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I. Letter From the Editor

I would like to thank everyone for writing excellent trip reports and posting them on the message board. No one actually sent a trip report directly to the VOCene, but I don't think that really matters as long as they are made available to fellow VOCers. I even posted my own trip reports on the message board. So, if you have the feeling that you have already read every single trip report, its because I plagiarized every single one from the message board. I did a little editing, but nothing more fancy than a spell check and cutting duplicate entries. They were all really well written. I love the c-c c-v sequence. Why re-due work that has already been done? Now, if I could just write my thesis in this manner, I'd have even more time to climb/ski.

Keep planning these awesome trips, and telling me all about them. Helps keep my work load down.

II. Summer BBQ

Held on the first Wednesday of every month (during the summer)

Where: Spanish Banks beach at the foot of Tolmie street

When: Wed, 6pm on July 5th

Bring: grill-able food item, their beverage of choice, and Frisbees/haki-sacs/soccer balls etc.

Really, please bring something to throw. Last time there were these two miniature Frisbees that were impossible to throw. The crowd of talkers kept on getting nailed by the Frisbees, I fully blame the Frisbee as clearly my aim was always perfect.

### III. Huts

There was a painting extravaganza at Roland's house (part two) to paint the second round of Sphinx plywood. Lots of work still left to do. Please contact Roland if you want to help/will help even if you don't want to/can be co-erced into helping as long as you don't whine too much.

Letter from Liz Scremin

Alpine Club of Canada - Vancouver Section

Just writing to let you know about the opening of the Jim Haberl Hut on July 1, 2006. This new mountain hut has been built by the Alpine Club of Canada - Vancouver Section over the past 2 summers and volunteers are completing the interior fittings now. It's hoped that the hut will serve as a great base for mountaineering in the Tantalus Range and will be enjoyed by many many people in the years ahead. Note that, in accordance with the ACC's Student Outdoor Club Partnership Program and the subsequent partnership between the Vancouver Section and the VOC, VOC student members will be able to book the hut at the ACC member's rate.

### IV) Upcoming Trips

Read the message board and Wiki for more accurate and up to date information than I can provide in a monthly publication. Boris and Richards Scrambling Adventures happen on a pretty regular basis. I go sport climbing almost every weekend and always have space in my car. Plus the many other trips of all types that VOCers are planning. Just read the trip reports for a small taste of what is happening.

### V) Trip Reports

Title: Cassin Ridge, Alaska

Author: Stefan Albrecher

I just included the link because this Vocene has already become incredibly long. I is an amazing story, the reason why it is first.

Title: Brew Hut: June 10-11

Author: Bram Van Straaten

Went up last weekend for a 2 day hike to brew hut, with two of my roommates (Thomas, Greg) & Ellen.

After taking the Greyhound to Brandywine falls (30\$ return) we hiked up via the summer trail. Significant snow cover started 1/4-1/2 hr before the lake, and walking on the snow was fine (even though it was late afternoon & very warm). Brew hut not only looks beautiful from a distance, but also from up close! Wow, amazing job guys!! We spent the hole evening sun bathing. Great views, esp. when the (full) moon appeared behind Garibaldi. Despite the fact that we brought tents, only half of us actually slept in there... Nice training, but maybe we should consider talking some beers as extra weight instead.

Early rise for two of us (Thomas & I) the next day, and again, a beautiful day with fairly solid snow. We walked along/below the ridge to the west, and traversed the 2nd (nameless) peak north of Cypress peak. Were ski-cat(?) tracks all the way

up to the col N and S of this peak from I guess the Roe Creek logging road. Some more clouds later in the morning and some drops of rain around 11am when we were heading back to the hut.

Had nice lunch in the sun in front of the hut, before we all headed back down. Around this time some more serious grey clouds appeared, and we descended towards the lake in a nice rain/hail/thunderstorm with strong winds. Cleared up pretty fast again, and became fairly warm (again). Way back went pretty fast, except that we missed the final trail to the railroad, but instead followed (old?) blue flagging tape, leading us more NNE. Crossed (Brew) creek via two large logs, and had a long hike out along winding logging roads, which led us just north of the brandywine falls parking lot. Just missed bus, so hitchhiked to Squamish Brew pub and took bus back to Vancouver later.

