Wild Isle

The Islands' Adventure Magazine

FREE
take one

East Creek

WYLD Winner

Trampin' on the Big Tree Ridge

wildisle.ca

#24 Summer 2003

Wild Isle

The Islands' Adventure Magazine

CONTENTS

Departments

Above- Kayak surfing the Pacific rollers. Wayne Barson photo.
Cover- Jonathan Bonk, Mt. Washington. Philip Stone photo.

Walking above & among Big Trees

High above Johnstone Strait a little known mountain range offers highway-side alpine trekking and cruise ship spotting!

see page 12

Wild Isle Magazine

#24 Summer 2003

Publisher/Managing Editor
Philip Stone

Assitant Editor
Ryan Stuart

Contributors & Photography
Cam Scott, Wayne Barson, Dom Domic, Analyse Weiler, Trish Cull, Dawn Patrol, Ryan Stuart, Philip Stone.

Wild Isle is published 5 times a year by Wild Isle Media
and is distributed free of charge across Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, Queen Charlotte Islands and B.C. Mainland Coastal Communities.

Editorial & Advertising Inquiries to:
Wild Isle Magazine
P.O. Box 482, Heriot Bay, B.C.
Canada V0P 1H0
Tel: 250 285-2234
Fax: 250 285-2236
eMail: editor@wildisle.ca

Printed on Quadra Island
by Castle Printing 250 285-2679
Cover- Key Graphics 250 334-4594

ISSN 1480-4026
Canada Post Agreement number – 40030406

Next Deadline for Ads & Editorial
September 26, 2003
for the Fall 2003 issue

EDITORIAL

Well, it was a long time coming but Island mountain folk can rejoice at the arrival of a definitive guide to our glorious Vancouver Island peaks - Island Alpine. Wild Isle the magazine had to take a back seat while I finished off the book but now the dust has settled and we're back on track with our publication schedule.

There are other titles planned from Wild Isle so keep tuning in for news on their publication in the coming year. Next up is a guide to coastal hikes follwed by a backcountry ski & snowboard guide.

I have spared readers any ranting in past editorials but it looked like this issue had to tackle the proposal by Boliden to siphon lakes within the Strathcona Park wilderness conservation area. Fortunately the government in their finite wisdom has declined Boliden a permit for this insidious intrusion and the matter can rest for now.

Despite the notoriously short memory of politicians, perhaps the recent headlines concerning the 10th anniversary of the Clayoquot protests reminded our leaders of the potential for spawning a massive opposition in the absence of one in the legislature.

Enjoy the summer, play hard but safe and we'll be back in the fall.

-Philip Stone

HAPPENINGS

Jul 26	Mind Over Mountain Adventure Race, Ladysmith www.mindovermountain.com
Jul 27	Island Cup downhill mtn. bike race, Port Alberni
Aug 9-10	Island Cup x-country and downhill mtn. bike race, Cumberland
Aug 10	AllterraMan Offroad Triathalon and Duathalon, McIvor Lake, Campbell River. www.allterramancanada.com, 250-923-7911
Aug 31	Island Cup downhill mtn. bike race, Parksville
Sept. 6-7	Island Cup x-country and downhill mtn. bike race, Hornby Island
Sept. 13	Mind Over Mountain Nanaimo Urban Race, Nanaimo www.mindovermountain.com
Sept. 27-28	Canada West Kayak Surf Festival, Long Beach, Tofino www.surfkayak.org, 250-754-6296
	Haig Brown Festival, Campbell River, BC www.hbfest.crcn.net
Sept. 28	Yellowpoint Pant & Paddle Yellow Point www.pantandpaddle.com 250-753-3459
Oct 4	Mind Over Mountain Comox Valley Adventure Race, Courtenay www.mindovermountain.com

If you want to have your event in HAPPENINGS, send us a fax at (250) 285-2236 or email at editor@wildisle.ca with all the dirt.

Island Cup Series

The Island Cup mountain bike race series continues this summer with rides all over the Island. Get out and race.

27-Jul Port Alberni dh, 09-Aug Cumberland xc, 10-Aug Cumberland dh, 31-Aug Parksville dh, 06-Sep Hornby Island xc, 07-Sep Hornby Island dh.

New Paddlefest Web site

The Vancouver Island Paddlefest Society has changed its website to www.paddlefest.bc.ca.

Check the site out for dates, times and more info. The society can also be contacted at Box 1912, Ladysmith BC, V9G1B4, Phone: 1 250 245-8084, Fax: 1 250 245-5708.

3rd annual AllterraMan

Organizers of the AllterraManCanada Off road Triathlon are pursuing provincial sanctioning and possibly hosting the first provincial off road championships. Organizers are pursing the provincial designations at press time.

The third annual event will be held August 10 at McIvor Lake near Campbell River, and will include a duathlon and a free Kids of Steel race in addition to its long and short course triathlons.

The duathlon will be a five kilometre trail run, followed by 12 kilometres of mountain biking and finishing with another five km run. The Kids of Steel event is a triathlon open to five to 13 year olds.

