

# CLOUDBURST

**Building Partnerships to Protect the Backcountry**  
**An Update on the Sea to Sky Gondola Project**  
**FMCBC Supports Member Club Projects Across BC**





The Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia (FMCBC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of and the accessibility to British Columbia's backcountry wilderness and mountain areas

Membership in the FMCBC is open to any club or individual who supports our vision, mission and purpose. Member fees go towards furthering our work to protect and preserve the backcountry for non-motorized recreation users. Member benefits include a subscription to our *Cloudburst* newsletter, monthly updates through our FMCBC E-News, and access to an inexpensive third-party liability insurance program.

**FMCBC Executive**

President: Scott Webster (VOC)  
 Secretary: Mack Skinner (NSH)  
 Past President: Brian Wood (BCMC)

**FMCBC Directors**

David Overall (ACC-Van), Rob Gunn and Judy Carlson (AVOC), Ben Heemsker (BBSS), Francis St. Pierre (BCMC), Dean Pollack (BOC), Bob St. John (CDMC & FoSP), Sam Waddington (COC), Dave King (CR), Roy Howard (FHA), Al Jenkins (FOGP), Patrick Harrison (Hike BC National Hiking Trail), Bill Perry (IMR), Doug Smith (KHC), Doug Clark (KMC), Travis Carter (MRBS), Mack Skinner and Cristina Jacob (NSH), Geraldine Meade (NVOC), Dianne Comens (OC), Valerie Van Veen (QIOC), Andrew Drouin (SOTA), Alex Shepard (SFU), Robie MacDonald (VISTA), Eric Burkle (VITIS), Mike Stewart (VOA), Chloe Williams (VOC-UBC), Jared Kesteven (VOCO), Chelsea Rich (VOCOMU).

**Committee Chairs**

Provincial Advocacy: Brian Wood  
 SW BC Recreation and Conservation: Brian Wood & Monika Bittel  
 SW BC Trails: Alex Wallace & Patrick Harrison  
 Outreach/Communications: Samantha Harrigan & Brian Wood  
 Insurance: Scott Webster

**Cloudburst**

Editors: Bill Perry, Jay MacArthur & Brian Wood  
 Production: Jodi Appleton

**Staff**

Program and Administration Manager: Jodi Appleton

*We would like to thank*  
**Mountain Equipment Co-op**  
*for supporting the FMCBC through their generous contribution of office space from which to base our administration.*

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**Cover Photo by Madeleine Martin-Preney**  
 Descent from Summit of Mt. Logan  
 Steve Senecal, Stephanie Falz, Jesse Milner.  
 Full article available in on page 19 of our [Spring/Summer 2013](#) issue

**Articles and Advertising**

Articles should not exceed 1000 words. Photos should be at least 4x6 inches at 150-300 DPI resolution. We only accept PNG, TIF, EPS and JPEG file format for photos and advertisements. For photos, please include photographer, location, names and a description to be included with the photo. For articles please include the author and a title. For advertisements please include a web link.

**Submission Deadlines:** Fall/Winter - October 1  
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Email articles and advertising inquiries to:  
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# The Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

## *Working on your behalf*

The Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC (FMCBC) is a democratic, grassroots organization dedicated to the conservation of and the accessibility to British Columbia's backcountry wilderness and mountain areas. As our name indicates we are a federation of outdoor clubs with a membership of approximately 4500 people from 30 clubs across the province. Our membership is comprised of a diverse group of non-motorized mountain recreationists including hikers, climbers, mountaineers, trail runners, backcountry skiers and snowshoers. The FMCBC also has several individual members who are not affiliated with any club, but share our concerns and interests.

The FMCBC recognizes backcountry hikers, mountaineers and ski-tourers to be a traditional user group of BC's wilderness and mountain areas and represents their rights province-wide to freely access and enjoy a high quality experience. As an organization, we believe that the enjoyment of these pursuits in an unspoiled environment is a vital component to the quality of life for British Columbians and by acting under the policy of "talk, understand and persuade" the FMCBC advocates for these interests.

Membership in the FMCBC is open to any club or individual who supports our vision, mission and purpose as outlined below and includes benefits such as a subscription to the FMCBC newsletter *Cloudburst*, monthly updates through the FMCBC E-News, and access to an inexpensive Third-Party Liability insurance program.

FMCBC's **vision** is that British Columbia's backcountry is shared amongst all recreational users in a way that self-propelled users have reasonable access to an enjoyable experience.

FMCBC's **mission** is to advocate for safe, self-propelled activities (such as hiking, mountaineering, backcountry skiing, snowshoeing, trail running and other backcountry activities) and the protection of BC's backcountry for current and future generations to experience.

FMCBC's **purpose** is:

- To represent clubs and the public interested in non-motorized backcountry recreation in BC, and to advise and take action on their behalf in matters which may impact their backcountry recreation experiences.
- To make recommendations to government and non-government organizations regarding the protection of and access to BC's backcountry and trails.
- To encourage self-propelled backcountry recreation, and to promote low-impact and safe practices.
- To promote the development and maintenance of a system of trails in BC.
- To promote the sound management and preservation of BC's backcountry recreation resources.

The FMCBC fulfills its purpose with a comprehensive approach to mountain recreation and conservation by:

- Participating in provincial land use decision processes
- Working to positively change government agency policies so that self-propelled outdoor recreation opportunities are recognized and protected
- Representing wilderness as a legitimate land use and a resource of identifiable value to society
- Advocating for new parks and wilderness resources, and working to maintain the integrity of existing parks and wilderness resources
- Advocating for improved access to existing recreational resources
- Supporting the building, maintaining and protecting of hiking and mountain access trails
- Promoting non-motorized and self-propelled recreation activities in BC's mountains and wilderness
- Educating its member and the public on mountain and backcountry safety issues and working with member clubs to address risk management issues
- Promoting membership within our member clubs
- Negotiating with insurance brokers to provide extensive liability insurance coverage for our members clubs

At the core of FMCBC's projects, issues and successes are the countless hours donated by dedicated volunteers from our member clubs across the province. Much of the FMCBC's work is done through committees including our Trails Committee and Recreation and Conservation Committee. With the exception of part-time assistance provided by the FMCBC's Program and Administration Manager, work on these programs is done mainly by volunteers. Without these volunteers the FMCBC would not exist and we appreciate all those who have volunteered in the past or are current volunteers and we encourage others to join us to help us reach our vision. ■

## President Report

Scott Webster (FMCBC President, UBC Varsity Outdoor Club Member)

The FMCBC had a successful AGM this past summer, hosted by the Kamloops Hiking Club. We tried a new format this year, staying overnight at the McQueen Lake Environmental Centre. Sleeping "on-site" made for a more intimate experience and allowed us to share resources with a parallel KHC "camp" event. Thanks again to the organizers.

This year is the first year of reduced membership dues of \$10 per member per year, a one third reduction from our previous years' dues of \$15 per member. If we continue to attract more member clubs as we have done recently, we expect to be able to hold our fees at this reduced cost and still provide good services for our members. We hope to recruit more volunteers from our clubs, new and old, to help on our committees, allowing us to further improve our services (no previous experience necessary - just a willingness to learn and help out).

At the AGM it was decided to purchase more trail markers for distribution to interested clubs. The markers are reflective orange on an aluminum backing and are now available at a subsidized cost of \$0.50 per marker. Let us know if you are interested in purchasing some and we'll work out delivery details.

The [FMCBC Member Club Grant](#) recipients were announced at the AGM as well, with the Alberni Valley Outdoor Club, Varsity Outdoor Club, Caledonia Ramblers, and the Kamloops Hiking Club receiving support for their trail and hut improvement projects. All donations to the FMCBC, which are tax deductible, go towards the Member Club Grants, so keep that in mind when planning your charitable donations. Many of these donations result from our members donating their travel expenses incurred on FMCBC business back to the FMCBC and so please consider doing this next time you could claim some expenses

We are still looking for a Vice President. If you would like to learn more about the VP role, contact [myself](#) or [Jodi](#). You can also send in your nominations to us and we will pass them on to our Officer Search Committee for consideration.

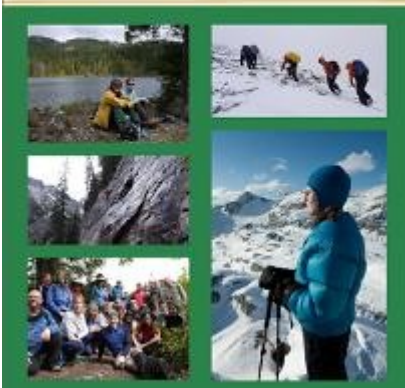
A final note of success: we received word from the provincial government that the omission of the National Hiking Trail from the [Provincial Trails Strategy](#) was unintentional and that this will be corrected online and in future print editions. One of our member clubs, [Hike BC](#), is the association responsible for the National Hiking Trail in BC. ■



Ann Webster

Scott with son Joel on Whyte Lake Trail in West Vancouver

## FMCBC News



### FMCBC's Strategic Plan and Building Partnerships

Brian Wood (FMCBC Past President)

One of the objectives from the [FMCBC's 2012-2014 Strategic Plan](#) is to build partnerships with other organizations and businesses.

In the past we have formed what some folks would call "ad hoc partnerships" with like-minded groups, usually for a limited time and to achieve a specific goal, after which the partnership tends to disappear (due to neglect?). One example is HELP MELP which was formed to persuade the government of the day to hire 15 wildlife biologists for MELP (Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks). The campaign started in about the late 1990's and finished in early 2002 as its purpose was achieved, but the victory was short lived when the government of the day was replaced - not an unusual situation in BC's widely-swinging political climate. This campaign took a great deal of time and volunteer effort in talking to politicians and getting large numbers of people to write letters by hand to politicians.

A similar partnership of like-minded groups was formed during the Protected Areas Strategy sessions, and was successful in having a lot of new protected areas designated in the 1990s and early 2000s, but again governments change and decisions can get reversed, or simply not implemented. These actions should not discourage us.

In 2011, MEC provided the FMCBC with funding through a Community Partnership Grant to assist us with formulating a three year Strategic Plan. The FMCBC hired a consultant, who drafted a formal approach to achieve our goals. In 2012, the balance of these grants funds were supplemented with some additional funding from the FMCBC to have Simon Fraser University conduct an Outdoor Recreation Study, with some aspects directed specifically to British Columbia. Our main reason for this study is to provide us with evidence-based research which we hope can be used to strengthen our position when negotiating with governments in land use planning relating to backcountry recreation.

At present we have recently become involved with another partnership of several like-minded groups and individuals to try to increase funding for BC Parks, which many of you know have been grossly underfunded for more than a decade. I feel the FMCBC can learn a lot about advocacy from our experiences gained in these partnerships and eventually we hope that the general public will benefit by having governments becoming more aware of the need to protect our back country while facilitating access to it for non-motorized recreation. I hope we can continue to form more partnerships as directed by our Strategic Plan as these partnerships seem to improve overall effectiveness in negotiations.

However, forming new partnerships is not a straightforward process as there are many organizations which have interests in the backcountry which are similar to ours, but there are differences in details and so there is not a 100% match of ideas. For example, mountain bikers and hikers have many interests in common, i.e., we like to be self-propelled, preferably on trails in unspoilt wilderness, but we differ in some details when it comes to trail use etc. Another example is conservationists who also like unspoilt wilderness, but they might prefer wilderness to remain unvisited and pristine whereas recreationists might want to build a trail into the pristine area which would facilitate access but could introduce problems such as disturbance of alpine areas and wildlife. Surprisingly, non-motorized recreationists even have some limited interests in common with motorized recreationists such as snowmobiles and quad (ATV) users. For example, some motorized recreationists would like old resource roads to be maintained open, i.e., not de-activated, so they (and us too) can access parts of the backcountry which otherwise would be inaccessible and this is where we can agree in principle, but probably not in details.

