ladder turned to blue ice under a thin crust of snow. Although Steve Grant and Steve Sheffield were somewhere ahead on the route, the ski carriers were routed by fear and terror at high altitude. It took over half an hour to reverse direction while clinging to the shallow crust. The tails of skis were employed to hack out extra steps to allow a descent. Once safely at the base, the members of the third option were content to wait for the return of the other two options.

Soon Steve, and Steve came into view in the mists above. They had made "IT". Apparently their route came out on the ridge less than 20m from the top. Since Peter was not back

yet, Steve offered to lend out the only ice-axe. Command knew he could never be a whole man again unless he went, so he tore up the face, and disappeared into the mists. Upon reaching the summit, he saw ski tracks, signifying that Peter had made it from the end of the ridge. Back at the bottom, there was still time to lend the ice-axe to Chris, since Peter had not yet returned.

Finally, both Chris and Peter returned, and the order was given to evacuate the mountain. By the time the party reached the 2400m bump, a hard driving blizzard totally obscured the tracks. The party halted in good old fashioned panic, shouting at each other as they huddled together in the blizzard. The problem was finding the route to climb down off the ridge. After half an hour, the route was re-found, and a full speed retreat to camp was implemented. The lower part of the retreat was routine, except for a nasty slip on the horrible exposed ridge. Three meters from certain death, Command was able to halt the slide by arresting himself with the tip of his ski pole. The black gulch loomed to the west.

The trip ended with a forced march in the dark, back to the Dogcar, which cost each person \$9. The key for the playground was returned to Jack, and the peaks are still up there, awaiting further missions.

PARTY: Peter Gumplinger, Steve Grant, Chris Kubinski, Steve Sheffield, and Robin Tivy
(Trip Commander and Reporter)



