

Dear VOC Grads,

Another VOC year has come to an end, which means it is time for our annual update. You might be interested to know that the VOC has grown rapidly over the past few years. As of today, the total membership count is 862, of them 624 are regular (student) members, and the rest are associate (non-student) or alumni members. The recent growth of the club has brought with it a flurry of trips, often resulting in four or five trips on busy weekends in mid winter. Another result of the growth has been a huge increase in the quantity and quality of the gear that the club rents out, especially telemark skis and avalanche transceivers.

The VOC website got a complete makeover this year by our tireless volunteer Marius Muja, who came to the exec offering his services, and the VOC website is so much the better for it. It now sports a brand new modern look, a publicly viewable trip report section, an online membership form and many other delightful features. Another advance on the digital front has been in the dusty archives. Over the past few years VOC archivists have been scanning old VOC journals, and now finally [journals 1-52 are online](#) and [VOC albums and scrapbooks](#) from 1944-85 are online as well (thanks to VOC Archives for scanning the albums). To gain access to these you must have an alumni account with the VOC, which you can get for free by filling out the [online form](#). If you are interested in the circuitous process of scanning the journals (started in January 2007), please see the article I wrote below.

Finally, the 54th VOC journal came out recently, edited by Kelly Paton. It is a masterpiece and our second longest journal ever, after the 50th edition from four years ago. Apparently when Kelly picked up the journals the publisher exclaimed that we could easily sell the journal at a bookstore... If you would like to buy your own copy of the journal, please mail \$20 and shipping (\$5 for one, \$10 for two in Canada) in cash or cheque to:

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

All the best and happy trails,
Gili Rosenberg
VOC Archivist '11-'12

12 MONTHS IN THE VOC by KATHERINE VALENTINE

The 2011 Banquet was held at the ANZA club. Even though they didn't serve tap beer upstairs, this was a fantastic location. The budget was passed, awards were given out to recognize/embarrass members, and the new exec was voted in. Since the banquet last year, the club has run more than 140 trips, many of which you can read about in this year's journal. The following provides a summary of the major annual club events.

SUMMER BBQS: On the first Wednesday of every month we held a BBQ at Spanish Banks. Piotr Forysinski's home-built trailer is still going strong, although the same can't be said for the BBQ—even the police were concerned at the amount of smoke and flame that it was producing. Ultimate Frisbee games happened most Wednesday nights, sometimes followed by swimming.

SON OF ROCK: On a summer weekend, over thirty VOCers swarmed the Chief campground. Saturday consisted of an instructional day with plenty of singing and stories for the evening. Instructors passed on invaluable knowledge and skills which were practiced not only on Sunday but also throughout the rest of the summer.

MOUNTAINEERING CAMP: Joffre Lakes was the location for this year's Mountaineering Camp. As Nick Gobin put it, "It was a great weekend and I thought it was very cool that VOCers stood on top of every peak in the Joffre group on Saturday, other than Tszil. Slalok, Joffre, Matier, Hartzell, Spetch and Howard is a pretty good catch for one club in one day."

GLACIER SCHOOL: This was my first Glacier School. After hearing the stories about how it always rains at Glacier School, I threw in a couple of extra layers and the weather didn't disappoint—but the rain (I think) made Mike Duncan's Vodka Spiked Mulled Wine just that much better, and the singing that much louder. Er, we (at G1) also taught and practiced

glacier travel and crevasse rescue skills.

Nick Matwyuk helped out with G2—the advanced group—this year. Here’s what he had to say about the weekend: “After throwing around a wide range of ideas in terms of location we finally decided on Semaphore Lakes. After beating our vehicles into submission on the Hurley FSR washboard we reached the trail head. We got up onto a snowfield and practiced running belays, self-arrest, crevasse rescue, and general glacier travel aspects. It even started snowing while we were there and I wish I had brought my skis to crank some turns on the fresh pow. Once we had become hungry and satisfied with the learning for the day we headed back towards camp. It was raining the next day, so plans of climbing Face Mountain were squashed. The visibility was terrible so we just hopped up onto a lower snowfield and gave each person a turn in leading a crevasse rescue. I believe it is very beneficial for each person to get in the “hot seat” so they really have to think about the process. After our brains were saturated from learning we started jumping rope. It was lots of fun and got people moving to warm up. While on the hike out, Ira Sutherland led the charge and went for a swim in one of the lakes. I followed suit along with a couple of other people. All in all, a very productive glacier school.”

