

## Illimani, Bolivia (6443 Metres) -Reid Carter-

A far better title might be: On the Wrong Side of the Line. That is where Gloria McNeill and I found ourselves. We were just below 6000 metres, some 500 metres below the summit at 3:45 A.M. I had just made the decision to turn around.

Gloria and I had planned this trip some ten months earlier so we could use Areoplan points to fly into Lima, Peru. We knew we wanted to climb and visit in both Peru and Bolivia.

Our first climb was Mt. Chicon in Peru, near Cusco and Machu Picchu. In spite of the oral vaccine for E. coli, Gloria spent two days suffering in a tent at 4000 metres at base camp. Only after taking the antibiotics Bryce had prescribed did she start to feel better. Our guides spoke to some French climbers who wandered around in the clouded summit and never found the top. We bailed, returning to acclimatize more in Cusco, Peru and there Gloria recovered quickly.

Next we were off to La Paz, Bolivia where the airport is at 4000 metres. Bolivia is the poorest of South American countries. The food was good, the wine was bad, but the beer was great. In La Paz, we connected with our guiding company and our 26 year old guide, Eloy. I am not sure if my Spanish was worse than Eloy's command of English, but there definitely

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## Boys Stay Away: Women's Climbing Days

Letter from member Adrienne Kidd:

I just wanted to send a formal 'thank you' to the Thunder Bay Alpine Club Executive for giving the go-ahead to have 'Women's Day's' included in the event calendars. To recap those recently, Feb 10/07 was Women's Ice in Orient Bay (Cascade) and June9/07 was Women's Rock at Silver Harbour.

Special thanks goes to Jenn  
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*Deb McIlwrath, Jenn Chikoski, and Sarah Hueniken at the Women's Ice Day*

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*"Experience Through Knowledge and Opportunity"*

## Outcrops Fall 2007

### Note from the Section Chair



Hi Folks! And a big welcome back to everyone after their summer spent on trips, or (worse yet) working, or just hanging out and climbing. As always, your executive has been busy planning out the events calendar and we've got a lot of events lined up for fall.

I'd like to extend a special welcome back to all our student members who are returning after a summer away – we're looking forward to you showing us all how to climb again. I'd also like to say hi and welcome to the club to new members on behalf of the executive. I think you'll find your membership is the best bang for your climbing buck and be surprised at the opportunities that away you as an ACC member. You'll get out of your membership what you've put into it.

This fall we've got ample opportunities for you to develop your technical, leadership and climbing skills, including a high-angle rescue course, various intermediate events and a number of events geared towards first time climbers. Also, be sure to come out to our Annual General Meeting at Con College (see the included events calendar for details); it's a great opportunity to learn more about the club and a good way to bring out a prospective friend that might be interested in joining. It's also a great way for

climbers new to town to get some beta on the local climbing areas and learn more about the local ethic.

This fall finds a small change to your executive committee as well. Jack Coulis is stepping down from his role as Newsletter Editor, after several years of cranking out newsletters at the last minute under the relentless pressure of the executives (well...me, anyway). Jack has done a great job of keeping this newsletter going and we all owe him a big THANKS! for his efforts. Jack will remain an Exec Member-At-Large, and we'll be sure to keep him involved with our bigger projects. Acting in Jack's position will be Bryce Brown, who's kindly offered to step in and produced this edition of the newsletter. Bryce will be confirmed (or challenged, along with our other exec members) at our elections, which are part of the next AGM. In the meantime, on behalf of the Section, thanks Bryce! Speaking of which, if you've got something you'd like to include in the next newsletter, make sure you get it to Bryce by the end of October.

