



The Chinook

Volume 37, Number 4

April 2003

The next Calgary Section Meeting will be held at **7:30 PM Tuesday Apr 15th**
at the Bow Waters Canoe Club Clubhouse, 1975 - 26 Street S.E.

This Month:
Photo Contest
Cam Roe, MC



Wells Gray Sunshine
Stewart Midwinter

From The Editor

Andrew Riggs

Submit your Photos to the Chinook

I'm considering adding more pictures to the Chinook. Photos from club trips and events, or not, if it's relevant to the mountain subject they'd be considered. If you're submitting an article, and you have a couple of pictures to go with, it would be appreciated if you would include them. Digital format only, I can't scan slides or prints. JPEG's preferred , 150 - 300k bytes maximum for each photo. This size is good enough, even for the front page. There is no guarantee that submitted pictures will be used.

New email address for Chinook articles, etc: chinook.ed@3web.net

The Online Chinook

As yet there are only 25 of 770 section members signed up for the online Chinook.
To register to get the Chinook online exclusively, and save a small tree
send an email to: cyberchinook@hotmail.com

Self-rescue review for rock, ice and glacier travel

Tuesday, April 29, 2003 7pm -10pm – University of Calgary, Outdoor Pursuits classroom
This three-hour review session will include classroom and practical exercises for escaping belays, mechanical advantage systems, and various single rope techniques. This session is primarily designed for trip leaders, and there is an expectation that those who attend are familiar with anchor building, knots and rope handling. Participants should bring their climbing gear and be prepared to practice on the wall for several hours.
for information please contact Michael Gendreau at (403)248-9078 or dmg_calg@telus.net.

ACC Centennial 2006

The ACC has put together a National Committee to plan for the ACC Centennial in 2006. This National Centennial Committee has been doing some initial planning work for camps, events, and a possible new backcountry hut to celebrate in the year 2006. You are asked to provide any input that you may have to the Committee for projects, events, and hut suggestions for the ACC Centennial . You can contact Dan Doll (dan@m2m.ca) to get further background on the Committee's work to date and to add your ideas.

Calgary Section Meeting – March 18, 2003 - 7:30 PM

Business meeting:

Section Chair - Dan Doll

- A brochure "Melting Mountains" available at www.davidsuzuki.org/mountains
- Slide show in April, submit entries to Derek by end of evening
- Motion by D. Doll:

"To create a Calgary Section Legacy fund with \$70,000 in current cash assets of the Calgary Section. This Legacy fund will be invested in conservative, income bearing investments, with 50% of the annual investment income reinvested in the Fund's principal, and 50% of the annual income disbursed to designated Section initiatives. Disbursements of any of the Fund's principal amount will require a vote by the Section membership at a regular meeting."

Seconded by Steve Fedyna, passed by majority vote.

Ski Committee – Marg Rees

- Skiing possibilities have been a bit scary with avalanche conditions

Access & Environment Committee – Stacey Karalash

- Ghost meeting update from Keith Sandford in March Chinook
- Ghost area summer solstice cleanup weekend – June 21& 22
- Trail steward training course coming in early summer

Presentation: Stewart Midwinter – Trekking and Climbing in Brazil and Chile

Climbing Committee News

- 1) Wednesday night climbing at the Calgary Climbing Center is still on! Come out and climb for only \$9.10.
- 2) A notice to all summer trip leaders to start thinking about which trips you would like to lead this summer! For ideas, you might wish to lead a classic trip such as Grand Sentinel or think of something else more original.
- 3) A general reminder to all trip leaders who sign out club ropes to return them as soon as possible after your trip.

Social Committee News

ATTENTION!

The position of Social Co-ordinator will be open as of September 2003. If you are interested in volunteering your time for the Alpine Club of Canada, now is the time! This position involves arranging presentations for each Section Meeting, as well as organizing other social events (Volunteer Party, August barbecue...) As Social Co-ordinator, you will meet a lot of the mountaineering community, and have a hand in some of the fun events. So, come on down, and support your organization! If you have any questions, please contact Shannon Healy: 660-8670 shealy@ucalgary.ca

Ya Ha Tinda Ice

Orvel Miskiw

About 4 years ago, my friend Art (another old and jaded ice hacker) and I were looking for ideas for refreshing our interest in ice climbing when the subject of Ya-Ha Tinda country came up. Neither of us had ever tried the ice up there, even though we've been climbing for many years during which various chances had come and been passed up.