In general we have found that governments do not want to get involved in overseeing a dispute between backcountry recreationist groups over what the government might perceive as “minor details” relating to land use, trails etc. Instead, governments sometimes take the position that if the disputing groups can resolve their disagreements amicably by themselves in a compromise settlement, the government will support that settlement and perhaps even draft legislation to bring it into law. This sort of arrangement occurred fairly recently during the Sea-to-Sky Backcountry Recreation Forum where a group of dedicated non-motorized and motorized recreationists, both commercial and public recreationists, spent many hours in meetings and finally agreed to zoning for different recreational purposes most of the recreational land in the Squamish-Whistler-Pemberton Corridor which, in some folks' opinions, was becoming a weekend war zone between the different groups. The almost-completed Forum Accord was spliced into the Sea-to-Sky Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), but some of the parties have not been pleased with this result, as commercial and motorized interests seemed to dominate the result. In addition, at the moment, the actual situation in the Corridor is essentially no different from before the LRMP, as there is no enforcement of the zoning rules and thus the conflicts continue unabated.

The FMCBC has been a member or partner of the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC (ORC), which is an umbrella organization of outdoor recreation groups which includes both motorized and non-motorized recreation sectors which usually compete with each other to hold onto traditional recreational territory and/or to expand their recreational territory. ORC is very useful to provide a forum for competing organizations to state their reasons for their positions in land use debates, and it can be surprising to see how improved understanding between the competing interests in land use discussions can facilitate the groups coming to a reasonably acceptable compromise, which does not always happen if the government and politics come into the debate.

So we will continue to work on building partnerships. If our members have suggestions for organizations who might be a benefit for the FMCBC to partner with, they should contact us so we can discuss. We are looking to both increase people’s awareness of the FMCBC and support other organizations with similar values. ■

**We would like to thank the following people for their past service as FMCBC Directors:**

Catheryn Fyfe (VOC Meetup)  
 Christopher Causton (VISTA)  
 Jordan Harrington (VOC Okanagan)  
 Peter Oostlander (KMC)  
 Rosalinde Nichols (SFU)

**We would like to welcome our newest FMCBC Directors:**

Alex Shepard (SFU)  
 Chelsea Richardson (VOC Meetup)  
 Doug Clark (KMC)  
 Jared KreSteven (VOC Okanagan)  
 Robie MacDonald (VISTA)

## Member Club Grant Program a Success

Jodi Appleton (FMCBC Program and Administration Manager)

At the FMCBC 2013 AGM in Kamloops, the following Member Club Grants were awarded:

- Alberni Valley Outdoor Club** - \$500 towards their *Bridges to complete Stage 1 of the Alberni Inlet Trail Project*
- Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club** - \$1325 towards their *Ancient Forest – Universal Boardwalk Project*
- Kamloops Hiking Club** - \$1325 towards their *Isobel Lake Accessibility Project*
- UBC Varsity Outdoor Club** - \$1350 towards their *Window repairs at the Varsity Outdoor Club's Brew Hut Project*

This is our second year running the Member Club Grant Program and we are very proud of its success so far. Although the size of the grants have been fairly small, we hope to grow the program over the next several years so that we may increase our level of support for member club projects. You can read the following two articles to learn more about two of the projects the FMCBC was able to support in 2013.

Keep us in mind for your club projects next year and watch for application forms on our website which will be available April 1st, 2014. If you would like to make a donation towards our Member Club Grant Program you can visit the [donation page](#) on our website or mail a cheque to PO Box 19673, Vancouver, BC, V5T 4E7. Make the cheque payable to FMCBC and include a note stating that it is a donation. Be sure to include your name and mailing address so that we may issue a tax receipt. ■

## Isobel Lake Project

Doug Smith (Kamloops Hiking Club)



Doug Smith

Volunteers upgrading the trail on both sides of a bridge to allow wheelchair access to the Forest Inn picnic shelter as part of the Isobel Lake Project.

part of the Isobel Lake Interpretive Forest, commissioned an Assessment Study, which points the way to the work to be done. A short section of roadway has already been moved to make room for the trail along the lake shore. Work parties on August 14 and August 24 upgraded the trail on both sides of a bridge to allow wheelchair access to the Forest Inn picnic shelter area. As further funding becomes available and this worthwhile project is completed it will be a notable asset for low mobility individuals from Kamloops and far beyond. ■

Kamloops Hiking Club has been working with the Kamloops Thompson Trails Alliance on improving the Isobel Lake facility, and work has now started with the generous support of FMCBC.

The Kamloops Thompson Trails Alliance has undertaken an ambitious multi-year project to complete and enhance the low mobility trail system and related facilities at Isobel Lake, 25 km. north of Kamloops.

This project was started in 1994 by the BC Forest Service, but the trail system remains incomplete and many of the facilities were never constructed. School District #73 uses Isobel Lake for environmental education along with its' nearby McQueen Lake Environmental Centre. Isobel Lake is well suited for this low mobility accessible project, which is expected to be welcomed as a recreational retreat for seniors and low mobility individuals of all ages. The trails and facilities will be built to current Parks Canada standards and allow both day use and camping opportunities.

With some start up funding already in place from the Federation of BC Mountain Clubs, the Kamloops Hiking Club and Kinder Morgan, work has already commenced with Alliance volunteers. Recreation Sites and Trails BC, who administer the site as



Doug Smith

A sign was installed to recognize the Kamloops Hiking Club and the FMCBC's contribution to the Isobel Lake Project.

**To Build a Boardwalk**  
 Nowell Senior (Caledonia Ramblers)

The Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club have made the globally unique Ancient Forest fully accessible with the construction of a 1500 foot boardwalk and a 100 foot long main entry pathway.

The idea of a Universal Boardwalk is one thing, but to construct one that will safely carry folks in wheelchairs and walkers as well as families with small children is quite another thing. Add to this the weight of hundreds of tons of snow under which the boardwalk is buried each winter – and you have a challenge.

The Ramblers didn't really know what they were up against; otherwise they may have just contented themselves with the usual day here and there doing low cost trail work.



Opening Day for the Ancient Forest Universal Boardwalk

Nowell Senior

However, since ignorance is bliss the Ramblers sailed into the boardwalk business with a donation of lumber, twenty-five dollars in cash, a chainsaw, hammers, a small box of nails and a large box of optimism!

This optimism was contagious, and both volunteers and sponsors fell victim to it, resulting in extraordinary feats of labor and very generous amounts of funding. The boardwalk took three years to build with 6,429 volunteer hours, and \$118,000 in grants and other in kind contributions.

Sixty tons of lumber was used – all carried by hand; 3 tons of hardware fastened the boardwalk together; 11 tons of rock, cinder blocks, gravels and paving stones support the boardwalk. A great deal of muscle and an enormous amount of heart went into the boardwalk!

The summary below gives a glimpse of how the Universal Boardwalk progressed. To all who helped in so many ways to provide universal access at the Ancient Forest Interpretive Site – Thank you! ■

**2010**

Feet of boardwalk built--- 120  
 Number of volunteers----35  
 Volunteer hours-----528  
 Kilometers travelled-----8,250

**2012**

Feet of boardwalk built---1,040  
 Number of volunteers----54  
 Volunteer hours-----2,474  
 Km travelled-----21,398

**2011**

Feet of boardwalk built---240  
 Number of volunteers----67  
 Volunteer hours-----1,698  
 Km travelled-----12,676

**2013**

Feet of boardwalk built---200  
 Number of volunteers----35  
 Volunteer hours-----1,729  
 Km travelled-----16,836



Nowell Senior



Nowell Senior



Nowell Senior

**Total feet of boardwalk – 1600**  
**Total number of volunteers - ---191**  
**Total number of volunteer hours-----6,429**  
**Total Km travelled-----59,160**

## FMCBC's success and future success depends upon our volunteers

Brian Wood (FMCBC Past President)

We are about two thirds through the time line for completing our [Strategic Plan](#), but we are not two thirds through achieving our goals and objectives and I feel we could do better with more volunteers to help us! Please note that for those members who live away from the Metro-Vancouver area (or even those who live here), we host many of our meetings by telephone conferencing which does not incur costs for out-of-town participants. Thus, even if you don't live in the Metro-Vancouver area, you can still get involved and contribute. We want to hear from all regions!

We have several committees working on various projects for the FMCBC. I'm going to highlight three of these committees that definitely could use help from our members this year. By volunteering with the FMCBC, you learn a lot more about how we operate, what drives us and what are goals are. We need help from our volunteers to make these projects happen.

Our Provincial Advocacy Committee is soon going to receive the research report we've been waiting on from SFU. Once we have this we will be able to use it to develop a tool kit for our member clubs to use when advocating for non-motorized recreation in the backcountry. We will also be able to use it as a partnership building tool when working with other like-minded organizations. We would like to hear from members from across the province when developing this toolkit and building these partnerships. We would also like to hear how issues such as accessing resource roads, conflicts with other backcountry user groups, and trail building and maintenance are handled in your areas. The Advocacy Committee meets once a month via teleconference. Over the past year, committee members have been taking on small projects that align with the goals of our Strategic Plan. Attending the meetings is a great way to find out what's happening across the province and offer your experiences from your region.

### Volunteer with the FMCBC!

Help us protect the backcountry for non-motorized users by volunteering a little or a lot.  
Every bit helps!

We are looking for individuals with skills and/or experience in many different areas including social media, communications, grant writing and more.

[Contact us](#) for more info or talk to your club's FMCBC Director.

Our Fundraising Committee has been having a lot of trouble getting off the ground and there are definitely some grant funds we would like to be applying for each year to support both projects which the FMCBC as well as our member clubs would like to be working on. Funds can come from organisations which specialise in distributing grants for the specific causes they support, eg the Vancouver Foundation, and there are corporations willing to supply funds for projects which align with their corporate image, eg the outdoor goods sector such as manufacturers, suppliers and retailers. Apart from the MEC, we have not tapped into the potential source of funding from the outdoor goods sector and I feel this warrants further investigation. Many of our clubs would like to have additional funding to support their own projects, and if the FMCBC is successful in raising

additional funding this can be distributed to our clubs through the FMC Funding Grant we administer. We have found that some funding organizations request details of the historical success of the grant applicant, and here we can help with our many years of handling grants and our successes in following through on the projects. We are looking for a few people with some grant writing experience who would like to help out on this committee. We are not expecting volunteers to write grant applications on their own, but rather we are hoping to have them work with our Program and Administration Manager to identify potential grants and develop project descriptions and budgets. Anyone with experience and an interest in helping us obtain funding for trail building, bridge building, publishing backcountry information and any other related projects across the province should let us know.

And our Outreach/Communications Committee needs some help as well. I have always felt that one of the biggest advantages of the FMCBC when advocating with governments is the strength in our overall membership numbers (now about 4500). We would like to continue to grow this number because large membership numbers mean that governments might take more notice of our views and ideas. To increase our membership we need to reach out to those individuals and clubs who support our interests in self-propelled backcountry travel, and this requires the FMCBC to be more pro-active than it has been in the past in getting the word out there.

Even though we have not been very active in promoting the FMCBC, over the last few years, there has been an encouraging increase in our membership numbers. In 2011 we had 26 member clubs with about 3500 members, whereas in 2013 we have 30 member clubs with 4500 members. Two reasons for this membership increase are probably the comprehensive third party liability insurance program we offer and the pressure to reduce the cost of our annual membership dues. Lowering our dues has made it easier for our clubs to continue supporting the FMCBC and has made the FMCBC accessible for new clubs to join because the fee per member for both membership and insurance is now under \$20.

So, how do we get the word out there about the advantages of joining the FMCBC? We would appreciate hearing from our members about their ideas, or better still have interested members join the Outreach Committee and help us put their ideas into practice. If you are interested in website design, social media, photography, graphic design, or creative writing we could definitely use your help!

Many of the projects we have lined up for 2014 are short term and with just a few extra people on these three committees we should be able to make them happen. Think about volunteering with the FMCBC this year. ■



## Sea to Sky Gondola – A Visit to the Top

Cristina Jacob (North Shore Hikers)

On August 26, 2013 a couple of folks including myself visited the construction site of the Sea to Sky Gondola project near Shannon Falls. We met with Jayson Faulkner, the project's General Manager, an individual of uncontestable charm who graciously and competently accommodated our request to tour the site and gave us an update on its progress. Since then, the project's public relations team has posted more updates on the internet and a promotional [video](#).

The Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC stands on record for its criticism to the process, or better said lack of process, of using land situated in provincial parks to accommodate the installation of the gondola towers. Notwithstanding the objections, the project sailed through the multiple agencies' approval process and is travelling now full wind to its finish line. The projected opening date is May 14, 2014.

We plan to visit the Sea to Sky Gondola again in the spring when the work on the proposed new trails will be more advanced. For the time being the discussions held during two fall meetings of the Recreation and Conservation Committee of the Federation had members express concern with the parking arrangements: they felt that parking capacities in both the main car park and the car park at the upper end of Shannon Creek road will likely be too small on busy days and may even affect the traffic flow on the Highway.

The following is a shortened version of my notes taken during the August 26 visit.

**Parking:** They will provide 300 parking spaces at the Gondola base and 14 parking spaces up on the Shannon FSR, where they are planning to put a gate about 2 km away from the gondola top. Right now they are planning to put no restriction on the parking which will be free. Overflow parking will be accommodated at Darryn Bay and a shuttle will be implemented, if necessary. The parking on top is for people willing to drive about 14 km up the FSR and will be available for hikers, climbers, backcountry skiers, etc.

**Road:** Access to the gondola top is via the FSR, which has been resurfaced by them and is in very good shape. It is quite steep in sections and you need a good-traction car to make it up. They are not planning to plough it in the winter. A gate will be permanently positioned very close to the top.

**Trails:** They will build an access trail to the Gondola base from the Shannon Falls-to-Chief connector trail. That would enable people that who are parked at Shannon Falls to walk to the Gondola base and use its facilities (washrooms, coffee shop, ride). They will also build a Grind that is separate from the trail that goes to the upper Shannon Falls. The Grind will be slightly longer and higher than the Grouse Grind and require about 30% more effort. They have already built a 400 m heritage trail and a 1500 m loop trail for viewing towards North.

Plans include more trails to connect with Upper Shannon Falls and lead people towards Mt Habrick, Sky Pilot and Goat Ridge. They are working right now on issues related to their jurisdiction on trail building beyond their land tenure. They seem to think that a Protected Area designation for the land outside their tenure will serve them best.

**Miscellaneous:**

They plan a year-round operation opening at 8 am and closing at 8 pm or later. Electricity is available from the grid at the Gondola



Cristina Jacob

Jayson Faulkner provided Cristina Jacob and others with a glimpse from the top



Cristina Jacob

The first of 15 gondola towers

base and there is a generator on top. Water at the Gondola base is stored in an on-site tank and is being pumped from Olsen Creek. Water at the top is also stored in an on-site tank and is being supplied by a small alpine lake. The washrooms in the bottom are going to be made available to all people visiting the provincial park. The top washrooms are available for all people at the top.

They have not made a final decision on allowing dogs, but probably will do so. Dog access in the long term will depend on whether owners clean-up after them.

Their vision for the non-motorized activities, besides climbing and hiking, include mountain biking, snowshoeing, cross country, and backcountry. For trail building they use a Squamish company that has been involved a lot in mountain bike trail building. They are planning to develop several climbing sites with fixed ropes and other things needed by climbers.

They already worked out the pricing for the gondola ride but it is not available for public consumption. It will be competitive, they will have annual passes, senior discounts, and it will include access to the viewing platforms, suspension bridge, trails, etc. ■

## Trail Updates

### Southwest BC Trails Committee Report

Alex Wallace (SW BC Trails Committee)

#### BC Parks Volunteer Trail Work Agreements

At a series of meetings on July 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> with BC Parks a permanent resolution materialised:

Friends of Cypress were following up on this issue in considerable detail to allow their Trailwatch program to continue: [ it had been shut down under the ruling from Victoria requiring a ranger to be on-site at all times during trail maintenance...Catch 22 : no rangers] they were told on July 26<sup>th</sup> that BC Parks had rewritten the previously acceptable, but rescinded, Individual Trail Work Promissory Note into a completely new "Individual Volunteer Services" form that allows individuals to be free of liability and indemnity ( i.e. they do not have to indemnify the Province of BC, but must be 'supervised' by following direction from BC Parks staff) and in many respects it does resemble the old sign up form that was in place satisfactorily for many years.

At the July 29<sup>th</sup> meeting with Becs Hoskins of BC Parks and a representative of the Ministry of Finance on the phone from Victoria, it was explained to us, in answer to our questions, that this individual form can be used as a 'multiple individual services form' and this can be made valid over a period of 2 to 3 years, not just for one day, or one season. This decision is up to the local BC Parks staff, who are dealing with the volunteers and will witness their signed form.

This system provides an alternative for clubs or individuals who want to do basic trail maintenance and do not wish to indemnify the Province of BC and take on liability and insurance by signing a Trail Agreement "as an entity". Instead, clubs or individuals will be able to attend a short training session with BC Parks and sign this new individual volunteer services form (witnessed by a BC Parks Ranger,) which will allow them to conduct basic trail maintenance (i.e., no power tools) for an agreed period of time, without having a Ranger present .

We were told that the intent of the BC Parks Trail Agreements is similar to the Rec Sites and Trails (MoF) Crown land Trail Agreement - in that clubs or groups like the Backcountry Horsemen of BC have already signed a Trail Agreement and would be completely autonomous, using chainsaws, etc. However clubs signing a Trail Agreement could be liable if things go wrong, and it was indicated to us in the July 29th meeting that this was intended as a method for keeping them aware of their responsibilities, despite there being a limited



Alex Wallace

This photo shows a fairly typical worn-out section of the Howe Sound Crest Trail that we hope to get rebuilt or detoured around in 2014.



Alex Wallace

This photo shows a rebuilt section of the Howe Sound Crest Trail under construction in August 2013.

amount of General Liability insurance coverage provided by Government [...which would be a last resort, i.e. after all other available insurance was exhausted, - like homeowners insurance.]

This is a summary, and a copy of the BC Parks “Individual/Multiple Volunteer Service Agreement” and the Trail Partnership Agreement (numerous forms) will be posted on the FMCBC website for review.

However, it is good that a resolution has emerged from BC Parks and the Ministry of Finance, after almost three years of negotiations and meetings.

### Howe Sound Crest Trail update

Some more good news: BC Parks came up with \$45,000 in trail work funding for the 2013 season, and has indicated that \$50,000 will be made available in the 2014 season to continue the Howe Sound Crest Upgrade work, which currently is focusing on rebuilding the switchbacks leading to St Marks Summit with a durable trail bed and proper drainage. The FMCBC Trails Committee will be writing to Victoria in an effort to ensure that this funding continues. A crew of rangers will be clearing blow downs at the Deeks Lake end of the trail.

### Garibaldi: Mamquam – Elfin Lakes trail project

A substantial Park Legacy donation from a long-time hiker has meant that a crew has been working on the Mamquam Lake - Elfin lakes trail in Garibaldi, and good progress has been made in difficult terrain. The record (90mm/hr) heavy rain in September meant that there were four washouts which resulted in Ring Creek changing its course. However this work is progressing and receiving good reports from hikers.

A guide to the Legacy program (i.e. tax deductible donations that can be directed to a particular trail or other BC Parks project) is available on the BCPC’s [website](#). ■

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## Damage Report for Bill's Trail (Mt Fromme)

Robert Batt (North Shore Hikers)



Robert Batt

Dozens of trees cut down by chainsaw have been left along the trail

south along a ridge from near the summit of Mt Fromme down to a crossing of the Grouse Mountain Road. It is partly in the Grouse Mountain Resort property and partly in federal land, all within the DNV.

In July this year, unfortunately, after the short open rocky section at the top of Bill's Trail (at the junction of the other trails) the rest of the trail has significant damage from some rogue trail crew that widened the trail, likely so it could be used by mountain bikers. After the open area, on the trail down to the first crossing of the Grouse Mountain Highway, and even beyond on some of the lower Per Gynt, dozens of trees beside the trail have been cut down by chainsaw and left beside the trail for at least 2km (or maybe 3 or 4km) of trail.

There would be no need for hikers to do this extreme amount of tree cutting; the trail was fine the way it was built years ago. Hiking trails rarely need to have live trees cut-- the trail just goes around or beside the trees. And hiking trails tend to be minimally invasive to the forest. Hikers want to feel part of the forest, unlike mountain bikers who focus all the time on the trail directly in front of them.

The trail bed has also been leveled: all branches, stray pieces of wood and rocks, removed. Again, no need for this for hikers, but mountain bikers want no disruption to a fast and smooth non-stop ride downhill.

At least once a year, I go up one of the three trails on Mt Fromme and go down one of the others. Almost always I come down the easy trail signed as Bill's Trail, although officially it is named Per Gynt (north or upper section) on the District of North Vancouver maps. This trail is also one of the few classified as "hiker only" on the DNV maps. The trail goes north-

## 21 Mile Creek Survey

**The 21 Mile Creek drainage is a non-motorized zone and snowmobiling is prohibited.**

We are continuing to conduct a [user survey](#) to measure the frequency of illegal snowmobile use in 21 Mile Creek. The results from the survey will guide compliance and enforcement actions by government conservation officers.

The non-motorized zone includes Rainbow Lake, Rainbow Mountain, Gin & Tonic Lakes and the north side of Mt. Sproatt. Hanging Lake, the west side of Gin Peak and the south side of Mt. Sproatt are outside the non-motorized zone.

If you've done a trip into 21 mile creek, please take 1 minute of your time to complete the survey. Only one member of your party needs to complete the survey which will be open all season to collect as much data as possible.

Data is welcome from any trip since March 12 2009. That's the day the Sea to Sky LRMP went into effect.

**Thank you for your help!**

I contacted the person in charge of trails for the District of North Vancouver, and he said there were no DNV staff working in that area, and he knew of no trail crews from DNV or elsewhere working there. He did say that any tree cutting there would be illegal. I am considering contacting the DNV RCMP to report this damage.

The crew that did this tree cutting would have had at least 2, and likely 3 or 4 members. Some large trees were cut down and moved off the trail, requiring at least 2 people. And the use of a chainsaw meant that the crew had to have a key for the gate at the top of Mountain Highway (or access to a chainsaw stored in the area).

To me the damage has ruined Bill's Trail. So many living trees have been illegally cut down and left by the trail, with their stumps for all to see, that the trail will never recover. ■



## Improved Lions Bay Bus Service

Robert Batt (North Shore Hikers)

Hikers have long been using the two main trails and their spur trails to access the mountains above the Village of Lions Bay, Howe Sound. A recent improvement to transit service now makes it easier to get to Lions Bay by bus.

For many years the only local bus service on West Vancouver Transit to Lions Bay was the #259. This route still operates with very limited service, Monday to Friday (not including holidays). For a day hike to Lions Bay the only useful trip leaves Park Royal at 6:20am. The last trip from Lions Bay is at 6:35pm.

West Vancouver Transit has added the C12 Community Shuttle bus route from Caulfield in West Vancouver to Horseshoe Bay and north to Lions Bay. This bus operates more like a normal bus route: daily service from morning to evening. This route began testing about 2009 and was added to the regular schedule in 2012. The 2009 schedule remains the current one.

The current schedule is hourly most of the time.

- To Lions Bay from Horseshoe Bay: Monday to Friday from 7:25am; Saturday from 9:25am; Sunday from 11:00am.

- Return from Lions Bay: Monday to Thursday, last trip at 7:15pm; Friday and Saturday 11:15pm; Sunday 6:40pm.

From Vancouver take either the #257 Horseshoe Bay Express, or the #250 Horseshoe Bay (note that not all of the #250 buses go all the way to Horseshoe Bay).

Of course the bus gets you only to (or from) Lions Bay near Hwy 99. You then have to walk up to (or down from) either of the trail-heads at Sunset Drive or Oceanview Road. Bring a map that includes both Lions Bay trails and roads, such as the *North Shore Trail Map 1:20,000* (Trail Ventures BC, 2012).

