



<http://alpineclub-edm.org>

November 2001



Next Meeting:

AGM and Gear Demo Night

Come out to vote for your new Exec. Plus, see the latest gear from Valhalla Pure and Track 'n Trail.

**Tuesday, 20 Nov, 7:30 PM
The Rutherford Room
Varscona Hotel
8208 - 106 Street**

Winter Trips

Yup, winter is here. Check out the enclosed winter trips schedule: We've got about 30 ski trips and 20 ice-climbing trips for all levels between December and May.

Nov 3 **2nd Annual Film Fest and Book Fair**

The film fest was such a blast last year that we've decided to make it an annual event. This year, we've got an eclectic assortment of DVD, video and 60-mm films: *White Powder World, The Sons of Haji Omar, Return to Everest, Everest the North Wall, Into Thin Air, Beyond Gravity, Lost Horizon, Ordeal by Ice, Cliff Hangers* (1950!), and the uber-realistic *Vertical Limit*, just to mention a few. The cost is still only \$10.00—pretty cheap for an entire day at the movies, especially when it includes all the beer, pop, juice and popcorn that you can handle. Bring your lunch/supper for something more substantial.

For the book fair, bring your old mountaineering books to buy, sell, trade or just plain give away!

Saturday, 3rd November
Strathcona Community Centre
10139 - 87th Avenue
Noon til midnight

Wine & Cheese and Photo Contest Nov 24

The best club social of the year is clearly the November wine and cheese. It's our chance to recognize various people who have contributed to the club over the past year and in ongoing endeavors. And, it's also when we show the results of our annual photo contest, with some of the most stunning mountain slides and prints that you'll ever see. Nibble foods (chips, cheese, vegetables with dip) are provided, along with a selection of wine, beer and soft drinks. At only \$10.00, it's really quite a deal. Remember, too, those who have led trips over the past year get in for free. See you there!

Saturday, 24th November
Strathcona Community Centre
10139 - 87th Avenue
6:00 PM

Photo contest rules and entry categories are on page 5.

ACC Edmonton Section Executive

Chair	Renee Polziehn	477-2943	polziehn@oanet.com
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	Graham Walker	433-9040	walkerg@telusplanet.net

The Breeze is the Newsletter of the Edmonton Section of the Alpine Club of Canada and is mailed to all section members. It is published ten times per year as a vehicle to inform section members of upcoming events and issues of concern. Submissions of trip reports, technical articles, opinion pieces and announcements are encouraged. The deadline is the third Tuesday of the month before the month of issue. *The Breeze* accepts commercial advertising. A variety of ad sizes are available. Rates vary depending on size and number of insertions. We run personal advertising and notices for section members free of charge. Inquiries and submissions (preferably in Word file format) can be e-mailed to breeze@alpineclub-edm.org. We reserve the right to edit material submitted for publication. The opinions presented in published articles are solely those of their authors.

Report from your Executive...

Thanks to all who showed up to the trip leaders meeting, we've got a pretty full slate of trips for the winter, with a couple of new leaders. There's nary an unfilled weekend from early December till late May, with the exception of the Christmas/New Years period and late April, but don't let that stop you from leading another trip: We can always put additions on the web and in future issues of *the Breeze*.

Speaking of *the Breeze*, some of you have already requested and received your October copy in pdf. As we get the system working, we're going to put those names in a helmet and draw some out for special gifts. It's our way of saying thanks for saving us the photocopying and mailing costs. Ne'er fear, though—we have no plans to dispense with mailing the traditional format to others.

We have given 20 Edmonton-section memberships to the U of A Outdoors Club. Our benefit should be more participants in the long run, and possibly a venue for booking a yearly activity. We trust that they will benefit from our monthly meetings, our trips and courses, and expert advice at the Wall.

Finally, November is a heady time of year for us. What, with the Film Fest & Book Fair, the Wine & Cheese / Photo Contest, and our AGM and executive elections, there's lots of opportunity to get out and mingle with your fellow alpinists and catch up on the summer's happenings before Christmas. So, come out and vote and/or come to one of the two socials and give your favourite executive member a beer (hey, it's included in the admission). See you there!