Title: False Creek Kayaking: June 7

Author: Dan Eagen

Me and Kristin rented boats from MEC and wheeled them down some very large hills to the water. Finding the construction, we turned left and hauled the boats to the suggested wharf under the Cambie St. bridge. This is the wharf that those tiny sea ferries use, and was quite good for putting in and taking out.

Finding that we did indeed have all the needed things to paddle, we jumped in the boats and off we went. The weather was glorious - a little too glorious in fact, as is shown by my sunburn. We paddled from Cambie down to Granville Island and back at a leisurely pace against a pretty stiff wind, as well as some paddling around science world area. Highlights of the day include seeing a seal pop it's head up and look at us mockingly, the glorious weather, the fact that me and Kristin are now in about 100 peoples tourist photos from Granville island, and the looks on peoples faces as we walked the boats a total of 28 blocks or so.

Good times were had, and this must be done again. Most likely the week after next I will do this again. Anyone who wants to join me - especially if they have a car - is more than welcome.

Title: Wedgemont Lake - Try 1: June 10-11

Author: Richard So

Sat Night

1:30am: Called Boris, Jordan's wasn't home yet, we decided to take the bus to Grouse.

6:30am: I woke up, and called Steve. I just woke him up, and he had ten minutes to catch his bus. His alarm didn't seem to go off.

6:45am: Can't get in touch with Boris.

7:00am: Finally reached Boris, and he says his alarm didn't seem to go off either. Plus the clouds outside are intimidating.

7:01am: I let the bus pass me, since Boris doesn't want to climb in thunderstorms. And I went back to bed.

1:00pm: Jordan, Mike, Boris, Fuller, and I end up going to Richmond for dim-sum. It was tasty. The clouds started to break up. Then we went for bubble tea, and we

were all too full.

The severe thunderstorm warning with heavy winds, 15-20mm of rain per hour, and hail never appeared, and the north shore mountains looked fantastic in the evening. Stupid weather forecasts.

Title: Brohm Ridge: June 6

Author: Scott Webster

Four of us (myself, Ivan Robin, Kevin Mitchell and Tom Tiedje) skied up Brohm Ridge yesterday. We were visiting a site we have set up for observing suncup formation.

Left Vancouver around 8am or so. We drove up a logging road (the right branch?) and got Tom's Plymouth Acclaim to 1000m. Hiked to 1300m then started skiing. Skied along the rapidly melting snow to the site at 1750m. Noticed that the site will unfortunately be snow-free sooner than hoped. Had lunch.

Ivan went for a run dropping down past a hut (presumably for snowmobilers) almost to the creek to the north. The rest of us headed east along the ridge towards the Warren glacier. We ran into 3 guys skiing down who had just summit-ed Garibaldi. They had left their truck at 1100m on a different road (the left branch?) at 6am that morning.

We skied along towards Garibaldi, over some of the Glacier and up to 2250m. At this point it was 4pm, so we turned around. We were probably not much more than an hour from the top, but we had never intended on summiting, or else we could have left earlier.

If you go soon this would be an excellent route to do Garibaldi in a day. There is snow all the way to the top. We could see the ski tracks down from the summit from the other party. Looks like they were able to cross the highest bergschrund in the middle of the face.

A great day of skiing... but there was noticeably less snow on the logging road at the bottom when we came down! The snow is going fast!