HISTORY

The Ya-Ha Tinda Ranch, about 24 km up the Red Deer River from the Forestry Trunk Road, is Parks Canada's horse ranch, where the horses (still) used for back-country patrols in the western Canadian national parks are kept. It is a couple of kilometers outside of Banff National Park, and surrounded by Alberta provincial land. Until a few years ago, the road continued through the ranch and followed the Red Deer River beyond it into BNP. That would have been a good time to drive up there and do the several excellent ice climbs which are past the entrance to the ranch, because since then the 'fire' road has been closed to casual traffic and gated beside the ranch entrance.

ROAD ACCESS

So off we went to the region of the Ya-Ha Tinda Ranch, which is just outside of the mountains west of Sundre. You can get there either by taking Hwy 22 north from Cochrane, driving west through Sundre and continuing another 10km to the Coal Camp Road, which you turn south on and follow west and south along the Red Deer River, OR Lake the Forestry Trunk Road, #940, northwest of Cochrane past the Ghost River and Waiparous Creek accesses for another 50 km or so of twisting and scenic driving, until you cross the Red Deer River on a blue bridge at Mountainair Lodge and reach a T-junction on the north side, where you turn left on the Ya-Ha Tinda Ranch road. The first-mentioned route via Sundre comes in from the right here. I generally prefer the Forestry Trunk Road, both going and coming, as it is shorter, but you have to be extra careful on the many tight curves in the middle section, about 20-40 km north of Waiparous, as they are often icy and can catch you off guard while talking with your passengers, as attested by many skid marks over the edges and many trees decorated with fluorescent tape, likely where vehicles have gone off the road. On the other hand, the route through Sundre is more relaxing and a good alternative for an occasional change of scene, though it takes longer.

FARTHEST CLIMBS

A year later, after doing several climbs readily accessible from the 24 km stretch of road to the ranch, Art and I decided to walk to the Park (mountains visible on the horizon) from the ranch for a look at a few promising icicles supposed to exist there. So we walked for 4 hours in big boots and carrying full equipment, until mid-afternoon, when we decided that the first possible ice gully appeared to be at least a half hour farther on. After some quick arithmetic, we threw down our packs on a sunny grass slope and had lunch, then turned tail. Four hours later we got back to the truck, footsore and displeased.

The next fall had a long stretch of cold and dry weather, and just about the time of the first good snowfall, Art and I realized that we should have used our bikes on that fire road to get up to the Park boundary, but by then we had missed our chance. And the following year, snow came early, so bicycling up there was impossible.

However, early this winter, I easily persuaded Gabrielle Savard to try a bike approach with me to the Banff Park boundary ice climbs through the Ya-Ha Tinda Ranch. This ride in took only an hour and a half, but unfortunately we tried it as a day trip, since by the time we got there, it was too late in the day to start climbing. But we did a brief reconnaissance of Ya-Ha Falls, in the first gully on the left side of the south-facing cirque of Wapiti Mtn., finding a terrific-looking series of ice steps, before we turned back east.

Then in mid-January, with the dry conditions and warm weather, Gabrielle and I went back for another try, taking camping gear this time. We went in early on Friday with most of our loads on the carriers and in saddle bags, and when we got to the Banff boundary, we hid the bikes and camping stuff in the bush, and went up to climb Ya-Ha Falls. We had to scramble up a couple of rock steps to get to the first ice, which was a scary free-standing pillar broken across the top and looking a bit frail: obviously the ice had deteriorated quite a bit since the first time we had seen it. So we hiked around and over another little rock band to bypass it.

