



The Chinook

The Newsletter of the Calgary Section of the Alpine Club of Canada

Volume 41, Number 4

April 2006

**The next Calgary Section Meeting is at 7:30 pm on Tuesday, 18 April 2006
at the Bow Waters Canoe Club, 1975—26th Street SE**

This month:

ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST

HOSTED BY CAM ROE

PLUS Trail Mix/Mountain Muffin Contest

Coordinated by Lesley Young & Shannon Healy



Ron Frank in Kokanee Glacier Powder
By Jason McCrank

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REUNION

7 to 10 pm, TUESDAY EVENING, 23 May 2006

**Ever wonder “whatever happened to old whatzizname?”
Come and find out!**

Jana Cakl is organizing an evening social for “old timer” members of the section or of the main club. If you joined before 31 December 1990, come for a visit. The event will be strictly a social evening — a time to visit and catch up on everyone’s news.

For those who have not been in the habit of going to meetings in recent years, this event is in the place meetings are held now, at the Clubhouse of the Bow Waters Canoe Club, 1975—26th St. SE. There is plenty of parking in front of the clubhouse, which is down by the canal. If you feel like contributing that way, please bring some cookies or other snack food. Tea and coffee will be provided.

For more information, please call Jana at 249-4997, or email her at jcakl@shaw.ca.

**Calling All Trip Coordinators (past and future)
By Peter Lloyd**

Mark 20 April 2006 on your calendar

I hope that you have had a great winter season and that your ski trips or ice climbs were successful and fun! Thank you so much for all the time you have volunteered for your trips. It is no small feat to choose, organize, and lead a trip as well as to make sure that everybody has the proper equipment, clothing and food, and to come back safely. The Calgary section, without the volunteer effort of trip leaders would not be the same.

Now that the winter season is winding down (although there still is lots out there to climb), thoughts turn to summer days, warm rock, dreamy summits and wonderful hikes along pristine valleys. It is to that end that I am writing you all. The ACC Calgary Section summer schedule needs to be put together so that we can send it out, hopefully in May as usual. As this is the ACC's centennial year, I hope that we'll see some extra enthusiasm for trips.

Please look at your calendars and your journals from past summers and trips and let me know what you have in mind for this season.

Trip information will need to include:

Date, Trip destination,

Type (alpine, rock climb, scramble or hike),

Length (Short, Medium or Long),

Rating (difficulty: E, I, H or rock grade),

Trip coordinator's information: Name(s), Phone number, Email address (if applicable),

General comments (if needed)

To make things easy for you, there will be a **social evening at the Calgary Area Outdoor Council building on April 20th (5pm onward)** for you to drop by, share stories, meet friends, enjoy some wine and cheese and sign up for a trip or two. This wonderful old building is located on the south west corner of Memorial Drive and 10th Street NW, just over the bridge in Kensington.

**Trail Mix/Mountain Muffin Contest
18 April Section Meeting**

We're looking for entries to the annual Trail Mix/Mountain Muffin contest (to be held in conjunction with the April photo contest). Bring your culinary delights to the April meeting. For more information please contact contest coordinators Lesley Young at 239-4611 or Shannon Healy, shealy@ucalgary.ca

**\$ave Acce\$\$ to the Gho\$t
by Bill Marriott**

Headline we would like to avoid:
Gho\$t Clo\$ed: Climber\$ Don't Give a \$hit

Do those \$\$\$ remind you of anything????

Seriously, kids - get out your cheque books right now. If you think someone else is going to keep the Ghost open for your climbing pleasure you are sadly mistaken. The ball is firmly in your court. If you are thinking somebody really needs to do something, you are absolutely right. But that someone is you!

I recently attended a CASA Board meeting and was very impressed by their professionalism and their passion for access. Access is going to become an even greater issue in the future. Any further work on the Ghost is waiting for cash to hire a consultant. And that's where you come in. Two thousand climbers from all around the world signed an on-line petition in 3 days last fall but they seem to be unable to put their money where their petition is.

In case you forgot the procedure: (1) take out cheque book, (2) write big amount (preferably, but anything you can afford will help), (3) put in addressed envelope, (4) put in mail box. Almost anyone can do this!