Title: Something Other than Sproat or Rainbow: May 27-28

Author: Maria Markov

I thought it was rather entertaining. We walked up for some time in warm snow-less weather, then there was a bunch of crappy snow through which one would fall through, up to one's knee in crushed snow, and I thought this rather dangerous due to the large # of bridges and slippery logs over tiny streams -- kept thinking what if the legs break or the ankles get sprained. Also the suspension bridge is taken out but the stream is not covered in snow so one cannot cross and get to actual Rainbow Lake. This posed problems and we had to camp somewhere which was not at all the trail and between Rainbow Lake and Gin & Tonic Lakes. Oh yes, and it rained on us slightly, and it was foggy. As a result we never did cross over to Rainbow Mountain in the morning, nor did we walk around that stream... rather we went upwards for some time to some unnamed destination that wasn't really a local maximum of height, more like a saddle point, and telemarked down and around where there was totally no trail so that we made a loop de loop. Got back pretty early. The snow was nice for some time and I managed tele turns with relatively nice technique, quite proud of myself there.

As an aside -- we didn't do Sproat or Rainbow but it didn't look as if Sproat was that great anyway, too many trees & vegetation sticking out...

Title: East to West across the Coast Mountains: April 14th - May 3 + a recipe  
Author: Scott Nelson

Tim Blair, Sebastien Oppel, Sandra Nicol and Scott Nelson.

April 14th (Day 0)

Like most trips, this one began with us realizing what we had forgotten. I couldn't find my good fleece gloves when packing up, so my only pair had holes in the fingers. Tim also couldn't find his fleece gloves (but he didn't know it yet). The first aid kit was short on ibuprofen and benadryl, and we needed new batteries for headlamps, cameras and avalanche transceivers.

Fortunately, the 15 hour drive up meant we had an opportunity to go shopping in 100 mile house on the way. It was snowing hard, and a bit windy. We didn't count on it being easter Friday, so we couldn't get any of the good drugs as there wasn't a pharmacist on duty. I found some leftover stretchy gloves, and we loaded up on batteries. For some reason we also went to an all you can eat Chinese Buffet Restaurant for lunch, which meant that we couldn't finish our dinner later on.

Anyway, we eventually started west from Williams Lake at 3:30 with full tanks of gas, and Tim had a full Jerry can in the back of his truck. The drive to Tatla Lake and then on to Whitesaddle air was uneventful enough. We left Tim's truck by the hanger and piled into our Pathfinder. The gas station in tatla lake was closed for the holiday, and it was beginning to look like we'd have to go all the way back to williams lake for more gas. Fortunately a gas station was still open at the Redstone indian reserve and we topped up the tank at 8:30pm and headed for Taseko Lake.

The signs towards taseko lakes were marked well enough, but navigating unfamiliar roads at night is always tricky. The last 25km was snow covered, a lot rougher and with big ice covered puddles to drive through. Eventually we made it to the Taseko Lake Lodge around 10:30pm. We were about to get out and pitch the tents when I saw a man up ahead in the headlights. He started walking towards us so I pulled ahead.

"Are you Sigfried Reuter?" I asked.

"Yes," he said.

"I'm Scott Nelson," I said, "We talked over email."

"I didn't realize you were actually coming," he said, "come on in."

Day 1

Sig's kindness continued as he invited us to have breakfast with him and his family. They served us tea and fruit and offered oatmeal (we declined, since we were facing 21 consecutive mornings of oatmeal). We shared our scones with the Reuters and they seemed very grateful. After some convincing they accepted some money from us for the use of their cabin (we got it for \$40/night, but the posted rate is \$125). We sorted our gear in the wind-free cabin, filled our water bottles and were off.

Sort of. We'd been going for 20 minutes when Scott realized his skins were in the car. He ran to get them while the rest of us went ahead to scout the lake crossing. We were on the east side of the lake and the logging road we wanted is on the east side. The ice was solid, but the wind coming down the lake forced us to hide in the trees until Scott arrived.

We crossed the lake and carried the skis for quite a short time. The map showed that the road would be pretty gentle, so we decided to try using kick wax rather than skins. That was a great choice, and we kicked and glided our way the rest of the day, covering about 22km total. On the way we met Fritz, a trapper who lives near the lake. He and a child and another man were on snowmobiles and were trying to get to Fritz's cabin in the Tchaikazan Valley. We got out the maps and he showed us where it is, and invited us to use it if we wanted ("it has firewood and there's lots of food there, help yourself").