Another similar pillar, but more solid, which we climbed, was still a bit nerve wracking, with blocks of ice occasionally dropping out around the crack across the top. I was glad to get off that one, and I was still worrying about what I could do if it keeled over while Gabrielle was coming up. Then some rambling ice steps and we arrived at the main wall, which had 2 big pillars and a wide ice sheet. I didn't want to be too wimpy, so I suggested Gabrielle could head over toward the pillars.

One of them was very chandelieri and a bit thin; the other one was solid but

steep and intimidating, and I noticed how late it was getting...however, it looked like good ice.

Anyway, I said, let's start up, I'll climb at least halfway up it to the cave that goes around in behind, and we can get a better look at the upper part. So we climbed that, and by then the light was getting dim. Gabrielle was uneasy about descending in the dark, but it looked like a walk-off down the east bounding ridge, and as some people know, I'm very experienced at night descents. So down the ridge we went, pausing for a side trip to pick up one pack we had left below the first column. Lower on the ridge, we reached an unexpected 50' drop with no sign of a previous anchor, but were able to set up an excellent rappel station. Then down the lower slopes through sparse forest in bright moonlight to the road. We camped nearby, almost at the Park boundary.

SUMMERY ICE CLIMBING IN JANUARY

We were up fairly early on Saturday morning in continued good weather, with no snow in sight. Wow, that's what all winter camping should be! After eating, we biked another 2-3 km. up the road into Banff Park to Trickle Falls, a grade 3, and had a glimpse of Ivory Falls (5) on the way, which looks similar to Malignant Mushroom.

Trickle faces south, and the weather was excellent, with no hint of a wind, slightly overcast as we walked up. Then the sun came out, so the ice started to drip a bit. We each led a pitch, and I'd say it was 3+ or 4-, but mostly one-shot placements, and lots of fun. Especially with Gabrielle, who is well known for her catchy enthusiasm and energy. Just amazing for Jan. 18, we sat/walked around, had lunch, and sorted gear in shirts, bare head and hands, not just OK, but really comfortable, like summer. And no one else around for miles; just once we heard what may have been a small plane.

The guide books mention a couple more good climbs in the Park: "Elk Droppings", a grade 3, 2 km farther west, and "Scotch on the Rocks", a grade 4 across the river 6 km beyond that. These climbs are likely to see very little traffic as long as the road is closed beyond the ranch. Anyway, then we had to bolt for home, as Gabrielle had plans for later. I wouldn't want to be doing that bike trip very often with a load--it's like the flatter parts of the Ghost River road: not bad for a car, but really quite rough on a bicycle.

CLOSER CLIMBS AND SPECIAL SPOTS

There are many other ice climbs in the Ya-Ha Tinda region which are readily accessible, most of them mentioned in the ice climbing guide books. Several of them involve a crossing of the Red Deer River (in winter, ahem!), but that is really not that big a deal, and they are usually well worth the effort. Kinda Nice, and Eanee, Meanee, Minee, Moe, and Last But Not Least, and Fjord Falls (locally known as Hidden Falls, because they ARE), plus other north-facing icicles that

sometimes form on the south side of the valley, all require some sort of crossing of the river.

Fjord Falls is worth special mention as a pleasant 'complete' day trip for an ice climb: it takes about a 2-hour walk-in, starting up the fire road from the ranch entrance (as far as you can drive), then crossing the river and picking up prominent trails which continue diagonally southwest into a canyon. The trails are for summer and lead uphill on the edge of the canyon, but the best thing for ice climbers is to contour a bit farther west into the bed of Hidden Creek and walk right up the ice. First you reach a small step (about 10 ft) to warm up on, and then after another couple hundred feet of walking, you reach the main spill which comes through a spectacular chasm.

This is grade 3-4 for about a half rope length, ending up on the flat ice of the creek

above the notch. Belay from willows and rappel or walk off.

RIVER CROSSINGS

The Red Deer River shrinks to little more than a healthy creek in winter, and at times and places, it freezes over, so you can just walk across on the ice. In such cases, I still recommend generally putting on your crampons for the few minutes needed to get across, for two reasons: they'll save you a broken arm or bashed head from slipping on shiny ice, and just in case you should break through, (don't worry, it's shallow) the spikes will allow you to scramble right out before water gets in your boots.