For the third year in a row the triathlon event is split into a longer and shorter course. The long course is open to elite and age group divisions. Distances are: 1km swim, 24km mountain bike and a 10k trail run. The short course divisions are by age group and by team. Distances for this event are: 500m swim, 12km mountain bike and a 5km trail run. All swims are in McIvor Lake.

Check the website for more information, www.allterramancanada.com

Haig Brown
Festival celebrates conservation, culture

After your "walk on the wild side," check out a cultural event taking place in Campbell River on September 27th and 28th - the Annual Haig-Brown Festival.

Bring your appetite to the downtown foreshore park for Taste of the Sea, a fish and seafood feast. Campbell River First Nation band will present a traditional salmon barbeque and local chefs and organizations will be serving a variety of other seafood delectables. BC VQA wines and micro-brewery beer will also be available.

Fly-casting competitions and fly-tying will be taking place concurrently, and the day will close with First Nations cultural dances and ceremonies.

On Sunday the Festival Book Fair provides an array of titles from antiques and collectables to an extensive selection of books on conservation, coastal life, natural history and fishing. A garden party takes place close by at the Haig-Brown Heritage House, on the banks of the Campbell River. Among other activities, the First Nations Salmon Return ceremony will be performed and complemented by a salmon ceremony from the Japanese Innu.

The Festival is in memory of Roderick Haig-Brown - internationally respected writer, conservationist and outdoorsman. His legacy is one of love for the outdoors and dedication to conservation and community.

For more detail visit www.hbfest.crcn.net


On the Kusam Klimb

Kusam Klimb-
Sayward Mountain Event Launched

SAYWARD - On a cool misty morning this past June 21st a half dozen walkers gathered in Sayward village for the inaugral Kusam Klimb. The trial run for this new annual event was a great success, proving the worth and challenge of the newly developed trail system up Hkusam Mountain.

A stiff 4,700 ft (1,400 m) climb up the steep Bill's Trail leads to the Stowe Creek col from where a long descent leads down into the Stowe Creek valley and back around the base of the mountain to the Heritage Hall. Views are superb overlooking the Salmon River valley, Kelsey Bay and Johnstone Strait. Hopefully a summit option will be added to include the 5,481 ft summit of Hkusam Mountain in the event.

Port Alberni mountaineer and caver Craig Wagnell set a solid time to beat of 5 hours 30 minutes.

Read more about Hkusam Mountain and the Prince of Wales Range in this issue, page 12.. Next year's event will be the third Saturday in June. For more info contact Bill West-Sells at 250-282-3818, westsells@telus.net

Win a seakayak in raffle for
Georgia Strait Alliance

NANAIMO - Tickets are now on sale for the Georgia Strait Alliance's Big Summer Kayak Raffle. Only 2,000 raffle tickets have been printed and the public can buy tickets for $5 each or three for $10.

This year, Current Designs, the world-renowned kayak manufacturer from Victoria, has donated the grand prize, a state-of-the-art Solstice GT sea kayak (5.4 metres long, fiberglass, colour: mango over smoke; valued at $3,400).

Second prize is an unforgettable three-day Gulf Islands kayaking and camping adventure for two people courtesy of Sealegs Kayaking Adventures of Ladysmith. (Valued at $800)

And third prize is a stunning, handmade glass bowl by Gulf Island artist, Tammy Hudgeon of Little Isle Glassworks on Mudge Island. (Valued at $250)

All proceeds from this raffle will help Georgia Strait Alliance with outreach and education activities in promoting marine conservation programs and establishing marine sanctuaries in the Strait of Georgia.

To buy tickets, charge-by-phone today and have your tickets promptly mailed to you. Call the Georgia Strait Alliance office at (250) 753-3459, or mail a cheque for the number of tickets you want. Send to: Georgia Strait Alliance, 195 Commercial Street, Nanaimo, V9R 5G5.

The public is encouraged to buy their tickets early as the raffle sells out each year. Draw date is October 1, 2003.

News&Events
regularly posted online: www.wildisle.ca
Breaking News

COAST to COAST

Get to the US outdoors faster
New Helijet service from CR to Seattle

CAMPBELL RIVER - Forget the ferries, border crossing lines and Vancouver traffic. Next climbing, paddling or skiing trip to the United States is now much easier and shorter.

Travelers in mid and northern Vancouver Island can start connecting to major destinations across the United States with Helijet International's fixed wing service between Campbell River and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (Sea-Tac). From Sea-Tac, travelers can connect to more than 70 non-stop destinations across the United States.

"For the past 16 years, Helijet has been North America's leading scheduled helicopter service with flights between Victoria, Vancouver, Seattle, Whistler and the Fraser Valley," said Danny Sitnam, Helijet's President and CEO. "Now, we're beginning airplane service, and we're making our first route the 50-minute flight between Campbell River Regional Airport and Seattle. We've looked at the passenger potential of the mid and North Island and we believe there is a real demand for direct service to Sea-Tac that connects to major destinations across the US."

Helijet plans a minimum of three return trips per day, each timed to connect with as many US flights as possible. One way fares to Seattle will start as low as $203, including taxes and airport fees.