Experienced hikers may want to try long trips, such as through hikes from the #253 Caulfield bus stopping at Cypress Falls Park and going up to Cypress Bowl, then taking either the Sunset Beach trail down to hwy. 99, or continuing on the Howe Sound Crest Trail to one of the trails descending to Lions Bay (the latter a very long hike).

This [link](#) includes a map of Lions Bay with bus stops shown at high magnification. I cannot confirm that all the stops are correctly shown, and some will be for the #259, some for the #C12, some for both routes.

To return to Vancouver from Lions Bay take the C12 stop on the west side of the underpass on Lions Bay Avenue: the C12 goes off Hwy 99 on the exit ramp to the underpass. The #259 stops in the underpass. A driver on the C12 told me that he will stop almost anywhere if safe to do so. An approximate map of the C12 route is found [here](#). Note that the C12 is often timed to connect with the #257 Vancouver express.

The schedule information here is from the May 2013 *Blue Bus Rider's Guide*. Before going on any of the routes discussed here, you are advised to get a copy of the current schedule (Vancouver Public Library downtown has copies; or phone West Van Transit to get one), or visit the West Vancouver Transit [website](#).

Not all stops are shown on the timetable. And stop numbers are also not shown, but may be added later. Stop numbers are shown on Translink's [website](#).

The Next Bus SMS text to 33333 feature may work but only for schedule times; real times using GPS may be added later. It is also advisable to record in your mobile phone the number for West Van Transit 604-985-7777.

Under the current 2013 fare system, from Vancouver it is a 3-zone fare to Lions Bay on weekdays up to 6:30pm. You must have the correct fare when boarding the bus.

The Compass card fare system will be implemented throughout the Lower Mainland later in 2014, and the current fare and zone system will still apply at first. ■



View of mountains above Lions Bay village from Lions Bay Ave. On the lower left is the C12 bus stop to return to West Vancouver. The left side of the underpass below Hwy 99 is the terminus for the

Robert Batt

## Avoid the Complacency Trap

Mike Nash (Caledonia Ramblers)



There are inherent risks in the outdoors, just as there are in everyday life; the key is how well we understand and manage those risks. Unpredictable weather, difficult terrain, wildlife encounters, consequences of getting lost or injured in remote places, and how we respond to peer pressure to just get on with something that we're unsure about or inexperienced with. There are many things that can go wrong in the outdoors: some are unavoidable, but most can be anticipated and dealt with safely. At the top of my list and squarely in the avoidable category is *complacency*.

We are all afflicted with *complacency* at one time or another—it seems to be human nature. I've watched an experienced outdoorsman, compass in hand walk in a direction opposite to his intended route. He was so convinced he was going the right way that he read the compass needle backwards. At the same time, in a remarkable case of collective tunnel vision, I ignored what my

GPS was trying to tell me! I've listened to members of the medical profession, a community coroner, and the head of a large industrial safety program discuss and rationalize that a padlocked fire exit door at a crowded New Year dinner/dance in a wooden hall with lit candles was not a concern.

*Complacency* arises whether you are in a work setting, on the highway, engaged in recreational activities in remote wilderness, or simply working around the home. According to the 2010 testimony concerning the death of an experienced BC forest worker: "Death and serious injury in the woods are rarely caused by inexperience. Complacency, often by those who have worked in the bush all their lives, is the deadly enemy."

One way to counter this tendency is to think through 'what if' scenarios. Anticipate what could happen and how you might respond if it did. This practice saved the life of a Prince George woodsman when he fell through the ice carrying a 40-kilogram pack on a minus 30 degree windy day on remote Stalk Lake in northwest BC. Fred Van der Post had mentally rehearsed this scenario many times during his 700-kilometre solo snowshoe trek and he knew what he had to do. Fred's amazing account of how he survived is the opening *reality check* in my recent book, *Outdoor Safety & Survival*.

Often it's an accumulation of small, familiar things that can blossom quickly into a serious, life-threatening problem. In the same book I detailed the series of minor events that led to Canada's worst civil aviation disaster in Toronto in 1970 when a brand new DC8 jetliner went down in perfect flying conditions, killing all 109 people on board. The flight was in the news again this summer, as the field where it crashed is slated for development and some would like to see a permanent memorial there.

Recently, I was leading a mountain hike near Prince George when we encountered a grizzly bear while bushwhacking off trail. We had anticipated the possibility and retreated unscathed, but in a post-incident assessment I learned that only two of the five of us had bear spray. That same afternoon, my wife was hiking in the mountains in southern BC when a member of her party suffered multiple leg fractures, requiring helicopter evacuation. It took seven hours to resolve the incident, leaving Judy and her two remaining companions barely an hour of daylight for the two-hour hike out with only one headlamp between them.



Whether you are in a remote area, or just enjoying the woods near your home, spend some time learning about outdoor safety and survival, take a wilderness first aid course, carry the essential gear that you might need if things go awry and you need to spend a night out, think through the *what ifs*, try to keep a focus on the *complacency trap*, and then go out and enjoy the best that BC has to offer! ■

*Mike Nash has been writing about B.C.'s outdoors for 30 years and is the author of four books, including Outdoor Safety & Survival published by Rocky Mountain Books in 2012.*

**CLOUDBURST**  
**Cover Photo Contest**  
 If you have a photo that you think would make a great cover please [email](#) it to us and include a caption or story to go with it. Please submit photos for our next issue by April 1, 2014.

## Mountain Legends in Assiniboine

Ron Dart (ACC-Vancouver)

I will be happy when my trail leads me back up to the little hut (Sunburst) which has become my home on a strange continent.

~Hans Gmoser

There are moments in the mountains when legends of the past, present and future meet, for a fleeting moment, then paths part and everything vanishes into the silence of mist and history. It's a delight to be in the midst of such a convergence and serendipitous moment---such was August 5 2013 at Assiniboine.

Ruthie Oltmann (author of *Lizzie Rummel: Baroness of the Canadian Rockies*) had agreed to lead members of the Chilliwack Outdoor Club (COC) on a historic lecture-tour to Lizzie's modest Hut (Sunburst Cabin) on Sunburst Lake on August 5<sup>th</sup>. The COC gathered on the porch of the Cabin to take in the unique mountain life of Lizzie Rummel. Ruthie, in her animated tale telling way, mentioned that Hans Gmoser was, in many ways, offered a hearth and home by Lizzie when he was new to the Assiniboine area---there is, in fact, a lovely photo of Gmoser and Lizzie at the Cabin in *Lizzie Rummel*---the same photograph is at Assiniboine Lodge.



Ron Dart

Ron Dart with Ruthie Oltmann and Sepp Renner

There was another group that kept an interested distance from Lizzie's Cabin when Ruthie gave her lecture. Hans Gmoser died in 2006, and as I mentioned above, Lizzie was a mother of sorts to him. After Gmoser died, he had his ashes scattered at Sunburst Lake (where his Canadian journey began in many ways). We soon discovered that the group that hovered attentively was on a five day journey in the Assiniboine area, and Margaret Gmoser (Hans' wife) was on the trip----Lizzie's Hut and the ashes of Hans in Sunburst Lake would have connected much for Margaret---her husband had begun his journey at the Hut and his ashes are in the lake at the foot of the Hut. Ruthie was the weaver that told the tale so well, the ashes in Sunburst a return to the beginning, a bursting forth of the new day light of the mountain sun.

Ruthie finished her lecture on Lizzie and most of us hiked up to Cerulean and Elizabeth Lake (named after Lizzie). Rain and hail greeted us on the upward trek to Elizabeth Lake. A few from COC hastened down the trail and made their way back to the Naiset Huts. Frank/Kate Wawrychuk and I ambled down slower and we were delighted, upon reaching Lizzie's hut, to discover that Sepp Renner was there with a few friends. Sepp (who has climbed Mount Assiniboine about 50 times) had worked with Hans for a short period of time in heli-skiing, but by 1983, he and his wife, Barbara (who was the sister of Margaret Gmoser), took over the running of Assiniboine Lodge from the Strom family (Erling had handed over the running of the Lodge to Siri, his daughter). Sepp ran many a winter ski trip from the Lodge (over frozen and snow deep Lake Magog to some luscious bowls worthy of many a turn)---much cheaper and less high powered than heli-skiing. Sepp's daughter, Sara Renner, won the silver medal in the 2006 Olympics in Turin in the team sprint ski event. We chatted with Sepp for about a ½ hour about his years at Assiniboine Lodge and the memorable 2006 silver medal of Sara.

Frank/Kate and I met, when returning from Sunburst Cabin, a young boy whose parents are now managing Assiniboine Lodge--he races for the Mount Revelstoke Ski team and has high hopes for the future---Olympic dreams perhaps?

We had heard about Lizzie and Hans (now dead), Ruthie's (Baroness of Kananaskis Country) telling of their lives and Margaret and Sepp's historic presence—who would have guessed that past and present would have gathered in such close proximity for such a short period of time? But, there was more to come.

Dusk was with us, and most on the trip were at the Naiset Huts. We were more than delighted that Karl Ricker had joined us. Karl has many a mountain tale to tell, but one of his finest was the climb of Mt. Logan East Peak with Hans Gmoser in 1959. The climb is ably and amply recorded in Chic Scott's biography of Gmoser, *Deep Powder and Steep Rock: The Life of Mountain Guide Hans Gmoser* (pages 154-171). Karl's daughter, Maelle Ricker, won the gold medal in the 2010 Olympics for the snowboard cross event.

There was Lizzie Rummel and her decades of mountain life at Sunburst Hut. There was Hans Gmoser and his friendship with Lizzie Rummel. Lizzie and Hans are now dead. There was Ruthie Oltmann telling so well, and in such a sympathetic way at Sunburst Hut, the tale of Lizzie and Hans (Ruthie, herself, being part of the mountain history). There was Margaret Gmoser down at Sunburst Lake where Hans' ashes are scattered. There was the young boy who raced for the Mount Revelstoke ski team. There was Sepp Renner who is a significant part of Assiniboine history. There was Karl Ricker who had been with Hans on the 1959 Mt. Logan expedition. Then, the Olympic children of Sepp and Karl (Sara and Maelle)---mountaineering legends and Olympians within a generation and silent Assiniboine a witness to all this.

How rare and unexpected---mountain legends of the past, present and potential future met, converged and parted---such a privilege to be there when the portal briefly opened. ■



Hilary Crowley

Caledonia Ramblers Trip Leader, Dave King, on ridge at Kakwa

## PORCUPINE POEM

Hilary Crowley (Caledonia Ramblers)

Views of Mt Ida and glaciers abound  
As the chopper flies away from the ground  
By Lunar Lake, he sets us down  
Away in the mountains far, far from town.

Airplane ridge was our first day's hike  
Great views of Ida and the like  
Lunch down by an alpine lake  
Then fossil viewing, best not take.

A steep scramble up the screes  
Slippery rocks and alpine trees  
Nice chats by the fire  
Fitness level not so dire.

The next day, long hike along the shore  
Up the ridge and then much more  
Nice walk by a deep cave  
Then an impossible ridge – led by Dave.

Up the cliff of scree and rock  
One foot then another, like a crock  
Finally we broach the top  
But even then, we do not stop.

Reward of lake and mountain views  
Some settle for a snooze  
Then we go higher again  
The highest point to attain.

A mountain goat was the highlight  
The scramble down, even more of a fright  
Then amble back across the meadow  
Another cave discovered below.

Next day bush-whack down to Jarvis Lakes  
Cross more creeks than it takes  
Beautiful view of Mt Ida with lunch  
A refreshing bath added a punch.

Alpen glow at the end of the day  
Setting sun spreading its rays  
In the morning a caribou  
This day the end of this fine view.

Off we set with packs loaded  
Back to the cliff our leader goaded  
Scary climb as we clambered up  
Finally made it to the top

Then down through meadows so lush  
Masses of flowers – try not to crush  
Set up camp by an alpine lake  
A goat on the cliff takes the cake.