In other places, you can cross channels on log jams or beaver dams. If it looks like there may be open water, wear running shoes, likely right from the car, and preferably with neoprene diving socks for real comfort. Otherwise a pair of sacrificial ordinary socks in plastic bags, tied around your ankles at the top, is a reasonable substitute-in any case your feet will get wet, but the idea is to prevent the free circulation of icy water around them. Carry your climbing boots and a small towel for the far side, and hope for sun and no wind at any temperature. If you don't have wet-socks, give your feet plenty of time to warm up before starting uphill, or you may incur 'squeaky Achilles syndrome', which takes a couple of weeks of annoyance to heal.

CLOSEST CLIMB

The easiest climb to reach is not even mentioned in the guide books, but is excellent for beginners and for practicing on, and always has some steep parts. This is Big Horn Falls, up the creek from a little bridge beside a parking lot at a Ya-Ha Tinda Ranch interpretive sign and an equestrian campground about 2 km

before the 'end of the road'.

You can put on your crampons at the parking lot and walk right up the creek about a kilometer to the base of the falls, which are a sort of inverse of Fjord Falls: a half-rope length lower section of grade 3 coming down between vertical rock walls, followed by a wide platform and then a low wall of ice offering everything from a walk-up to vertical, leading to flat prairie above. But these face south, so you can spend hours playing in the sun, then rappel or walk off on an easy trail.

MOST PLEASANT CLIMBS

About halfway between the T-junction and the ranch, there is a kind of summer cabin resort called "Frontier Town" at the foot of a road which leads to Eagle Lake and James Pass and a cluster of reliable and pleasant ice climbs, the "Dreams". In the last couple of years, this side road has been closed and a parking lot built just west of the resort, so whereas we could previously drive right to Eagle Lake, you now have to walk for about an hour to get there and bypass the lake, best on trails above the north shore, or slide or crampon straight up the lake, often on spectacular clear ice decorated with suspended bubbles frozen into it.

A few minutes east of the lake an interesting grade 2 climb, "Little Dreamer" (etc.) may be found a short distance up the slopes to the right (south), while on the other side of the valley, facing south, are "Dream On", which is a long grade 2/3 flow through a rock notch to a wide platform followed by a grade 4 column, and above that reportedly 3 more grade 3 icicles called "Another Dream", "Sunny Dream", and "This Dream is Over".

Back at the base of these cliffs, a short distance uphill and around the corner to the east is "Sweet Dream", also grade 3. This is a scenic area and a fun day of climbing is certain in reasonable weather if the ice has not all melted out.

My last comment really applies to the entire Ya-Ha Tinda region; in my many trips there with various friends over the last 4 years, we've never had a bad day, and never encounter many people. To our benefit, most people likely think that is an awfully long drive (which it's not) and shy away. Other climbers are occasionally spotted, but they tend to disappear into the terrain quickly.

I urge all you early-intermediate ice climbers to visit this area at least once for a stimulating change from the crowded safe-feeling favorites of the Bow and Kananaskis Valleys; though not really remote, it offers a sense of remoteness and lots of opportunity for developing independence along with a great number and variety of important ice skills, from driving icy roads to crossing icy rivers and setting up anchors on top of dicey icicles. You may very well find yourself going back.

Orvel

El Pico De Orizaba, Mexico, 5610m

Gerry Drotar

The volcanoes of Mexico are a good intro to high altitude mountaineering. This is an account of a climb I made with my nephew last winter. Matthew and I flew to Mexico city and traveled by bus to the foot of La Malinche, which at 4462m is a good acclimatization scramble. There are comfortable cabins here at a government operated resort. We spent two nights here at 3100m and hiked up the volcano, a straightforward route, only requiring a bit of kick-stepping for the final 75m.

