

Dear V.O.C. Grads,

Well, it's been quite some time since the VOC has sent the annual Grad letter. I doubt that anyone, with the obvious exception of the eternal present Roland Burton, even knows about it anymore... I could go on with all the lost traditions that occurred over the years, but it's time to reminisce over the club's activities in '07 – '08. This year has been quite a busy year for the club: celebrating the [50th Anniversary of the VOC Journal](#), VOC digital archiving project, Jeff's [Europa](#) route cleaning project on the Chief, Veenstra's [Phelix hiking trail](#) project and the usual [club activities](#).

Just before we started the new school year, we had our annual [Mountaineering camp](#) over the Labour Day weekend at Wegdemount Lake. A crew of 21 people showed up and did various scrambles and practiced glacier traversing on Wedge Glacier. No attempts on Wedge were made due to bad weather. Even if the trail to the lake gains over 1 km in elevation, this didn't stop Piotr in carrying up a [16 pound dinghy](#) to cross the lake...

Shortly after, the first big event of the new school year was [Glacier School](#), held at Anniversary Glacier, near Pemberton. Over 60 people camped out beside the terminal moraine at the base of the glacier; many songs were sung and much mulled wine was drunk the first evening. The group was subdivided into 2 level of experience and all practiced their glacier safety skills. Just to show how strong a bollard can be, [4 people ran down](#) the snowy glacier attached together to a medium size bollard: the rope barely made a dent in it but sure did make all 4 participants lose their appetite and grab some air...

By October, [Longhike](#) was on hand and as per usual, it was by far the club's biggest event of the year. Sold out again, 120 eager climbers came down in force to the Smoke bluffs at Squamish, even with the high probability of rain forecasted. Evans Lake Forest Education Center was the epicentre of after-climbing activities. Our resident DJ and VOC alumni Arlin was spinning music all night, from 7 pm to 3 am and many participated in some table bouldering, human bouldering and various games. Unfortunately, on Sunday, it rained so much that everyone opted to head back home.

The traditional climbing [Halloween trip to Skaha-ha-ha](#) was only half the usual size since we weren't able to have a potluck at the Stathers' in Penticton, also, there was a [trail workhike](#) to the Brian Waddington hut that same weekend and the weather wasn't very cooperative. Needless to say, almost 40 people went and had a great potluck at the Lost Moose campsite, looking down into Penticton.

In November, the last big climbing trip before skiing season was held at [Smith Rock](#), Oregon. 34 VOCers descended and enjoy some particular nice warm weather and even a warmer bonfire at the Hallow Skull campsite. Nothing particular dramatic happened this year, as opposed to me getting stuck on the Monkeyface for 3 hours....

November and December were particular good this year for skiing. Many beginner-friendly trips were lead by Roland Burton to Red Heather, Elfin Lakes and Brew hut (the 3rd). A

few more advanced trips to the Brian Waddington Hut were also held, not only to enjoy [the fresh powder](#) but also to continue work on the winter ski route to the Hut.

As the last few days of 2007 were ticking away, a flock of 25 VOCers headed up to the Waddington Hut for [the traditional celebration of the New Year](#). A good quantity of alcohol, faceshots and faceplants were taken by all. By the stroke of midnight on New Year's, many of us ran naked around the hut. Good thing that I wasn't the one breaking trail...

As people came back to UBC for the winter semester of 2008, the club went back into gear and continued to organize regular trips every weekend in January: [Winter Longhike](#), 2 beginner [Avalanche courses](#), 2 [Advanced Avalanche courses](#) and [Tele School](#).

During this same period, the Journal editor got into overdrive for the special 50th VOCJ. With the help of his wife and professional publisher, they worked non-stop to make sure that the VOCJ would be ready on time for the Banquet. What started as a special 300-page Journal with about a dozen articles from Alumni ended up as a 540-page monster, with a 50-50 split between current and alumni articles.

By February, even more beginner friendly trips here held: [Intro to Ice Climbing](#), [Intro to Backcountry Skiing 2008](#), and even a [Midnight Clamming extravaganza](#) trip up to Sechelt, with a complementary VOC dinner afterwards with 20 odd VOCers. For Study week (aka. Spring Break), the new tradition is the climbing / road trip to [Red Rocks](#), just outside of Las Vegas. Since we're still in the middle of skiing season in BC and the weather was just fantastic here, many ski traverses were also held by various members.

