THE MOUNTAINEER

MAY 2007

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03 Administrivia

Presidential Decree
From Our Convenors

05 Glaciers, Girls And Granite
GRETA RAYMANT

08 Doing The 'W' In Patagonia
KYLIE MCINNES

10 South Cape Track
JANIE MAXWELL

13 John Long's Research
STUART HOLLAWAY

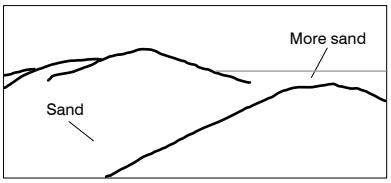
16 A Whole New Game
GRACE PHANG

18 The Good, The Bad, The Ugly
MARINA CARPINELLI

20 Highlights From Cathedrals
STEVE CHAN

22 Ice Climbing
ALICE LEPPITT

COVER
Erg Chebbi In Moonlight by Oliver Clarke. This was photographed on an overseas journey to Morocco (and according to less-reliable sources, Casablanca, where the phrase "Play it again, Sam," was uttered many times). An erg is a flat area of desert with sparse, or nonexistent, desert vegetation and covered by dunes.



ABOVE
Dunes Near Sunrise by Oliver Clarke.

Lincoln Smith
President

PRESIDENTIAL DECREE

I'll keep this mercifully brief. As always, a big thankyou to all those who've run trips—that is what MUMC is all about! There's so much to do, and with the odd spot of rain—and snow—about, deciding upon what trip to go on this weekend should get a whole lot harder (or easier) depending on who you are…

A few things that have been going on behind the scenes, that you may or may not have heard about:

The climbing gear store is receiving a long overdue tidy up courtesy of Kathryn Whalley. She's also reorganised the gear, and is putting in place a new hiring system. Please respect the effort Kathryn has put in: note down what you've taken, and return things (promptly!) to their proper place.

We have a first aid course being organised for in a couple of months—details in the clubrooms and on the website.

It rained!…

…Then it snowed!

At least one of the Kayaking Convenors (Hi Jen!) has been hard at work trying to sort out alternative pool venues for training sessions. I went along to the trial run of the Monash Uni pool out at Clayton, which, being indoors, is a lot warmer than our old venue, but the driving makes for a rather late night…

Steve has been pestering me to write this column, which I'm sure has delayed this edition of the Mountaineer by at least a fortnight…

Have fun out there...

Lincoln Smith
President

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FROM OUR CONVENORS

Canoe Polo

Greta Raymant
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OXO, OXO, OXO! Oi, Oi, Oi!!!

Forget the rumours you may have heard…canoe polo is alive and well in MUMC. This season MUMC has had one team playing in E-Grade. The OXO-E team has been playing fantastically well and at the halfway point in the Autumn 07 season is on top of the ladder. Finals are fast approaching (to be held in early June) and it would be great to see lots of MUMC members come along to Richmond pool to support the OXO-E team on Finals Day.

The Spring 07 competition starts in July and new canoe polo members are needed! Beginners are most welcome. No experience is required—we'll teach you! Its great for improving your paddling skills and learning to roll. And best of all IT'S FUN!

Good luck to Duncan, Alaster, Tom, Gil and Sache for the finals. Go OXO!!!

Rockclimbing

Simon McKenzie
rockclimbing@mumc.org.au

From the Cathedral Ranges to Arapiles, the You Yangs, Mount Alexander, Ben Cairn and Werribee Gorge, this semester has seen a lot of activity and a lot of new faces.

As the days grow shorter and the rain sets in, we can look back on a very successful six (is this right, Steve? [*I have no idea, but it's been about three months since February—Steve*]) months' climbing, and look forward to good paddling and skiing.

Highlights this semester included changes to our Easter Arapiles format—opting for a more relaxed intermediate-style trip, with no topropes. Our leaders responded very well to this, and while there were a few teething problems, it looks like it could be a great way to go. The beginner season leading up to Easter Arapiles was very successful, with a number of last year's beginners running trips and some new leaders emerging (Grace and Claudine). A combined climbing/bushwalking weekend run by Kathryn and James saw club members hiking up Mount Difficult and pulling moves at Summerday Valley.

More recently, Dale and Stu's *Learn To Lead* weekend saw a number of beginners take their first steps toward independent climbing, braving the elements at Bushrangers' Bluff and the Organ Pipes, Arapiles.

I'd like to thank all of our dedicated leaders for running so many trips and for being so enthusiastic, and to Alice, who started leading last year and has already surpassed most of us!

Bushwalking

Marina Carpinelli
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Bushwalking, tramping, hiking, whatever you call it there's been lots of action in this area in the first half of 2007. There were two trips to Tasmania over summer—one via the sodden Loddon Plains to Frenchman's Cap and another along the South Coast Track. Another Tassie trip at Easter involved five women walking for eight days in the central plateau and Walls of Jerusalem areas.

Other Easter trips went to the Victorian Alps and the Grampians. A combined walking and climbing trip to the Grampians was very successful. Daywalks to the coast near Anglesea, Brisbane ranges and Kinglake national park were enjoyed by all. There was also plenty of walking at the Cathedrals Introductory weekend, allowing people to build up a suitably sized hunger for a Buxton Burger.

Future destinations include Cape Liptrap and the Lerderderg Gorge. Although not always offering as much adrenalin as some of the other sports in the club, tramping is a great option for those wanting to see new places, meet people, exercise, experience wilderness and eat lots of chocolate.

GLACIERS, GIRLS AND GRANITE

A three week self-propelled kayaking, mountaineering and cycling adventure!

BY GRETA RAYMANT

This story takes place in the land of powder snow, tall mountain peaks, grizzly bears, kokanee beer and crazy Canucks ice hockey fans whose favourite word is 'eh?' It takes place in British Columbia (B.C.), Canada…

"What!! You want to summit those peaks from the west [a route very few, if any, have attempted]—are you crazy?"

This was the initial reaction of a highly experienced alpine climber from B.C. when approached for advice on mountaineering in the Tantalus Range (located in the south-western corner of B.C.) by myself and three other attractive young ladies from the outdoors club at the University of British Columbia (UBC) back in early 2006.

In hindsight, I think there was definitely some truth to this advice. No-one summits peaks in the Tantalus Range from the west because the only access is via the ocean. Most sane people choose the more sensible inland route from the east.

Krystil, Ellen, Alex and myself—UBC's answer to the Spice Girls—are not sane people however. Alex is a Kiwi: say no more.

In January we were very grateful to receive money from the Alpine Club of Canada to plan a female-only self-propelled mountaineering expedition to some remote part of B.C. What could be more remote than approaching the Tantalus Range from the sea?

To meet the requirements for a 'self-propelled' wilderness adventure, we planned to use our own power to go 'door-to-door', i.e. start and finish our trip to the Tantalus Range at Ellen's house in Vancouver.

No motorised vehicles were to be used to gain any distances.

