



The Chinook

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

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September 2007

The next ACC Calgary section meeting will be held on Tuesday September 18 at 7:30 p.m. and will include a slide show and short videos of the section's 2007 Kokanee Cabin ski week, presented by Tom Fransham of the Ski Committee.



**Above the clouds on Mt. Lougheed
By Willis Tsai**

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**Attention all trip leaders
and aspiring trip leaders!**

On Monday October 1st, you are cordially invited to attend our first ever

"Winter Kick-Off Party!" Join the climbing, ski, and training and leadership committees for an evening of conversation, refreshments, and keen anticipation of the upcoming season. A special guest speaker will give us a short but fantastic slide show. This will be your chance to network, be entertained, and sign up to lead winter trips. Please join us whether you are a new leader, a current leader, or an experienced leader who perhaps has not been actively on the trip schedule for a few seasons. The fun starts at 7:00 PM, don't miss it!

The place: Calgary Area Outdoor Council (CAOC)
Rocky Mountain Room
1111 Memorial Drive NW
SW corner of Memorial Drive and 10th St NW

The Date and time: Monday October 1st.... **7:00 PM**

Parking: Lot located immediately west of the building. Bring a toonie.

The Training and Leadership Committee
presents:

**"The elusive 4th Class terrain -
experiences in Short Roping and Running Belays"**

Who: All trip leaders and aspiring trip leaders

Why: To pool our knowledge and learn from others experience (good or bad) on how to cover 4th class terrain efficiently.

How: We will have a round table discussion where trip leaders can share their vast knowledge on various topics related to moving efficiently in the mountains. Don't miss this opportunity to come and discuss with other leaders a very debatable topic which leads to many injuries and accidents.

When: October 4th 2007, 7:00PM

Where: CAOC
Rocky Mountain Room
1111 Memorial Drive NW
SW corner of Memorial Drive and 10th St NW

Parking: Lot located immediately west of the building. Bring a toonie.

ACC Volunteer Party

Did you help out the Calgary section this past year? (co-ordinating a trip, collating, or otherwise donating your time...)

If so, you're invited to the annual ACC volunteer party! It is a dinner (barbecue) at Chuck and Lesley's house

Starting 7 pm Friday evening, Sept. 28 2007

Please RSVP by contacting Chuck and Lesley at 239-4611

TABVAR
The Association of Bow Valley Rock-climbers
August 2007

The Association of Bow Valley Rock-Climbers (TABVAR) was established in 1993 to promote the responsible development of safe rock climbing areas serving the Calgary, Canmore, Banff and Lake Louise climbing communities. At that time it was realised that our local climbing areas would not be able to withstand the demands placed on them by the anticipated explosion in the number of users resulting from the rapid rise in popularity of rock climbing that was occurring here and worldwide. More and better-equipped crags would be needed and more effort would be required to maintain them. Clearly, the costs involved could no longer be borne solely by just a handful of dedicated route builders. Many climbers had indicated their willingness to help out by making cash donations to a gear fund and so TABVAR was established to facilitate this.

In addition to assisting with costs incurred in route building and crag maintenance, TABVAR is also able to promote safety and a high standard of handiwork by requiring that those who receive funding use only high quality materials and adhere to a high standard of craftsmanship. All disbursements are made on a post-hoc basis so that individual projects may first be inspected, and all new applicants must have already demonstrated their route-building abilities before they are eligible for funding.

Applications for funding are voted on by TABVAR's seven (elected) directors and require majority approval before any reimbursement is made. In the event that TABVAR does not have sufficient funds to meet all the approved requests for funding, the projects are prioritized as follows: 1. environmental projects, 2. retrofits, 3. new climbs - rock, 4. new climbs - mixed rock/ice. (For more details about TABVAR's guidelines, policies, eligibility rules and to view annual reports, go to www.tabvar.org and click on "about".)

Since its inception, TABVAR has raised and disbursed more than \$60,000. This has come from donations from climbing organizations (like the ACC), equipment manufacturers and retailers (like Black Diamond and MEC) and from numerous individuals. Some of the larger projects that have been undertaken include: major retrofits of Barrier Crag, Wasootch Slabs and Heart Creek; developing new crags like Bataan and ACC Canyon (both on Grotto Mountain); replacing and upgrading top-anchors in popular areas like Cougar Canyon, Grassi Lakes and Lake Louise; and the Grassi Lakes Erosion Reduction and Trail Project. This latter project, started in 2003 and now nearing completion, represents hundreds of hours of volunteer labour and some \$15,000-worth of materials.