We decided to camp at one of the two small creeks on the map, so that we would have water. Upon reaching it I started cooking, and was kind of annoyed that the guys were down at the tents talking to each other while I was all by myself up at the creek making them dinner. Scott came over eventually and told me what was going on. Sebastian's AT binding had broken, and we had no spare AT parts.

## Day 2

We rounded up the logging/old mining road into the start of the Tchakazan Valley. What a beautiful valley. I STRONGLY recommend going here. The access is really easy. So we hit the Tchakazan River, which is wide and flat. We skied all day up the gravel bars occasionally switching sides and the mountains slowly grew larger, steeper and more coastal as we went. We camped about 2/3 way up on the side of the river. Running water ;-)

## Day 3

We continued to ski up the large, wide and flat gravel bars. We got caught in a little canyon where we had to backtrack and get ourselves up above it. Then it was to more flat skiing through glacier washout zone to the Tchakazan Gl. From there we mounted our harnesses (just in case but didn't rope up) and skied up to our campsite below the peak of Monmouth. Great views that evening of the surrounding peaks and our route up to the col next to Fluted Mtn. Sorry but nothing suspenseful to leave you with.

## Day 4.

After we go to bed the wind picks up and rattles the tents all night It's only an 800m climb from our camp high on the Tchaikazan Glacier to the summit of Monmouth, so don't exactly get up for an alpine start. It's a beautiful clear day, but during breakfast we can see the SW wind blowing spindrift off Fluted Mountain. At camp the gusts are hitting about 50 or 60km/h, and it looks like double that up high so we wait. I spend some time building the wall higher around camp and staking out the tent better. Finally at 10:30 or so we get tired of waiting for the wind to die down. May as well go up to the 9500ft col at the base of the SE ridge and see what it's like. I fully expect that we may not be able to stand.

We set out from camp getting blasted by wind gusts and climb past a few well filled crevasses on the lower part of the glacier. Soon we get some nice views of the East face of Monmouth, and the wind isn't getting that much worse.

By the time Sandra and I reach the 9500ft col, Tim has already gone up the ridge to take a look. Sebastien, Sandra and I cram behind the only big rock at the col for shelter from the wind. It's blowing steady at about 80km/h and we're getting cold as Tim disappears out of sight. Finally Tim comes back down - the snow conditions are hard packed from the wind on the SE ridge and we may not be able to make the summit without crampons (which we don't have). After some debate, Tim and I decide to try for the summit and Sebastien and Sandra ski down because they don't want to climb in the wind.

Tim and I start up the SE ridge, along the line that he scouted. We go up the lower part of the ridge on the S side of the crest, up a little chimney and then along the ridge crest. The section above the chimney looks considerable more technical and the snow is getting very hard. We managed to climb up one more section on hard snow before getting stumped at a short rock step. Under good conditions it would be class 3 but today it's covered in a thin coat of icy snow, and we're wearing telemark boots. I make a move or two up, but quickly run out of options. The ridge above looks to be quite challenging and I'm ready to throw in the towel and head down. We down climb a bit and then decide to try descending down the the big couloir that goes up the middle of the S face. I had figured that the snow in the couloir would be icy and impossible to climb without crampons, but we had lots of time to check it out so we may as well try right?

Going down into the couloir, the snow got progressively softer. The wind died down too, and soon we were climbing up the mountain with nearly perfect snow for kicking steps. At one point the couloir steepened and there was a pillow of soft snow so Tim went to the side while I climbed up the short avalanche prone section. Above the snow was hard again, so I waved him up and we kept climbing. A few sections above had harder snow, but solid ice Ax placement meant that we didn't ever have to rope up and we climbed quickly. As we climbed, some clouds started blowing in from the west, but visibility was still OK in the couloir. Soon we reached the top of the couloir which put us right between the two summits. I insisted on hitting both peaks (since they were so close) and Tim was satisfied with the eastern one, since it seems to be a few meters higher.