Detailed instructions: make your cheques payable to "The Alpine Club of Canada", with a note in the memo section stating "Calgary Section Ghost Access Fund". Mail to The Alpine Club of Canada, P.O. Box 8040, Canmore, Alberta, T1W 2T8. You even get a tax receipt. Thanks for your support.

Remember.....

Only You Can \$ave the Gho\$t

**Tech Tips: Sharpen Them Yourself
By Orvel Miskiw**

The need to sharpen ice screws arises eventually for everyone who owns some and uses them even occasionally. Even if you manage to avoid running your screws into rocks, they gradually become dull through repeated use. Hard ice and grit frozen into the climbs probably factor heavily in the routine dulling of your ice screws.

One unexpected benefit of the modern high-speed screws is that they require so little torque to place, that when they run into a rock behind the ice, you instantly feel it and stop turning the screw. That was not the case with many earlier designs, which necessitated using a tool and high torque for turning the screw into ordinary ice, so if a screw hit a rock, you would sometimes not realize it until a tooth was severely damaged, bent over or even sheared right off.

This is not likely to happen nowadays, but it's still a good idea to be alert to the possibility of shallow ice when placing ice screws, to minimize the maintenance and repair work needed to keep them in top condition. Also it seems like a good idea to keep your screws capped or sheathed when they're not in use, to protect them while knocking around with other hardware.

In talking with many climbing companions recently, I've found that the notion of sharpening is unfamiliar, and possibly daunting, to a surprising number of them. I've also read a lot of questions and discussion about this on several climbing websites, and have even run across comments from one person who stated that ice screws can not be sharpened and advised everyone to not even try--I have no idea if he had alternatives in mind, but that sounds like defeatist, and expensive, advice to me. He obviously had a bad experience with sharpening and didn't take the time to learn how to do it right. Through the years, I've found the sharpening of ice screws to be a necessary part of regular equipment maintenance. It's easy to learn and it's easy to do.

A few friends who contemplated sharpening, but had not yet tried it, said they understood that a round file would be needed, and that notion is understandable when you notice that the notches between the teeth of ice screws are often beautiful circular machine cuts. But in fact the notches are nearly irrelevant.

The most important parts of an ice screw, in terms of sharpening, are the leading points and edges which cut the ice while the screw turns, and those are primarily parts of straight edges, so a small or medium flat mill file is the preferred tool for sharpening ice screws, while a round file is unnecessary, al-

though you may like to use one for tidying up the inter-tooth notches for cosmetic reasons. If all you had was a round file, you'd be in a mess, and get really frustrated. Second to a flat file, a triangular file about 1 cm or 1/2" wide, will suffice.

If you look at the teeth of an ice screw up close, you'll see that they have been formed by cutting tilted v-shaped notches in the business end of the tube wall. Each tooth has four main surfaces: the curved inside and outside surfaces of the wall, the ramp, and the leading face. These last two join to form the tip of the tooth and are the primary filing faces, while the inside and outside surfaces are normally not filed.

Whatever file you're using, a bench-mounted vise is a great help to hold the ice screw solid while you work on it, but of course the screw should be protected from the jaws of the vise by small pieces of soft material like wood, or even cardboard.

A handy jig for this purpose is what I call a screw clutcher: it consists of a block of wood with a hole drilled right through it, slightly smaller in diameter than the ice screw, and sawed into two pieces, lengthwise through this hole. The screw is then laid between the two resulting grooves and the assembly is clamped in any vise.

Another big help in ice screw sharpening is a bright work light above the vise.

It's important to keep the file under control and always be aware of everything that it's touching; leading edges and points on a screw have to be filed carefully and protected from 'stray' parts of the file. While you are carefully filing one part of the screw, the underside or a hidden corner of the file may be hitting something on the far side of the screw; the consequences may be either serious or harmless. In fact you may cut quite a gouge in the trailing edge of a tooth and it'll make no difference to the screw's performance at all.

Also you have to be very careful to keep your hands and fingers under control while filing, to keep from slicing them open on the increasingly sharp teeth. Typically, you should rest your hands against each other and on the jaws of the vise and work the file with slow and firm strokes.