LONGHIKE: Wow, Longhike, what can I say. It’s an event that you have to experience to understand. My highlights from the weekend were Craig Alfredson standing at the back of the tent explaining that when he was new to the club, Longhike was where older, experienced guys in the club picked up new girlfriends for the year. A few hours later he was still standing at the back of the tent explaining that he was going to get a girlfriend. Mike Duncan’s use of bike lights on the dance floor and Shuvi Haramati wearing nothing but a t-shirt were both extremely memorable. Before I headed back to Vancouver I ended up checking the foundations of the hot tub with the management of Sunwolf, as they weren’t sure how we had fit that number of people in it without the foundations giving way. And I think there might have been some climbing at some point...

JARED STANLEY MEMORIAL LECTURE: In Phil Tomlinson’s words: “In January 2005, Jared Stanley, a UBC student, passed away while back country skiing on Mount Seymour. Every year, the VOC hosts a memorial lecture in his name; this year was the seventh. While Jared wasn’t a VOCer, he’s the sort of guy that probably would have ended up knocking on the VOC’s door at some point, so we sort of adopted him and the lecture. Jared’s family, Anna and Bob Parton, fly out every year to attend the lecture and speak a little bit about Jared. The Partons are great speakers and great people. Last year, after learning about SPOT devices from our guest speaker, a Search and Rescue team member, they promptly went out and bought the club three devices because they felt that if such a device had existed back in 2005, then maybe Jared would still be with us. Much like the VOC sort of adopted Jared, the Partons sort of adopted the VOC.”

In Stephen Mullen’s words:

“As always, the Partons are great speakers. Their words are deeply moving and hit a tone that I think is glossed over with much of the ‘organised’ outdoor world (ie. guiding, SAR, Scouts, clubs, etc). Chris Lawrence had a bunch of first-hand stories that I think people could glean some take-home messages from. A big thanks to those who helped out with all aspects of the organisation of the lecture. Phil did a great job of hosting. The MCing was done very professionally, and the emotional moments were handled with tact & dignity.”

FORMAL/ UGLY SWEATER WINTER SOCIAL: An awesome Winter Social was held at the gallery: a potluck, music, and dancing, with our VOC DJ Oker Chen. Elections for a couple of second term exec positions ended in possibly our very first tie in voting, accompanied by some interesting methods of persuading voters by the nominees (certain clothing items were removed). We danced into the wee hours of the morning, and many of us didn’t quite make it to school early the next day.

ANNUAL BREW DEBACLE: Christian Veenstra took the lead on this trip this year. His trip is as always in classic VOC skiing style—a bunch of keen VOCers, never having been on telemark skis before, toughed their way up to the hut and discovered that (despite the suffering) they really love the mountains in winter.

New Year's Trips: Again this year, Phelix did not disappoint. Stable hero snow, blue bird days, singing, and of course naked laps of the hut were some of the highlights. A small party headed up to Brew to ring in the New Year. Murray Down’s take on the snow pack: “We went for a ski, but no gnar slopes were tried, for the avalanche rating was still kind of high; we examined the snow pack, we prodded and poked; then had a nice run down a mellow slope.” Although not an official VOC trip, fifteen VOCers headed up to Roger’s Pass in search of powder. It was only the second time in my life that I had wanted it to stop snowing. With avalanche conditions at high down to below tree line, objectives were scaled back, and hut time was increased.

CAC FUNDRAISER: A night at the Gallery watching ski porn and drinking from a shot ski... what more can you ask for in an evening in the city? Raising over \$1500 for the guys that put the avalanche bulletin out every day to help keep us safe (the CAC) made the night that much better. Some awesome prizes were donated for the raffle from Westcomb, MEC, the CAC, and some generous VOC members.

WINTER LONGHIKE: Fifty VOCers headed up to Seymour with hopes that there would be enough snow to make snowcaves feasible and we wouldn't have to make quinzhees instead. Luckily it was snowing by the time they reached the camping spot. Unfortunately the snow turned to freezing rain which decreased the enthusiasm to the level of hanging out singing in the kitchen area. When I arrived on Sunday morning the whole camp was covered in three inches of ice. People started surfacing, and since it was still raining the main aim of Sunday was to head down back to town to warm up and dry off.

TELESCHOOL: As in the past, teleschool was held at Seymour; it is where old VOCers can pass on their knowledge of the art of "freeing the heel and skiing for real." And so they did.

INTRO TO BACKCOUNTRY CAMPING: Nick Matwyuk posted his Intro to Backcountry Camping trip in December, but had to cancel due to injuries. Phil Tomlinson then posted his Intro to Backcountry Skiing but had to cancel due to beginners bailing because of road and avalanche conditions, leaving only experienced people. Finally, Skyler Des Roches stepped up to the plate, and ran an awesome trip to Iago. Frans Kouwenhoven's take on the Iago trip: "VOC trips don't disappoint. Saturday night, things were looking grim for my overall satisfaction with the trip. After my not so awesome skiing in the dark, I came back to camp and soon discovered that neither my jacket, nor my pants, were as waterproof as I had thought. This led to a cold, wet Frans, not often a happy fellow. However, Sunday turned everything around. Skiing through trees is a lot easier when you can see where you're going and pick nice lines. While the evening of the first day may have been full of type 2 fun for me, the second day was nothing but type 1. I gained a lot of experience skiing in powder, my faith in telemark was restored once Skyler imparted the wisdom of "back foot, back foot!" and even face planting to the laughter of my peers was met with smiles of my own."