In March, we were back again at the Waddington Hut, where 5 members of the VOC Okanagan from the UBC Okanagan campus [came over for a potluck with us](#). A total of 17 VOCers decided to say hi and shred some pow. More trails workhikes were held at Brew and Brian Waddington. Two weeks later, VOC Alumni and current ACC – Vancouver section President Rob Brusse organized an [ACC/VOC Neve traverse](#) to help promote interclub activities. By Easter weekend, another Waddington Hut trip was held (the snow is always good up there) to celebrate the return of one of our good friend from England and her birthday. Prompted by an article about the installation of a temporary hot tub on the summit of Mt. Blanc, we tried to make a sauna inside of an igloo. It didn't work as anticipated: everyone just got wet...

We finally arrive back to the present, the '07 – '08 year is dwindling down and only a few events remain before most people head back home for the summer: [VOC Banquet](#), climbing competition, [Son of Rock](#) and [MEC Gear Swap](#). Before I start talking about the Banquet, there are a few things I need special mention.

Since the fall of 2006, Jeff Mottershead, the current Journal Editor has been working on a climbing project on the Chief, in Squamish. A variation of the 5.6 Crap Crag, the new route is called [Europa](#): a 7-pitch 5.9(?) which will offer the easiest multipitch climb up the Chief. As crazy as it might sound, Jeff has been going almost every weekend and multiple nights cleaning this beast. A few workhikes/siege s have been done and many VOCers have helped him, either physically or financially. Now that Jeff is going to be a dad in June, the project is in its final

stage, with only pitches 1 and 2 needing some light scrubbing. If everything go as planned, the first climbers will have access after the Falcon closure on the Chief is lifted. If only I could post all the trips reports, there's enough material to make a book and to have quite a few good laughs...

Talking about the trail workhike earlier on, our Special project exec, Christian Veenstra, has been working hard to make [a summer hiking trail and a winter ski route to the Brian Waddington Hut](#) over the past year. Beforehand, good navigating skills were required to get to the hut and more than one occasion parties would take a harder route than needed. A summer route existed before but required to cross Phelix creek twice and it was too steep (erosion problem) near the hut. Thanks to a grant from MEC, we're able to procure some needed gear to build and flag the trail. With over 6 workhikes and an army of VOCers spread over the course of the year, the trail is almost finished. The final touches should be done at some point this upcoming summer.

Our current Archivist, Duncan McPhedran, is currently working on digitalizing the entire VOC archives. With a grant from HSBC(?), we were able to procure a digital scanner and external hard drive to store all the information. At the moment, all the slides and a good quantity of pictures have been scanned. For those who happen to be joining us at the Banquet, you will be able to see them firsthand as we will be showing them during the early stages of the evening.

Taking about the Banquet, this year's Banquet will be held at the Student Union Building (SUB) Ballroom (2nd floor) on **April 2nd**, from 7 – 12 pm. Since we've been in contact with many alumni with respect to the VOCJ 50th anniversary and continuing the whole celebration theme, we're pleased to have as guest speaker Helen Lemon-Moore (Archivist '77 - '78). She'll be presenting various club activities during her stay with the VOC and has promise to teach us the Salty Dog Rag dance. For more information, check the following link: http://www.ubc-voc.com/wiki/Banquet_2008 . If people decide to come, I would like to mention that no alcohol is allowed (like in the VOC before the 70's) and please bring a small dish (potluck) or dessert, dish to eat out of and utensils. The exec currently has to serve 10 people each and are limited.

During the Banquet, we'll be giving out the copies of the 50th VOC Journal. If people are still interested in getting a copy, please send a cheque of \$25 to :

Box 98, Student Union Building
6138 Student Union Mall
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 2B9

Don't forget to mention your mailing address. Number of copies is limited and we can't promise that everyone will get one...

Well, I hope this is satisfactory for the first Grad Letter in over a decade. My English may not be up to par, but you get the idea. I'm in the middle of trying to finish this letter and get ready for the Banquet et al, as such my writing style progressive got worse as I wrote... I'll try to make next year's Archivist do this since it's supposed to be his job. That's pretty much the VOC

'07 – '08 year in a nutshell. Hopefully, '08 – '09 will reserve even better times. (Forgot to mention the snowmobile problems at Brian Waddington and Brew...)

Christian Champagne

Acting Membership Chair

'07 – '08