...and from the Editor

You might have noticed with the last issue of your newsletter that the body text looked more crude and heavy than in past issues, and a few words were missing from some of the shaded boxes. Those errors were due to an unexpected glitch in transferring the files from the new software to the printer, something that I hope to have rectified by now. In providing an electronic version, I intend to adhere to an important condition: *The content and appearance of the traditional Breeze should not be compromised by adopting the new technology.* So, let me know if you see any problems or have any concerns. After all, it's *your* newsletter.



This newsletter has been possible, in part, by funding from the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation (ASRPWF).

Announcements

Leslie DeMarsh Moves On

Leslie DeMarsh, Programs Director, has left the Alpine Club of Canada's National Office, effective October 20. She has accepted a job as the Executive Director of the Canadian Reflexology Association, and has moved to Calgary to take up that position.

While several of us have come into contact with Leslie personally, many more have benefited from her "invisible" efforts over the years. We certainly wish her well as she takes on her new challenges and opportunities.

Two New ACC Awards

The special committee which was charged with reviewing the ACC service award structure has decided to keep the current awards and create two new ones. The new award structure will include:

- Silver Rope for Leadership Award (current – no change)
- Leadership Award (*new*)
- Distinguished Service Award (current – no change)
- Service Award (*new*)

The new Awards Committee will define and bring back to the Board the nominating / review process, selection process (including selection criteria), keepsake for recipients, etc. for all ACC awards. We'll give you details as they become available.

New Book—*Aware of the Mountain: A view of climbing from a yogic perspective*

A story about mountains, climbers, and the fun and challenges of travelling in wilderness, based upon the increased awareness derived from self-study using yoga.

200 pages with 10 photos
Retail Price \$21.95
Pre-publication Price \$17.00

Contact: Gil Parker
tel 250-370-9349
e-mail: gparker@telus.net
Preview at: www3.telus.net/ascent

Web Site—*Alberta Online Outdoors News*

Check out this web site for lists of things to see and do in Alberta's outdoors, and for related resources. For example, the Announcements link tells you about free guided hikes from the Waskahegan Trail Association.

The front page of the October issue features Bob Sandford, ACC VP Publications, who is being given the 2001 Bill March Summit of Excellence Award. According to the article, Bob got his start in mountaineering when he slipped into a crevasse on the Saskatchewan Glacier, travelled for approximately half a kilometre throughout the sub-glacial drainage pipes, and emerged relatively unscathed at the toe of the glacier. (Let's hope that he has modified his technique since then.)

The web site is:
<http://www.angelfire.com/sports/aboutdoors/index.html>.

CADS Open House

The Canadian Association for Disabled Skiers (CADS) runs programs to help children and adults with special needs learn how to ski, both recreationally and competitively. Instructor training and development, and alpine and nordic programs for students, are run at Rabbit Hill, the Victoria Golf Course Driving Range, and the Snow Valley ski hill in December and January. CADS will have an open house to show their

equipment and to answer questions and take registrations from students and volunteers.

November 7th at 7 PM
Snow Valley Ski club, 2nd floor
13204-45 Ave

Further info: E-mail Janine Dumas at cads_alberta@hotmail.com.

U of A Club Winners

The U of A Outdoors Club ran a contest to see which lucky 20 of its members would get complimentary membership in our Section. The winners are:

Andrew Dixon Withers
Assar Grinde
Brent Welsh
Cam Whitaker
Colin Michael
Deb Harding
Doug Cheung
Erica Anderson
Fred Cundict
Gerda Ludwig
Giselle Beaudry
James S Brown
Joel Miller
Julien Budin
Leroy Schulz
Mikolaj Raszek
Naomi Legg
Russ Phillips
Tanya Bok
Xavier Cattarinich

Welcome to the new members! We hope to see you at the Wall and at some of our events.

Birkie Volunteers

The Birkebeiner nordic ski race is scheduled for 9 Feb 2002, and we might just have enough snow this winter. If you wish to volunteer to assist, contact any Exec member.

The Wall


The first Wednesday of each month is your opportunity to review basic mountaineering skills, such as roping up, crevasse rescue, knot reviews, setting anchors, map reading and compass skills. The estimated start time for these review sessions will be 8:30, but don't set your watch by it! The sessions will be led by experienced, volunteer members, who give up their time to help us out. If you have a good aptitude at these kinds of skills and enjoy sharing your expertise, please consider helping out.

Contact Bob Thorgjerson or Enid Higham to schedule a time that works for you.