Next day, pull up stakes  
Set off towards Babette and Kakwa Lakes  
Bush-whack down through slippery slope  
Rocks and rhodos, trees to grope.

Suddenly Anne tripped and fell  
Glasses broke and went to hell  
Eye black and blue and swollen too  
Up she gets without ado.

More slippery slope we clamber down  
Then a trail, just like down-town  
Finally the track we find  
No more challenging grind.

Five more kilometres to Kakwa Lake  
Greeted by hosts, our thirst to slake  
Set up camp with outhouse and fire  
Even the bugs aren't so dire.

Kakwa is Cree for porcupine  
On pole handles and boots, they like to dine  
In fact there were none around our poles  
But the climbers on Ida had some holes.

Last day, Mt Ruth our goal  
Three hours up to the alpine knoll  
Six then climb up to the peak  
Four of us, more views we seek.

The other five relaxed at base  
Chats in the cabin, no need to race  
Now, last supper in the rain  
Can't wait 'til next year - to do it again.



## Karl Ricker: Renaissance Mountain Man

Ron Dart (ACC-Vancouver)

The *Pique Newsletter* (September 12 2013) in Whistler had an article by Karl Ricker entitled “Camping crowds at our receding glaciers”. The essay, appropriately so, reflected upon the way the Overlord and Wedgemount Glaciers have thinned out and drawn back in the last few years. Karl has had an abiding interest in glaciers for decades.

Karl and I met for a lingering two hour breakfast at the Alpine Café in Whistler on September 26 to talk about his life in the out of doors and mountaineering. We had chatted about meeting when we were together for a few days in Assiniboine in August. Don Munday had published in 1922, *Mount Garibaldi Park: Vancouver's Alpine Playground*, and the missive became an orienteering sacred text of sorts for aspiring trekkers and climbers. Karl was involved with the UBC Varsity Outdoor Club (VOC) from 1954-1959, and he has many a vivid tale to tell of the annual VOC camps at Garibaldi Lake that Munday described so well in *Mount Garibaldi Park*. Garibaldi Station (which is no more) was the final stop before the upward and long day trudge began to the lake, mountains and glacier thick region. It was because of Karl's involvement with the VOC in the 1950s that he heard of the rising star in the Rockies, Hans Gmoser, and in 1959, Karl joined Gmoser (and others) in the successful climb of Mount Logan East Peak (the ascent is ably told with ample photos by Chic Scott in his biography of Gmoser, *Deep Powder and Steep Rock: The Life of Mountain Guide Hans Gmoser*: pgs. 154-171). Karl was on the 1<sup>st</sup> Fitzsimmons-Horseshoe Traverse (now called the Spearhead Traverse) in 1964---he was also part of a group that participated in renaming London Mountain Whistler Mountain in 1965. Whistler was very much in its infancy in those days---did not open for downhill skiing until January 1966.

Karl and I, after breakfast, went over to his chalet and he dug about in his files and gave me a copy of his extensive bibliography (larger than some books). The topics cover six areas: 1) Catalogue of geological/biophysical mapping projects, 2) Community service organization reports, 3) Publications of mountaineering and related alpine activity, 4) News briefs, 5) Manuscript reports, committee reports, industrial reports or memos and proposals for projects and 6) Publications in journals, theses and reports that have been or could be circulated to an outside audience. The sheer range of interest and writings about such diverse fields does make Karl a definite nominee as a renaissance mountain man,

Karl does come by such a breadth honestly, though---his father, Bill Ricker, had a multidisciplinary mind and wide ranging research skills, abilities and interests. Bill Ricker did early research in Cultus Lake and was one of the trail makers in the area. The fact that Bill Ricker contributed to many key areas of study and research meant that he was honoured and respected by many. In fact, in 2006 a *festschrift* was published on Bill Ricker's life and scholarly work titled: *Bill Ricker: An Appreciation*. Karl contributed a couple of fine articles to the collection and his father also submitted an essay. Some of the essays in the *festschrift* reflect upon Bill Ricker's interest in entomology, fishery science, ornithology, botany and the naming of “Ricker's Curve” after Bill's pioneering work. Other contributors commented upon Bill Ricker's gifted intellect, insatiable curiosity, generous spirit and his significant role in ecological awareness long before environmental concerns had surfaced. Bill was, in short, very much a renaissance man and Karl has inherited his father's being in many ways. Karl recounted, as we chatted, his many trips with his father, when young, when he was carried up and down trails and mountain terrain on his father's back.



Ron Dart

Ron and Karl

Karl moved to Whistler in 2001, but his mountaineering life brought him to the Coastal mountains many times before 2001---as mentioned earlier, the VOC did its annual camps at Garibaldi Lake (often in late April-early May) and Karl participated in many of such trips from 1954-1959. When Karl returned to do a Master's degree in Geology at UBC from 1962-1965, he was yet again involved with the VOC---these were the years when the road had been put through to Squamish and the Chief became the climbing mecca for many from the early 1960s onwards--the publication of Glenn Woodsworth's *A Climber's Guide to the Squamish Chief and Surrounding Areas* Varsity Outdoor Club in 1967 signalled a shift of sorts from a focus on Garibaldi to the Squamish Chief environs. Karl worked for the National Parks for a short time between 1959-1962 and he was on the ski patrol at Lake Louise when the ski hill was divided between the Mt. Temple ownership and Whitehorn.

There is a definite sense in which Karl is part of the

significant bridge generation of Canadian and West Coast mountaineering. Don/Phyllis Munday and others stand behind Karl and Dick Culbert/Glenn Woodsworth/Tim Auger, and others follow on his mountaineering heels. Karl has many oral stories to tell that reflect much about both mountaineering history in Canada, the West Coast and beyond that need to be recorded. The VOC, ACC, BCMC and FMCBC do need to hear and hear well what Karl has yet to say----a real goldmine and mother lode of insight and information.

Karl's daughter, Maelle, as most know, won a gold medal in the 2010 Olympics. Karl's son, Jorly, was once an Olympic hopeful. When Karl and I parted, we took a few photos---he had just returned from an annual trip with the VOC veterans and had biked the Kettle Valley (bike was still on the back of his car)---he was off to lead his 21<sup>st</sup> annual week long trip in the Coquihalla----he has been leading trips in the area since before the highway was put in and made the Coquihalla mountain region more accessible. The weather did not seem promising; calls were coming in about the advisability of the trip, but, true to form, the Coquihalla Mountains were calling and Karl was going with those who were willing to join him. Karl has definitely seen more of the Coquihalla than most and much could be written about what he has seen in more than two decades on the rock ridges, forests and deep carved valleys.

There has not been a solid historic book written on west coast mountaineers since Susan Leslie's *In The Western Mountains: Early Mountaineering in British Columbia* (1980). I suppose, in some ways, *The B.C. Mountaineer: 100 years of mountaineering 1907-2007* is the best we have at this point. Gratefully so, Karl has four articles in the tome: "In the Footsteps of Roy Mason-1977-1978", "A quarter century on Coldcoqu and another decade", "Centennial Hike 2007-the Brigade trail to Mt. Davis" and "A century of scientific query by the BCMC". When a historic book is finally compiled, written and published on Canadian/West Coast mountaineers, Karl should be recognized as the pre-eminent renaissance mountain man.

When we parted, Karl kindly gave me the French horn he played when young--the instrument never held him. My wife, Karin, is a harpist and fiddler and she was most grateful for the gift. Karl and Karin had chatted at Assiniboine about music and, again, Karl the renaissance mountain man, revealed yet another aspect of his varied and rich range of interests. ■

## Club Activities and Updates

### South Okanagan Trail Alliance

Andrew Drouin (South Okanagan Trail Alliance)

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce Cloudburst readers to the South Okanagan Trail Alliance (SOTA), a recent member club addition to the FMCBC.

Located in British Columbia's beautiful South Okanagan, SOTA is a small but growing coalition of trail-lovers from multiple outdoor activities. In our first year we've wasted no time in doing great things for the trail community, while bringing those of like minds together.

The roots of our foundation reach back to 2008, when Andrew Drouin founded the Penticton & Area Cycling Association, a road and mountain bike advocacy club. Andrew led this group as president between 2008 and 2011, before following his heart into founding SOTA, seeking to create a [trail]-based organization, as opposed to supporting the needs of one user group.

The South Okanagan Trail Alliance welcomes all non-motorized trail user groups, including hikers, mountain cyclists, trail-runners, equestrians and naturalists. Much of SOTA's funding originates with [SweetSingletrack.ca](http://SweetSingletrack.ca) - a print publication and companion website created by Andrew in 2010, as well as financial and material donations from local business-owners.

2013 has found us creating new, sanctioned, multi-use single-track trails on Crown land, obtaining Section57 designation on a popular trail network - signing much of the same, building and signing a new section of sanctioned trail in Skaha Prov. Park, building and signing new trails on Campbell Mt. and maintaining countless existing trails in the interim.

A tall order for a club in its infancy with few members!

SOTA actively works with Crown land managers, BC Parks staff and private land-owners in order to forward our goal of advocating, creating and signing sanctioned trails in the South Okanagan. We invite you to visit us and ask our members to show you around the area. ■

SOTA: [www.SouthOkanaganTrailAlliance.com](http://www.SouthOkanaganTrailAlliance.com)



## Griswold Pass

Mike Nash (Caledonia Ramblers)

In early August, 2013, my wife, Judy and I joined a party of 15 for a week of hiking and climbing at Griswold Pass in the southern Chilcotin Mountains. Ours was the last of three consecutive weeks organized by the Vancouver Island Section of the Alpine Club of Canada. The Vancouver Island folks generously opened the third week to members of other ACC Sections. In addition to eight people from Vancouver Island, there were two from Prince George, two from Vancouver (including one from Maine, USA) and three from Calgary. Arranging back-to-back trips meant large savings in helicopter costs and made practical the transportation of a well-appointed communal base camp. The latter consisted of two large geodesic dome tents for cooking, eating and drying ropes and other gear; two portable outhouses; a portable shower; an engineered bear cache; a high-capacity three-burner stove with plenty of propane; plus tables, chairs, kitchen gear and several large metal garbage cans for food storage.



Mike Nash

After a flight in, it's time to set up camp on the moraine.

The adventure was staged from a small airstrip just north of Gun Lake at the west end of Carpenter Lake, from where we flew 43 kilometres west up Slim Creek to our base camp just south of Griswold Pass. There, we had ready access to meadows, glaciers and peaks offering superb views of the Coast Ranges around us. *Google Earth* depicted a rather desolate-looking landscape, but on the ground the alpine meadows, flowers, lakes, glaciers and mountains proved to be spectacular.

We enjoyed blue skies all week, with no mosquitoes or other small biting flies. There was just one spoiler to this idyllic place... on exiting the helicopter, even before it had shut down, we were swarmed by horseflies. Fortunately they were either solar powered or unionized since they only operated from nine to five. This allowed us to enjoy pleasant mornings and evenings for eating and other activities, and we only had to deal with them during the day. It wasn't hard to develop coping strategies while on the move, and the only real challenge was getting in and out of the many warm tarns for refreshing afternoon ablutions.

On the day of our arrival, after establishing camp, we hiked together as a group to an easy peak that gave us a good overview of the area and afforded an opportunity to get to know each other. For the rest of the week we broke up into smaller groups according to interests. For safety, we agreed that nobody would hike or climb alone, and each party carried a small radio with prearranged check in times; plus we had a satellite phone and a PLB for emergencies.

It took three flights to transport everyone to base camp, and the first arriving parties took advantage of this to get beta on the camp and on the best hiking and climbing routes from those who were leaving. We learned that a female grizzly with a cub had been seen near the top of Slim Creek, and we were aware that we were camped in a mountain pass that was likely an animal movement corridor. As it



Mike Nash

turned out, we didn't see any faunae larger than hoary marmots during our stay, but we did see fresh tracks of a lone wolf that had walked around a nearby lake and through camp one night, as well as recent and fresh sign of several bears.