We would travel only by sea kayaks, our feet, sometimes our hands and feet, and bicycles…

Days 1-5
Sea Kayaking

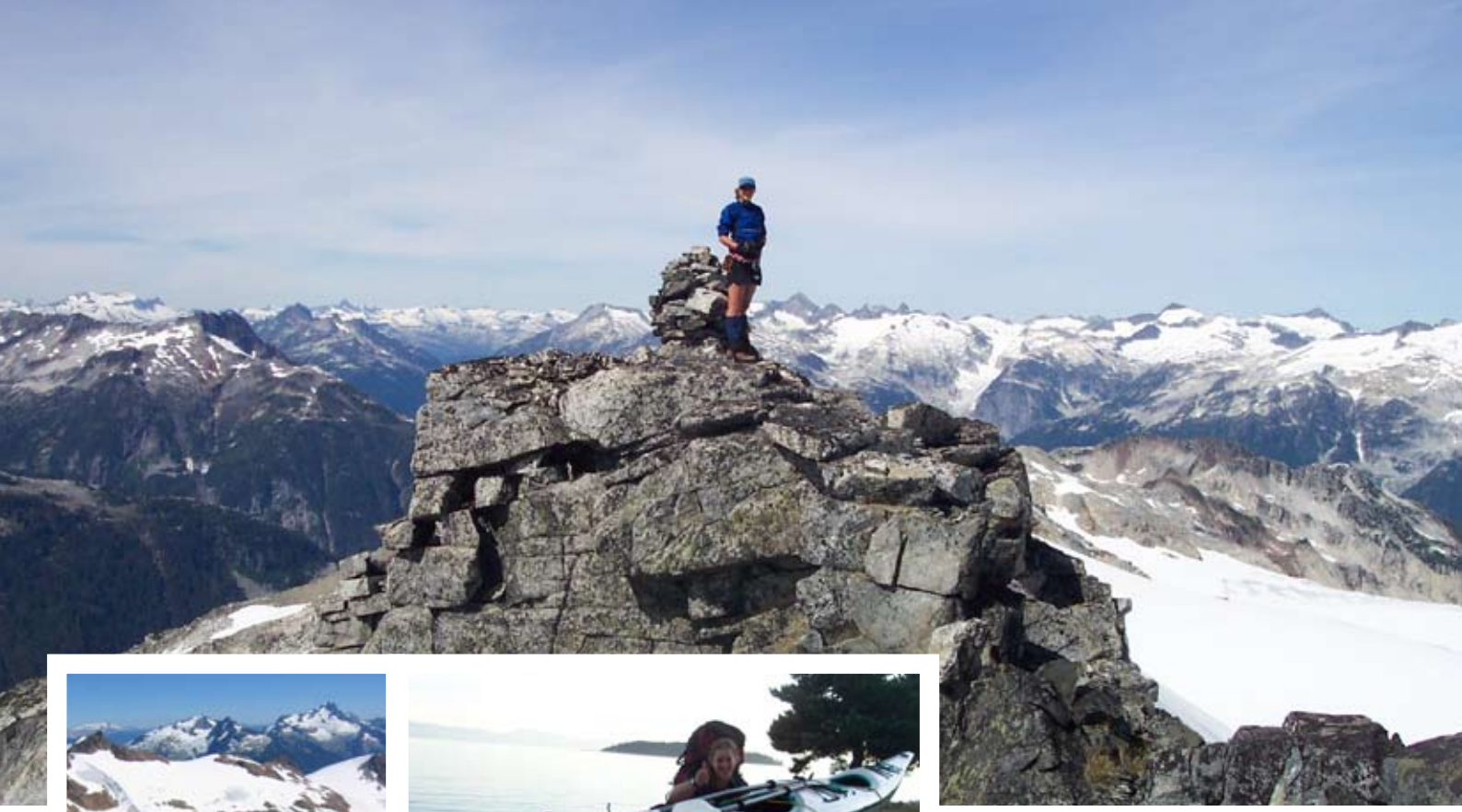
After several months of planning, our adventure finally began on August 14th. Two very heavy tandem sea kayaks were carried two blocks from Ellen's house to Kitsilano Beach in Vancouver. Both neighbours and tourists were very amused.

At this point we discovered our first big problem was how to fit all sea kayaking gear, mountaineering gear, cycling gear and food for two weeks (we were relying on a food drop for our third week of food) into the tiny compartments of our kayaks. We had around 300L of dry bags between the four of us plus many miscellaneous items in garbage bags. Miraculously we managed to cram everything into—and on top of—the kayaks. This didn't exactly make the kayaks very stable and made launches difficult but we were on our way!

Our first two days of kayaking were very productive and we managed to paddle 60km north of Vancouver along the coast and into Sechelt Inlet—our passage to Narrows Inlet and the base of the Tantalus Range. Reaching the inlet involved a 4km portage through the town of Sechelt.

Herein lay the second major problem on the trip: how to transport two incredibly heavy kayaks and gear 4km over land with no vehicle support? The answer: shopping trolleys! The local townsfolk had a good laugh at us trying to balance our kayaks and gear on shopping trolleys and told us that we should find ourselves some strong Canadian boyfriends—er, right.

Four days of paddling up Narrows Inlet followed. During this time I discovered that sea kayaking is really something that should not be done for more than two days at a time. After two days of sitting in a tight confined space that constantly filled with water (due to holes in decks and lack of pumps to bail out water) one can begin to develop a rather unpleasant "boat bum" (aka, a bum with a nasty rash).



The Girls styling it up on the glacier to Mt. Jimmy Jimmy. From left to right: Ellen Morgan, Greta Raymant, Alex Ross, Krystil Koethler (opposite).

Ellen on Jimmy Jimmy summit (above) and high-fives all around (far left). MacGyvering a transporting system for a transportation device (left).

Yeast infections also thrive in this environment. The remedy: paddle naked and expose one's behind to sunlight whenever possible (this also gives passers-by something to comment on and is a good excuse to use when one needs a break or needs to pee over the edge of the kayak—"just drying my behind…"

This brings me to another important point. Before embarking on a multi-day sea kayaking trip, one must master the art of peeing from the kayak. We found straddling the kayak or using a wide-mouthed Nalgene bottle worked best. Hovering over the edge of the kayak, and worse still, peeing in the kayak, led to unpleasant results. Other important lessons learnt included:

Waterproof Everything! When the kayak rental company tells you the compartments are water tight, they most likely are not! Fork out the extra money and buy dry bags. Garbage bags have a bad habit of acquiring holes and you can be sure that any water in your kayak will find its way into that hole!

Remember to bring a tide chart. This will save you the misery of being woken at midnight by waves lapping at the foot of your tent and having to retrieve kayaks that are floating away.

Close all kayak hatches at night. Mice have a tendency to fall into open hatches and subsequently drown in the water at the bottom of these hatches leaving a nice surprise for you in the morning.

Do not trust friends who tell you to bring minimal food for the kayaking portion of the trip and instead rely on the ocean for subsistence. Red tide is likely to spoil this plan and render bivalve molluscs (the most reliable ocean food) toxic.

Days 6-19 Mountaineering and a bit of bushwhacking

ON DAY SIX we gladly bid adieu to our sea fairing vessels (thanks to Porpoise Bay charters who helpfully picked up and returned our kayaks for us) and prepared to approach Mt. Tzoonie on foot. We were truly on our own now in relatively unexplored territory. There was no turning back.

Our kayaks were gone and we had no other contact with the outside world. It was at about this point on the trip when I started feeling more alone than I ever had before—and subsequently I really started regretting not having forked out the extra money for a satellite phone. To be honest I was scared shitless. It turned out we were not as alone as we initially thought. In our first hour of hiking we stumbled across a scary park ranger carrying a big rifle. He quickly informed us that we were standing right in the middle of a recently developed grizzly bear breeding ground…err? Excuse me, sir? Grizzly breeding ground? F*&^!!!!!

Apparently six grizzlies had recently been transported from the Rockies into this remote region of the Tantalus Range.

Why here? Because it was so remote! Good thing we packed a can of bear spray.

OUR FIRST ATTEMPT at gaining the alpine cost us 2.5 days. Two and a half days of horrendous bushwhacking through incredibly dense vegetation that seemed to grow horizontally as well as vertically. Prickly devils club, blackberry bushes and a whole heap of other nasties significantly impeded our progress. Often we found ourselves on all fours sliding our packs along in front of us. The situation was made incredibly worse by the steep terrain. So steep in fact, we had to rope up and use our ice axes in the dirt.