Down we went, retracing our steps down the couloir, back up to the ridge and then down to the col to pick up skis. Tim was ahead, but when I reached the top of the chimney I couldn't find him. I was fairly certain he would wait for me here, but you never know with Tim. I looked at the footprints in the snow and found none going down, so I must have passed him. I went back uphill and soon found Tim on the east side of the ridge at the top of a steep snow slope. We plunge stepped down to the col, which was a lot easier than down climbing the chimney. With skis on, we followed Sandra and Sebastien's tracks back to camp. A few turns were attempted on the slabby snow, but they were not graceful and only a little bit fun. We pulled into camp an hour ahead of schedule, and spent the afternoon hanging around camp. Around dinner time it started to snow.

#### Day 4

It snowed all night and all day so we just hung around reading, eating and maintaining the snow fortress around camp.

#### Day 5

Sometime overnight the wind died down and changed direction, so it was now coming from the north or northeast. We took this as a sign that the weather was going to

break so we packed up camp and headed for the col East of Fluted Mountain. We could just barely see the col, which was about 2km away so we knew the visibility would be OK.

The slopes below the col were heavily wind loaded with about 3 feet of new snow. We picked the best line, traversing right on moderate slopes to a wind scoop below the huge N face of Fluted Mountain. Then we went back left across the same slope to the col. I was worried about avalanche danger on this section but Tim charged ahead so what can you do. We made it to the col without incident and started feeling our way down onto the Chapman glacier in very flat light. The wind and snow had picked up since we left camp, and it was obvious that the storm was not clearing. Nevertheless we were making good progress despite the weather so we continued. We set a high traverse across to the other side of the Chapman and reached the top of the slope above the Edmond's glacier quite quickly.

This descent looked a little more fun, so Tim and I took our skins off. Sandra went ahead, descending with skins while Tim and I struggled to fold our skins up in the wind. Sebastien soon followed her down. A little close, I thought to myself, but not too bad. I had my back turned to them when I heard it. Sandra said later it sounded like thunder but I don't remember anything other than it caught my attention. I turned around and saw Sebastian standing there as a 40cm thick slab of snow slid off silently into the fog and disappeared. The fracture line was 3 or 4 meters below Sebastian; he look stunned.

"Oh \*\*\*\*!" I said, "Where's Sandra?"

Day 6, April 20, continued

We were all eager to get down to Edmond's Creek and wait out the storm there, where there would be running water and less wind. One more steep slope and we would be on the Edmond's Glacier highway. Scott always takes his skins off to go down hill, but then he can see better than me in flat light. I decided to go first down the slope rather than wait and get cold. I started to traverse and kick-turn my way down the slope, carefully feeling the snow and peering blindly ahead. I thought that over on the skier's right the slope looked less steep, so I headed that way. The snow when I started was wind-packed to a solid crust, but I quickly found a wind-pillow. I did not think that the slope was very steep, but I was sending sluffs down from my skis. These helped me see the slope a little better, so I did not worry about them too much. I soon found that the right side was not less steep, so I continued to kick-turn-traverse down the slope until I judged that I would be able to traverse out below a group of rocks in the middle of the slope. As I traversed past the rocks I heard a very loud noise above me. A quick shoulder check confirmed that I was below an avalanche. Swearing loudly, I double polled further across the slope until I was below another outcropping, and on a low-angle slope.

Looking back up I could see Seppel standing above the rocks, and a big crown on both sides of him. I heard Scott yell, asking if we were all right, and Seppel told him I was not buried. I think that the rest of the group was more frightened by the incident than I was, since I did not have time to get scared before I knew I was out of the way. I dropped my pack, took my skins off, and had a granola bar while waiting for the rest of them to get down the slope. Scott had a good look at the crown, and we think that Seppel set off a sluff that stepped down to a weak layer below the storm snow.

Kind of a stupid move. But we were where we wanted to be, so we carried on to



Edmonds Creek, where we camped at tree line to keep waiting for the storm to end.