Call to make your booking at 1 800 665-4354 or online at www.helijet.com

Experience the Riding Fool Hostel

CUMBERLAND BC- Located in historic downtown Cumberland, the Riding Fool Hostel has brought new life into an old building along with the help of Dodge City Cycles and Tarbells Café. This old building, known locally as the Tarbells building was originally constructed in 1895 and is one of the few structures to have escaped damage from the two catastrophic fires long ago in the downtown. Much of the original character was preserved and enhanced during the seven month renovations that saw a vacant building turn into a hostel. A hostel that meets and exceeds Hostelling International standards while remaining independent, it's definitely a cut above your 'normal hostel'.

Rates are inexpensive at $17.99 + GST for a dorm and $44.99 +GST & PST for a private room, a steal for the price!

Designed with the rider in mind, the Riding Fool hostel offers 24 dorm beds, 3 private rooms and an extremely spacious, social, fun and funky environment. Amenities include a bike shop and café on premises, full common use kitchen, common room with woodstove, bike storage, wax table, bike wash station and access to kick-ass trails. Whether you go straight out the back door to the hills of Cumberland, shuttle Forbidden Plateau or hit the lifts of Mt. Washington only 24 minutes away, there are trails for you.

Situated in the heart of the Comox Valley and only minutes off the new inland island highway, the Riding Fool Hostel is easy to get to via plane, train, bus, car and bike. So, whatever your method of transportation you can still get to paradise on earth!

Upcoming events include the Cumberland Fat Tire Festival August 9th and 10th, Wednesday night DH races on Mt. Washington and riding clinics throughout the season.

Check out www.ridingfool.com for more information or call 1-888-313-FOOL.

Man's Best Friend has new outdoor shopping resource

SEATTLE, WA Now your traveling, hiking, camping, active dog, (or couch potato, as the case may be) has a special website to sniff out the latest travel gear www.campk9usa.com Website highlights include 'Company Paw'ticulars', 'Sniff out a Store', and 'Bark Back' there ís even a place to sign up for 'pup-dates' on new products and website additions.

New Camp K-9 Dog Beds and Trail Pads are made using the technology of Therm-a-Rest™, the camping mattress brand that for over 30 years has signified pure comfort in the outdoors. There are a lot of dog beds on the market, but Camp K-9 is the only brand offering portability with maximum comfort.

Camp K-9 Dog Beds feature a warm, soft, and easy-to-clean paw-print fleece top; fido-friendly batting; and, a chew-bone tough bottom thatís waterproof. When a dog lies down, the special construction of the Camp K-9 Dog Bed creates even support for every part of the body, especially sensitive areas like shoulders and hips. This makes the bed especially important for dogs ìof a certain age. A tent vestibule is the perfect place for your poochís den, which means no more tracking of sand and mud into your tent. Beds are available in small (MSRP $80), medium ($90), and large ($100).

The Camp K-9 Trail Pad is the lightest dog pad on the market, using top-quality insulating closed cell foam. Trail Pads strap easily to a dogís pack for easy carrying, and are available in Small (MSRP $26) and Large, MSRP $30). Camp K-9 beds and pads are available at specialty outdoor retailers; check 'Sniff Out A Store'.

Our canine testers report that trials (and trails) have been intense and grueling but the results are clear. Camp K-9 Dog Beds and Trail Pads give trail-weary dogs a soft, warm, insulated place to rest their weary bones at the end of the day. Every dog participating in the tests rated Camp K-9 four paws up!

No humans were harmed during product testing.

Send Wild Isle your news item, press release, event info, new product info etc. Send them to Wild Isle: wildisle@island.net or by fax to 250-285-2236.

Kayak Surf festival is back for a second round this September

Paddling beach bums reserve the last weekend in September for the second annual Canada West Kayak Surf Festival at Long Beach, Tofino. The judged kayak surf competition will run September 27 and 28, and is presented by the Vancouver Island Whitewater Paddling Society.

"Our goal is to create a forum for local and distant paddlers to hook up for a weekend of fun and competition," said the society's secretary, Sean Plecas. "We hope to produce a bigger, better event this year."

Last fall's inaugural event attracted 40 participants – the maximum allowed by Pacific Rim National Park. This year parks has upped that limit to 60.

"If you intend to participate please register early," Plecas said. "Last year people drove from as far as Alberta and unfortunately we had to turn some of them away."

Not only is the competition going to be stiffer but with 26 sponsors the prizes are too. Prizes include Riot and Necky kayaks and other prizes from manufacturers, stores and magazines.

Even after the sun goes down the fun will continue, Plecas said. An after party will be held at the Ucluelet recreation hall; it will include videos, a live auction, dinner and beverages.

Registration and tickets are available at the paddling society's website, www.surfkayak.org. At the site web surfers can also visit the 2002 event with feedback and pictures.

The surf competition is a revival of an old event that used to happen at Long Beach each year.

Mine's Hydro request denied for Strathcona

Boliden Mine has been rejected in its request to tap Strathcona Provincial Park lakes for hydro power.

"We as a government have a commitment not to allow mining and logging in parks," said Water, Land and Air Protection Minister Joyce Murray.

The mine wanted to draw water out of lakes to make power for its operation and to sell excess to BC Hydro. The plan outraged environmental groups. The mine tried to appease opponents by pointing out that hydro power would be cleaner than the diesel power generators it uses.