In a six-hour period we'd only make around a kilometre of progress. Slow going. One night was spent in harnesses tied to trees due to the steep terrain.

PLAN B—"SHIT CREEK". To avoid being attacked and devoured by the vegetation we tried to follow a creek up to the alpine. Our feet became wet at this point and they were to remain wet for the rest of our expedition, giving rise to some unpleasant footrot.

The creek soon acquired the name "Shit Creek" because *creeks always turn into waterfalls!* Remember this, kids!

After being bluffed out by waterfalls we were forced to retreat to the valley below. Six rappels later we were finally back on flat ground.

PLAN C—BACK TO BUSHWHACKING. With time and food running out we gave up on Mt. Tzoonie and tackled the vegetation again, this time trying to ascend Mt. Jimmy Jimmy via a pass further up the valley. And finally—success! Amidst horrendous clouds of mozzies we were able to scramble along the south-west ridge and gained the glacier which lead to the summit.

Perhaps it was the effort it took us to get there; the summit of Mt. Jimmy Jimmy felt like the most astounding mountain that I have ever stood on top of, and a feeling of accomplishment washed over me unlike anything I have ever experienced. There were certainly high-fives all around-and plenty of naked summit shots! Four days later more high-fives were had on the summit of Mt. Ossa.

Key Lessons: Learning the hard way

Bushes can be tricky, evil and nasty. Logging roads are your friends.

Be grateful that you live in Oz and don't have bears to contend with. Hauling 80kgs+ of food high into trees every night is just a pain in the arse.

When in Canada, Deet is your best friend. Don't go anywhere without it. If you forget it the mozzies will suck you dry and leave you with looking like you have the chickenpox.

Don't trust what you read on dehydrated meal packaging. When dehydrated meals say 'feeds four people' what they really mean is 'feeds four dwarfs, prepare to go hungry.'

Two-man tents are really four-woman tents. Just make sure there is plenty of spooning happening.

Days 20-21 Cycling; The Home Stretch

AFTER SUCCESSFULLY SUMMITING Mt. Jimmy Jimmy and Mt. Ossa (which was absolutely "Ossa-um") we made a quick escape from the alpine and re-entered civilisation, meeting up with friends who delivered our bikes to us, and some much needed fresh food. Oh apples had never tasted *sooo* good!

With our tummies full, we then biked 109km back to Vancouver with only a few slight detours along the way—hmmm… was it four pub stops? If only we'd remembered that peeing whenever you want, wherever you want applies only to backcountry travel…

OVERALL THIS WAS an amazing trip. Definitely a once in a lifetime experience. Many thanks to our sponsors: The Alpine Club of Canada, Mountain Equipment Co-op, Pedals and Paddles, Porpoise Bay Charters, Earth Sea Sky, Harvest Foods, Natures Path, UBCs Varsity Outdoors Club, and to our family and friends who helped make this trip possible. And special thanks to trip participants Krystil Koethler, Ellen Morgan and Alex Ross—you girls rock!

MORE COOL PICTURES and information about our expedition can be found here: http://www.glaciersgirlsandgranite.blogspot.com M

Mt. Jimmy Jimmy (left). Negotiating "Shit Creek" (middle).
Greta sleeping on the edge (right).

DOING THE 'W' IN PATAGONIA

A different kind of bushwalk.

BY KYLIE MCINNES
ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASMINE RICKARDS

It was a bit of a last minute decision to go south after two weeks of kayaking in Pucon, Chile.

Jasmine and I had heard lots about *Parque Nacional Torres del Paine* (Towers of Pain) in Chilean Patagonia ('beautiful', 'wow', 'lots of people') and we wanted to see it for ourselves.

The 'W' is a very popular walk with well-maintained tracks and the option of staying in fully-catered luxury at the *refugios* if you feel so inclined. There is a longer, more remote circuit through the park, but we didn't have time for that, so we aimed to join the hoards on the 'W'.

From Pucon, we headed to Bariloche, Argentina on the cheapest bus we could find, but two hours into the trip (hangover + hot dusty bus + windy road = bad idea) we agreed that we'd pay a bit more for our next bus to have leg room and air conditioning.

So the 36-hour leg from Bariloche to Puerto Natales, Chile via the Argentinian coast was slightly more comfortable, but the Argentinian coast isn't exactly a pleasant holiday destination and it's a very, very long way from Chile. We kept ourselves entertained by eating empanadas in every roadhouse we stopped at (and there were many) but it was a relief to get off the bus in Puerto Natales.

The next morning we had another suffocating two-hour bus ride to the Park, by which time my legs had forgotten all about how to walk and my stomach was acutely aware that the brown bread we'd had for breakfast was the only decent food we'd had in days.

The beauty of the park itself managed to distract me from the horrible unfit feeling in my body, although it was raining when the bus drove away and motivation levels were certainly not at a peak. But then we remembered there were supposed to be pumas in the park and by the time we'd hatched various schemes to see one (probably best not to ask), the sun had come out and we had been walking for half an hour up a steep hill. I could say we felt energised, but it would be an outright lie. Our lungs and legs burned and our only satisfaction was in passing people even less fit than us when they collapsed on the side of the track.

Lesson one: kayaking and drinking beer do not keep you fit for bushwalking.

The first day of the walk follows a river up towards the Torres del Paine themselves. I admit that I don't remember much of the walking because we were constantly checking out the river to see if it was runnable.

We reached our campsite just as it started to rain but headed up to the lookout anyway because we didn't want to have to walk the extra distance in the morning.

Luckily, just as we reached the lookout the sun came out again and by the time we'd lazed by the lake for an hour there were barely any clouds in the sky.

The spectacular rocky spires that form the towers jut sharply out of a glacier that is flanked by more rocky peaks. Below the glacier, scree slopes and more cliffs drop steeply into a grey-green lake that is too cold to put your feet in.

Feeling satisfied and lazy we ambled back to camp for an easy dinner and an early

night. At least, that was the plan before my stove tried to blow itself up.

Bencina blanco, or white gas, is easy to buy in Chile. And we'd been assured by numerous other people that it was indeed shellite. Given that we couldn't understand the difference between the three expensive types of unleaded petrol anyway, bencina blanco seemed like yet another good idea.

Like our other good ideas, it quickly went pear-shaped when the stove recovered from the near-explosion and then refused to light at all. Faced with the prospect of six days of cold uncooked packet pasta in the rain, we persevered. After what seemed like 45 minutes of priming, the stove spluttered but stayed alight. Two litres of water boiled in less than a minute, the pots went black and the flame was scary. We cooked dinner in record time and collapsed exhausted into the tent. We agreed that whatever bencina blanco is, it definitely isn't shellite.

Lesson two: never trust advice on fuel from an Israeli ex-soldier who runs his MSR on pure ethanol.

ON DAY TWO, the sun was out for most of the day and it conveniently only rained when we hid in a *refugio* for an afternoon cup of tea. We played spotto with expensive European outdoor clothing brands and wondered how cool we'd need to be before we could justify buying trekking poles with suspension. We camped below a big glacier and beside a clear, blue river (yes, this one was runnable!).

The stove struggle that evening wasn't as traumatic, but we were laughed at by our fellow campers for the rocket-flare we were trying to cook over.

DAYS THREE, FOUR and five followed pretty much the same pattern—only raining when we were hiding in *refugios* and plenty of awe-inspiring scenery.

Sure, we met lots of people along the track, but they were usually friendly (especially when Jasmine was disguised as a blueberry in her bright blue poncho and blue thermal pants). One lady even complimented me on my purple stripy "leg warmers" and asked where I'd bought them.