Another couple of bus rides brought us to the town of Tlachichuca where we hired a 4x4 truck and driver to take us to the Piedra Grandehut at 4250m below Orizaba. Unfortunately, we arrived at the hut after dark and were unable to scope out the route for the morning. After four hours of restless sleep, our alarm went off at 2:30 am. We were the only two people climbing from the hut that day, and our route finding skills were put to the test in the pre-dawn darkness. We scrambled our way up a series of gullies, then traversed to the foot of the Jamapa glacier where we put crampons on. As we ascended the north glacier we could see shimmering lights from villages surrounding us far below. Later a cloudless sunrise illuminated a rock buttress nicknamed the "Sarcofago" an incredible fiery orange. Above us, the route looked long but obvious. To the west we saw the immense pyramidal shadow of our mountain cast in the early morning haze. The effort required to climb and the stunning views had me arrive at the summit crater physically drained but emotionally charged.

The surrounding countryside is flat to the west and north, with the exception of three other volcanoes, Popocatepetl, Iztacchihuatl and La Malinche. We saw great plumes of smoke rising from Popo, and later learned that it had become active that morning before dawn. Popocatepetl has been closed to climbers since 1994 due to random volcanic activity. After spending an hour on top in bright warm sunshine with no wind, we descended the now softening glacier back to the hut. I was feeling sick from ascending too high too fast, but our driver returned shortly and by the time we were back in town, 3000m below the summit, I had completely recovered. We rewarded ourselves with five days in Acapulco where the air felt thick enough to drink.

Orizaba is a worthwhile objective for those seeking a technically moderate high altitude experience. Take the time to properly acclimatize and you will enjoy the climb much more. A good guidebook is R J Secors "Mexicos Volcanoes" Escale Bien!

The Dolomite Circuit, February 8, 2003

Stuart Dechka

We met at the Esso station at 7 AM (this has to be, if only to let the writer of the trip report begin with this classic war-horse of trip report lines). Actually it was more complicated than that and we really all met a bit later on at Laggan's in Lake Louise. Laggan's is a really great stop and I wish all the favourite areas had a place like it. After calorating and caffeinating (those aren't real words?) we headed to the Helen Creek trailhead and on the way we left one of the vehicles at the Mosquito Creek trailhead. We put the skins on the skis and with the requisite transceiver checks we start heading up.

I'm writing this with a nod towards those of you who have not done this ski tour before and/or have not already read the Chic Scott book (which is sure worth having). I was to see why the Dolomite Circuit is so justifiably popular. The route through the trees up Helen Creek is pretty open and the views really great. On the right the north slopes of Dolomite Peak offered up some avalanche paths. One area had already released, and for the most part these slopes didn't have a whole lot of snow on them. The way to the pass had ski tracks that were deemed to be about a week old. Fresher than that were those of a large feline, presumably those of either a lynx or a cougar!

In general, trail breaking was not a problem and this was to be the case for the rest of our trip. Some switch backing and assorted crazy ski and non-ski manoeuvres brings us up to the top of the pass. The views now go from great to stupendous. The Katherine Lake valley, which is now skied down into, is an incredible gleaming white. If there are any trees there they must be pretty small; the snow depth was judged to be about one metre. The enjoyable run down the valley slope takes us to THE big rock, which is the big cheese among rocks down there. And the traditional lunch stop on the tour. Tradition outweighed comfort as we had decided to stop at it rather than at the pass, which on this day at least, was by contrast very warm and calm.

Next we swung a ways right around some big slopes and headed up to a little pass that leads to the head of a tributary drainage to Mosquito Creek. Upon reaching this pass we stopped to take off our skins and take in the incredible views. At the time the place was being blasted by wind, and was quite cold. Still, we stopped for a snack too, as cold wind blasted places are great places to eat, just ask Celia! Next we skied down the upper drainage in good time, and then when it widened out for a bit, we ascended a little to the left and into a loosely treed area. This is so as to stay away from the huge loaded slopes coming up on the right. The way now was still down, but "loosely treed" becomes more like "densely treed" and this band of trees can offer a

difficult time for all but gifted skiers, or people who like to make sudden stops into major vegetation. Once through this segment we got to join the Mosquito Creek trail at a nice safe spot, and it was clear sailing from there except to watch out for a couple of steep turns near the highway end.