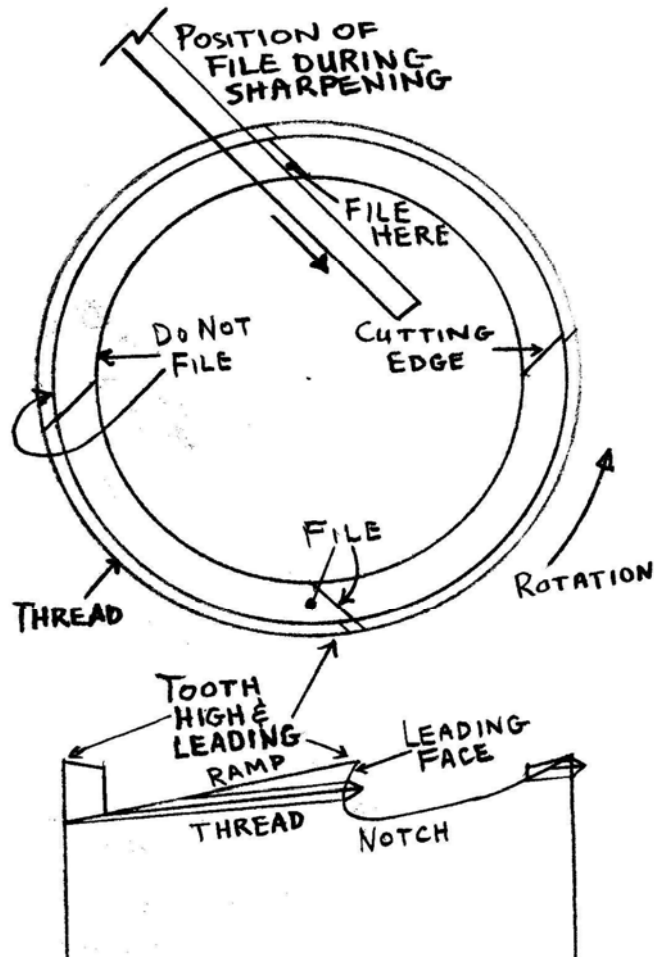
To give you a better idea of how to shape the teeth, experiment by holding the screw tip against a sheet of paper and you'll see what the teeth have to do to bite into it. You'll get the idea right away, that each tooth has to be 'high' at the front and pointed forward in order to bite in. Also the outside edges of the tube and threads have to be sharp and leading in order to shave the ice effectively.

A good guide is the original shape of the teeth: as long as you maintain or restore that, your screw will work like new, even while the teeth recede

gradually through repeated sharpening.

With practice, filing soon becomes instinctive and easy. With even simple equipment, you can do a routine touchup on a screw in a couple of minutes and return it to razor-sharp functionality

DIAGRAM



**Elizabeth Parker Hut 2006!
By: Ornmadee Baxter-Lovo**

It's year 2006 and the great E.P. hut trip is once again a great success. My family ate a wonderful lunch in the car so we immediately left for the trail when we got to the parking lot.

I just got new skis, thin skate skis or sprints. They had no wax. If you can imagine it was pretty slow up the hill but I still out skied my parents. While I was skiing, my mind wondered off as it always does and I imagined I was Chandra Crawford sprinting up the hill. The excitement of a gold medal, the singing of the national anthem was just pounding away at every stroke I could get. I started to go faster and faster, soon I was at the 5km mark in no time. I just wish they did not put those signs up; they make you feel depressed when you expect to be at 11km and you are really just at 4km. At 5km my heart was beating faster than a greyhound or kangaroo. I felt like water had been splashed on me as I was still being Chandra Crawford. In 2010 I will be 15 and maybe I could enter in the Olympics! I have never been so excited in my life just thinking about winning a gold medal! Of course a gold medal takes a couple of Olympics to win.

During the ski into the hut, the scenery was unbelievable. I have seen it before but you always find something new each time. We only had to stop once for a quick snack and then we were back on the trail. As soon as we arrived at the warden's cabin, my heart was pounding with excitement. The power left in me to continue was slim. This pushed me to my limit to race up those last hills like a cougar soaring through the air to catch its prey and land right back on both feet again.

My legs would stop right when we hit our hill, and I took a moment to think about my grand entry. "ORNMADEE BAXTER-LOVO WINS GOLD! CANADA IS IN THE LEAD FOR THE MOST MEDALS". This is when all of my team mates pile on top of me as I sigh in relief. After my 'awe' moment I bounded up the hill. We arrived at the hut all happy and excited because my Chandra Crawford moments were just the beginning.