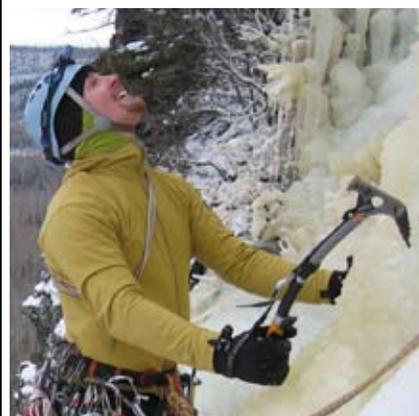
Well, I end my little piece here by saying I'm looking forward to getting out with everyone and meeting new members this fall, as well as watching our budding trip leaders and young rock stars continue to develop their skills. Remember, by joining the ACC you didn't buy a service, but an opportunity – your membership is what you make of it. If you'd like to see something happen or have a cool event idea, speak up and make sure the exec knows about it. Better yet, volunteer to

help make it happen yourself. You don't have to be an expert climber to help make an event happen.

Everyone climb safe this fall as "sending season" is upon us, and have a great time out there.

-Nick Buda-  
-ACC Tbay Section Chair-

Announcing our new  
editor, Bryce Brown



Bryce hails from the sleepy town of Thunder Bay, Ontario, where he often talks about becoming an active member of the ACC. Believe it or not, he has been climbing locally for 15 years. He can usually be found hanging around other climbers, boring everyone with stories: "This one time at basecamp..." Bryce makes his home with his partner Sunny (who actually wears the pants in the relationship), but he also has been caught cuddling with various male climbing partners at stormy bivies. When asked why he would ever want to volunteer to do such a thankless, stressful job as that of Newsletter Editor, he comments: "'cause I ain't not that bad at spellin' stuffs".

### *Illimani*

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was a language barrier.

Although Illimani is visible from La Paz, it takes 4 hours to drive the 100 kilometers to the trail head. At this point I was quite concerned as the mountain was covered by a lenticular cloud indicating high winds. Illimani was looking way too white for me. The bright white new snow was unusual for this time of year and meant there would be avalanche potential and hidden crevasses. Two hours of hiking brought us to base camp at 4400 metres in the nearby village's pasture. We shared base camp with lamas, horses, pigs, dogs, sheep and donkeys. The next day we moved to high camp at 5500 metres at the base of the glacier.

At 1:30 AM. we roped up with Eloy leading, Gloria in the middle and me at the end and headed for the summit. It was damn cold (at least -18°C) with very strong winds that had turned around climbers the previous day. The route was much steeper than I had anticipated and the new snow prevented effective use of the single alpine axes we were

using. While climbing a steep slope in the dark at about 5900 metres it happened! One of my legs shot past the mid calf snow penetration that we'd been slogging through into nothingness. I knew immediately I had pushed through a snow bridge over a crevasse. I carefully tried to push off my other leg, but the snow bridge collapsed and I fell fully into the crevasse neck deep. I peered down into the crevasse and it was at least 10 metres deep. The soft snow prevented Eloy from quickly building anything to act as an anchor, so I had the potential to pull him and Gloria off the mountain. Gloria really kept her cool in a very intense situation and kept the rope tight and me safe. I knew I had to get out quickly. I managed to sink a crampon into the wall behind me and climb out.

That was my first fall totally into a crevasse and I hope it will be my last. I took a minute to recover from the effort and get it together. Eloy didn't say anything, knowing that as leader and guide he should have been looking for crevasses. We continued up in the blowing cold



*Gloria McNeil at 5000m on Illimani*

another 75 vertical metres passing a large avalanche release to our right. From the sharpness of the shear I could see it was quite new. While the snow would be relatively stable at night, it would not be good to be descending the route once the sun was on it.

I called for Eloy to stop so we could talk. He wanted to continue at least another hour to a technical feature called the ice face. In my mind, the mountain was not in shape to be safely climbed by our group. In fact I knew the ice face hadn't been climbed since the recent new snowfall. Only after I insisted did he consent to turn back.

