

THE HIGH ROAD

In this Issue...

Trip Write-ups
Spring Schedule not really.
Winter Camp photos and contest

Word from the Avalanche Association -
the CAC and you
Decisions, decisions

SECTION EXECUTIVE

Chair Ron Berlie
buzzber@shaw.ca

Treasurer Brenda Bouchette
brendajb@gmail.com

Secretary Gerald Levac
glevac@kpmg.ca

National Rep Brad Schmucker
bradschmucker@shaw.ca

Newsletter Cat Mather
picogato@telus.net

Membership Lise Maggs
overthemoon@shaw.ca

Web/Listserv Andrew Parker
agparker+accokweb@gmail.com

Access+ Environment Sean Kelly
smkellyesq@yahoo.ca

Winter Trips Trent Marshall
trentmarshall@yahoo.com

Summer Trips vacant

Socials Kevin Witzke
kevin.rita@telus.net

General Director Jim Tanner
jetanner@shaw.ca

General Director Andy McQuilkin
ajmcq@shaw.ca

General Director Dave Rothwell
mountainphoto@shaw.ca

OK Section Website
www.accokanagan.ca

Message From the Chairman



The chairman respectfully declined to include a message. Perhaps he is still digesting the anti-continental breakfasts from the winter ski trip. Back to muffins for this guy!



Names in the News

Congratulations are in order to David Gluzman, aka Fro Bro, participant on our last 2 winter camps. He has won the grand prize in the backcountry lodge photo contest with one of his shots from the 2009 Fairy Meadows ski camp. That could be your tracks in the photo! See his winning entry (and others) here - <http://www.backcountrylodgesofbc.com/contest.htm>

Asulkan Trips

After the Feb trip was cancelled due to High avalanche danger, apparently the March trip went as scheduled. Much arm twisting led to no trip articles.



Trip Report - Apex in December

On Saturday 12 Dec 2009, **twenty-one** ACC Okanagan Section members enjoyed a beautiful day in the Apex backcountry on an early season ski tour. It was quite the site emerging from the bush at the power line road to see all the cars parked and people, lots of people, hurriedly preparing their gear. We split into 3 groups in order to have an easier time keeping track of each other and then departed en masse through the Nickel Plate Nordic Area and then climbed through the trees and up onto Secondary for a look into the Apex Bowls. Early season is not a great time to be venturing into the bowls unless you have a love affair for applying p-tex so we tried to give everyone an overview of the area and then we headed across to the top of Apex Proper and then down onto the southwest ridge for lunch. After lunch I took a small group of "hard-chargers" down the south side of Apex Proper while Sid and "Spotty" Graham led the rest back to the "practice slopes" on the NW side of Secondary for some turns. I'm happy to say that the hard-chargers handled the variable conditions at the top of Apex Proper with great aplomb and enjoyed the boot-top powder lower down. They even enjoyed the skin back up through the col and back the west side of Apex Proper (well, maybe it was just me who enjoyed that part). It seemed from all the tracks left on the practice slopes that the other groups had an enjoyable afternoon turning in the trees. All in all it was a great early season trip. It was fantastic to renew acquaintance with some of the long term members who haven't been out for awhile and to meet some "first timers". Many thanks to Sid Scull and Graham Punnett for their assistance with leading groups and to Ken McClure for being a great tail-gunner with the "hard-chargers".

Reudi Berlie or Ron Berliinger

Baldy Sunday Jan 31

A group of us skied on Mt Baldy on the weekend. Ten skiers, including four people new to the club, had a great time yo-yo skiing on the N side of the mountain. We rode the lift to its top, and then contoured around to the back, where we found, and sometimes saw, excellent snow. The end of the day we toured to the top, and were rewarded by the clouds parting and a great run down to the ski runs below. This year the skiing at Baldy has been stellar.

Sid Scull

Decisions, Decisions

A great deal has been written about making decisions in avalanche terrain. There are lemons, red-lights, triangles, charts and lengthy academic articles, all designed to provide a framework for making a very simple, straightforward decision - ski it or not. Many of these tools are well designed and helpful. But standing on top of a long untracked run, somehow the decision never seems simple or straightforward. Even the best tools and formulas can seem trite and simplistic.