No one was at the hut when we came. I checked to see if it was a good season for igloos or quincys but unfortunately it was not. Only one igloo!!!! So, from that moment I tried to build up another igloo but did not finish. After about twenty minutes outside I made my way inside where I sat down in front of the fireplace to a lovely burrito filled with cheese, coriander, peppers, salsa all baked and melted.

Out of the blue Jackie, Steve and Judy came in, Judy being the one with a broken binding. You can imagine what Judy did for most of the trip right? Well, she walked. Up and up and up, until she reached the hut. When Steve came in I swear there were thousands of invisible speech bubbles popping out of his mouth. He was born a speaker! I mean imagine him not talking and not being much of a speaker. See! Hard to imagine isn't it?

Anyway, while the adult 'blah-blahs' were being passed around I looked out the window to see if anyone else was coming. No one else was coming. Ian usually came to the hut at this time I thought, secretly timing how long it took him every year. But Ian is in no rush so I just waited. Meanwhile Clarence and Gabrielle arrived followed by Gary and Mark. They all came in hanging up all of their clothes on the big clothes lines and once

again there were many invisible speech bubbles coming out of their mouths. While all of this was happening Sandy, Phyllis and Deanna slipped in with Marg. I sure missed M.J. not being here this year. She always lightens up the evenings.

This is the moment when Friday night snacks come into the picture. My family was supplying the snacks. My mom wanted something exotic (at home when she said exotic she moved her arms like a hoola dancer). My dad just wanted some munchies. I didn't care, I just wanted something good. So my mom got some dragon fruit, lotus seeds, coconut milk covered peanuts, Vietnamese sour sausage and Bits and Bites for my dad. After five minutes of dishing this out Ian, Fiona and Evan came in. Ya-hooooooo!!!!!!!!!!!!!! The first thing Ian said when he came in was "Hi, hey I hope we did not miss the snacks".

Now that almost everyone was here (John, Louie and David would come on Saturday), I started to go up to the bunk and unpack everything but my dad had done it already. Dads, aren't they just amazing?

It's a beautiful Saturday morning now, and I forgot that we were at EP hut and expected to be in my bed with my cats meowing at the door but my brain suddenly switched to EP mode. I heard Steve and Jackie busily making their porridge, and got all ready and made my way downstairs. I was going to make some hot chocolate when Steve showed me another way of making it. First you put the mix in, and then put only a tiny amount of water in the cup and mix it until it sort of looks like pudding and then pour the rest of the water in. Apparently this makes your hot chocolate less lumpy. Try it, it does work!

So now everyone is up and the great porridge is being served. Everyone was making plans where they were going to go for the day. I decided to stay at the hut with my mom. Ian was going to go up into Steve's secret stash. Clarence, Judy and Mark would go for a walk since Judy's ski bindings had failed. Gabrielle was to do a transceiver search in the field. So when everyone had left including my dad, my mom immediately got the Howard Hughes Syndrome and before you knew it she was bleaching every plate cup and utensil in site. What did she find in the utensil drawers? Well she found: Dried up dead bugs mixed in with dried food and yucky mystery stuff in between the fork prongs. Bleah! And we eat with these things! I sat by the fire re-wooding it whenever needed. My mom went to go collect water and I continued working on my card castle (which by the way, I am queen of). Clarence came back and started writing a song about Judy and others while my mom and I danced to his guitar playing. Mark had lots of blisters from skiing to the Hut so he went to go walk down to the Lodge. I think his blisters were as big as his feet. Gabrielle helped him out with first aid. He was very brave.

David Moe came around at lunch and of course I did not know who he was until he introduced himself. A couple hours later Louie and John (our breakfast crew) arrived. When everyone came back Geoff had little red dots on his face. Everyone else wondered what they were from. They were from his ski. The ski hit him right on the chin and was really close to the eye. Betsy was obviously concerned and rushed up to him to look at the scars.

While all of this was happening Sandy Sauer asked Ian and me to help her with

the Tuxedo brownie squares she was making for dessert. While we were making the brownies Sandy realized she needed chocolate for the top when it was done. Just at that moment Marg came in and Sandy told her what she needed, and on that note, Marg offered her aero bar. After the brownies were done, Ian grated the bar and sprinkled the chocolate shavings on top of the brownies. The recipe called for it to be put in the fridge. We were in the mountains with no such device. But why waste electricity when there is nice frozen snow on the ground outside? Assuming the animals would not have their share of the dessert Sandy placed the cake outside.