Check the web site for our schedule, which is subject to change without notice! You will need to bring as much of your own gear as is appropriate for the skill in review (except ropes). If you don't possess these items, don't worry. There are often enough extra bits and pieces to make things go. However we do encourage you to bring your own, so that you become more familiar and efficient with it.


If you have any ideas for holding special events at the Wall, let us know. We can arrange for exclusive bookings for club events, typically on Sunday afternoons.

ON
BELAY...
CLIMBING!



TO FINANCIAL
FREEDOM.

**JIM
BARROW**
Certified
Financial Planner
BUS. 486-5000
barroj1@investorsgroup.com
[roup.com](http://www.investorsgroup.com)



If you'd like to receive this newsletter as an Acrobat pdf file, send an e-mail (boreas@compusmart.ab.ca) to me with "pdf request" as the subject. For now, you'll still receive issues in the mail as well.

Environmental Issues—*Comments Please*

Bighorn Wildland Recreation Area

Where: Large foothills area north of David Thomson Highway, east of the Parks, sometimes referred to as a potential Kananaskis North.

Problems: Many! Most recent is giveaway of oil/gas leases in supposedly protected area, without any public input or environmental assessment.

ACC Contact: Dani Hallett, phone 459-2496

e-mail: tamale_79@hotmail.com

Further info: <http://www.bighorncountry.org/>

Mt. Robson (B.C.) heli-sightseeing

Where: Most popular B.C. provincial park for hikers to go into Berg Lake to view spectacular Mt. Robson.

Problems: Peaceful hike disturbed by frequent (every 10 minutes?) flyovers by heli-sightseers, with more proposed; feds responsible for airspace, not B.C.

ACC Contact: Roderick Hazelwinkel, phone 453-9036

e-mail: Roderick.Hazewinkel@gov.ab.ca

Kakwa Wildland Provincial Park (B.C.)

Where: Large area contiguous with Alberta's Kakwa Wildland Park, north of Willmore, with Mt. Sir Alexander at the northern end of the Rockies chain.

Problems: Snowmobiles all over; some areas great potential for skiing/ mountaineering, but heli access may be required as pretty inaccessible; wildlife don't observe provincial boundaries, so B.C./Alberta parks should be treated as one.

What to do: Management plan under way, opportunity for input.

ACC Contact: Roderick Hazelwinkel, phone 453-9036

e-mail: Roderick.Hazewinkel@gov.ab.ca

ACC Access and Environment Policy

Where: National, committee/e-mail info shuffling.

Problems: Ambiguous policy document doesn't address ACC's policies for preserving mountain environments as well as promoting access for climbers. Do we care?

What to do: We need members' comments!

ACC Contact: Alison Dinwoodie, phone 437-7183

e-mail: adinwoodie@powersurfr.com

Further info: Check our web site.

Notes: Items 2 and 3 highlight item 4. Heli-sightseeing doesn't affect our physical access to Berg Lake, but it sure as heck spoils our enjoyment of the mountain environment—which includes noise pollution and aesthetics! But if we want access for ski/mountaineering in Kakwa, why should we be asking for access but trying to limit it for snowmobiles? No easy answers, but we have to find a balance. **Please help** by contacting Dani, Roderick or me (Alison Dinwoodie).