Unfortunately, we didn't get to see a puma.

THE VIEWS FROM the plane back to Santiago were amazing and Jasmine's nose was pressed so firmly against the window that I almost managed to steal her dessert.

We felt good after several days of walking in such a beautiful place and we would have been very relaxed had it not been for one niggling question: what *is* bencina blanco? M

Jasmine in Patagonia somewhere (top) and her blueberry poncho (above).

PHOTOS: JASMINE RICKARDS (OPPOSITE)

SOUTH CAPE TRACK

A kind of photo diary about a trip to Tasmania.

BY JANIE MAXWELL
ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY BY
ALASTER MEEHAN AND SAM FLEWETT

Our little light plane—four people, two pilots and four packs in this one. A spectacular flight: unfortunately for most it was a little bumpy. We landed here in Melaleuca on the sand.

The South Cape Range from the light plane on the way in. This is the last big range that you climb; thus being on one side feels incredibly remote whilst the other feels a just a few steps away from human civilization. A strange feeling—teetering on the edge of two worlds.

Starting off on day two, with a pic of most of the bunch—Janie, Evan, Sam, Tom and Alaster (Greta trying to walk backwards and be an expert photographer at the same time). The South West Cape of Tasmania is in the background.

Alaster well-equipped for the crossing of the Louisa River…snorkel and goggle got a bit more use later in the trip with some fruitful spear fishing expeditions. The fish turned out to be delicious and fortunately not poisonous!

The mud. Hip deep in parts, it inspired true spirit, tears, swearing and humour.

An island off the coast—seen from the light plane. A fabulous aspect of the plane trip was that we were able to see where we would be walking over the next ten days, and then whilst we were walking, experience and see the country from a completely different perspective.

Sunset at Surprise Bay.

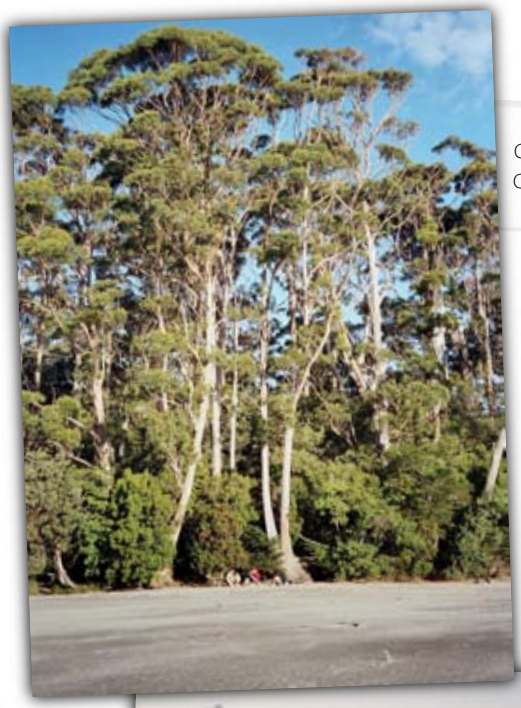
Searching for Antarctica across the stormy waves of the Southern ocean. It feels like the edge of the world.

PHOTOS: ALASTER MEEHAN (TOP RIGHT)

Granite Beach—a nice change from the mud, campsite in the ti-tree at the end of the beach. There was a little waterfall which we had to climb up to get towards the camp. Quite picturesque.

On top of the South Cape Range. The whole walk was incredibly remote and gave us a wonderful feeling looking back along the misty coastline, to see where we had walked.

South Cape Rivulet. The site of the swift skinny dips, snorkels and rock-pooling. We spent a bit longer here, relaxing and enjoying the untouched beach before taking the last steps to Cockle Creek. The stars, sea and sand were indescribable.



Cooking on South Cape Rivulet.

Nearing the end. This was our last beach. And finally some sunny weather.

Final campsite, Cockle Creek. Back in touch with civilization…still very peaceful. The road from here to Hobart is named "The End of the Road".

PHOTOS: SAM FLEWETT (MIDDLE LEFT);
ALASTER MEEHAN (BOTTOM LEFT AND RIGHT)

JOHN LONG'S RESEARCH

The cord-a-death and other Internet hysteria: what it means to us

BY STU HOLLAWAY

In the mid-90's John Long published *Climbing Anchors* which popularised the cordalette, a technique for arranging anchors that had gained broad acceptance in the guiding fraternity.

Last year, in preparation for an updated edition of his book, Long had a series of tests conducted to verify the assumptions on which his earlier work and much climbing wisdom was based. Long regarded the results of these tests as shocking and outlined the preliminary findings on the internet, pre-empting his own publication, because he felt that his new knowledge had direct and crucial implications for climbers' safety.

Forum Frenzy

John Long's anchor challenge on the *rockclimbing.com* forum triggered a thread that ran more than 60 pages long and precipitated that volume again of related discussions on that forum alone, along with all the attendant flaming, waffling, fear and declarations that 'I told you all years ago.'

The exchanges prompted people to propose anchor systems of arcane complexity, requiring metres of cord, multiple knots and two fistfuls of biners, and to rant about the deatholette or cord-a-death, as it was apparently now known, which would surely kill us in our sleep if it couldn't fail in a climbing application. Some posters asked whether the matter was really as serious as all that, given the apparent dearth of multi-fatality belay failures on a daily basis but they were generally fiercely denigrated by people who had their caps lock stuck on.

So…what is it about?

It is the internet, so you can't take it entirely seriously even if it is serious, but if you are a climber you will be wondering what John Long did find, what does it mean for my climbing and will someone please tell me so I don't have to wade through 700 increasingly angry posts on some forum because the book hasn't come out in Australia yet? So here we are.

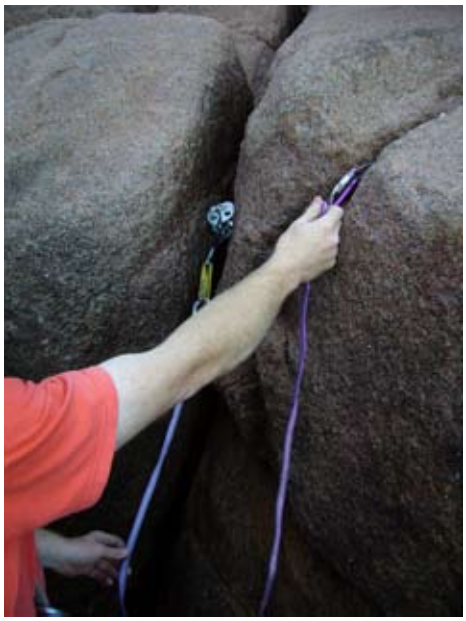
Long was looking at the effectiveness of different ways of tying off multiple points of protection to share the load in the construction of an anchor, particularly for belaying part way up a multipitch route, where the anchors can be subject to the greatest forces.

If you want to know how the tests were conducted, exactly what conclusions were reached and all the other science-type peer-review sort of thing you'll have to read his work directly, I am just going to outline the things that it led me to think about.

The Results

Long reported two key findings that, depending on which faceless typists you believe, are either "completely, unimaginably horrifying and must change the way we climb forever, I can't believe we are not all dead" or "completely obvious you are all such stupid fools cord-a-deaths are going to get you I can't believe you are not all dead." (My own view tends to fall in a different, hopefully less virtual reality than this mainstream.)

The first finding was that in the event of the failure of one component of an anchor constructed using a self-equalising sling, also called a *sliding-X*, the remaining component(s) was not subject to excessively large shockloading, providing the mass was connected to the anchor via a dynamic rope. The threat of this shockloading has traditionally been presented as a limitation of the self-equalising or sliding-X anchor system. Long points out that the forces involved in this sort of fall should in normal practise be quite minor compared to the lead falls we take every day and so should not be destruc-



Clip a strand of the sling to each piece of protection.