In the coming years TABVAR will continue to assist with the development of crags, both old and new, and will help maintain existing crags particularly through the replacement of worn top anchors and staging area/trail construction and remediation.

I hope we can count on your continued valuable support.

Sincerely,

Jon Jones
President, TABVAR

Studded Tires, for your Ice Climbing Boots
By Chuck Young

After about 15 years away from Ice climbing I decided to get back into the sport. I told Lesley that the only money I would have to spend would be on new tools, perhaps 500 bucks; then I discovered all the new and improved equipment out there making Ice Climbing so much easier than back in the early days.

Thanks to many friends and especially Denis Pelletier and Ray Van Nes, I managed to get out 25 times in the 2005 – 2006 season. Denis brought me up to speed on Ice Climbing technology and was very safety conscious. I repeated climbs that I had done in the late eighties, climbs that I never thought I would see again in this life time. What a difference the new gear made, good crampons that support you, ice screws that go in quickly by hand, tools that stick when you needed them most and ropes that don't ice up. Don't tell Lesley but I ended up spending \$1800 during that season, mostly to the benefit of Dave Campbell at Wicked Gravity who had lots of great advice, good prices and was on my way home! I also read Will Gadd's book on Ice climbing which took me out of the Stone Age!

One of my concerns during this season was slip sliding away as I made my way to the base of the ice climbs; you know the deer on ice routine. So I devised a plan that would be the envy of most any man — to have the traction I needed but without additional time to put on and take off. My old purple Scarpa double boots needed resoling so I visited Gary at Alpine Shoe Service to get his advice. To my surprise Vibram does have a studded sole. Gary gave me half of a new Vibram sole to experiment on plus two new soles for my boots. Using actual tire studs donated by Brad at Kal Tire I worked away at finding the perfect size.

I put in about 25 studs per sole by first drilling a pilot hole then a countersink hole from the non tread side of the sole and then using Freesole over top of each stud head. The tough part was getting them to stick out the right amount; therefore I needed several sizes of studs. I presented the soles to Gary for application to the bottom of my Scarpas.

I now have a boot that will not slide around on those hard packed icy trails or creek beds leading up to the climb, good for say...40,000 kilometers. Sweet eh ! The overall cost was very small as I needed a resole anyways, under \$ 100.00, including the studs, soles and application. Have a safe ice climbing season.

Did you know
that the Norseman Ski Shop, 4655 - 37 St SW , Calgary AB
offers a 10% discount on regularly priced items to ACC members?

**Above the Crowds on Mount Lougheed
Willis Tsai**

I bumped into Kris Thorsteinsson last year on Gap Peak, where I was extremely impressed by his elite register making skills. When I saw that he was putting on a scramble up Mount Lougheed, I had to sign up. Mount Lougheed had been a major objective for me. Until now, it had been inaccessible, since the fabled non-technical route remained shrouded in mystery. Also, an opportunity to scramble with Kris was not to be turned down. For those who don't know, Kris was there in the Beginning; before scrambles were scrambles, back in the day when the Book of Scrambles was being formed.

We were a small but select group consisting of Kris, me and my scrambling partner Harvey Kwan. We met on a cloudy 6:30 morning in the parking lot by the old MECCA café and set off along the Smith-Dorrien. The trailhead was on the left side of the road by Spencer Creek, exactly 11km south of the bridge by Goat Pond dam. I was surprised by the well defined trail along the left side of the creek. However, sure enough, the trail ended with bushwhacking and creek crossings until the creek ended in a natural amphitheatre.

As the natural amphitheatre came into view, we took the first scree slope up until we could see a rock-face with waterfall. We then headed right until we hit the ridge. Kris was good enough to mark the turn-off point with red flagging. Once on the ridge, it was an easy walk to Peak 2; the official summit of Mount Lougheed. Like on neighbouring Sparrowhawk, the views were spectacular, leading to a longer than expected (1 hour) lunch. The day had begun with the threat of rain; however, as we reached the summit, we broke through the cloud cover exposing blue skies with the tips of mountains just peeking above a sea of clouds.

Not wanting to turn down the opportunity to bag another peak, it was a quick jaunt down the steep and deep scree run on Mount Lougheed's northern face. A quick run (Kris ran, while I gasped) up a steep scree slope resulted in the Peak 3 target (45 minutes peak to peak). We traversed back to the waterfall, and then 9 hours after starting, we were back at the car. Some food and beer at the Paw rounded off a perfect day. Good company, spectacular views, and a new non-technical route up a previously inaccessible mountain made for a great outing.

(runner up in the 2007 literary contest)

**Assiniboine Story
By Josie Daub**

Well, it's almost midnight and I'm writing this story from the airport, awaiting the red eye to Toronto. I'm alive & well but may not be doing so tomorrow morning....