A call to Dale at Tyax Air for a weather forecast: we should be able to move the next day, in the afternoon. So we relaxed for the evening. Scott and I went for a walk and found a goat carcass (goats frequently get killed in avalanches, and their bodies feed the bears when the snow melts).

Day 7, April 21st

The morning brought more of the same snowy weather, but as promised the skies cleared around noon. We packed up, filled the water bottles and the dromedary (a great big water bladder), and set out up to the food cache. The trail breaking was difficult, as there was so much new, heavy snow. The trail was over 30cm deep! We followed a glacier up to our food cache, which we found with no problems. We did not need the GPS, but we checked its accuracy so that we would be prepared for the next cache; the accuracy was more than good enough. The weather cooled dramatically as we dug out the cache, set up camp, and made dinner (fresh mushroom ravioli with Alfredo sauce and chorizo sausage). We ate gratefully, looked at our huge new packs, and prepared for a cold night.

Day 8, April 22nd

Scott and Sandra had packed fresh eggs and white bread into the cache for french toast. The bread was a bit squashed (probably my fault during the food drop) and the eggs were frozen. Scott laboriously thawed the eggs in warm water and fried up egg coated bread in the lid from the pot. There was even butter and syrup. Quite a treat considering the cold temperature.

Due to the cold temperature of the snow and the cold clear skies the trail breaking was still difficult. Are packs were big (again). We spent most of the day traveling the wide ice field covered ridge north of Stanley Smith Glacier. We even had to trail break downhill a couple kms to the low point in the day, a pass between the Bishop and Edmond's creeks containing a couple lakes. This was obviously a major fly through route for migratory birds going to the Chilcotins and made for an interesting lunch. Now on to the 1000ft of uphill (still with heavy snow and bright sun) to camp on the ridge east of Ramose Peak.

Day 9, April 23rd

It's Sunday, again! (popular joke on the trip)

With the sunny weather there was now a nasty crust on the surface with cold powder below. This made getting from the ridge down to Ramose Creek quite frustrating. Ascended the slopes to the south end of Ramose Glacier then broke trail DOWN the glacier to the next jumping off point which was 1000ft climb up to the head of the next glacier. Time was getting on but we put in a little more effort to cross the head of this unnamed glacier and camp on the ridge to its west. Nice being that we had sun till late in the evening and then first thing in the morning. The sun really helps to get out of the tent when it was 17C.

Day 10, April 24th

First thin in the morning I break a buckle on my ski boot. Oh \*\*\*\*, I thought, but then we fixed it easily with a Voile strap. First up is a north facing descent that offers some descent turns and then a very steep climb up onto the Norrington Glacier. We break trail down the Norrington - there is a breakable crust on the surface and cold powder underneath. A steeper pitch at the toe of the glacier

gives a few OK turns and then we turn east up a small glacier valley. Finally the conditions become springlike with corn snow over a firm base. Near the top of the climb we get forced onto a north facing slope that punishes us with more soft sticky snow. Finally we decide to make camp on a ridge south of Mount Dresden. Seppel stays in camp and Sandra, Tim and I go off to climb Dresden. The climb is easy enough, and the view from the top is spectacular. By the time we start down, the temperature is dropping and a crust is forming on the south facing slopes which makes the descent painful.

#### Day 11, Aprils 25th

We start with a short descent and then a fairly long climb up to the col between Wednesday Mountain and Mount Dresden. The snow is rock hard and Seppel is having a hard time getting his skins to stick. We drop packs at the col, scout the descent and then climb Wednesday up a small gully on its east face, teaching Sebastian some self arrest skills. The descent down to the Goddard Glacier is fantastic, and we set camp quickly on the glacier and then go off to ski up Mt. Craddock in the afternoon. We go through a notch in the NE ridge of Craddock around to the N face where there is a fantastic 1000ft ski run off the summit. The powder is great, so Sandra and I went for another partial run while Tim went and climbed Mt. Canopus. We finished the day by seeing who could straight line the fastest on the semi-breakable crust going down the Goddard Glacier.