PHOTO CONTEST RULES

1. Entries must have been taken by a paid-up member of the Edmonton Section.
 2. Entries must have been taken within the last two years.
 3. Entries must not have won a prize or honourable mention in a previous Edmonton Section competition.
 4. No more than three photos to be entered, per member, in each class. Enter as many classes as you like.
 5. Entries are to be marked with the owner's name, class submitted for and title.
 6. Entries will be judged for:
 - suitability for the class
 - originality
 - composition
 - definition
 - exposure
 - difficulty of access
 - title
 7. Pictures from any alpine area in the world may be entered.
 8. Except for classes H, K and L, entries are to be colour slides.
 9. **(New, as a trial).** Electronic photos, from scanned photos or taken directly, may be submitted in lieu of slides; however, they must be un-tampered and must be in a presentation-ready format, such as Powerpoint. The images will be judged with the same criteria as for slides.
10. Trophies are awarded at the discretion of the judges.
- ### Entry Categories:
- A. Rock Climbing and Mountaineering: Rex Gibson Memorial Trophy. Good climbing technique preferred. Resting parties are not considered climbing subjects.
 - B. Snow and Ice Climbing: Frank Hollingworth Memorial Tray. Same criteria as class A.
 - C. Skiing: Edmonton Section Ski Photo Trophy. Pictures should include people on skis. Resting parties are not considered skiing subjects.
 - D. Alpine Association - Summer: Gladys Harlley Memorial Trophy. Any aspect of alpine scenery taken during the summer months.
 - E. Alpine Association - Winter: George Jones Trophy. Any aspect of alpine scenery taken during the winter months.
 - F. Mountain Flora: Pat Payne Memorial Shield
 - G. Mountain Fauna: Ralph Forster Trophy
 - H. Helen Burns Cup: A selection of black and white or colour prints, from three to six in number, presented on one page. They should not be larger than 5x7 inches and should follow a theme, Photos will be judged for interest to the Edmonton section, composition, exposure definition, and story-telling ability.
 - I. Mountain Humour: Trophy is a wooden model
 - J. Alpine Experimental: Harry Wohlfarth painting. If you have a slide that is photographically unusual, artistic, or far-out, please submit it. The criteria for this category are experimental too.
 - K. Black and White Print: Entries in classes K and L can be of any mountain-related subject. Prints should be enlargements between 5x7 and 12x15 inches, preferably on a cardboard mount.
 - L. Colour Print - open category, see above.
 - M. Smith, Carlson, Smith Award. Presented for the slide that best shows people in a mountain setting, with an emphasis on capturing the spirit of mountaineering.

Onwards, novices...

A message from Rick Cowburn

The perceptive will notice that Cowburns are leading *five* trips this year: December 15, January 12 & 26, February 16 and March 9, and that on each date there are *two* trips—one Ski, one Ice (hence they are skIce weekends).

This is a scheme to create conjugal harmony, allowing Rick C to pursue his passion for ice climbing while spending time with Mary C, who enjoys being outdoors but has not done cross-country skiing for many years. It is our intention to share this harmony with ACC members in similar situations (or with anyone who wants to come along).

We have been fortunate in finding ski co-leaders Phil Kemp and Frank Geddes, experienced survivors of many ventures much nastier than novice x-country ski trips. The ski objectives will be extremely modest in nature, so this should be a good learning experience for all novices: The more there are, the better the party. Following the tradition established by Chris & Eddie, there will be a communal feed on Saturday night, and spirituous fluids may perhaps be consumed.

On the ice climbing side, Eddie & Cronies have nurtured a number of new talents who show every promise of passing beyond the boundaries of sanity to *lead* Multipitch Alpine Ice routes. This transmogrification from *Cozy Collegial Top-Roping* to *Solitary Fear at the Sharp End* is best done in the company of others who have survived the learning process.

Roger Marchand has organized an Ice Leadership course with Cyril in January. As with all Cyril's courses, this is high value—but more is needed. Roger, myself (and other Ice Leaders To Be Announced) will work to provide a supportive environment for those who want to learn the Leading Game on ice.

In my own experience, leading ice is a complex and unforgiving business. I was fortunate to find a brilliant mentor in Brent Peters, but few can be so lucky. There's gear to manage, movement skills to learn, and a dozen decisions to make about what types of systems to use in the first place. There are few absolute right answers, but a group of committed wackos with a common objective will do far better than isolated individuals—which is the essence of a Climbing Club.

So all who want to participate (to a limit of *six*) are welcome to join in.

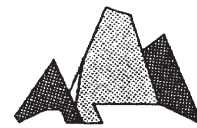
* The core commitment is to take Cyril's Leadership course on January 5-6. Sign up NOW.

* We should get together before actually hitting the ice, to discuss the issues that leaders face, and the mechanics of learning to lead (gear selection & organization, strategy for placing screws on top rope, pinkpointing with screws already set, etc.).

* The five skIce trips I am leading will be focused on learning to lead and will be progressive in nature, moving upscale as the season advances. Roger and I will also endeavor to interest a few other strong leaders in sharing their knowledge on these outings. Personally, I've learned a lot more from the humble attentive Viewing of a Climbing God in movement that I did by thrashing my way up kilometres of ice. (We may even be able to view the Fabled Deity leading our section's Premier Expeditions, the *Wild Thing* and *Reality Bath Direct*.)

By mid-February we might expect to be comfortable seconding Grade 5 on the Weeping Wall RHS and leading Grade 4 on the LHS, but we'll see how it goes. Knowing my own abilities, I wouldn't feel comfortable leading Grade 4 unless I was getting out at least two weekends a month, but everyone sets their own risk threshold.