When Ian and I went back to the main room people were talking and talking about dinner. Then it happened; Gabrielle and Clarence brought out the soup! Home-made chicken noodle soup was being dished out in the newly bleached and washed bowls done by mom (a.k.a. Howard Hughes). I enjoyed my soup and of course finished it all! Next meal was pasta made by Geoff and Betsy. After this the dessert came out! Fiona got a trifle (it was giant) and Sandy had her brownies. Mmmm! Yummy. While everyone was eating, Gabrielle and Clarence brought out their guitars and harmonicas. I was listening to all the songs. Man can adults go 'whoop' when music like this comes out. One of the songs was a popular Disney song from Lion King called "In the Jungle". Marg demonstrated her crazy monkey skills. Then she started picking imaginary bugs out of David's hair. Then the song we were all waiting for: "Judy's Jive" song. It was in the tune of "These boots are made for walking". The lyrics go like this:

These boots ain't made for walkin', but that's just what they'll do,
Until you know your bindings, won't crap out on you.

You keep saying that your skis are ancient,
You bought them long ago, but confess,
You've been skiing when you should have been shopping (yeah)
You've saved some cash, but now you're in a mess...

You keep skiing when you should have been thinking,
About what to do before things fall apart.
You'll be walkin' when you should be sliding (yeah)
And your hips will hurt, and then so will your heart.

You've been lucky that your friends are with you,
Some to give you screws, another a bit of wire.
And when you trudged to the hut all cold and blue (yeah)
There was Steve with his tools, and a nice hot fire.

Now Evan's ski gear might be seen as ancient,
He likes leather boots and long thin skis.
While Gary favors new high tech and modern gear,
But both get back in time for snacks and beer.

Mark's boots are made for skiing, but that's not all they'll do.
If you rent a pair of them plastic boots, they'll tear the skin off you.

Now Ian's boots are made for skiing flat lands,
But that's not all that they and he can do.
They took him down a slope that was so scary (yeah)
And he showed us up with style and laughter too.

Our boots are made for skiing, and that's just what we'll do.
'Cause we have come a long, long way, for fun and skies of blue.

Are you ready boots? Start skiing!

(Lyrics by Clarence and Gabrielle)

After this song, I crashed onto my lovely comfy sleeping bag. In the morning John and Louie were making their famous blueberry pancakes for us. I loved them they were so good! Today was our good-bye day and our 'see you next year' day. While everyone was packing up Gabrielle and Clarence sang songs and played guitar solos. We all sang "waltzing matilda" so that Mark would not be homesick for Australia. When everyone was ready we all headed outside. I was itching to pack and go. My mom and dad of course were taking their time. I was just getting restless so Sandy took me down to the trail where I could once again wait for my parents. Deanna came down and told me that mom had a waxing problem and she would be down soon. So I waited... and waited. I was thinking about all of the songs, the good people and all the meals. That Jungle song stayed in my brain for a long time. It's funny when you let adults go they become wild again. I don't know whether their brains switch or whether it's just their senses telling them to be free.

People on the trip:

Jackie Clark, Steve Fedyna, Marg Rees, David Moe, Evan, Fiona and Ian Jones, Sandy Sauer, Phyllis Normey, Deanna Thompson, Clarence Kort, Gabrielle Savard, Judy Archer, Geoff Minielly, Betsy Willson, Gary Newman, Mark Williams, John and Louis Kloster, Lee Lovo, Ken Baxter and Ornmadee Baxter-Lovo

Adventure: Something often more enjoyable to describe in the bar afterward than it was to experience at the time. Write about one of yours for the Chinook and we can place it appropriately — maybe under training and leadership, maybe under humour. Try it out.

**Smuts/Birdwood Ski Trip—February 18th, 2006
By Leslie Johnson**

The Smuts/Birdwood trip is a spectacular alpine ski loop located near the Spray Lakes area of Kananaskis Country. The trip offers an abundance of beautiful backcountry bowls and a variety of alpine terrain. However, significant avalanche hazard can occur on this trip under certain conditions. A large slide had taken place the week before our trip, which sadly had taken the life of Dave Hurd, a Calgary resident and avid backcountry skier. (The slide occurred on a slope just east of Mount Smuts near the Fist.) Subsequent to this slide however, the avalanche hazard rating had decreased to "Low" (later in the week climbing back to "Moderate.") The trip leader, Stan Bobrow, noted the possible avalanche hazard and advised the group participants that he would turn back rather than ski suspect slopes, if conditions warranted.