Pull the strand down from between the pieces to create a V (or W etc. depending on how many pieces are in use) pointed in the expected direction of load.

In the self-equalising or sliding-X system, twist the back strand as you pull it down into the V, then clip through the loop created by the twist and over the front strand of the sling.

tive as the climbing rope stretches to minimise the peak impact force in the system.

The second finding was that while no anchoring system consistently and equally shared the load of a fall onto the individual pieces of protection, the cordalette-style knotting of a loop clipped to the protection performed least consistently and shared the load least equally, even under ideal conditions, and that its performance deteriorated as more protection points were added and/or the points became less equidistant, with the nearest point receiving much more of the load than distant protection.

Self equalising or sliding-X systems achieved more effective equalisation of the load between pieces and did so more consistently, although they still tend to transfer more of the load to the closest piece. The realisation that anchors constructed with cordalette technique were not really equalised to any great extent raised the fear that those anchors might not be as strong as anticipated. This prompted the more alarmist to highlight the possibility of cascade failure, where the nearest piece receives all the force of a fall and fails followed by the other pieces in turn, leading to catastrophic failure of the entire system.

One well known double fatality at Tarquitz may actually be an example of this but it remains uncertain.

I THINK THAT THESE findings do represent developments in our understanding of the physics of climbing and anchor systems in particular and we should think about them; however, I do not think they should precipitate a radical change in general practise. Risk management in alpine climbing requires you to evaluate which hazards you are most concerned about and prioritise them, accepting others as unlikely or acceptable. Rock climbing doesn't demand this as much because of the more stable environment and generally shorter climbs, but it can still be a useful way of thinking about and responding to the risks involved.

About Protection

INDIVIDUAL PIECES OF protection hold lead falls every day. The forces on the top piece, which holds a lead fall, are significantly higher than the forces on an anchor as a whole, and even more so than the force on the components of an anchor even if the load is shared highly unequally. This is important as it means that a piece of protection placed appropriately in sound rock is strong enough on its own to act as an anchor for general climbing.

The primary function of the multiple pieces of protection in an anchor is therefore not really to share the impact so that it is reduced to a manageable load but to provide some redundancy so that if a placement for some reason proves not to be sound there are others in place that should hold the fall.

In general rockclimbing, particularly as we enjoy here in Victoria with outstanding rock offering abundant high quality protection, this redundancy is the most important feature of the multiple pieces in an anchor and any load sharing achieved by the anchor to reduce the load on the components is a welcome but much less important bonus.

Sharing the load between the components of an anchor or otherwise reducing the impact forces on the anchor becomes the primary concern if the protection seems of dubious integrity or when the anchor could be subject to unusually large forces such as a factor-two fall.

Factor two falls generate potentially destructive forces and should be avoided. This is why climbers emphasise getting quality protection early in a pitch to protect the belay. If a factor-two fall seems a possibility you should probably be considering retreating from the route.

If you decide to accept the risk you need to climb carefully and avoid the fall but there are some other things you can do to minimise the possible impact on the anchor and therefore its potential to remain intact.

Tie a knot to create the focal point of the anchor. Use a clove hitch to attach to this with the rope.

The twist prevents the 'biner sliding off the sling if one of the protection points fail. The overhand knots added here limit the extension of the anchor if a point fails, reducing the movement of the belayer, and introduce redundancy against the sling cutting.

If a point fails…

You can fiddle around with some rigging to lower the belay in order to get more rope out and bring a runner into play, which will reduce the fall-factor but not the length of the fall. The belayer should prepare to use his or her body to help absorb the force of the fall.

A highly effective way to reduce the impact of a fall on protection is to incorporate a shock absorbing sling (a *screamer*) at the focal point of the system.

Finally, to make the anchor as strong as possible, maximise the equalisation of the pieces, probably by using self-equalising systems which Long suggests are most effective at this, especially if you keep the sling a bit loose around the focal biner, allowing it to shift if necessary, rather than binding in the sling which tends to lead to loading of the nearest protection.

SOMETIMES WE NEED to rely on protection in ice, soft rock or in the form of very small wires, all of which can be weaker than we might wish.

Screamers also work to reduce the peak impact force on weak protection to give it the best chance of holding, but where you are relying on marginal protection—whether as runners on in an anchor—your best option with standard gear is to equalise multiple pieces as effectively as possible to minimise the load to which individual components will be subject.

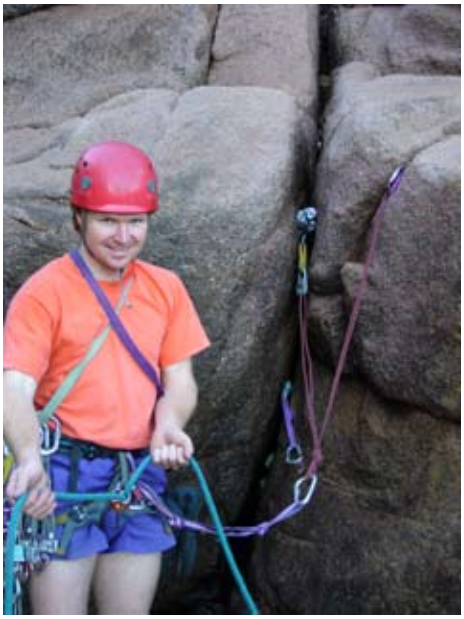
Traditionally, people warned of the dangers of shockloading the remaining protection should one piece of a self-equalising anchor fail. Long's research discounts this provided the fall factor is not unduly large and, crucially, that the climbing rope is incorporated into the system between the load and the anchor. In effect, his findings reinforce the danger of connecting to a climbing anchor with static material, such as a daisy chain, sling or clipping the static sling of the anchor directly to your harness. Static components should not be used to connect to anchors on technical climbing ground and where used for snow slopes or on abseils considerable caution is warranted. Crucially, climbers must remain below, and should preferably stay hanging from, the point of attachment, as even a factor-one fall on static material can generate enough force to break biners and harnesses.

PERHAPS A BIGGER HAZARD of the partial failure of a self-equalising anchor is loss of control of the rope by the belayer when s/he is pulled out of position as the system extends. Tying limiter knots in the system, which Long strongly advocates, minimises potential forces of this secondary fall and, more importantly, reduces the extension of the system, thereby minimising the movement of the belayer and consequent likelihood of loss of control of the rope.

SO WHAT DOES it all mean? Where I am able to place good protection in sound rock, I use cordalette style rigging because the anchors should easily be strong enough to cope with the forces involved even if they are not effectively equalised; there will be virtually no extension should one piece somehow fail and the multiple focal points make such anchors convenient to use especially for larger groups.

When leading off I try to arrange good protection to protect my anchors from factor-two falls. If a pitch appears so unprotectable that factor-two falls seem likely I will probably avoid the hazard by retreating or climbing elsewhere. If I have to rely on protection which seems dubious, I will use self-equalising systems to share the load as effectively as possible between equally poor (or equally good) pieces.

SO, THREE PAGES later you know that, while I have learnt some new things, I haven't really changed what I do at all—but you also know why. When it is casual I don't worry much and enjoy it. When things look like they could get to be slightly marginal I try to be a bit cunning and have fun. M



(Far left) A three piece anchor built using classic cordalette technique. You tie the knot to equalise the pieces as best you can. Despite the limitations recently highlighted, there should be some load sharing between them and, in the event of failure of one of the components there should be essentially no extension of the focal point or movement of the belayer.