The week went fast, with lots to do, great weather, interesting company, and gourmet meals that each of us took turns to prepare for the rest of the group. The participants in the preceding two weeks had the benefit of a large remnant snow patch near camp in which to put garbage cans containing their perishable food. This was an important consideration given the amount of fresh food brought along and the high daytime temperatures. However, the last of the camp snow disappeared on the second day of our week and we urgently needed to find an alternative. The first experiment of placing a weighted garbage can in the lake next to camp was a dismal failure as everything above the water level re-



Mike Nash

Griswold Peak

we were above treeline. So, through a team meeting we devised a system of careful washing, sorting, storing and zip-tie sealing food packaging and waste in heavy duty plastic bags placed in garbage cans away from camp that would later be flown out. It wasn't an ideal solution, but we thought it would buy us time — hopefully until the end of our stay.

We became concerned, however, on the final day when three returning parties found fresh sign of at least two different grizzly bears on three sides of the camp, including the tracks of a large, likely male grizzly on the moraine above camp in a place where there was no obvious reason for it to be. Anticipating a possible incursion and need to evacuate the camp during the last night (it's always good to think through the 'what ifs'), we made some preparations before turning in. Shortly, however, we were treated to one of the fiercest wind, rain and lightning storms that I have ever experienced in the mountains. It came out of nowhere and raged on for half the night. A close lightning strike was exciting, as was the lashing wind and rain trying to push our tent over combined with animated voices from nearby abodes, but otherwise it allowed us to relax about the bear. It also helped to suppress morainal dust during the next morning's helicopter operations as we flew out three loads people and their gear plus a heavy sling load of the dismantled communal camp.

Griswold Pass was a superb experience, with splendid camp accoutrements, lots to do, new places to explore, new challenges, and new friends to meet. Judy and I, who are hikers, were capably instructed and guided on a 'snow school' glacier climb by the camp leader, Andrew, and his ever-helpful assistant, Eryck. This inclusivity made us feel fully part of the group and rounded out our enjoyment of the week.

The opportunity to combine and share trips like this is one of the benefits for outdoor clubs to belong to umbrella organizations like the ACC or the FMCBC. Members get to meet new friends, visit parts of the province they might not otherwise, and to share the cost savings of multiple back-to-back trips. I think the ACC does this best, with its 100-year tradition of the flagship General Mountaineering Camp as well as with Sections like Vancouver Island offering space on their trips to other ACC members. BC Nature is also well known for its shared events and trips, and last summer I joined their weeklong exploratory backpack to the Niut Range northwest of Tatlayoko Lake. Likewise with the FMCBC — the opportunities are limited only by members' imaginations.

View Mike's slideshow of the Griswold Pass Trip [here](#). ■



Mike Nash

mained at ambient air temperature. Then, someone came up with the idea of digging two of the cans into the glacial silt that made up the north-facing side of the melted out snow gully. This summertime version of a root cellar worked brilliantly, keeping bin contents at near refrigeration temperatures.

Food waste management in grizzly country had not been well thought out. At issue was the epicurean food that most people had brought, combined with the difficulty of estimating how much 15 people would eat. The largest food group that I had previously cooked with was half a dozen people using mostly smell-free dried food. It's fairly easy to estimate food quantities in that situation, especially with people who habits you are familiar with. We had also inherited a food waste legacy from the groups that had gone before us, adding to our concerns. Burning was tried, but wasn't much of an option as

[Mike Nash](#) is the author of 'Outdoor Safety & Survival' and 'Exploring Prince George' (both from Rocky Mountain Books), and 'The Mountain Knows No Expert' (Natural Heritage Books). For more information visit: [www3.telus.net/pgoutdoors](http://www3.telus.net/pgoutdoors)



Ron Dart

A view of the Assiniboine area from Sunburst Lake

## Mount Assiniboine: August 5-10

Ron Dart (ACC Vancouver)

I don't think even old K2, the 28,000er, looked to me as high and imposing as old Assiniboine when you and I finally won through to where we could have a good look at him.

~Robert Barrett 1924

Mount Assiniboine has been called the Matterhorn of Canada, and there is a great deal of truth in such a graphic comparison, although I think (having lived in the Matterhorn region from 1973-1974) the Assiniboine area is much more attractive and spacious than the Matterhorn- Zermatt mountain and tourist area in Switzerland.

It was, indeed, a rare and packed Chilliwack Outdoor Club (COC) trip to Assiniboine. We had 30 on the trip (24 from COC and 6 from Ruthie Oltmann's hiking group in the Canmore area). The day of departure from the Shark helipad was a dubious one---clouds were thick, low lying and rather ominous---the falling rain was relentless. We wondered if the helicopters would even lift off. But, as the time arrived for the helicopters to ferry trekkers and climbers into Assiniboine, clouds slowly parted and a tentative blue sky appeared. Most on the trip were safely settled into one of the five Naiset huts (at about 7200 feet) by early afternoon. We were then led by Ruthie Oltmann on a tour to Lizzie Rummel's hut on Sunburst Lake---we stopped at Lizzie's hut for about a ½ hour and Ruthie gave us a lecture on Lizzie, the history of the hut and many of the mountaineers who stayed with Lizzie before/after their climb of Assiniboine --- Ruthie's biography of Lizzie, *Lizzie Rummel: Baroness of the Canadian Rockies*, is a must read for those interested in a pivotal period of Assiniboine history. Ruthie then led us upward to Cerulean Lake, then higher still to Elizabeth Lake (named after Lizzie Rummel). The weather played cat and mouse with us all afternoon---a fine blue sky, then hail and buckets of water. The day ended, though, with an expansive blue sky and the reigning monarch of the area, Mt. Assiniboine, gazing down on us.

August 6<sup>th</sup> began well and all sorts of trips were on the agenda. Some trudged uphill to the fine sights offered by Wonder Pass, others stayed lower at Og Lake and a few took to the splendid heights of Og Pass and Windy Ridge. The late afternoon lightning and thunderstorm had most of us huddled at Assiniboine Lodge enjoying a sort of high tea as Nature put on a tempestuous show. And again, as evening joined us, clouds parted and the blue canopy joined us.

The treks on August 7<sup>th</sup> ventured further afield---the upward ascent to the Niblet, Nublet and Nub made for a photographers paradise. Windy Ridge welcomed more from COC and Cautley Peak/Alpine Meadows and Ridge charmed those who took in mountain sights from varied directions (a couple of wolverines were even spotted). Breakfasts and dinners were well prepared in the spacious Wonder Lodge Cook Shelter (with pots, cutlery and plates



Ron Dart

It was a good sized group that went together.

provided) The shelter became the commons with adventures of the day ably and energetically recounted and relived.

August 8<sup>th</sup> dawned with low lying mist and the promise of an early burn off. Rain did arrive for a short time in the morning---some were keen to trek to Hind Hut (where those climbing Assiniboine stay for the night), others did Nub, Windy Ridge and Wonder Pass---Cautley Meadows was a profuse with alpine flowers---indeed, the meadow was more of a football field in size. There was, also, a group climbing Assiniboine, and they were often watched with much interest from the Lodge. Ruthie Oltmann charmed us in the evening with tales told of her mountain life. Each on the trip was given a copy of her recent autobiography, *Ruthie's Trails: A Lifetime of Adventure*.

August 9<sup>th</sup> promised to be a blue bonnet charmer. Most of the group rose early and did the long hike over Wonder Pass to the trailhead (took most from 7-8 hours). Others took the quicker helicopter out---not much more than 5-10 minutes to either the Shark or Canmore helipad. Many gathered in the evening at various places in Canmore or Banff to wind down the Assiniboine trip.

We were fortunate on the trip to meet with Sepp Renner (who ran Assiniboine Lodge for many a decade in the post- Erling/Siri Strom era) and Karl Ricker, as recounted on pages 12-13 of this Cloudburst issue.

Most of us were back in the Fraser Valley on August 10<sup>th</sup>, the 9 hour drive from Canmore behind us and life giving memories well stored for when needed. I'm not sure we will ever do a COC trip with 30 on it again, but, for the most part, the weather, mountains, flowers and members on the trip lived well and wisely together. I plan on doing Assiniboine-Kananaskis next year---those interested, let me know. ■

*Participants:*

*COC Group: Frank/Kate Wawrychuk, Alan Wheatley, Moira Gartside, Phil/Liz Long, Richard/Leslie Loewen, Mary Ann Dykshoorn, Peter Epp, Lisa Siddons, Carolyn Hrynyk, Doug Hudson, Sue Lawrence, Elizabeth Bernoth, Irene/Simon Hofler, Marilyn Cram, Fred Hahn, Saeed Ghafari, Mehrdad Tabriz, Karl Ricker, Ron/Karin Dart*

*Ruthie's Group: Ruthie Oltmann, Trish Jevne, Roseanne Tarnowski, Ray Johnston, Rochelle Sato, Wayne Robb*

## NSH Summer Camp 2013: Not Kananaskis

Carole Nakonechny (North Shore Hikers)

This year, the annual NSH car-camp started with disaster. Our original destination, the Kananaskis was struck by sudden torrential flooding. Much of the trail infrastructure inside Peter Lougheed Park was damaged or inaccessible. Kudos to our intrepid leaders, who had a contingency plan in place. We managed a successful about face and headed out for Jasper.

The campground at The Whistlers was a vast expanse of recreation vehicles, and airstream trailers, but we were at the very edge so thereby escaped much of the KOA effect. On arrival the weather was rainy, the ground soggy, all made worse by reports of brilliant sunshine in Vancouver.



Gillian Chee

A view of Mt. Edith Cavell with Angel Glacier across the valley

Our situation turned out to be not so bad after all. All we had to do was gain 1000 metres in elevation, and the delusory gloom was left below for warm sunny weather at altitude. We had superb hiking weather for the entire week.

Some of our stronger hikers looking for more challenging hikes (the "C group") were doing ten hour days, scrambling around on high, while the rest of hiked happily somewhat lower, and for shorter period of time.

Our first day turned out to be the toughest for some of us, because although it started out as a touristy ride up the Whistlers chairlift, we ended up in verboten territory, scrambling on mixed loose ground with boulders moving around at random. The Indian Ridge walk was stunning, with ranges of ochre peaks, streaked with indigo shadows and glaciation. Our elite group described their day heading up Nigel peak as "a great day of friends and spectacular views."

Another favorite was Verdant Pass, a trail which took us behind Mt Edith Cavell and the Angel Glacier, past the first Cirque into a huge magnificent valley. Toward Maligne Lake, we hiked up into the Opal Hills, pyramids of violet shale, which offered the great fun of boot-skiing back down. More spectacular, the Bald Hills, like weird gargantuan waves petrified in time, enclosed the green blue of Maligne Lake far below.

We also did several forays up the Icefields Highway to spend time doing relaxed hikes up Parker Ridge and Wilcox Pass to view the splendour of the Athabaska and Saskatchewan glaciers.

The C group accomplished Cinquefoil Mountain, Mt Wilcox, Roche Miette, and Tangled Ridge, but as their trip reports are somewhat cryptic, their experiences must be left to the imagination. They did seem to be extremely "happy campers" however.

What could be better than rambling the high country with old hiking buddies for an entire week?

Special thanks for the hard work of the trip co-ordinators: Vinit Khosla, Bill Myrtle, and Gillian Chee. ■

## The Colorado 14,000ers: August 18-31

Ron Dart (ACC-Vancouver)

Colorado's 14,000-foot peaks offer the hiker and mountaineer one of the finest arrays of alpine challenges in the Rocky Mountains.

~Gerry Roach

*Colorado's Fourteeners: From Hikes to Climbs* p. IX

The Chilliwack Outdoor Club (COC) had not done a trip to Colorado thus far to do the 14,000ers, so this was our maiden voyage. Most had taken their Ginkgo Biloba before the trip to ease our passage into the higher elevation without living with altitude sickness. The actual time taken to get to Colorado (Frisco was to be our home city for our duration of the stay---it's between the famous ski towns-villages of Vail and Breckenridge) was slower than anticipated. The van we were travelling in had problems, so we spent the night in Boise (Idaho) for repairs---we then rented a van near Salt Lake City for the rest of the trip.