"It really reaffirms that parks are special places for people and for nature," said Eva Riccius of Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.

The decision by the province comes amidst the BC government's review of provincial parks.

Roxy-Quiksilver Surf Jam

TOFINO, British Columbia - For the fourth consecutive year, the Quiksilver/Roxy SurfJam, June 14-15 at Cox Bay, has retained the bragging rights as Canada's largest surfing competition. Over 120 contestants from across the globe - America, Australia, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa - competed for $10,000 in cash and watched a local boy take home the goods.

On Saturday organizers and competitors were forced to contend with unexpected winter-like conditions in the unlikely month of June. With a 4-meter swell, combining with the highest tide of the month, and a mix of wind squalls, conditions proved to be challenging under any definition.

While the judges and event staff hunkered down under tents, the near capacity crowd turned out to support their hometown heroes compete in the preliminary rounds of the competition.

Numerous highlights filled the day from Jay Feaver getting the bomb of the day on his 9 foot Longboard, to Australian Jason Smith's sick overhead barrel.

As the first day of competition wound down, the word on everyone's lips was how to get a ticket to the legendary SurfJam party?! Competitors and fans piled into the Tofino Legion for the sold out show by the hundreds and were not disappointed. The party got going with local designer Sylvie Brousseau's fashion show displaying her new line of skimpy bikinis and lingerie under the label Mer Made. By using local hotties to model her wears, the crowd became the show and with thousands in sponsor giveaways and Coors Light girls handing out Silver Bullets it all added to another night of sweaty mayhem. The punk beats provided by Kook Show and world beats by Dubfreque stirred the crowd to the boiling point, but sadly the clock struck one and everything fun had to end. With one more day of competition remaining, many of the surfers elected to restrain their partying ways and get some well deserved rest.

The final day dawned with clear blue skies, light offshore winds and great 4-5ft waves across a sand bar that provided long open faces, some good juice and even some barrels.

In the men's pro event Tofino local and the youngest Bruhwiler, Sepp, finally overcame years of competitive disappointment by defeating his older brother Raph - Surfer magazines Hot 100 and defending SurfJam champion Peter Devries to win the Quiksilver SurfJam Pro.

In the finals Sepp had three near perfect rides, where he showed off his skills with an alley-oop aerial 360, a barrel ride and a reverse 360. Sepp brought home $2000 in victors spoils.

In the women's pro final, defending champion Catherine Bruhwiler-Temple couldn't find a solid back-up wave and had to settle for second place to Roxy pro rider from California Tori Alexander. In almost flawless conditions, the Californian managed to secure two heat-winning waves, when she dropped into a couple of fast rights and ripped them apart. In a very cool move, Tori left her share of the prize money to be split evenly by the three local finalists. Tori left more than money behind; she also left a positive lasting impression on all the girls.

Women's Amateur Winners:
1- Emma Washer Tofino, BC, 2- Andrea McGowan Tofino, BC, 3- Marie Beaudy Tofino, BC, 4- Molly Chater Ucluelet, BC
photo: CoastalBC.com

For all the results check out the BC Surfing Association's website www.bcsa.ca

The BC Surfing Association would like to thank everybody that was a part of making this year's event the best ever, and we're looking forward to doing it again. - Dom Domic

Mind Over Mountain

The Mind Over Mountain Adventure Racing Series is taking Vancouver Island by storm with its incredibly popular race series. These day-long, multi-discipline races take place over 40-50km of terrain and require solo athletes or teams of two or four to test their physical and mental limits over the challenging terrain of the British Columbia wilderness. Each adventure race consists of some serious kayaking, mountain biking, trail running and orienteering. Throughout the course, racers will also face "Mystery Events" to add an element of fun and intrigue to the course.

In addition to the four adventure races, organizers run a three-race GutBuster Trail Running Series along Vancouver Island's east coast. Earlier this year, racers faced vertical climbs and fast descents on Duncan's Mt. Tzouhalem, Nanaimo's Westwood Ridge and Victoria's Mt. Douglas.

You may have missed some wicked early season racing but you still have time to sign up for the next Mind Over Mountain Adventure Race in Ladysmith on July 26th, as well as the Nanaimo Urban Race on Sept 13th and the final race of the season in the Comox Valley on October 4th .

When you're flying high after finishing your Mind Over Mountain adventure race, you'll head to the awards banquet for an awesome dinner + the infamous after-party. Race hard - then play hard.

For info: www.mindovermountain.com, 250-715-8933, info@mindovermountain.com

Points and Breaks

A surfing tale from South Africa

Points and bays. Beachbreaks and reefs. Lefts and rights. High tide and low tide. Onshore and offshore.

There's a big swell on the horizon, and some of it is wrapping in to roll along the coast.

Where are the best waves on offer?

It's our job to find them, and to make sure that they are surfed.

The guys are ready and waiting in anticipation. They watch us expectantly while we debate and deliberate.

Okay, it's decided then. We go west to a bay that will probably deliver the goods, and failing that we go to "The Vale."