Dynamic cord, bulkier knots (e.g. figure-8 instead of overhand) and "arms" of similar lengths will all make the load sharing more effective, however, if that is your primary concern perhaps system featuring a sliding-X would be more appropriate. In this case a screamer is incorporated into the focal point of the anchor to maximise its ability to withstand an impact.

(Left) Avoid connecting to the anchor with static material on technical ground. The force of the belayer falling is transmitted to the anchor without shock absorbency of the dynamic rope and so can generate potentially destructive forces with relatively small falls. If you do connect this way, which is common for multi-pitch abseils, stay below, preferably tight on the anchor.

A WHOLE NEW GAME

BY GRACE PHANG

With Asia's biggest climbing gym newly built just ten minutes' walk away from home, I spent the summer break building up my climbing skills in between traveling and working.

A trip down to neighbouring Singapore got me a harness, a pair of climbing shoes and a belay device at an extremely good deal. New gear, new skills—I was certainly pumped up for a good year of climbing with MUMC!

First week back into semester saw me at the You Yangs—my first outdoor climb in six months. It was all top-rope slab climbing that day: good for practicing balancing and feet placement. I went from climbing 12s to a 20 (resting on the rope at one point, I must admit) that day, and knew that I wanted to get more out of my climbing.

I immediately signed up for a trip to Summerday Valley at the Grampians the next weekend. As some of the leaders busied themselves setting up top-ropes on the crowded back wall of the cliff, I took the opportunity to teach some of the new beginners belaying techniques and basic climbing protocol. After a few climbs and some lunch, I was pumped to do my first "trial lead".

Kathryn and Simon gave me some pointers on racking up, went through a couple of gear placement basics and taught me a couple of rope skills. After tying into a rope and another top-rope for safety, I had my first taste of leading on *Eat More Parsley (7)*. The scorching sun and buzzing flies probably helped a bit in my attempt to forget about the safety rope as I placed piece after piece of gear into the cracks.

After what must have seemed ages for that short route, I topped down. Simon then climbed up to remove my gear, and gave me feedback on my gear placement. One dodgy piece out of ten, a "passive" cam and trusting a single boulder for all 3 anchor points was the feedback I got—not a bad start, I reckon.

From the back wall, we moved on to the Wall of Fools.

"Do you want to give your first real lead a shot on *Handles (7)?* I did my first lead here too." Simon said. The insides of my tummy did a flop—one from the excitement of being given the chance to lead, another from the butterflies that had already begun to start churning.

"Oh yeah," I answered, half excited, half scared.

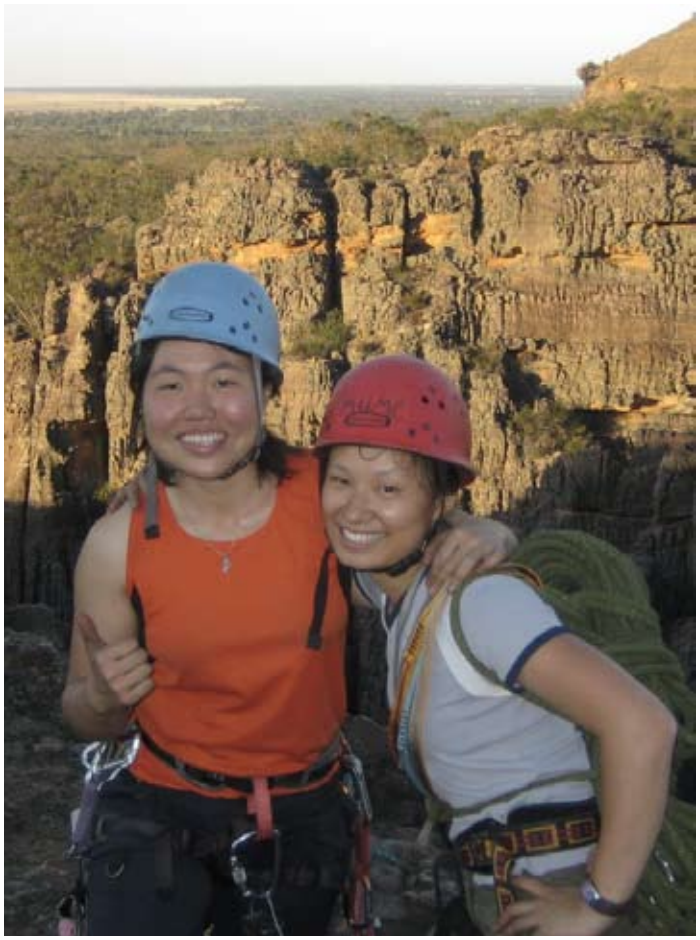
"I'll second you!" said Eugenie.

"And I'll take photos for you!" echoed Claudine. As I racked up, people around me gave words of support and encouragement.

I then scurried along after Simon to the climb, with a massive tonne of clanking hexes, nuts, cams and quick-draws weighing down on my harness. A photo with my seconder at the base of my first climb was customary. Simon double-checked us, gave a few pointers on the route, and off I was on my first-ever pure lead.

As I climbed, I thought hard on every piece of gear I placed—finding the "perfect size" for each crack, the direction of force if I were to fall, the amount of gear I had left on me…it was definitely a lot of things going through my mind. The phrase *what if I fall* kept playing over and over again in my head.

At one point, I couldn't find the right piece to fit into one of the cracks. My brain



Eugenie and Grace at the bottom of the climb (above). At the top—still alive! (above right).

Grace and Simon, who helped out with the anchor.

was at war with itself: one side was playing *Crap, what I if fall now?* The other side played *Just trust your feet. It's just a 7. You'll be fine!*

Maybe it was because the fear of falling had already started to build up, or maybe it was because I was in a sleeveless top and the sun had already started to sink, or maybe it was because the climb was pretty exposed. Whatever it was, my legs started shaking. Damn it!

At this point, I decided to forget about placing any gear into that crack. My last piece wasn't that far down—I just had to trust it! This is when climbing turns from a physical game to a purely psychological one. Lead-climbing is not about being a super-good climber, but it's more about having the mental strength to trust yourself and the bullet-proof confidence to take the next step.

I scanned the wall in front of me, saw a nice juggy handhold, grabbed it and hoisted myself up. Phew, that move wasn't even hard at all. I guess it's just the feeling of having no rope above you. You really try much harder not to rest on any gear. Though I was on a nice ledge at that point, I quickly found a crack and put a piece of gear in for safety. I then turned around to admire the beautiful sun that was setting behind me. A small gust of wind blew, and I instantly turned around to face the wall again. No, I wasn't going to test if I was truly afraid of heights. I didn't even dare take a peek at the ground below.

I continued up the climb, occasionally shouting down for more slack (I found out later that I had built up quite a fair bit of rope-drag from climbing zig-zag).

Piece after piece of gear I placed, satisfied each time I found something that fit well. It's like trying to fit a 500-piece puzzle together; it's not that hard, you just gotta find the right one.

About two or three metres from the top, I spotted Simon standing there. Just the fact that he was there, and all the butterflies that were churning in my tummy before immediately disappeared.I scurried up the last bit, dragging the rope behind me and topped out.

Bringing my rusty knowledge of knots and anchors learned from the clubrooms the year before, my earlier knowledge of equalising weight (wishing that I'd paid more attention to my Year 12 physics teacher) and coupled with Simon's guidance, I built my first real rope anchor. I shouted 'safe', adjusted the rope and was now ready to belay my seconder up.

AS I SAT AT the edge belaying, I could barely stop myself from smiling all over from the excitement and happiness. Nevertheless, belaying wasn't all that easy due the rope drag I'd built up along the way and had to tug on the rope a lot. Or maybe it was because exhaustion had already started to sink in. Tired I was, but the sight of Eugenie full of smiles as she climbed past me truly overwhelmed me with a sense of jubilation and achievement. I had accomplished my first lead. I truly was on thin air!