The trip to Mt Assiniboine was epic! Josh & I decide to leave Friday night as this is our first alpine touring trip and we are told that the trip to Assiniboine is long so it is better to break it up over two days. By

the time we get our rental gear at U of C, eat, drive out to the Mt Shark parking lot and gear up, it's almost 10:30 PM. There's only one other car in the parking lot and we're praying they're staying at the Bryant Creek shelter so that it's nice & warm when we get there. It's quite cold Friday evening, so we are well bundled up. With our headlamps, we are travelling quite well given that we've snowshoed this trail a couple of times and are familiar with where we are going. We stop for a quick break to re-wax the skis at the campground which is a little over halfway to Bryant Creek. Then I see some lights through the trees and innocently ask if those would be lights from the warden's cabin not too far away. Josh says no way, it's too far, plus pretty darn late at midnight! He's thinking more it's animal eyes! Maybe we're being trailed by an animal (somehow cougars start coming to mind given that bears should be hibernating!!!). We are now officially spooked and can only think about getting the hell out of there. I start again towards our destination for tonight: Bryant Creek shelter – albeit at an Olympic pace may I add. It's amazing how fast you can go when you think you're being chased. Nothing like it to get the adrenalin flowing. Josh is screaming for me to wait up as he struggles to put his skis back on and catch up. He's regularly looking back to see if there's anything stalking us from behind. I'm just fixated on the goal ahead, thinking the animal will pounce on the weakest prey and that would be Josh since he's trailing behind. By now you must be thinking what a true friend I am! Needless to say, we don't stop again until we've reached the safety of the shelter. Unfortunately, no one is there so the hut is quite cold. We try to get the fire going but I soon come to learn that neither of us is very good at firebuilding. Luckily, we've got good sleeping bags!

The next day we wake up quite late. It's cold in the hut (see reference to firebuilding skills above!) and we try our best to stoke that stove. We get breakfast going and a group of 3 skiers stop in for lunch. They are heading our way too, to Mt Assiniboine. We pack up and get back on the trail around noon. Slight problem, those rental boots are causing me quite a bit of pain. I feel like my shins are all bruised and banged up and skiing is just painful. However, we've got a good 10km to go – most of it uphill – even more pain! So I grin & bear it (ok – I'm in tears pretty much!). It makes our travel up the Assiniboine Pass quite a bit slower since I'm having a hard time skiing uphill, especially when we put on the skins. We finally make it up the pass and are only a few km away from the lodge when we meet a skier coming the other way. He insists on taking my pack (loaded with my clothes, gear, food, etc.), helps me get the skins off my skis & waxes them quickly. He's a Swiss guy living in Canada, here with his 15 year old son and nephew. I feel re-juvenated and in much less pain without the skins and we get back to the Mt Assiniboine lodge quickly. We check in, get our logs (for heating) and go to our assigned hut.

Needless to say, the first night isn't as cold as the night before but heck, I'm still seeing frost on my breath when I wake up the next morning! Stoking fires just isn't our specialty (see above reference again!). We still have a good night's sleep and then go out for a ski. My shins are in such pain, I cannot fathom wearing the same boots again, so I rent a pair of Telemark boots & skis from the Lodge. With our skins we climb up this ridge on Mt Cauntley, then I realize I have never used or skied down with Telemark skis before and do not know how to use them. A little late huh! Well, I just wing it, go down, and hope they aren't too unlike alpine skis. I somehow manage to get down in one piece after a few turns in the deep powder.

They even serve tea at the Lodge at 4:00 PM for the poor folks like us staying at the huts. We make sure we don't miss it this time! It's nice to be somewhere that's actually warm! We are actually quite thirsty so have a few beers too and chat with all the other skiers we've met on the trail over the last few days. We make a date with the Swiss guy and his family for a card playing night at his hut later that night. It turns out to be a very smart move since their hut is almost as warm as Hawaii while we're still struggling to get ours above freezing! I know it's below freezing every morning since our water has managed to freeze again.

The next morning we are skiing out (actually the wimps are flying out by helicopter: an 8-minute ride vs the hardy who enjoy a 6-hour plus ski out). But my shins have something to say! They are not any better, so I am regularly popping Tylenol to somewhat dull the pain. Luckily, all the downhillers are a lot kinder on the shins but we've learnt a pretty important lesson! Never rent the orange Scarpa boots from U of C again – they will destroy your feet!

We are happy to get home; unfortunately, after a quick nap, food & laundry, I'm packing up for Toronto and the wonderful red-eye I'm about to get on. Pray that I will survive Tuesday...day long meetings for which I arrive a day late thanks to Family Day in Alberta!