Fifteen minutes later we are watching the lines pealing into the bay, fanned by a warm offshore. One wouldn't think it was mid-winter. The sun is beating down out of a cloudless sky, and it's only 8AM.

Nope, it's not perfect. Maybe later when the tide pushes. We move on. The road is now a gravel one sweeping through bushveld and farmlands. Good road. Down into a valley, and onto a grassy patch.

The boys pile out. Cool sounds on the radio.

Look at that! A set lines up on the point and grinds over the rock and sand bottom. Five cooking waves follow. The water is clear and the surf is good!

A flurry of excitement as the guys get the boards out. I knew we would get waves here and we'll only have dolphins for company. Nobody surfs here! Baggies and a top will do as it's about 20 degrees in the water.

Our American guests from colder climes are jumping around. This is the life, amigo.

The point is grinding but that doesn't deter Glenn from backdooring the first wave.

Louis and Roger run Dawnpatrol, a surf tour company based in East London on South Africa's south east coast. They and their support team move up and down the coast, surfing the best waves on offer between Jeffrey's Bay and the Natal South Coast. Check out their site on http://www.dawnpatrol.co.za

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT THE OUTDOORS?

Wilderness Youth Leadership Development Writing Competition

Every spring Strathcona Park Lodge gives away a free WYLD Expeditions summer camp to the teen who sends in the best 500-word essay on "What do you love about the outdoors." This year's winner is 15-year old Anelyse Weiler.

I love the way we are forced to be in the moment when we are outdoors.

Outside our predictable daily lives in dwellings with modern conveniences, the wilderness is a place where humans are thrust into their most primal natures. It is here where we are most vulnerable and at the mercy of Mother Nature, like squirming prey ensnared under the piercing stare of a venomous snake. Despite this palpable exposure, many of us feel a surreptitiously spine-tingling vivacity creeping through our veins when we are met with a challenge outdoors.

In contrast, those same people might also feel peaceful in the sweet serenity of untamed landscapes, where eagles promulgate their beautiful screams, and water rushes down a foaming river where great bears attempt to snag salmon in their powerful claws.

I enjoy the fascinating things that the wilderness can teach us, and the similarities that we share with our animal counterparts.

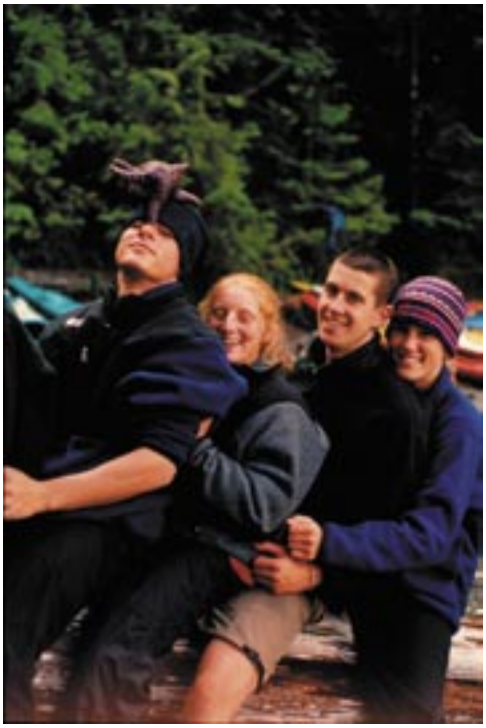
For example, the male Bowerbird adorns his abode with flowers and other objects that are chosen specifically for their loveliness. He does this in order to attract females and, generally, a less attractive male will make up for his appearance by decorating his home extravagantly. Does this sound familiar?

Conclusively, I belive in the importance of observing and understanding 'the ways of the wild'. I'm certain that the universal lessons we learn from the earth can teach us how to make the world a better place. I have learned that going outdoors opens doors.

-Analyse Weiler

WYLD Expeditions range from one week to a month of exploring and learning for teens 13 to 17. Camp activities include sea kayaking, backpacking, rockclimbing, whitewater paddling, canoe trips and more. Check the WYLD website for more information: www.wyld-expeditions.com

Watch the website, sharpen your pencil and organize your thoughts for your chance to enter the WYLD writing contest next spring. You could win a free summer camp, and get your writing published in Wild Isle.



WYLD participants fooling around with tidal life on a sea kayak trip.

Photo from Strathcona Park Lodge

So Few Words...

Untracked and untouched wilderness around East Creek taken from the air. Ivan Hunter photo.

What could be, the Klaskish Valley. Mark Hobson photo

East Creek is one of only six unlogged watersheds on Vancouver Island. Its preservation is the one cause that has made ***Trisha Cull*** stand up and count the Ducks.

The Beginning

…10, 000 years ago…

I cannot hear the ice scraping across the belly of the province, no scuttle of rock, or primal groan within, miles of ice deep. I cannot see its beginning or end, but it is one solid mass, a voiceless white blanket moving quite deliberately, despite itself, toward the Pacific Ocean.

What communes so deep, between it and what it expands across, I do not know, only that it is dark and infinite in its circumference. The scent comes like old ice clinging to the dregs of winter, hoarfrost and rime, ice that has grown so old it is even tired of itself.