#### Day 12-13, April 26th & 27th

A whiteout greets us in the morning so we dispel any thoughts of climbing more peaks and pack up camp. Today's route involves skiing down Boulanger Creek and then up into the headwaters of the Southgate river. It's a nice ski through meadows and open forest. We try to camp near open water, but fail so Sandra and I dug a 2.5m deep hole in the snow down to the creek. It took the two of us a good half hour, and it makes me wonder if we would be any faster if it was an avalanche victim at the bottom of the hole instead of just running water.

The next day we ski up over the pass into Deschamps creek as the iffy weather continues. After traversing along a bench, the ski down to the valley bottom is a bit steeper than expected, but at least it wasn't dense forest. The valley bottom offered a mix of nice meadows and really thick bush. Soon enough we were skiing up the filled in creek bed, and we reached that start of a narrow canyon. From the map, it looked like we would have to climb around one side of the canyon, but in fact the creek was nicely filled in with snow along the bottom. It was a surprisingly pleasant ski, and in no time we were at the base of the Stilly Glacier. Up on the Stilly we hit a whiteout, navigated by compass for a bit and then set up camp at the pass between Deschamps creek and Allaire creek. The snow was just perfect for wall building - very moist so you could shovel out huge blocks and then they would freeze into place on the wall. Seppel was the champion brick layer, cutting blocks that were 3 1/2 feet long, 15 inches high and 15 inches deep.

#### Day 14, April 28th

The morning was clear, and we were optimistic that the poor weather had passed by. From the top of the Stilly we had to get to Allaire Creek, but the direct route was far too steep. So we had to climb over a small peak to the north of our camp, then descend the ridge to where a lower-angle glacier followed by some steep slopes would take us the rest of the way to the creek. As we skied up the peak it

the wind got stronger and the snow got harder. Before long we took the skis off and carried them up to the peak. The wind was so strong at the top that it was difficult to walk in a straight line, and when I let go of my pole it dangled from my wrist at a 45 degree angle. A short distance past the peak we ran into a wall of fog - so much for the nice weather - and had some disagreements about when we should start down the slope. After some messing around with a rope and an ice ax to try to see how steep the slope below us was, we decided to stick to the ridge until we were completely sure that the glacier was below us. We continued to feel our way down and eventually made it to the toe of the glacier, through horrible isothermal snow that soaked us, to the creek bottom.

We had a break at an open spot on the creek, and tied two poles together to dip water out of the creek. I was very happy to be down the slope, as there was no technical terrain remaining between us and the next food drop. However, shortly after starting out it started raining pretty hard (and was quite windy), so we camped for the rest of the day, a mere 2 hours from the next drop.

Day 15, April 29th

We awoke to more wind and rain, but it slowed quickly so we packed up. Just before we were about to take the tents down it started raining again, so we jumped back in the tents to wait some more. Fortunately the precipitation turned to snow before long and we headed up into the fog. We had gotten a pretty good look at the glacier the day before so we felt our way up without too much trouble. The weather was still crappy but we could follow the cliffs of Cloister peak most of the way to our food drop, so the poor vis didn't matter. The GPS led us straight to the drop and we were soon building another big wall and anticipating dinner.

It was still early, and the sun had come out, so Scott, Tim and I set out to ski up Cloister peak. It was a very easy ascent, but as we went up the weather fogged in again, so we did not get any views from the top. Tim was getting cold and decided not to wait for Scott and I. He would follow the ski tracks back to camp. Scott and I followed soon after and got some blind turns in on the glacier. We had the GPS so we knew we could find the food drop. When we were most of the way there we found Tim, who had gotten separated from the track in the white out and was using his compass to ski a grid through the pass where the food drop was, so that he would hit it. His method would have worked, but he was still happy to see us.

I have to applaud Tim's food drop dinner: seafood chowder (canned mussels, canned oysters, vacuum-packed fake crab, potatoes) and mango cheesecake (made from condensed milk, graham crust, and re-hydrated mangoes). So tasty.