So *onwards* all novice skiers and novice ice leaders!



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Trip Reports

Mt. Kidd (NE Buttress) 2–3 July 2001

by *Brian Driscoll*

Reinhard Berg, along with able son Alik, had concocted a plan to climb Mt. Kidd in Kananaskis via the northeast buttress and a long traverse over the ‘first peak’ to the final summit, where we would bivouac and descend the next day. Sounded good to me so I signed up. At the Yamnuska parking lot where our party was to meet, I encountered a lone climber, Catherine Zekri, who had just driven up from Seattle after an attempted ski down Washington’s Mt. Rainier. She was here to do some climbing, so we enlisted her in our adventure as well.

Our climb began early Saturday morning after a night of on-again-off-again rain at the Yamnuska parking lot. In the dark of the pre-dawn, the weather looked promising enough, and, having all slept in our vehicles, we wasted little time getting started down the highway toward Kananaskis.

After a quick breakfast in the Kananaskis parking lot, we shouldered our packs and headed out. A pleasant trail from the Kananaskis mall soon turned steep enough to warm us. Alik, who had reconnoitered the trail last year, successfully navigated the various forks to the correct route, until thinning trees made further guidance unnecessary — the way led straight up through the forest and open hillside toward the site of a former forestry lookout and the rock buttress — our first objective.

With the sun rising at our backs, the Kananaskis valley presented a beautiful backdrop to our climb, though we were already keenly aware

that we may pay for our late start following the long drive to Kananaskis.

Reinhard set off in the lead, with myself second, at 6:35 AM. Catherine, on her first-ever climb in the Rockies, led the second rope — and promptly discovered the moveable feast that is limestone climbing here; before placing her first pro, the boulder she was perched on disappeared underfoot, leaving her hanging by two suspect handholds. She recovered to finish leading the pitch but, as the team gathered at the belay station above, Reinhard suggested having the second rope clip into the first, partly to speed up the ascent and partly for security. This proved an auspicious decision — it soon became apparent to all that only Reinhard had much stomach for leading most of the pitches of loose rock and runout leads we encountered above.

Somewhere at this point our route and Sean Dougherty’s description of it parted company. There were times we persuaded ourselves that we were following features described in the book, and we did end up on the only reasonable ridge scramble to the summit, but I’m getting way ahead of things — about 24 hours ahead.

Readers with access to Dougherty’s original guide will notice the climb begins with a “scramble up the ridge to the base of the first steep part which is bypassed on the left via a loose chimney.”

Perhaps.

We failed to discover an obvious chimney, loose or otherwise. And if there was a scrambling route at this point, it was well disguised; four pairs of eyes failed to detect it.

Were we off route? We entertained the possibility. However, a couple of pitches of fifth-class climbing brought us to a piton and a large, securely wedged hex — an obvious rap station; either we were on-route or some predecessor had thrown in the towel and headed back down from here. On-route or not: the next pitch was spectacular, and proved to be the premier attraction of this buttress. One moves up the chimney containing the hex, then out to the right to the apex of a triangular buttress, separated from the main face by a 30-inch gap the chimney just ascended! From the point of this triangle, a bold step is made onto the main face, with only a small crimp for security. Largely unprotected slab climbing above brings you to Dougherty’s “base of the second steep bit.” Looking back down, we saw, to the left (south) of our route of ascent, what might have been the “loose chimney”. (At the bottom, the traverse to this point had seemed too improbable to be worth pursuing).

We seemed back on-route. A traverse right brought us to the “two short steep walls.” The second posed some difficulty for myself. It involved two moves on minimal handholds and even less for the feet; a fall at this point would mean a long pendulum, bouncing along the rock wall and taking out Alik along the way. After two failed attempts, I managed to get on top. Alik, displaying superior technique, had little difficulty.

A traverse back to the left, brought us above the “white spot,” about halfway up the buttress. Another traverse right along a steep wall afforded us a moment of excitement, as Alik’s foothold disappeared under him. His plunge pulled me off the wall, too, though my situation was more secure

as I was on less-steep terrain. We recovered quickly and soon reached Reinhard's anchor. Though reasonably solid, it consisted of just two pins, one located about seven metres above the other in a wet, slippery gully — indicative of the difficulty finding secure belay points. This unorthodox anchor meant Catherine, who was cleaning the pitch, had to ascend via the steep, wet gully to collect the upper piton, and then scramble up over a roof to join the rest of us, who had ascended instead to the right. This short pitch brought us to a sort of sloping scoop. By now, however, the best part of the day was well behind us. We'd spent 13 hours climbing eight pitches, and both energy and daylight were fading. We called it a night, rather short of the summit of Mt. Kidd, which had been our bivvy objective.