We humans are very good at learning from experience. If we make a bad decision, and then get a bruise or lose money, we remember. After years of decisions and feedback, we become very adept at buying cars and operating barbecues. Activities in the mountains, however, do not give us the same scope for trial-and-error learning. To complicate matters, the feedback we get from our decisions is inconclusive. We choose to turn around, and we never know if the slope was really just fine. We ski down, and maybe we were only a half-turn away from a trigger point that would have brought down the whole slope. We set off a small sluff, and maybe it was only a hair's breadth from stepping down to a deep instability. The only information we get is that everything seemed fine. Conclusive feedback is what we hope to avoid.



Faced with poor quality feedback and very few informative experiences, recreational skiers are asked to make decisions based on rational analysis. Truth be told, we're not very good at that. We can train ourselves to do it better, with some effort. But when we've collected all the relevant information, and we're still not sure what to do, how often is our final decision based on how we feel? And how is our feeling affected by fair or foul weather, how tired we are, or what other people are doing? Our gut feelings are not invalid, but they are all too often muddled and fickle. Without the benefit of hundreds, if not thousands of ski-days, our guts are better at digestion than decision-making. Making decisions becomes exponentially more complicated when we're acting as trip leaders. Though not a guide, a trip leader accepts an increased level of moral responsibility, real or imagined. A leader's decisions affect others on the trip. An incident, however minor, can reflect poorly on the Alpine Club. Although participants are expected to be part of decision-making and ultimately be responsible for themselves, the group leader is often left with making a final call. Whatever decision we make, we have to be happy with that decision. This is perhaps the most difficult part of the entire process to learn. It is difficult to be happy about turning back from what looks like the best run of the season, retreating from a summit, or failing in our objective. Such a level of equanimity is usually only reached after years of heavy meditation. But what better place to meditate than an uptrack in the Selkirks?

Brenda Bouchette

Mar 2010 Golden Alpine - Meadow Hut Ski Camp

In the absence of a real trip report, we substitute a contest, open to members of the ACC Okanagan Section. who were NOT at the Ski camp.

CONTEST : As is the custom at huts, folks put their name on a mug. The names from the mugs are listed on the right and various photos from the week are on the left. Check out the people photos, and match the people to their cup names. Some will be easier than others, and there are a few hints hidden in the newsletter First person to send all 12 matches to me, the newsletter editor (picogato@telus.net) wins a coveted ACC mug! Winner will be announced on the website.



Cup Names

- Muffin
- Lard Ass
- Cruella Deville
- Sweet Cheeks
- Mountain Scat
- Spotty
- Maryanne
- Yummy Mummy
- Fro Bro
- Professo
- Bazooka Pam
- Grain Man



Rob



Dave



Brad



Graham



Maryanne



Ron



Ev



John



Pam



Ken



Tracey

The CAC & You

Against the background of recent natural disasters such as the Haitian or Chilean earthquakes, this year's challenging backcountry snow avalanche hazard is a minor inconvenience. After all, we have the choice of not entering the hazard zone. However, many of us do make the decision to travel in the backcountry; and most of us will consult the Canadian Avalanche Centre (CAC) Public Avalanche Bulletin (PAB) as part of our trip planning routine. Regular users of the PAB will have noticed that the CAC is asking for public financial contributions.

Certainly, the world has many problems of a more pressing nature than avalanche awareness; and the general taxpaying public is not overly interested in funding what many consider to be elitist adventure by adrenaline-seeking societal misfits. While we may not overcome the public misperception of our sport, it's important for winter backcountry users of all types (skiers, boarders, sledders, snowshoers) to demonstrate their individual & group commitment to the CAC. Such direct support is a tremendous aid to the CAC in securing operating grants & longer-term funding from government & corporate sources.

How can you help? One quick & easy way is to become a member of the Canadian Avalanche Centre. Full information on membership opportunities is available at www.avalanche.ca ... follow the "I Am

Public" link & search under 'membership'. You may also wish to consider a donation to the Canadian Avalanche Foundation (CAF). The Foundation is a federally-registered charity which fundraises in support of public avalanche safety initiatives. A large proportion of the Foundation's annual disbursements are directed to CAC operations, as well as to directed research & public outreach. The CAF issues tax receipts for all donations of \$25 or more.

Safe turns, everyone!



Ken Little

Editor's note : Grain Man is a director of the Canadian Avalanche Foundation
<http://www.avalanche.ca/caf/about/directors>



Spring Greetings from the Editor...

Send your trip reports to the Editor -
Cat email address : picogato@telus.net

OK it's not that snowy any more, so the articles have been uncovered.....