But from underneath comes faintly a bittersweet scent of dahlia or damask rose just now sprouting through, though I have not yet knelt down and dug my fingers in or held up to my nose this new *perfumed tincture of the roses. It is no place I have yet tread upon in bare feet or skinned my knees against, only a hint of flowers and what might be, what sun, what rain, what twilight may cling upon one day in the spring.

I have just arrived, a new wild gardener with a spear, ready to cleave from the white the infinite manifestations of my imagination, to claim this place as my own. Here, I plot my labour and love with each gash, so that over time I become the many nuances of the land- thin ice, ice adrift, calved and hummocked, ice at the edge of the sea. And as the earth warms- snow blown in, water-filled snow, snow adrift, snow falling quietly.

I will dig until I have dug deeper than all other gardeners, and my plot trembles with the qualms of my conscience, its boundaries wide and dissident.

And when the first stream emerges, I will follow it to its mossy end in a valley in the gloaming. I will follow it, widening as a forest gives way. I will call it earth, my tongue ill equipped with so few words for ice, what the land could not say for ten thousand years.

I will know that it was me...

* Shakespeare's Sonnet ~54

East Creek

…present day…

Brooks Peninsula, Vancouver Island, BC

…the glacier, scientists say, crept around the forests of Brooks Peninsula, while the rest of the province succumbed to the ice…

LeMare Lake Logging has proposed a revised *FDP (Forest Development Plan) that will include 34 cutblocks, 16 of which will be clearcuts (478.1 hectares = about 1000 football fields), as well as 31.7 km of new logging roads. Some of the clearcuts will be as large as 60 continuous football fields (30 hectares). Over 5 years, the total amount of timber to be removed will be 323,195 cubic metres.

East Creek is one of the six remaining pristine watersheds on Vancouver Island, and the nesting place of the endangered marbled murrelet. American logging giant, Weyerhaeuser, holds logging rights of the lower part of the valley, and promised environmentalists it would not disrupt the area due to its delicate ecosystem. However, LeMare Lake is proposing a road through a marbled murrelet reserve, in areas

previously designated as stream habitat, wildlife reserves, or inoperable for logging, clearly paving the way for Weyerhaeuser.

Because Brooks Peninsula escaped glaciation over 10, 000 years ago, it is an irreplaceable gateway to BC's archaeological and ecological history. Its ancient cedar and hemlock uplands are also the refuge of other wildlife, such as eagles, wolves, bears, black tailed deer, Roosevelt elk, and five species of salmon.

Located on the northwest coast of Vancouver Island, East Creek winds through one of our many old growth forests. Many similar forests have been liquidated over the past half-century, in an effort to improve the province's wealth and stability. The rate of cut, however, has far exceeded sustainable levels. This has led not only to deterioration of the ecosystem, but also "the demise of salmon runs and related fishing jobs, species facing extinction, water quality degradation and the costs of watershed restoration, denial of First Nations constitutional rights, and severe community instability as logging and milling jobs dry up" (http://www.saveeastcreek.com/theplace.htm).

Conversely, if East Creek is left intact, its long-term economic potential from ecotourism is staggering, while the logging benefits will be short-lived and marginal in comparison.

These forests are public lands, owned by British Columbia citizens. It is up to us to take action. Perhaps more importantly, it is up to us to explore our rising cynicism and indifference, and what role we will play in shaping the future of the planet.

I believe we are each influenced, for good or bad, by an industrial era that fosters insatiable greed by deconstructing our tenuous relationship to the natural world. We must ask ourselves in the most prophetic sense:

Why am I here?

"Nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does the wisest man extort her secret, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfection"

(Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature, Emerson: Essays & Poems. The Library of America: 1996).

Gabe Jutras with an East Creek giant.

Margot Bloxom photo

The Pacific Rim, August 1992

No, I do not know why. I am eighteen years old, lying face down in the sand. A warm wind stirs across my body, and the surf laps then recedes upon itself back across the stones of Botanical Beach.

In the distance, I eavesdrop on the noises of my company gathered around a campfire. They are preparing for nightfall, chopping wood, zipping tents, and drinking beer. That is my sister's voice, her laughter. I have read letters from her over the past few years since she left home for university, so now she has become the words themselves, but only in the most remote and romantic way. Carmanah. Clayoquot.

While I am a small-town girl and have only ever seen the ocean once before, only once touched the surprising silvery skins on the underbellies of fresh sea shells, only once tasted such salt, I too wish to embrace this ephemeral green world she has written of so often. Until now, my protest has come swift but brief while watching documentaries about baby seals bloodied by clubs, a vague interest in vegetarianism, and a silent abhorrence of live lobster bins at the grocery store.

Now, if only through emulation and worship, some drawn out need for rebellion, I too long to chain myself to trees and cry Carmanah! as the logging trucks draw near.

And I think, pressing my palm flat against the sand as the day's last warmth emanates yet, I am going to do something here.

But the next morning we are awakened by wind thrashing the canvass, a dangerous swell of ocean lapping outside the door, and a violent assault of rain as we poke our heads outside.