Mt. Elpoca June 30, 2007

Lionel Nguyen van The'

There are times when you ask yourself: "Why am I here, of all places? How on earth did I get here?" If you are reading this, you probably asked yourself such questions on a mountain trip. Last time it happened to me was during my trip to Mount Elpoca. It was in the middle of a steep snowy slope. After reaching the summit while avoiding the rockier areas, we - a group of three-legged creatures - started heading back to the camp. A three-legged person is usually what we call an elder who reached the dusk of life. But we were literally moving like three-legged creatures: night had fallen, and we were moving ever so slowly. In fact, going down the mountain took longer than climbing up.

Moments like these are ideal for pondering over the meaning of life. You see, there isn't much to focus on except: 1) kick one step, 2) kick another step, 3) lower the ice axe, 4) go back to 1) and repeat the procedure until the crampons hit rock instead of snow. So there is plenty of time to think about, you know, life, our place in the universe and all that. Very often, however, reflecting on "life, the universe and everything" is reduced to thoughts about "remove shoes... ahh... inflate mattress... mm... snuggle in the sleeping bag... ooh...". Thinking about that stuff doesn't take very long, though. The camp is still very far. I have to admit that for a moment, in that particular situation, "life, the universe and everything" reduced to "remove shoes, inflate mattress, snuggle into sleeping bag". But only for a moment -- The camp was indeed still very far. And that's when the more profound thoughts entered my mind. For example, it's not very often that you come to realize what you truly represent. At that moment, we were all

little night bugs jiggling on a huge white wall. A few hours earlier, we were tiny spiders hanging on a rope and doing our best not to start a rock avalanche on our rope-mates.

And here's another thought I had: Going on a mountain trip is by far the best way to (1) renew our mountain stories arsenal; (2) retell the mountain stories we've accumulated so far. The Mount Elpoca trip provided me with some great story material. I have already told the story many times (it keeps improving the more I tell it, of course), and I am sure Margaret, Janice, Manfred, Mike, Orvel, Russ, Ross and Stan have loads of other mountain stories to tell. Then, still climbing down, a little anecdote came to my mind, about a famous mountaineer whose name I cannot remember. When asked "how do you know you're in the mountains?" he answered: "I know when I'm NOT: when I meet strangers and they don't say 'Hi' to me anymore." And I agree: wherever you go climbing, the farther away you get from parking lots and highways, the more similar people become. Consider the common pleasures of washing in a river, looking for that perfect flat surface to sleep, doing your best to eat away from the wind, or just gaze at the stars. Now try explaining that to someone who's never been more than 1K away from urban centers, or "civilization": If they're kind enough, they'll look at you and think you're a little loopy; if not, they'll see an accomplished masochist.

Oh well, on Mount Elpoca, the river was too far to go for a dip; there was no way you could eat away from the wind, and even though there was lots of time to look at the stars, I would bet very few of us actually did. Still, even for all the riches of the world (or a comfy bed) I would not have given up my chance to be in the middle of that damn gully!

Mount Howard By Leslie Johnson

On June 23, 2007, Ben Wards led a group of six ACC participants (Gary Luzny, Kari Hass, Susan McClellan, Lionel Nguyen Van Thé, Diane Casurella, and Leslie Johnson) on an ascent of Mount Howard, located at the eastern side of Don Getty Wildland Provincial Park, west of Bragg Creek. At the outset, he suggested the trip would be long (about 11 hours) and exploratory in nature. Ben was correct on both counts. However, in addition to the long day and a bit of bushwhacking, Mount Howard offered a great day of ridge walking and an opportunity to view many of the more familiar peaks in the area (such as Romulus and Remus) from a different perspective.

Because of the long approach, we started early, meeting at Bragg Creek at about 7 a.m. From there, we drove west along highway 66 (Elbow Falls Trail) towards Powderface Ridge. The group then left the paved road and turned north along the gravel-covered Powderface Trail. We stopped and parked the cars at the small parking area where Prairie Creek meets the road (about 9.6 km west of highway 66). Next, Ben and Gary did a car shuttle, driving further north and leaving one vehicle where Canyon Creek meets Powderface Trail. Upon their return, the group started hiking west along the Prairie Creek drainage following a number of faint animal trails.

Eventually, we started bush whacking in an upward, northwesterly direction to gain the western saddle of Compression Ridge.

The group then began a straightforward hike along the ridge in a southerly direction. There was only one short section that required the use of hands for balance. After ascending the first ridge, we turned in a westerly direction towards Mount Howard and ascended a series of scree covered ridges as we made steady progress towards our objective. The route could basically be described as ridge after ridge after ridge.