As said before we had left a vehicle at the Mosquito Creek trailhead and so avoided a walk/ski along the road or a hitchhiking endeavour to get the rest of the transportation at Helen Creek. The trip was a really great time and we capped off our day with a hearty repast at The Grizzly's Paw in Canmore. Many thanks go to John for leading this very enjoyable outing.

Trip participants: Mike Brown, Stuart Dechka, John Gray (leader), Celia Norman, Ian Rainey.

New Members

Welcome to the following new members. You are invited to the next section meeting, where you can talk to Sandy Sauer our Member Services Co-ordinator to find out what the section has to offer.

Lise Beaulieu
Ross Taylor
Jon Sliwinski
Jana Taylor
Richard Parker
Sarah Wilson
David Weeks

Monique Dame
Dwayne Babiak
Sarah Gamble
Mechthild Reinders
Matthihs Amrein
Michael D. Brown
Tom Sarauskas

Deb Gilbert
Richard Korzeniewski
Simon Holland
Sonia Holland
William Keats

Upcoming Ski Trips						
Date	Destination	Days	L	Diff.	Name	Phone
April 5/6	Mt Hector	1	L	Ex	Danielle Tardif	210-2401
April 5/6	Mt Cirrus	2	L	A	Ray Norman	403-609-0337
April 12/13	Intro to Glacier Travel	2	L	I	Marg Rees	283-5494
April 12/13	Sherbrooke Drainage	1	L	I	Bob Scott	247-3003
May 2 – 4	Mt. Columbia	2	L	Ex	Dave Stephens	934-5191

<p>For Sale Charlet Moser Mountaineering Axe 65 cm \$25 firm call Joanne at 295-9231</p>

SECTION ENQUIRIES: P.O. Box 1995 Calgary, AB T2P 2M2		ADDRESS CHANGES: The Alpine Club of Canada P.O. Box 8040 Canmore, AB T1W 2T8 (403) 678-3200 678-3224(f)	
NO CALLS AFTER 10 PM IS THE POLICY OF THE SECTION, THANK YOU			
Calgary Section Contact Information			
Chair: Dan Doll	541-0570	Michael Gendreau(Chair)	248-9078
Past Chair: Jackie Clark	678-1969	Shaun Fluker	283-4933
Vice-Chair: Scott Montgomery	249-4537	Vince Losier	209-0037
Treasurer: Sandy Walker	270-0894	Brock Grolla	283-3227
Library: Cam Roe	253-5463	Ski Committee:	
Secretary: Frédéric Labarre	516-0693	Marg Rees (Chair)	283-5494
Member Services:		Michael Lefeuve	241-8577
Sandy Sauer	283-7463	Jane Maduke	229-4872
Social Committee:		Manfred Czechak	271-0119
Shannon Healy(Chair)	245-8828	Phyllis Normey	281-0128
Melissa Burdan	670-0890	Club Ropes:	
Orvel Miskiw	932-2800	Stan Bobrow	217-2260
Derek Kemp	253-5339	Chinook:	
Climbing Committee:		Andrew Riggs(Editor)	286-8320
Murray Eitzen(Chair)	238-6535		chinook.ed@3web.net
Ray Hogan	249-0099	Collating:	
Rick Loetscher	257-3224	Marg Rees	283-5494
Gabrielle Savard	282-1767	Calgary Section Web Site:	
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Rob Owens	255-5443	Email List Service (post and subscribe)	
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Stacey Karalash(Chair)	283-1206		
Dylan Thomas	276-6116		
Laara Banner	229-9646		
Kate McAnally	238-4244		
Training and Leadership Committee:			
Chinook Submissions: Any article relating to the Club or the mountains is welcome. Please send submissions as an email attachment to chinook.ed@3web.net before the Friday following the section meeting. Microsoft Word documents (Arial font) work the best. Submissions become the property of the Alpine Club of Canada and are subject to editing.			

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