Reinhard now demonstrated his prowess at building a spider web of rope tying us and our gear into several pieces of protection above the sloping ledge. We thus passed a cool, uncomfortable but tolerable night—at least it didn't rain, though we did have a nocturnal visitor, a rodent that looked suspiciously like a rat.

“ ... only Catherine, in an attempt to run the creek, lost her footing and took a bath in the glacial water. ”

Morning arrived early and, after a couple of gulps of our dwindling water supply and a bite to eat, we were on our way again. Three pitches of low-fifth-class climbing brought us to the summit ridge of the buttress, which we short-roped up in few minutes to reach the top of the buttress around 11 AM.

Having abandoned our original objective of summiting Mt. Kidd, we descended via an easy scree slope down the backside. Entering the trees,

we failed to find a trail, so bushwacked more or less straight down to the creek. There, we discovered the trail out was on the other side of the creek, which was running fast and high. More bushwacking until a reasonable crossing was found; only Catherine, in an attempt to run the creek, lost her footing and took a bath in the glacial water. Fortunately it was a warm day. Another hour of hiking brought us to the trailhead and the start of our walk back to Kananaskis Village several km away.

Participants: *Reinhard Berg, Alik Berg, Catherine Zekri (from Montreal) and Brian Driscoll*

O'Brien Meadows Mt. Assiniboine Provincial Park 12–26 August 2001 *by Nancy Townsend (Calgary Section)*

Week 2 of Edmonton Section Climbing and Hiking Camp: *Better than the Best!*

George and Millie Stefanick and Bruce Morrison had been planning this trip for months: from initial permission for a “single drop” on O'Brien Meadows to a slightly larger one—48 L kerosene, 40 L camp fuel, two second-hand Alberta Forestry tents, 16 dozen eggs, 100 breakfast sausages, 4.2 kg filet steaks, 3 kg stewing beef, 4 kg ham, 5.2 kg rolled oats, 100 oranges and 90 apples to be exact—plus any one of the 25 participants from as far away as Peterborough, New Hampshire, to Ottawa, B.C., and, of course, Edmonton area.

Even in the 24 km walk-in crowd, it was clear we had “an Advance Party”: Walter Latter, Brian and Janice Thicke and Martin Schmoll who throughout the week bagged the territory—the Nublet, Jones's Pass, Ellie's Dome and a chimney, Cautley Meadows, summit of Mt. Cautley and Ferro Pass. Then

there was “the slow” group (referring to walking speed only) who bagged the meadow up behind The Towers, just below Wonder Lookout for a spectacular view of all three lakes — Gloria, Terrapin and Marvel —and the upper reaches of Cautley Meadows. There also was the “even slower” group and the “almost stationary”. Where Stan, Jean and Jocelyn fit, I never was quite certain, but Stan kept taking these readings from his GPS, so I never did worry about them!

Cook Eileen (Phillips) kept us all together at dawn and dusk as we enjoyed her ever-changing, welcomed wholesome hearty cooking. This was chased by champagne, Courvoisier, Kahlua, coffee, dark and herbal tea.

We had our usual “scares” but the one we all remembered was Derek's “close encounter of the Coleman kind” and his subsequent remark that “this nose does not pose for everyone”. Alma wanted to befriend one night a young coyote who had been shoved out of its pack. David Weir referred to the smoke from the Mt. Shank and Simpson fire as “the ultimate second-hand smoke”. The best story was the advice George Stefanick received as a student if a bear encounter occurred. “Just imitate the bear.” So when George's first bear encounter actually happened, the bear stood up, George stood up. The bear urinated. When George stood up he had already...

Truly, we received a \$4000-in-value *perfect* ACC hiking week for one-tenth the cost, thanks to Millie, George and Bruce. We thank them immensely. Walter says it better than I: “I would like to say thanks again to all the effort into the planning and preparing that made my summer camp a week to remember and cherish. Meeting new people who enjoy the mountains as I do is extremely gratifying.”

Mount Abraham

(9,000 ft?)