The plodding nature of the ascent was made rewarding by the unending views of peak after peak in every direction. In addition, the objective – the summit of Mount Howard – soon came into view and gave a sense of purpose to the rolling nature of the ridge walk.

Eventually, the group ascended the summit of Mount Howard, which offered a bit of hands on scrambling. Once at the top, we were able to stop and enjoy the spectacular views of the surrounding peaks. Nearby mountains, such as the north sides of Romulus and Remus could clearly be seen as could the entire western side of Nihahi Ridge. After enjoying the panorama, the group descended the summit of Howard and traversed below the first false summit.

Instead of retracing our steps east toward Compression Ridge, we attempted an alternate descent route. The group turned in a northwesterly direction, descending a series of ridges toward Canyon Creek. This ridge walk also offered spectacular views of nearby mountains such as Bryant. Once at the creek, we turned east toward Powderface Trail, crossing Canyon Creek numerous times. The hike along the creek bed was also scenic and the vegetation offered a welcome change from the miles of scree on the ridges. After reaching Powderface Trail, we all piled into one vehicle and drove south towards Prairie Creek, where the other car was parked.

All in all, the ascent of Mount Howard offered a long but rewarding day out, with great opportunities for ridge walking and enjoying spectacular views. For related information on this area, consult the web at <http://www.freewebtown.com/anugara/howard.htm>. Many thanks to Ben Wards for organizing the trip and for keeping the group steadily plugging onwards, while at the same time providing sufficient time for rest.

**Iconoclast Camp, Week One OR
How I Learned to Hate Chipmunks
By Carmie Callanan**

Our week, 15 to 22 July, was the wondering week – we wondered whether enough snow had melted, we wondered whether the proposed campsite would be usable (no one had seen it in summer); we wondered who was coming and who wasn't.

It all mostly worked out; the snow was gone (though the creeks were amazingly high), and Don the Pilot found us a higher and drier campsite. Unfortunately, a few days before our departure, three people had to bow out for medical reasons. So at the last we were a group of nine. Bill Marriott, who had hoped to be 'a passenger' this season after years of organizing

camps, took Deborah's place as camp manager. I hope we all thanked him enough.

The first few days were SOOOO hot! Sunday afternoon after we had set up the camp most of us walked up onto a shoulder, sat on rocks and eyeballed our surroundings. The cameras were busy. From Monday to Wednesday we enjoyed a variety of trips – to Benedict Head, Window, a traverse from Joy to Pain, and a couple of tries at finding a route up Mt. Iconoclast that did not involve dropping way down into the valley and climbing back up—this would have called for a high camp, which we did not have. On Wednesday, our last day of clear weather, Diane Colwell and Terry Manning succeeded on Mt. Iconoclast.

Thursday was for sleeping, reading, playing cards, & talking – foul weather kept everyone in except Danielle and Manfred, who braved the cold and wet for a few hours to check out the start of Diane and Terry's route. Friday was grey but not bad, although those with large ambitions had to put them on hold. And that was it – the rain began again by late afternoon Friday, and on Saturday it continued, with a low cloud ceiling. Three people ventured out in the afternoon to nearby Goat Mountain, but were stopped by wet slabs.

All week, the eating and socializing happened inside the cooking tent because of the ferocity of the mosquito population – we not only sat inside, we even had mosquito coils going all the time at the tent door! A few had bug hats but no one figured out how to eat or drink without at least partially removing them. On the positive side, our personal swarms of mosquitoes meant that there was no dallying in the mornings – getting above the 'bugline' as fast as possible was a priority for all.

Oh, about that chipmunk: I had brought in wine in one of those tetrapacks. On Wednesday morning, the day I was thinking about opening it, I removed it from the food storage box while in search of something for the lunch bag. Guess what? Tetrapacks are NOT rodent proof. I wished on that striped marauder the worst hangover in the history of the animal kingdom. Next year the wine goes back into something more solid.

We enjoyed a beautiful area with company good enough to make even the wettest days pleasant. Thank you to Bill, for stepping into the breach for Deborah, to Deborah for her work in the lead up, and of course to Sandy Walker for making it all happen for the section.

Participants: Bill Marriott (Camp Manager) Christine Grotefeld, Danielle Tardif, Denis Longuepee, Diane Colwell, James Hsu, Manfred Czechak, Terry Manning and scribe Carmie Callanan

THAT'S ALL FOLKS! SEND MORE ARTICLES!
Did you have fun this summer? Any excitement? Did
you get scared? Share the stories!

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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.