With this in mind, the group met in the Calgary area around 7 a.m. and very kindly met me, a Cochrane resident, at the Petro-Canada station near the Cochrane turn-off around 7:30 a.m. About an hour and a half later, our two vehicles pulled into the Burstall Pass parking lot, located on the Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail. Because the Smuts/Birdwood trip is a loop, Stan and Hans made a car shuttle and left one vehicle on the Smith-Dorrien road, near the outflow of Commonwealth Creek. After they returned, we skied up the Burstall Pass trail -- traveling first along the gently undulating section near Burstall Lakes, and then up the steep wooded section beside Burstall Creek. After the headwall, we turned north up towards Birdwood Pass and spaced out as we climbed up the open slopes. Since the upper part is quite steep, most of us found it easier to pack our skis and kick steps in the snow for the final section. Once up, we took a quick break and were treated to spectacular views of nearby Snow Peak and the Burstall Pass area.

After this, we skied down the bowls west of Mount Birdwood. The snow conditions alternated between wind slab and pockets of soft powder. We were fortunate enough to see a mountain goat nimbly climbing up the lower cliffs of Birdwood. After traversing along and up through the forest below Birdwood, we ascended a fairly steep and narrow gully to reach the high col. Once there, we were once again blessed with beautiful blue skies and spectacular views of Mount Smuts and the surrounding area. The bowl east of the high col looked as though it was composed entirely of a hard wind slab but actually offered fairly good skiing. Some of the trip participants took the opportunity to carve some turns and others traversed the bowl directly to Smuts Pass. Since Smuts Pass was windblown, we packed our skis for the last section. Once below the pass,

we donned our skis once again to descend the hard, windblown snow directly east of the pass. However, once we had descended lower into the Commonwealth Creek valley, the hard crust gave way to powder, and we were able to enjoy some wonderful turns. We then began the final leg of the trip, skiing east along Commonwealth Creek towards the Smith Dorrien Spray Trail.

We soon came across the remains of the massive avalanche that had thundered down between Mount Smuts and the Fist the week before. A huge fracture line could still be clearly seen at the top of the avalanche slope. The snow had funneled through a narrow section in the middle of the slope and then had spilled out in the valley bottom. There was still avalanche debris everywhere. Hard chunks of snow, and bits and pieces of trees and other rubbish were still scattered about. Many of the trip participants took a moment to look at the slide. I was shocked by its enormity and saddened by the death of Dave Hurd. I took a few moments to pay my respects and send a few prayers to his family.

After leaving the slide zone, we continued to ski out along Commonwealth Creek. The trail, which was flat and wide along the valley bottom, narrowed as it descended through the forest. We reached the Smith-Dorrien Spray road around 5 p.m. and took a few moments to bask in the sunlight and enjoy the beauty of the area. After a quick car shuttle, we were on our way back towards Calgary. For further information about this trip, consult Gillian Daffern's *Kananaskis Country Trail Guide* (Trips: Burstall Pass, Birdwood Pass, Smuts Pass, and Commonwealth Creek).

Many thanks to Stan and Deborah Bobrow for leading this beautiful trip. We had a great time! *Trip participants:* Hans Hannema, Brad Dryska, Reid Kowalski, Manfred Teczak, Diane, Leslie Johnson.

**SKOKI – There and Back
By Paula Corbeil**

As a newcomer to the Alpine Club, I was looking for a good introductory trip. John Peachell's round trip to Skoki looked like just the ticket. Tea at the lodge sounded like a great idea, along with the promise of awesome views. It was the 28 km that caused some consternation but what's an adventure without a challenge. John's email set the tone "it will be a full day so bring your skins and lots of snacks, pack light and we will need an early start.....7:30 am at Laggan's in Lake Louise".