22 August 2001

by Wayne Vibert

Night Crawlers

As a summer wrap-up, our plan was to join Marc for a couple of light hikes in Nordegg country. For Saturday, it was to be Mount Abraham. For the Sunday, we planned to paddle across the lake to Mount Michener.

Two of us decided that Shunda Creek Hostel could prove more hospitable in early autumn. Most of the gang opted for tenting at two o'clock Creek campsite. The group had two canoes strapped to the tops of their vans.

Saturday morning at 8:30 AM saw Jim and Wayne leave Shunda Creek and head for our rendezvous at Michener Point, about 20 minutes west along the main highway. Marc and the camping crew arrived, and we drove a few minutes west, to the base of Mount Abraham. Very prominent in the distance, we could see what appeared to be a rather unfriendly (i.e., steep rock) col, with touches of snow here and there.

It was a sunshine day. By 9:30, we were off, heading through the trees up an obvious gully, following a creek. We skirted pools of water, sometimes detouring into the trees. An hour later, we reached a fork in the gullies, and we chose the one heading to the right. By 11 AM, we realized that we could no longer see that col. We turned left and clambered up into the trees. After a munch on lunch, we were faced with a descent into the previously ignored "left gully". The col was now visible.

This was a scree day, ranging from rock-hard stuff to softer versions. Almost all of it was steep (40+). We often moved toward the right, into the creek-bed, to make quicker progress. Many nicks and scratches left blood on the rocks as we grasped protruding

rock while progressing up the scree/riverbed.

By 3:30, five of us were up to the col, preparing to move right toward the summit ridge. The exposed ridge walk easily rivals the ridge along the summit of Mount Victoria. If we had had snow to go with it, it would have been a no-go.

We were now blessed with a brisk breeze. That added a special aura to the wavering trek along the ridge. At 4 PM, Jim and Wayne met Chuck, Marc and Victor coming off the summit. Jim's thigh muscles had been reacting badly to the physical activity so we had many rest stops. We made a point of extending our summit-break; thus, were there to welcome the determined Terry, the picture of weary perseverance.

“ Mount Abraham provided perspiration and inspiration combined with occasional desperation. Occasionally, we could have used mediation. ”

By 5 o'clock we were back to the col. As the sun was beginning to set, we began to brace ourselves for the dark side of mountain adventure. We came off the col scree-skating, introducing Terry to the process. When we hit the harder surfaces we moved into the creek bed, and eventually we caught up to Victor and Tharin. Terry lagged, but when he came into sight, Jim and Wayne began moving down the gully toward Marc and Chuck.

A short time later this gully suddenly dead-ended at a spectacular drop-off. An hour of trudging back up 600 ft (elevation gain) to the right, through the trees, returned us to the gully we had used in the morning. Now the sun

was fading fast. We checked for headlamps and found we had five. By 8:00, it was pitch black. We took turns forging ahead, providing a beacon for the rest to move toward. We put the non-headlamp people in the middle. Tharin's lamp soon burned out. Jim had extra batteries but they made little difference. Her lamp barely glowed. Now the stumbling along the ledges began, compounded by having to dodge deep pools in the creek bed.

Finally, after much bum-skidding, along with tenuous ledge crawling, we reached smoother (?) ground, back in the gully that led to the highway. By 10:30, we were at the vehicles.

We agreed to meet at Michener Point at 9 the next morning for the canoe trip across the lake, and Jim and Wayne raced back to the hostel, hoping to be able to put Jim's cramping thighs into the hot tub (which ordinarily was shut down at 11 PM). No problem—it was Saturday night, and a group had encouraged the congenial custodian, Tamara, to extend the hours.

The next morning, Jim and Wayne headed to the rendezvous. The campers did not put in an appearance. We speculated that the strain of the day, followed by late night steak and beverages, dissuaded them from the dangers of a repeat performance. From our viewpoint, Lake Abraham looked pretty bumpy. It turned out that the high wind in the early morning had encouraged the campers to stay close to their tents.

After an attempt to locate the group at the campsite, we picked up coffees at the David Thompson Resort about 10 AM and turned back to Edmonton.

Mount Abraham provided perspiration and inspiration combined with occasional desperation. Occasionally, we could have used mediation.

A fun day on a mountain!!

Night Crawlers: *Chuck, Jim, Marc, Terry, Tharin, Victor, Wayne*