We pack up camp, hike out with a kayaks on our backs, beer bottles dotting the shore.

then…

I study Creative Writing at the University of Victoria, learn about status quo journalism and how to carefully craft an argument somewhere in between fact and fiction. I never grasp the difference, and fail miserably on several assignments, but succeed at writing a short piece about some aspect of campus using one-syllable words only. I write about ducks, and get an "A".

Sometime around my third year of study they shorten the formal title of my program to Writing, omitting the Creative.

In the proceeding years my student loan catapults to forty thousand dollars. I eat over-packaged varieties of processed food and drink coffee from Styrofoam cups to alleviate the costs. The tuition freeze ends, but my bus pass cost is absorbed in the hikes.

A year later I pull off the highway at Cathedral Grove. A quiet man distributes pamphlets out of the back of his van, which state that Weyerhaeuser has proposed a plan to log 7 of 12 hectares of the Little Qualicum River Floodplain forest. The man tells me the plan will include cutting down old growth trees in order to expand the parking lot for visitors. Environment Canada and BC Ministry of Environment identify the area as the second largest floodplain on the east coast of Vancouver Island. It is a rare and sensitive ecosystem that provides the nursery forest for all 7 wild salmonid species. (http://www.portaec.net/local/cathedral_grove/logging_at_qualicum_and_cathedra.html).

I drive home trying to grasp the logic of cutting down ancient trees so more people can come and see the ancient trees.

Two weeks ago, I watched a telethon by the World Wildlife Federation. One man choked a Siberian Tiger with his bare hands while another speared its throat with a two-pronged wooden spear. There are approximately 300 to 400 Siberian Tigers left roaming wild today (http://ca.news.yahoo.com/020124/5/hop8.html).

I have begun to change. A new cynicism gradually invades. The campus expands incrementally each year. New buildings occupy once grassy spaces. There are fewer and fewer ducks, and more and more rabbits. Neither the ducks nor I can calculate the schizophrenic schedule of the campus fountain, one day full, and the next empty.

But I succumb to the randomness and in time forget about the empty spaces, and take pleasure in walks through Mystic Vale, cautious of the pesky cougars that on occasion visit there.

Today, walking across campus I caught a glimpse of one of the protesters camped out on a wooden platform in the fringe of trees on the other side of recently clearcut forest behind the Elliot Building. We crossed paths and smiled, but said nothing. A fleeting thought of medical school crossed my mind and I imagined myself walking the halls of the new medical building that will soon adorn the landscape, knowing I can no longer afford it.

I think of a boy on a wooden platform among the trees, a flicker of orange tarpaulin, and a thrush of wind.

* *LeMare had a previous FDP approved (December 2002) but is choosing to re-submit. They did not implement any of the East Creek portion of the previous plan, so no logging or road building has occurred yet in East Creek.*

On the Big Tree Ridge

Looking over the edge of the cliff my heart sank. Here I was, committed by a full day's travel down the Prince of Wales Range from Sayward, with a seemingly impassable notch in the ridge blocking my path. It looked like it was going to force me to retrace my steps and tackle a hideous descent through old burn and logging slash back to Sayward by the Stowe Creek trail. I had to have a closer look.

The line descending into the notch went easily enough, but long drops down twin gullies on either side of the little col made climbing back out the short, steep and dripping headwall on the other side look very exposed! Looking at the curve of the snow in the wind lip at the top of the gully on the west side of the ridge a plan came together. Dropping my pack, I pulled out a length of 5 mm cord and tied one end to the haul loop on the pack and the other around my waist. Free of the pack the short 4 metre step began to look less intimidating and the curve on the snow immediately below me formed a perfect catcher's mitt, just in case!

In no time I was up the slimy rock and clutching some very sturdy cedar limbs hauled my cumbersome pack up to join me and it was off again down the ridge.

I had come to Sayward to join the first annual Kusam Klimb and had decided to take advantage of the climb and a few days off to explore the meandering ridgeline down the Prince of Wales Range to Big Tree Creek.

The first ever Kusum Klimb had been a great experiment, proving the new trails constructed by Bill West-Sells and Lyle Fast, and promising to become a welcome fixture to the Island mountain calendar in future years. I had left the climbing party at the Stowe Creek col after the calf crunching 4,700ft. grunt up from Sayward. While their route descended on the trail system down to Stowe Creek and around the base of the mountain to the starting point at the community's Heritage Hall my route kept to the high ground on the divide between the Salmon River valley and Johnstone Strait.

A slow but straightforward traverse from the Stowe Creek col led across a series of shallow gullies above a cliff band and on to the crest of the ridge I was to follow from here on. The ridge was narrow but eminently walkable with a perfectly consolidated cap of old snow. The map shows a lot of green along this north-western part of the ridge but in fact the vegetation is quite thin and I was granted some stunning views between the swirling clouds of Johnstone Strait and Victoria Peak.

Some up and down over a series of knolls eventually put me on top of a high point where the huge fire that ravaged much of the Stowe Creek drainage and the flanks of Mt. Hkusam had crested. It is a stark and perversely beautiful landscape here. The ash and charred wood have long since disappeared and the lush and colourful regenerating vegetation is punctuated by tall, sun-bleached snags. A group of alpine ponds added to the scene and I settled on this as an ideal point to stop for the night. I squeezed my Trekker Tarp™ into a patch of heather and lamenting the lopsided sag, hoped for clear weather overnight.