I SPENT THE NEXT few weekends learning and helping out with setting up top-ropes, teaching beginners and even managed to do a couple more lead-climbs at Easter Araps.

A big thank you to all the leaders, Simon in particular, for the encouragement and patience in teaching me the skills.

To gain the courage to take the first step is one thing, to be a truly independent climber and good leader is another. There's only one way, and that's more climbing! M

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

…and the many things that make trips not-so-great.

BY MARINA CARPINELLI
ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARLENA MENDE , DANIEL HEARNDEN AND SU LI SIN

The Good And The Bad
Hiking in the Grampians

Lots of elements went into making this a fun weekend and we faced up to all the challenges successfully. The initial plan was to go to Mt. Difficult but someone set it on fire a few days earlier so we changed our destination to the Fortress.

Having read in the paper that a shop in Ballarat was selling deep-fried pizza we stumbled upon that very shop for dinner on Friday night and got to try that culinary delight.

There was a full moon that weekend which made it easier to drive until 12:30am to get to the campground and we managed to just miss hitting the kangaroo that hopped in front of the car near the end.

We had to carry 7L of water each up the 600m hill but there was a useful stream near the top where we could refill and carry the full 7L again.

We had lunch on a rock with an awesome view of the rocky wonderland and were entertained by a tame skink that liked stealing scroggin.

We walked 12 km along a 4WD track and camped near it, but no country-and western-loving bogans decided to spend the night there.

It hailed on us on Sunday morning but we ascended Mt. Thackeray anyway and the weather took Callum and Ned's minds off their hangovers. There was running water near the campsite but we didn't care that much.

The ascent down to the cars was enjoyable and we consumed milkshakes at Dunkeld and pizza at Ballarat on the way home. Marlena won a milkshake for predicting when it would rain (4am) and Daniel managed to catch the last train home to Sunbury. The other people on this trip were Ned, Callum, Marlena, Mara, Isabelle, Daniel and Philipp—thanks for a great trip.

The Grampians is mostly sandstone, a sedimentary rock. The layers can be seen clearly here.

Philipp on a rocky outcrop near the vicinity of Mt. Thackeray.

The Ugly

The time we ran into the Bogans From Hell at the Mitchell River

When you get to the campsite at midnight on Friday night after driving for four hours you tend to be ready to get into the tent and go to sleep. When we arrived at Angusvale on the Mitchell River one Friday night we quickly set up tents and got into our sleeping bags.

No-one took much notice of the bogans throwing huge pieces of wood off the end of their ute onto a large bonfire at the other end of the campsite. However as soon as the last of us was zipped into our sleeping bags they made their presence known by turning on country and western music at full volume.

Although this was initially a little bit funny it wasn't funny anymore when they finally turned it off five hours later. In the interim, while Andrew Oppenheim managed to sleep, we were treated to their favorite songs over and over and over again. These songs have been indelibly imprinted on the subconscious of those on the trip, and although I can't remember the words, I know I will recognise them if I hear them again.

The bogans were considerate enough to break the tedium of their music with chainsawing wood at 3am and throwing things on the fire that exploded with a sound like gunshot.

Most of us got to sleep at 5am and woke up a few hours later with the sun and birds. The bogans were lying on cots next to their fire and looked quite satisfied with themselves, but also exhausted. We quickly completed our car shuffle and started the walk, leaving them to continue their own interpretation of being in the great outdoors…

PHOTOS: MARLENA MENDE (OPPOSITE); DANIEL HEARNDEN (TOP); SU LI SIN (BOTTOM)

The caption for this reads as "Early morning sunrise through the misty trees. This sort of view is why you put up with frost on your sleeping bag" but it doesn't mention country and western, banjos, chainsaws or bogans. You might remember seeing this numerous times at Pie And Slide Night 2006.

Andrew, Marina, the Ned, Cass and Daniel. This was taken at a break overlooking The Amphitheatre, not far from the campsite.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM CATHEDRALS

BY STEVE CHAN

Having endured a mysterious three-second spot shower at the entrance to the Park (always a good sign) Daniel and I considered it a baptism of sorts, and proceed to the usual site. *Where was everyone?* Jen and Kat were the only bipeds present. As we set up our tents, we were bombarded by rain. "This is going to be the best Cathedrals ever," Jen said.

Everyone else appeared and we learned the minibus broke down, its engine somehow destroyed near the Black Spur. This group arrived at close to midnight, allowing them to mostly avoid the dampness while they set up their tents. Some tents were better than others; Mix-And-Match Bergens unsurprisingly gave us grief, and Pink Olympus was unhappy the following day.

The auto-tent arrived without instructions or instructors, forcing everyone to pool their IQ points (and my fractions thereof) into completing the strangest pole-jigsaw since Federation Arch. Typical of many DIY projects, there were spare bits and bobs left over and nobody could work out where the four or five extra poles were meant to go, so we left them on the ground.

The "fire" magically came into existence with the activation of Simon's LED lantern. One of the Americans, Alex, delighted in the discovery of a tiny frog in the firepit, and we were shocked by the inexplicable appearance of fresh grapes in said pit. We retired soon after.

Saturday morning proved to be unusual in that it was wet and not a total fire ban: therefore not much climbing was going to be done. Thus we inherited Tom, Simon and Alice and made them walk with us. Today's absence of other leaders was noted.

My group ended up with the Jawbones route, approaching Cathedral North and Cathedral from the south, while Dan's lot attempted it from the north via Ned's Gully. Those are the main approaches and thus we would do the reverse of each others' walks. Alaster's dudes went up Sugarloaf, which apparently is pleasant after rain.

Our ascent was surprisingly swift despite the dampness and before long we reached the somewhat-breezy summit of North Jawbone, a side-trip precipitated by the climbers at the front. Daniel's group had a little technical difficulty reaching the main ridge, unwittingly ascending Ned's Peak instead, which lies in the opposite direction. With some dextrous map-and-compass work, they eventually worked out where the spare mountain came from.

On the brief descent from the Jawbone summit, we split into a slower group (led by me) and a not-as-slow group led by the aforementioned climbers and Marlena. Despite being about five minutes' walk to the previous track junction, the other half was nowhere to be seen. *Okay*, I thought; *maybe they've kept going up to the ridge for a bit of a view*. Nope, they weren't there either.

Working out they'd continued further down the hill than intended, I did a bit of running around and found Marlena striding

Ascending The Cathedral from the south after the mist cleared (opposite). Grant and The MacPhallus (top left). Part of the camp frivolity, Mac (after whom The MacPhallus is named) and Alaster partake in the marshmallow ritual. Many others partook as well (left). Simon, Tom and Alice with others at the climbing rock below Mt. Sugarloaf…I don't know its name.

back up the track with Catarina in tow. With a waterlogged map we resolved the situation. I continued running after the climbers, who had congregated at a sign-post, mapless.

Up higher, the weather significantly improved (oh how warm sunlight was! I hadn't seen it in weeks) granting us views of the valley below and the path we had taken. Ticking off Cathedral and Cathedral North, we noticed that Daniel's crew was still nowhere to be seen and that it was almost lunchtime. *Where'd they go?*

We bumped into them at the Ned's Gully carpark and they explained how they mistakenly ascended Ned's Peak and didn't bother going on the main ridge.

A short while later, lunch was eaten by all but one. Alaster forgot to bring food, so we were nice to the yeti and shared ours.