We did not arrive in Frisco until August 21<sup>st</sup>, but we were greeted warmly by Brett/Michelle/Charlie and feasted well with a fine dinner. Needless to say, we were keen to begin trekking to the summits of the 14,000ers. The elevation of Frisco is almost 9200 feet, so we spent the next 10 days between 9,200-14,286 feet.

Quandry Peak (14,265) was the goal for August 22. The weather dithered between rain, thick clouds and blue sky, but all who started on the trail reached the summit at the far end of the long rock spine. A few had minor elevation symptoms but nothing serious. Many a fine photo was taken and we were off the mountain by late afternoon (mountains known for their fair blue sky mornings and afternoon lightning-thunder storms).

We decided to do an acclimatization day on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, so some went to Rocky Mountain Park and the Hot Springs and others did the long bike trip from Vail Pass to Breckenridge. The goal for August 24<sup>th</sup> was Grays/Torreys Peaks, but the crowds-cars that arrived from the Denver area to do these favourite peaks were so numerous, we decided to do the lower Breckenridge summit at 13,000 feet (still more than 2000 feet higher than Mount Baker). The ski chair lift at Breckenridge is the highest in North America (Imperial Express: 12, 840 feet), but the summit is yet higher and the ridge walks from the summit real charmers (there was still well packed patches of snow on the upper rock ridges)---more fine photos taken from the windy summit.

August 25<sup>th</sup> was a tourist trip to Aspen (one of the historic ski delight towns/slopes in Colorado). The drive over Fremont (11,320) and Independence Passes (12,095) took us into Colorado high country---chiseled mountain valleys and barren rock spires mesmerized eyes and souls. The final descent into Aspen around narrow bends where cars almost touched was navigated well by John. We took the long gondola ride to the top of Aspen mountain, took in an informative nature walk and some fine blue grass music---the much photographed Maroon

Bells will need to wait another trip, but the day atop Aspen's roof (11, 212) made for spacious views in all directions---we even took in a history lesson of the mountains and town site.

It was back to the 14,000ers again on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Grays (14,270) and Torreys (14, 267) Peaks were the beckoning treks for the day. The trail began above tree line, so the upward ascent was done between a spacious cathedral of rocks on all sides. Grays held our summit attention, then a fine path descent trail to the col and up to Torreys welcoming peak where hands were raised in joy---the weather ever spoiled us---3 14,000ers were now behind us.

We decided to do Mount Evans (14, 264) on the August 27<sup>th</sup>. Some drove to the summit (the highest paved road in the USA), whereas others followed larger and smaller cairns from Summit Lake round the arching mountain boulders to the summit of Evans (where we were greeted by mountain goats, a historic restaurant and the highest observatory in the world). The weather played cat and mouse with us---clear skies and plenty of thick mist that obscured much.

August 28<sup>th</sup> was to be our four peak day: Mounts Democrat (14,148), Lincoln (14,286), Bross (14, 172) and Cameron make for a fine high ridge loop ramble---the trip is supposed to take about 8 hours, but the COC keeners did the roundabout in 5 hours. We had certainly by the 28<sup>th</sup> acclimated to the thin air above 14, 000 feet---8-14,000ers of the 54-14,000ers had now been summited by the COC. It was off to the Backcountry Home Brewery for supper to celebrate a demanding yet successful day on the slopes.

August 29<sup>th</sup> was our cherry on the cake day---a ½ hour drive to Vail Ski resort/village (Colorado's version of Whistler-Blackcomb although not as expansive). We took in some fine Colorado-Vail history at the Museum and learned much about the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division and the combination of skiing-military and WWII that was so focussed in the Vail area. The Vail Museum is a must see place for those interested in mountaineering-ski history. Joce prepared a fine dinner for us back at our flats in Frisco in the evening. The trip now almost over, we regretfully prepared to leave in the morning.

The two day drive (August 30-31) back to the Fraser Valley was done with no van problems---a fine Mexican dinner in Sumas at El Nopal and we were all at homes again as dusk joined us. The first COC 14,000ers were behind us; 8 of the 14,000ers part of COC history. Next summer, hopefully, more will be bagged. ■

*Trip Leader: John Mclellan*

*Participants: Brett/Michelle/Charlie, Joce/Case, Ron/Karin, Marilyn Cram, John Mclellan.*



The group atop Quandry Peak



## Finding Jim

By Susan Oakey-Baker

Rocky Mountain Books, 2013

Review by Ron Dart (ACC-Vancouver)

Joy and woe are woven fine,  
A clothing for the soul divine,  
Under every grief and pine,  
Runs a joy with silken twine.  
It is right it should be so,  
We were made for joy and woe,  
And when this we rightly know,  
Through the world we safely go.

~William Blake

Wrangel-St. Elias National Park in April 1999, and in 2006, the ACC-Jim Haberl Hut was opened in the Tantalus Range in the Coastal Mountains (Cloudburst: Fall/Winter 2006, pgs. 22-23). I remember, with some fondness, the ACC week trip in 2006 to the Tantalus Range to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ACC--the Haberl Hut was ever in our sights and imagination---it opened a few weeks before our trek.

*Finding Jim* is a fast paced and energetic book (44 chapters) that, in a vulnerable and raw sort of way, retells the intense phase of Jim-Sue's relationship in the 1990s and, more to the telling point, walks the reader, in a tender and transparent way, into Sue's extended mourning phase after Jim's death in 1999---there is nothing opaque in this see into the soul book. There can be no doubt that Sue had knitted deeply with Jim (Goethe calls this "elective affinities") and such an unexpected death shredded the knitting and unravelled Sue's hopes and dreams for a life that was supposed to unfold well and successfully. Joy (mixed with some early confusion in the early relationship) tended to dominate until the death of Jim altered the script of the drama-----woe entered Sue's life and joy was dimmed in the process of mourning searching for meaning---there is a surgical like precision as Sue touches, in a vivid and deft way, her many feelings and reactions to Jim's tragic death.

The burnished gold of *Finding Jim* is the way Sue does not flinch from feeling her pain, trying to ease such suffering and the varied places she goes (where she and Jim had spent life giving moments) to what the Celts called "thin places" where she might re-find Jim. Death is never easy, but it is doubly difficult when it occurs at the beginning of lives that had much promise, a promise that will never be fulfilled. Life does go on, though, after death

and to Sue's credit, she courageously lived into and through the mourning season. Each chapter in the mourning quest is packed with Sue's intense longing to find Jim yet knowing Jim, at one level, is gone and can never be found. There is a certain comfort in being at places, wearing clothes etc, that were there in the bonding stage of the relationship----letting go is more difficult and re-finding how to live again equally demanding---such are some of the deeper themes of *Finding Jim*.

There are tender letters in the book, fine mountaineering photos near the end of the book and many wise quotes worth meditating on for those seeking a way onward and forward after the unexpected death of a soul friend. Sue's journey forward is one of seeing that joy and woe are part of the texture and tapestry of life--when both dwell well and wisely in the soul and mind, the pilgrimage through time is made in a more mature way---never easy to live through, though, when the tragic side of life rears its demanding head and will not leave.

Sue brings to a close *Finding Jim* with a parable (pages 354-356) not to miss---the brief tale compares/contrasts a shallower view of what it means to be human (all bluster and bravado) with a more honest, soft hearted and humane way of living life that recognizes the transformative power of suffering. The book does end in a rather positive way in which Sue is married again and has a child, but most of the book is more about Sue processing, in her unique way, Jim's death. The book, in some sense, should be called "Finding Sue" or "Sue Finding" for the simple reason that it is more about Sue in search of herself---Jim is the icon and portal she must see and live through to go deeper on such a quest, to ascend such a peak from which more can be seen and sifted through.

I met with Sue for an hour Harvest Thanksgiving weekend at Whistler to discuss her published book *Finding Jim* as the sun turned to the west---autumn trees spoiled us with their flaming red, rust and yellow hues. Sue had recently returned from her 15<sup>th</sup> climb of Kilimanjaro to raise funds for Alzheimer's---her first trip to the summit of Kilimanjaro was with Jim Haberl and the trip is poignantly and honestly recounted in *Finding Jim* (chapter 4).

Many of us remember, with predictable understated Canadian patriotism, the day Jim Haberl reached the summit of K2 in the summer of 1993---he and Dan Culver were the first Canadians to do so. The climb was marred by the death of Dan Culver who died on the descent. Haberl recounted, in evocative and graphic detail, the climb in *K2: Dreams and Reality* (1994). Haberl continued his mountaineering tales with a follow up book, *Risking Adventure: Mountaineering Journeys Around the World* (1997). *Risking Adventure* was dedicated "To Sue, my partner in the biggest adventure of all-life". Haberl in the Acknowledgements, doffed his grateful cap to Sue once again---"And a very special thanks goes out to Sue Oakey, who supports who I am and gives me perspective". Jim Haberl died in an avalanche in the University Range in



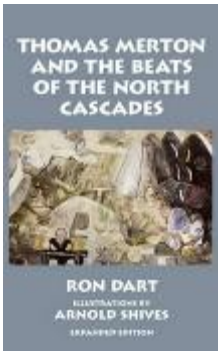
Ron and Susan

Ron Dart

*Finding Jim* is as much about Sue's journey into insight as it is about entering the larger perennial issues of life---knitted relationships ending, death and life, joy and woe, hopes dashed and dreams crushed yet living forward---each and all can tell their own story of such growth experiences, but Sue's confessional approach and limpid prose makes for a read that is virtually impossible to put down—I read the book in a few hours sitting on a mountain ridge on a clear blue canopy day after fresh snow returned for another season and autumn was fading---autumn brings endings, the cold of winter can be hard to live through, but spring does return---such is the latent message of *Finding Jim*. Sue has clearly demonstrated she is a writer of much passion and skill—we await a sequel with more delving and deeper dives---it seems a book on Kilimanjaro might be in the offing. ■

## Thomas Merton and the Beats of the North Cascades

*By Ron Dart, 2005, With Illustrations by Arnold Shives*  
Review by Bill Perry (Island Mountain Ramblers)



The spring-summer, 2011 issue of *Cloudburst* contained a review by Ron Dart titled “The Beats of the North Cascades.” Recently I came across an earlier book by Ron which expands that topic considerably. What a lucky find! I think anyone interested in this subject or Alpine literature in general, beyond the trip report or expedition history format, should pick up a copy if you can. Ron has done an excellent job of weaving many scattered threads into an absorbing narrative that may remind you of why you chose to climb in the first place and inspire you to continue.

The message and mood of the book is complemented and enhanced by the illustrations of Arnold Shives. There are seven relief prints between the pages and a colour reproduction of the oil on canvas painting, *Poets and the North Cascades* on the cover.

The beats, you may recall, were a group of 1950s American writers in rebellion against a culture which seemed to find little value in anything as impractical as, for example, mountaineering. Dart's book introduces someone many of us may never have connected to the Beats - the writer, political activist and Trappist monk, Thomas Merton. Dart examines Merton's influence on three prominent writers of the beat generation: Kenneth Rexroth, Jack Kerouac and Gary Snyder. Often, it seems, they influenced Merton as well.

These three writers were all climbers and worked for the US Forest Service at different times in the North Cascades. Kerouac was not as experienced a climber as the others, but attracted many people to the mountains through the popularity of his 1958 novel, *The Dharma Bums*. All three valued the mountains as a place of contemplation and meditation, thus the connection to Thomas Merton. They admired Merton's commitment to the spiritual path and seemed to covet his monastic life style. Although none of them became monks, Rexroth did spend some time in a monastery, and Kerouac and Snyder both served as fire lookouts, living alone on mountain tops for extended periods. At the same time, it seems that Merton, partly through his friendship with Rexroth “was drawn to mountains as a myth and symbol of the interior ascent to meaning.” (Page 8.)

Dart sketches the lives of the three, each in a separate chapter, and describes their interactions and communication with Merton. Often this is through letters or indirectly through mutual friends. Part of the last chapter touches on the attraction of Eastern religious tradition to all these men, even Merton to some extent. Dart appears to support this, but cautions that Snyder “tended to overreact ... and, in the process, idealize the East and dismiss the West,” (Page 40.) while Merton maintained a more balanced view.