The day dawned clear and calm with an expected high of -10 degrees - we

had lucked in! There ended up being seven of us; John and his wife Melanie, their friend Doug from Canmore, Gabe who had driven in from Cranbrook, Meagan, Andre and myself all from Calgary. We began our ascent at 8:15 skinned and waxed, pumped for the day ahead. The first three km was along the Lake Louise ski out – a steady uphill climb, fully groomed, just for us of course. After 1.5 hours we arrived at the bottom of the Larch chair. From here the trail went along the valley with the magnificent backdrop of Mount Temple and its 11,000 foot companions. Along with the beautiful views came those early warning signs of blisters. John had the group stop at the ‘not quite’ halfway hut so I could take care of my feet. Never was I so glad to see a roll of duct tape. Thanks to Gabe and John I was soon ready to go again.

The trail continued up Boulder Pass and across Ptarmigan Lake. We were now into the alpine meadows, snowy peaks with skier tracks on both sides and fabulous views of the distant mountain faces at both ends of the pass. The sun was high in the sky and there was not a breath of wind. We were one pass away from making our first turns in the freshly fallen snow. After a brief lunch stop we began our climb, one ski at a time, each of us finding our own rhythm. As I reached the top, suddenly all the effort that I had expended to get there was forgotten, powder awaited us. Down we went, enjoying the thrill of carving our tracks, leaving our mark on the mountain.

We arrived at Skoki Lodge at about 1:30, just in time for tea. The Dutch hostess made us a fresh pot and we shared the stories of the day. As tempting as it was to spend the afternoon enjoying the sun on the deck, it was time to head back. There was only one way over the pass – I had to put those boots back on and get those skins moving. I don’t remember how long the last ascent was but with the help of conversation, I made it to the top of Deception Pass.

With the hard work behind us, we had one last blast through the powder before the glide down. There was a slight crust which made it tricky in spots, but everyone made it down without incident. It was now time for the glide home. A wind had come up which made for a hasty trip across Ptarmigan Lake and over Boulder Pass. Once on the other side we were home free.

Before we knew it we were back in the parking lot, 8 hours car to car. It had been an awesome day. Thanks to John and the rest of the group members I have been to Skoki – there and back.



**ACC Ski Leadership Course (March 4-5)
by Ben Stephenson**

Question: What are the 3 most important things you should think about when you are in the back-country on your skis?

Answer: Terrain, terrain andyep, terrain!

This was the mantra of Cyril Shokoples, ACMG & IFMGA guide, owner and chief instructor of Rescue Dynamics, as we headed up towards Observation Peak on the first day of our backcountry Ski Leadership Course. As experienced or aspirant leaders on ACC trips we had applied for this course to increase our skills, knowledge and awareness, to become more proficient back-country skiers and to improve our leadership skills. Skiing with Cyril was a real eye-opener on how to read the terrain. We surveyed slide paths, discussed the risks of different route options, dug a pit, carried out the usual stability tests and surprisingly, found them to be different to what the forecasters were predicting. Throughout the day we took it in turns to lead the group, route finding and seeking the best powder lines.

After an overnight in Lake Louise and a few beers in the pub, we set off for Crowfoot Pass on the Sunday. Temperatures were cool and Elizabeth set a nice line through the trees, snaking around obstacles, whilst Alan tried to drop snow-bombs on everyone by shaking trees. Up high, we spotted another group heading our way, so we did a quick slope assessment and then scooped the best lines off a ridge before they got to us. From the pass we had some great turns back down to the valley bottom, surveying the terrain after each pitch to sight our next line down. Gary shocked us all by gunning a steep bowl without turning and taking air off a snow-covered boulder at the bottom. The look on Cyril's face was priceless. The weekend is highly recommended for anyone wanting to further their knowledge of safe and successful skiing.

And don't forget the terrain. As Cyril said (and I paraphrase), any old goof ball can put their skins on and ski straight uphill, but it takes a real artist to set a smooth, contouring, safe, ski track.

Participants: Elisabeth Dupuis, Alan Fortune, Mike McDonough, Gary Newman, Ben Stephenson.

**That's all, folks
Write about your latest adventure
Then read all about it here next month**

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NO CALLS AFTER 10 PM IS THE POLICY OF THE SECTION, THANK YOU

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Chinook Submissions: Any article relating to the Club or the mountains is welcome. Please send submissions as an email attachment to **callanan@telusplanet.net** before the 26th for the next month's issue. Microsoft Word documents (Arial font) work the best. Submissions become the property of the Alpine Club of Canada and are subject to editing.