SPHINX CAMP: As we all know, weather and avalanche conditions can never be controlled, so although a good number of us headed up to the Burton Hut for Sphinx camp this year with some big objectives, most of the time was spent skiing small mellow slopes. A couple of the deception pinnacles were climbed. In the hut, cards were played, stories of past trips were told, and of course there was singing, all of which made the time spent in the hut more enjoyable. On the last day, the weather showed us what Sphinx Bay can be like, and some epic skiing was had. 'Twas all capped off with a beer at the Shady Tree to mark the end of Reading Break.

VOC Archives Digitization: Journals & Albums Now Online

The project was started by Duncan McPhedran in January 2007, when Duncan took over the archivist position from Evan Morris. Duncan, a history student, had this great vision of digitizing the VOC Archives, but needed funding, so he applied for and got a \$1000 grant called the Local History Grant from Hudson Bay Co. With \$300 of that money he bought a desktop scanner, and began scanning the journals page by page. This was a very ambitious project and Duncan was planning to "...be in the Clubroom from 9:30am til 4pm every Thursday until everything is digitized"* and in that year's journal he wrote:

Quote

Duncan McPhedran, VOCJ49, pages 14-15

... so I started my own project which I hope to carry on with next year. I am digitizing the entire VOC Archives. The project is rather huge, and I've only gotten a small start on it. It involves scanning the photographic collection, the contents of the filing cabinets, and the past 48 volumes of the Journal (there are several on disk that do not need to be scanned), I plan to have it complete by the release of the 50th anniversary edition of the Journal next year.

Duncan continued as Archivist the next year, but the project was moving along very slowly. There were several reasons for that, including: the journals had to be scanned manually, there were many mistakes in the scanning, some were scanned in notebook style and had to be split, OCR'ing had to be done separately, and at some stage (later) apparently most or all of the previously scanned journals were lost due to a computer crash (which was not backed up). The next Archivist ('08-'09) was Eric Escobar, in whose time the idea surfaced to use the remaining \$700 to hire someone to scan the journals, but it quickly became obvious that it wasn't enough money and the idea was sacked. The next Archivist was Ignacio Rozada ('09-'10).

Finally, just in time for the 2010 banquet, Ignacio managed to finish scanning the first 25 journals and had them available for purchase on DVD.

Still, about 25 journals remained to be scanned. The next archivist - Laura Morrison ('10-'11) continued the job, where Phil Tomlinson would scan the journals and pass them back to her. Nisan Haramati helped greatly with OCR'ing old journals. Gradually the scanning job became easier with the advent of feeding photocopier-scanners. The job still took much time, mainly due to the varying size and margins of the VOCJ over the years. Some journals from recent years were located in digital form, either in PDF or in Publisher files which had to be pieced together, but some were lost - a good reason to be more vigilant in the future about keeping good digital backups of our journals. At some stage the journals were made available to members online (by Chris Michalak), which also served to make sure that the scanned files would not be lost (again). Recently the scanning job has been completed: [all past journals are now online](#). Marius Muja improved the journal webpage greatly by having the thumbnails consist of the journal covers.

You might recall that Duncan's vision consisted not only of digitizing the VOC Journals, but the whole set of Archives. Well, in 2010 Ignacio Rozada donated much of this material to UBC Archives for safe keeping and scanning [*](#)

Quote

Ignacio Rozada, Exec Report '09-'10

Regarding the other club archives (photo albums, club minutes, hut logbooks, etc), a radical approach was taken, partly because some of the material was in bad shape (specially old photo albums). We decided to donate as much as they would take to the university archives. They would, in turn, scan what they thought was the most interesting material, post it on their website, and give us copies in high definition.

and finally, two years later, we recently received the beautifully scanned albums (thanks to UBC Archives!), which you can now [view online at your leisure](#).

But this is not the end... First of all, the journals need to be checked/proofed. This mostly consists of browsing through a journal, making sure that there are no missing, upside down or crooked pages, and noting these mistakes on the wiki. Secondly, the coming Archivists (starting with Todd MacKenzie '12-'13) should continue the job of digitizing the VOC Archives - both in raising the quality of our collection of scanned journals and digitizing other old records (such as photos and hut logbooks) which remain in the clubroom.