The last chapter in Dart's book bears the same title as Gary Snyder's 2004 book of poetry, *Danger on Peaks*. The “peaks”, in this case, refer to peak experiences. These can occur literally *in* the mountains, or anywhere, as a result of a spiritual quest or meditative retreat. It sounds very much like the “mystical ecstasy” described by the English Romantic Poets about 150 years earlier.

One danger is becoming so addicted to the peak experience that we fail to engage in the real life issues in the valley. Another is becoming so involved in the many tasks and distractions of the valley that we lose sight of the peaks entirely.

Dart suggests that the answer lies in “leaving ... what must be left behind and knowing how to integrate, fuse and travel lightly the path between peak and valley, rock rim and asphalt highway, snowfield and snowed-in driveway.” (Page 41.)

Dart points out that Thomas Merton uses descriptions of mountains as metaphors for stages in spiritual growth throughout his work, and even titles his bestselling autobiography *The Seven Storey Mountain*.

Therefore, it seems fitting that Dart employs this same technique in his book. I will finish this review by quoting a mountain metaphor from the preface.

“Deep does call unto deep, and Merton and the Beats do call to the deeper longing and hunger within for life and life abundant. May their story point the way to fuller vistas and finer peaks.” (Page v.) Amen, Ron. Thanks for a great read. ■

## Syd Watts

Bob Spearing (Island Mountain Ramblers)

Syd Watts who passed away on May 25, 2013 in Duncan was a member of the Outdoor Club of Victoria from 1952 to 1972. He was Chairman of the Outings Committee in 1956-57 and 1957-58 and he was Vice-President in 1958-59 and 1959-60. In 1958 Syd and Harry Winstone formed the Island Mountain Ramblers, and in following years Syd led joint trips on Vancouver Island for the Outdoor Club of Victoria and the Island Mountain Ramblers. He had firsthand knowledge of all aspects of the Vancouver Island wilderness, which he shared willingly. He contributed much to the Vancouver Island hiking scene through his leadership, explorations, trail building, and conservation initiatives. He also contributed information to the *Hiking Trails* books, notably vol. 3.

In recognition of his contributions, Syd received the Distinguished Service Award from the Alpine Club of Canada, the Volunteer of the Year Award from the British Columbia Parks Branch, Watts Walk at Somenos Marsh was named after him and his wife, Emily, and in 2010 a mountain on the east side of Buttle Lake was officially named Syd Watts Peak. ■

## VI Hiking Books Founder Dies

Eric Burkle (VITIS)

Sad news that Jane Waddell Renaud has passed away. She came to Canada in 1960 from Sussex, England, joined the Outdoor Club of Victoria in 1962 and became an active hiker. She was the founding president of VITIS in 1972 and led the organization until 1991, almost two full decades. Few have done more to popularize hiking on Vancouver Island. Jane did it through the creation, editing and publishing of the *Hiking Trails 1 to 3* series of books, all on a voluntary, non-paid basis, the first hiking books for the island.



Jane was awarded an honorary life membership in both VITIS and the OCV, two organizations that have meant so much to her, and for which she had done so much. She was a remarkable person and we very much appreciate what she has done for the hiking community and the outdoors. Her memory will not be forgotten. ■

## Ferdinand (Ferdl) Taxbock (1942-2013)

Ron Dart (ACC Vancouver)

Taxbock hurried. When he reached Gmoser's side he was horrified at what he saw. Gmoser's left arm was swelling with blood, and his left leg stuck out at grotesque angle under the granite. The damage done to Gmoser's chest and vital organs could not be assessed.

~Phil Dowling

*The Mountaineers: Famous Climbers in Canada* p. 186

Phil Dowling, in his finely penned classic, *The Mountaineers: Famous Climbers in Canada* (1979), tells a graphic tale in his chapter on Hans Gmoser---Gmoser had taken a potential fatal fall in the Bugaboos when climbing Marmolata in August 1969 (pgs. 185-186). It was Gmoser's "fellow guide", Ferdl Taxbock, who led the rescue operation. This dramatic episode in Gmoser-Taxbock's lives was unpacked in more depth in Chic Scott's *Deep Powder and Steep Rock: The Life of Mountain Guide Hans Gmoser* (2009). It was Ferdl Taxbock who recounted the serious fall in an evocative and true to the event detail way (pgs. 263-264)---it is well worth the read as is Scott's biography of Gmoser. I was fortunate to see Ferdl at work doing and teaching various types of crevasse rescue techniques---Ferdl's Austrian training as a mountaineer prepared him well for the delights and emergency

responses in the unforgiving ice and rock culture of the uplands.

Ferdl Taxbock was born in Vienna Austria in 1942, and he was hired by Hans Gmoser in 1968 as a mountain guide. Taxbock arrived in Canada in 1966, and he became a member of the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides in 1968 --- in many ways, he modelled a way of being a mountain guide that was both kindly yet firm, gentle but eager to teach the basics (and more so for those curious and eager). Ferdl had become a mountaineering icon for many and he was rightly honoured in 2012 in two ways: he was the 2012 Guides Ball Patron and Lynn Martel published a fine biographical booklet on Taxbock's mountaineering vocation (*Alpine Journey: Ferdl Taxbock's Life on the Edge*).

Ferdl had been consistently active with the Alpine Club of Canada in the last few years as main guide of the "Plus 55 Camps"---those who returned from trips with Ferdl had many memory keeper tales to tell.

Most who knew Ferdl Taxbock could not help but be saddened by the news of his death on August 2013. Ferdl took a fatal fall when climbing with his daughters in the Bugaboos (where the 1969 rescue of Gmoser occurred). Ferdl took the fall while leading a pitch on the southeast ridge of Eastpost Spire.

I remember, with much fondness, the 7 day Wapta Traverse I did with Ferdl in July 2007---many a peak climbed, many a fine memory, many photos taken, many a mountain tale recounted. Our trek took us, the 1<sup>st</sup> day, to turquoise coloured Peyto Lake, up Peyto Glacier to spacious Peter & Catherine Whyte (Peyto) Hut where we bunked in for a couple of days---we climbed the north peak of Rhondda the following day, doing short roping in two groups on the knife edge ridge to the summit---did some challenging crevasse rescue techniques at the base of Thompson, also. The time arrived when Bow Hut was to be our next home on the traverse---did south peak of Rhondda on the way to Bow---many fine photos taken as Ferdl chatted with one and all. We descended the onion patch to Bow Hut (the crème de menthe of the four huts on the traverse). Bow was packed with people taking a variety of mountaineering courses, so the maddening crowd was left behind after a night, and we headed to Balfour Hut---Ferdl ever the moderate paced guide on the crevasse laden glacier field. The trek to Balfour Hut took us to the col between Olive and St. Nicholas (where we dropped our packs and summited Olive---again sights to see that silenced the soul). Most days began about 5:00am and we were off the glacier by 2:00 pm. It was a privilege, day by day, to absorb decades of hard won mountain wisdom from Ferdl. We had planned to climb Gordon from Balfour but a nasty storm dominated the day, so hours were spent with Ferdl combining all sorts of knot combinations for a variety of mountain and lowland activities. It was also an interesting, mostly, hut day. Ferdl told us much about his journey, his work with Hans Gmoser (who had died the previous year, Scott's biography of Gmoser in the offing) and much else---an autobiographical day of sorts with Ferdl. Our final two days on the traverse included the upward ascent, in a white out, of crevasse-riddled and imposing Balfour, through a snow storm to the compact and Spartan Scott Duncan Hut and down to the greenery of the Valley again, the traverse Canada's Haute Route of the Wapta/Waputik Icefields behind us. The solid white of ice and snow was left behind for the life giving green of trees and plants. The full week with Ferdl (he was off to Austria to do more guiding) taught us all much about mountaineering, navigation, skills, knots and histories of the mountain life. None of us on the trip would have anticipated in July 2007 that Ferdl would take the fatal fall he did in August 2013.

Ferdl will be sorely missed in the BC, Albertan and Austrian mountaineering communities. The last email I received from Ferdl was signed off with his typical European "Berg Heil"

Berg Heil, indeed, Ferdl. ■

# FMCBC Member Clubs

## CENTRAL INTERIOR

Bulkley Backcountry Ski Society  
[www.bbss.ca](http://www.bbss.ca)  
Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club  
[www.caledoniaramblers.ca](http://www.caledoniaramblers.ca)  
Fraser Headwaters Alliance  
[www.fraserheadwaters.org](http://www.fraserheadwaters.org)

## NORTH COAST

Mount Remo Backcountry Society  
[www.mtremo.ca](http://www.mtremo.ca)

## METRO VANCOUVER

Alpine Club of Canada – Vancouver  
[www.accvancouver.ca](http://www.accvancouver.ca)  
BC Mountaineering Club  
[www.bcmc.ca](http://www.bcmc.ca)  
Friends of Garibaldi Park  
[www.friendsofgaribaldipark.org](http://www.friendsofgaribaldipark.org)  
Hike BC  
[www.nationalhikingtrail.org](http://www.nationalhikingtrail.org)  
North Shore Hikers  
[www.northshorehikers.org](http://www.northshorehikers.org)  
North Vancouver Outdoors Club  
[www.northvanoutdoorsclub.ca](http://www.northvanoutdoorsclub.ca)  
Outsetters Club of Vancouver  
[www.outsetters.org](http://www.outsetters.org)  
SFU Outdoor Club  
[www.sfuoutdoors.ca](http://www.sfuoutdoors.ca)  
Valley Outdoor Association  
[www.valleyoutdoor.org](http://www.valleyoutdoor.org)  
Vancouver Rock Climbing Group  
[www.vrcg.ca](http://www.vrcg.ca)  
Varsity Outdoor Club UBC  
[www.ubc-voc.com](http://www.ubc-voc.com)

## FRASER VALLEY

Backroads Outdoor Club  
[www.backroadsoutdoor.ca](http://www.backroadsoutdoor.ca)  
Chilliwack Outdoor Club  
[www.chilliwackoutdoorclub.com](http://www.chilliwackoutdoorclub.com)

## SOUTHERN INTERIOR

Kamloops Hiking Club  
[www.kamloopshikingclub.net](http://www.kamloopshikingclub.net)  
Kootenay Mountaineering Club  
[www.kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca](http://www.kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca)  
South Okanagan Trail Alliance  
[www.southokanagantrailalliance.com](http://www.southokanagantrailalliance.com)  
Varsity Outdoor Club Okanagan  
[www.ubco-voco.com](http://www.ubco-voco.com)

## VANCOUVER ISLAND AND ISLANDS

Alberni Valley Outdoor Club  
[www.alberniavalleyoutdoorclub.wordpress.com](http://www.alberniavalleyoutdoorclub.wordpress.com)  
Alpine Club of Canada – Vancouver Island  
[www.accvi.ca](http://www.accvi.ca)  
Comox District Mountaineering Club  
[www.comoxhiking.com](http://www.comoxhiking.com)  
Friends of Strathcona Park  
[www.friendsofstrathcona.org](http://www.friendsofstrathcona.org)  
Island Mountain Ramblers  
[sites.google.com/site/islandmountainramblers](http://sites.google.com/site/islandmountainramblers)  
Quadra Island Outdoor Club  
[www.qioutdoorclub.org](http://www.qioutdoorclub.org)  
Vancouver Island Spine Trail Association  
[www.vispine.ca](http://www.vispine.ca)  
Vancouver Island Trails Information Society  
[www.hikingtrailsbooks.com](http://www.hikingtrailsbooks.com)  
Victoria Outdoor Club Meetup  
[www.meetup.com/Victoria-Outdoor-Club](http://www.meetup.com/Victoria-Outdoor-Club)



The Kamloops Hiking Club's Isobel Lake Project received funding support from the FMCBC this summer (story on page 6).

Help the FMCBC support more trail projects next summer by making a tax deductible donation. For more info visit our online [donations page](#).



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