Day 16-18, April 30th-May 2nd  
The Homathko Icefield

The weather was beautiful, but our packs were heavy again. I wanted to spend a day bagging peaks around Sasquatch Pass, and then cross most of the Ice field in one push to Gargoyles Peak, but the others weren't so keen. I think Tim really wanted to spend a day to climb Mt. Bute, and that an extra day here might put that at risk. Since the weather had been so so for the past few days we figured the best action would be to press on in case the good weather didn't hold. It held.

We climbed Mist Peak that day, attempted Plateau and finally settled down a few km south of Plateau Peak. The next day we climbed Grenville, arriving at the summit in a short lived snow squall. It cleared just enough to make the ski back down enjoyable.

On May 2nd we headed out across the final section of the Homathko Icefield, the high ridge leading to Mt. Bute. Janus Peak looked like a good objective for a side trip, and it delivered with fabulour views and a stellar ski run. We followed the ridge, skiing below Incisor peak (which is much more incisor like than the map indicated). We came along the ridge to the north of Peak 7900 above the Bute glacier, and had to negotiate our way down around some cliffs and crevasses. At 4:30 we were at the top of the huge ice-fall beside Mt. Bute. The conditions were just right to go - soft but not melted too deep so we decided to proceed down to Galleon Creek. The thought of climbing Bute crossed my mind, but it looked like a long climb with a potentially hard icy slope, and we didn't have crampons.

Down we went, traversing beside the ice-fall on avalanche debris. You could sneak in a few turns here and there between the big frozen chunks of snow. Once we had descended past the base of the ice-fall, the terrain steepened. We followed a natural ramp to skier's left which took us right under the toe of the ice-fall. The skiing was really neat, winding our way along ribbons of snow and around clean granite slabs. There was no way off the ramp (cliffs below), so we hustled along until we were finally able to descend an avalanche track to get around the cliffs and down into the trees. The snow turned to complete isothermal mush and the skiing suddenly became much less enjoyable. We found a spot to camp in the forest on the edge of the avalanche track, and everyone washed off in the creek. It was painfully cold but worth it.

Day 19, May 3

When we asked Jacquie Hudson about their trip to the Homathko Ice-field a few years ago, she said that coming out of Galleon Creek was the worst bushwhacking of her life. It took her group 7 hours to travel 2 km through heinous slide alder, devils club and blown down logs. However, we had two key advantages - a good snow year and a one-month head start.

A bit of dense forest skiing got us down to a flat spot where multiple avalanche tracks converge in a mess of slide alder. The snow pack was just thick enough that we could ski over and around the worst of the trees, and after about an hour we had made it across to the other side. We crossed Galleon creek to the north side and picked up some grizzly bear tracks that led us right to the trail. It wasn't much of a trail - bushy, tricky to follow and steep, but it sure beat bushwhacking. After a few hours we came out onto a logging road that was starting to get overgrown. 7 km or so of hiking down the road brought us back to civilization at the Homathko River Logging Camp. We found Chuck, the camp caretaker, had a chat about the trip and then went for a swim in the river.

The next morning Dave King picked us up and flew us back across the mountains to Bluff Lake where Tim's truck was waiting. After picking up the other truck at Taseko Lake, we headed for home, arriving bleary eyed at 3am Friday morning.

Notes:

New tasty dinners that worked well:

- \*Lemon Spinach couscous

- \*Scalloped Potatoes (not idahoan premix)

Food that didn't go over so well:

- \*Extremely spicy Tom Yum soup when everyone has sunburned and/or cracked lips

- \*Tim's Dehydrated tofu, which took on the texture similar to a bathroom sponge and tasted like nasty chemicals.

New Cooking Experience:

\*Making French toast on a whisper-light at -15C with frozen eggs.

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Quote of the Week: "Never fight an inanimate object."

P. J. O'Rourke (1947 - )

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CONTRIBUTIONS to the VOCene are welcome. Please send all inquiries or additions to: [vocene@ubc-voc.com](mailto:vocene@ubc-voc.com).

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**Varsity Outdoor Club**