Sadly the few sunny breaks of the previous afternoon gave way to more grey skies the next morning as I shouldered my burden and continued down the range. A 700ft climb and some crafty route finding put me on the twin summits of Mt. Milner (as marked on the topo) where I encountered the nasty notch previously described. Mt. Milner must have been named from Johnstone Strait, as the high trig point, 4824, a kilometre and a half south west of the named feature is clearly more deserving of the title but is probably obscured from view down on the water.

After leaving 'Mt. Milner' my route rose and fell over more knolls. These knolls were forested with huge sub-alpine trees, mountain hemlocks and yellow cedars. I began to daydream about the potential for a chain of huts down the range. The Kusam Klimb team had been enthusing about a hut at a lake next to the Stowe Creek col and now as I passed the Mt. Milner col it was looking like the best place for a mid-point shelter.

Finally I began the climb I had been waiting for up into the clear alpine and onto Peak 4660 (Big Tree Peak?) The sun was finally winning its tussle with the clouds and although the air was cold enough for me to keep toque and gloves on, the warm rays and blue sky lifted my spirits as I scrambled up to the top of Big Tree Peak.

What a spectacular view! The maze of islands and channels branching off Johnstone Strait were ablaze in hues of emerald green and blue. The Coast Range and the Island Ranges remained hidden in cloud but I basked in my growing world of blue sky.

From Big Tree Peak I was able to scout a surprisingly easy route down to the two lakes in the col north-west of Mt. Roberts. It was these lakes that had drawn me all the way along the range to see and I was not disappointed. From the lakes an elegant ridge wound steeply up to the summit of Mt. Roberts. I was amazed at how much snow cover remained for late June, the lakes were still frozen over. In fact I could have skied through this entire section of the route there was so much snow.

Dropping to the col by the lowest of the lakes I found a dry heather patch and stashed my overnight gear. From the path the sun was taking I knew the evening at the col would be shady and cool so I took stove and supper with me and headed for the summit of Mt. Roberts for sunset.

The ridge started gently enough but the top 400 ft of steep snow saw ice axe in hand and some very careful steps up to the summit plateau. And from there, what a view! By now the sky was clearing quickly and although the mountains to east and west remained covered, the vista up Johnstone Strait and down to the Georgia Strait was superb.

I returned to my camp at the Big Tree-Roberts col and mused on how this would make an obvious site for the hut at this end of the range before drifting off into a deep sleep.

Next day it was down from the col into Big Tree Creek and out the Venus Main (or you could head the other way on the Big Tree Main) to the Island Highway. - Philip Stone

BOOK REVIEWS

They say good things come in small packages. Well at a svelte size of four inches by 3.5 *Mis-Adventure: Rise to the Challenge! A step by step guide to accident handling* by Anna Christensen is a lesson in economy of space.

The pocket bible to wilderness first aid is designed to be a cheat sheet to first aid treatment for adventurers and guides.

The guide also comes in two other formats, a standard sized book and a electronic edition, eBook.

Computer savvy outdoors people will appreciate the convenience of a first aid manual on a laptop or home PC with the eBook. The table of contents is linked to every page, making specific information instant accessible.

Anyone with Acrobat software (not just Acrobat Reader) has the ability to make the eBook interactive. Highlighting, adding information and making notes are all possible.

Christensen has long taught and wrote about first aid and she is the innovator of many first aid techniques. In Misadventures she has compiled a concise and easy to understand manual. The book is easy to navigate and clear and concise with illustrations and text descriptions.

The book also has helpful decision making criteria.

With so much information to remember when it comes to first aid on humans it is nice to finally have a field practical, class room worthy, first aid manual. The addition of the eBook makes her book even more worthwhile.

Misadventures standard format retails for $39.95, the pocket book for $35.95 and the eBook for $9.95 with the purchase of one of the print editions. - Ryan Stuart

A classic's Ninth edition

Edition nine of *Hiking Trails III, Northern Vancouver Island including Strathcona Provincial Park* is available in stores now. It features three new hiking areas: Nootka Trail, Beaufort Range and Malcolm Island. It's good to see the VITIS continue to improve this classic guide. Spot colour is another welcome addition.

While the additions add value to the book, more could be done to enhance the guide's ease of use. Hikes are labelled with letters, which is confusing, especially with maps being letter coded but not related to the hike letters. The geographic areas run into each other with little division between areas.

My chief complaint though is a lack of enthusiasm in the text. When new areas are introduced the prose often begins with a negative statement that could be saved until later in the description.

In general route descriptions lack a hook. They offer no explanation of what's worthwhile about the hike, instead they begin with directions or even warnings. I want to know why I should go to this place, and then receive directions.

In all this is an invaluable guide for hikers and backpackers on Vancouver Island but with minimal extra effort it could be an inspiring book enticing people to all corners of the North Island. - Ryan Stuart

Canada Post Agreement # 40030406

DIRECTORY

Wild Isle back issues

Now online in interactive pdf format for free download

www.wildisle.ca/magazine/backissues