Due to the non-climbing, the afternoon walk was not on the ridge (everyone had done it and the kayakers were still away) but along the river to Ned's Gully carpark. We messed with a tree stump, trying to fit everyone on it simultaneously. We failed. People discreetly headed back while I talked with and beat up on Phildo for a while.

Jogging back along the track I encountered the yeti again, then caught up to the others who were collecting pinecones for incineration at the fire. While helping them my destiny was revealed and I returned with the artifact known as The MacPhallus, a stick with two curiously-attached pinecones.

Back at camp, there seemed to be much communal, almost ritual, eating of marshmallows from The MacPhallus. Intriguing... and yet...repulsive! Somewhat like the games of Naked Chicken where I and others were subjected to Alaster's nudity once again.

Sunday heralded the arrival of more walking leaders, namely Marina, Andrew and Bronwyn. After slapping Phildo around some more I found myself at the Sugarloaf. Having done the walk previously I looked forward to more-elegantly getting past the chockstones bit, a few metres from the top. I succeeded and my nemesis was conquered in a neither-here-nor-there manner. After something of a challenge, all the people made it to the top alive. The weather was sunny, there was a great view, and I didn't think to take a picture. We descended in somewhat strung-out form, where I found the wrong way to go down the canyon route from Sugarloaf. There are no sudden abrupt 10m drops on the correct route, nor should you attempt to descend them (I didn't, and ran away instead).

Everyone made it back safely, and I encountered Sean snoozing at the top of the climbing crag. There were lots of people there so I made do talking with the climbers rather than actually climbing. All the lollies disappeared somewhere and that was about the most memorable part of my afternoon, aside from the two tent pegs which I found, unbent, and subsequently lost.

After the traditional Buxton burgers we were pleased to pass Grant's truck, the sacred MacPhallus leashed to the front. What a hood ornament! M

ICE CLIMBING

BY ALICE LEPPITT

When I arrived in Canada I did not plan to become so 'outdoorsy', however the VOC and the brilliant people in it became my second family and I ended up going on adventures almost every weekend.

Coming from Australia: typically hot, dry and flat, the idea of ice climbing was very foreign to me, however it instantly captured my imagination.

Within the club, I heard differing opinions about ice climbing. Some said that it was the greatest thing ever and they spent many a weekend in search of 'B.C. ice'. Others told me that it was a 'death trap' which should be avoided at all costs—why climb something that not only changes from day to day, but hour to hour? Although slightly wary, I had grown to have an attitude of 'whilst in Canada I must try everything', therefore I decided that I would at least give it a shot.

My first attempt at ice climbing failed very early on. MEC did not rent out ice climbing gear and I did not happen to have a spare grand to set myself up with all the equipment. A weekend ice climbing changed to a weekend studying, not quite as fun. Before my second attempt I begged, borrowed and stole the necessary gear from some generous friends. Then Christian V., Ptior and I set out for a day at Whistler and then a day of ice climbing. I think that managing to fall in a creek whilst resort skiing says as much about me agreeing to follow Christian down a 'trail' as my skiing ability.

Anyway, after a day of skiing we headed North from Whistler to just before Pemberton, dug an area in the snow for Lara's car and started out for the waterfall ice Christian and Ptior had spied the previous weekend. After a few creek crossings (no falling in) and a short section of trail breaking we found ourselves at the Tyrolean traverse. We decided to cross the traverse the next morning so we snow camped, enjoying a slightly burnt dinner and a brick of chocolate (we hacked at it with a shovel) for dessert.

Joined by Adrian and Tina from BCMC the next morning, we crossed the traverse which I found very exciting. It was a beautiful, sunny day and we set out for the ice. After an hour or so we came to our waterfall. It was tall, perfectly shaped for ice climbing with great rest spots to place screws, and very spectacular. There was only one problem: it was flowing. In true VOC style we were not deterred and spent the day climbing trees, very sketchy ice and sucking icicles: delicious!

By the end of the day my feet were frozen and absolutely drenched, and my overpants were balled with snow—and due to this, weighed about an extra kilogram. On this trip I vowed to buy gaiters (something I now never go on a trip without). My tip is that gaiters are very useful for staying warm and dry and that if you buy red ones they will make you go faster (a proven scientific fact).

Arriving back at the car at dark, slightly disappointed at not finding ice but still happy having spent a fun day in the outdoors, I attempted to start the car. With the gear stick in neutral I turned the key, my normal procedure for starting a standard, but the car did not make a sound, not even a rev before giving up. Christian hitched into Pemberton, and two hours later brought a tow truck out. Attaching jumper leads we tried starting the car but still no luck. 'Put the clutch in,' suggested the tow truck driver, and what do you know, the car starts as if there was never a problem—probably

View and ski traverse across the Garibaldi Neve, Garibaldi State Park, British Columbia (main).

No ice! May as well climb a tree instead. Just north of Whistler, British Columbia (opposite, left). Mixed climbing in the Rockies (opposite, right). Min belaying Alice up the same mixed route (left).

because there wasn't! I certainly learnt a lesson out of that: *always* have the clutch in. Christian and I saw the funny side of this, Ptior was not completely happy but we still had a good drive home, with good conversation and everyone warm and tired after a fun weekend.

After this experience, I was convinced that to go ice climbing one must leave B.C. and I was starting to think that I wouldn't get the opportunity because 'out of B.C.' was a long way needing willing people and time (and when other exciting VOC trips were always occurring, time wasn't that available).

I finally got the opportunity when I received an email from a friend from MUMC who was keen to head to Canmore for a week of ice climbing: how could I say no?

Again, armed with others' gear as well as my own brand new pair of mountaineering boots and a pair of red gaiters, three Australians set out on the 12-hour drive to Canmore. Due to road closures, however, the trip ended up taking two days. The road closure resulted in us taking the pancake challenge at a remote roadhouse (eat three 12-inch pancakes and you get them for free), which we failed miserably and made us feel very sick.

Arriving in Canmore we stayed at the Alpine Club of Canada Clubhouse which we all agreed was the best hostel we had ever stayed in. We got four days of fantastic ice climbing in and I had such an awesome time that I am planning a trip to New Zealand for more ice climbing in July 2007.

SOME THINGS I LEARNT about this newly discovered outdoors activity are: firstly, the people are extraordinarily friendly; many people lent us their ropes, set up top ropes for us and gave us technique tips and crag advice.

Secondly, dry ropes are definitely better: we only had regular ropes and whilst they are safe (we were assured of this by a guide), they do freeze which makes belaying almost as much work as climbing.

Thirdly, watch out for screaming barfies, especially in the fingers. Whenever we were ice climbing on a colder than regular day, having paused a minute or two after finishing a route the pain would set in—our faces would turn red and depending on our coping mechanism we would either start laughing uncontrollably or screaming out in pain. Generally, someone else would have to untie us from the rope because of our non-functioning fingers. I don't think that screaming barfies can be avoided due to the nature of the sport involving close contact with ice, however, be warned.

Fourthly, ice climbing and mixed climbing are fun—in fact awesome fun—whether you are top roping, leading or dogging on bolts. I would highly recommend it to all.

Lastly, whilst having more inherent danger than say lawn bowls, ice climbing can be relatively safe. I definitely don't think that it is an absolute death trap. You just need to be aware of avalanche and ice conditions, as well as the temperature. So if you listen and talk to people and read the guide book, you shouldn't have a problem.

AFTER HAVING NEVER really heard of ice climbing before arriving in Canada, I am now quite hooked and looking forward to future climbing. In my experience, ice climbing trips in B.C. offer lots of fun and adventure, however there doesn't appear to be a lot of regular ice. Therefore, head out to Canmore and the Rockies where there is an abundance of ice in a spectacular setting. M

THE MOUNTAINEER

MAY 2007

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