I would have been easy to ignore the obvious danger and continue to attempt the summit as Eloy was so keen. Everything I knew and felt was telling me to turn back. Heeding intuition and obvious conditions are part of the important process to stay alive! So we scratched the next climb on a mountain in similar conditions and ate some good food, drank some bad wine and good beer back in La Paz and Lake Titicaca. -RC-

*Bolivian Army searching for terrorists with illimani in background*



**Women's Climbing**

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Chikoski and Deb McIlwrath for organizing the Ice day and it was an honour to have Sarah Hueniken (ACMG Assistant Alpine and Rock Guide) come share her spirit and her skills with us. It's amazing what a couple of words like 'screw' and 'poo' can do to improve a girls climbing technique! Thank you again to the Executive for providing the necessary support to enable Sarah to join us.

Then Jenn stepped up again to be our fearless leader for a Rock day. The response from the club's female component was an overwhelming surprise and unfortunately many were unable to join us for this day due to group size exceeding capacity.

No offense guys, and although it is difficult to explain why, but these days without you have proven to be very rewarding for all the females involved. I speak for many when saying we would appreciate having the opportunity to climb with just the girls again.

On a personal note, the Thunder Bay Alpine club is high on my list of reasons for staying in Thunder Bay. You're a great bunch and I thank you for the climbing experiences!

**Don't Forget!**

You can now renew your membership ONLINE through the National Office!

[www.alpineclubofcanada.ca](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca)

**Camp Quality**

**-Ruth Chapman-**

Camp Quality ( a camp for children with terminal cancer) was a guest at the Nor' West Outdoor Centre on August 16. The Centre hosted close to 100 campers, friends, helpers, and brothers and sisters of the campers, providing them with an experience on the climbing wall, the vertical challenge course, the bouldering wall, the pole climb, the low ropes courses, the survivor ropes course, the adventure challenge course and the zip line. It was an inspiration to see them meet another challenge- that of climbing to top of the wall and to see the sense of satisfaction on their faces as they were lowered back down to the ground. In the wrap-up that followed at the end of the day, the climbing wall and the zip line certainly got the most votes for the most popular activities.

The Centre once again could not have provided this opportunity to Camp Quality if not for all the Alpine Club members who donated their time to belay and help at the other areas. I would like to thank Dianne McNicol, Brian Ratcliff, Barb Schumacher, Teesha Riley, and Donna and Fabio Zorzes for manning the ropes and spotting. Your time and efforts were greatly appreciated by all attending this awesome event. Thanks again.

**Brain Bucket Bucks Back Program**

Its simple - members buy a helmet from Wilderness Supply Co. and get \$20 back from the club!

Details in store!

**Bluffs Clean Up**

**-Leo Tardif-**

Our annual Bluffs clean up was another successful event and it appeared there was more litter than usual this year. A big thank you to Judy, Jordan, Damien, Jevon, John, Rob, Doug, Jenn, Nick, Lena, Erik, James, Natasha, Barb, Adrienne and Lora for their efforts and especially to Doug Mason for using his truck to haul all the stuff to the dump. Club volunteers are exceptional people and without them our club wouldn't be what it is, so again, thank you to all participants.

**Go Green! Sign up for PAPERLESS Outcrops!**

We are encouraging all section members to sign up for a new web user account, or if you are already registered, to update your profile to read this newsletter online. As an environmentally conscious section, we would like to reduce the amount of paper we consume and eventually throw away as well as the resources used to mail your copy out to you. So lets all do our part and choose a 'paperless' newsletter. Visit [www.acctbay.ca](http://www.acctbay.ca) NOW to change your profile. (Note that the default for new web members is paperless.)

-Wes Bender, Web Director-

**Address Change?**

If you are wondering why you don't get the ACC mail outs when everyone else did, consider whether you have moved and not given a change of address either to Judy, our membership chair, or to the National office in Canmore by way of the website :

[www.alpineclubofcanada.ca](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca)

## Top 5 Ways to Get the Most Out of Your ACC Membership

- Keep your address up to date and your membership paid up and current. This is all easy to do online at [www.alpineclubofcanada.ca](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca), and then you won't miss out on events and opportunities, or newsletter mailings.
- Check the section website [www.acctbay.ca](http://www.acctbay.ca) regularly for changes to the events calendar, special events notices (we've had several this year), and important news that we can't get out in our 3 Outcrops issues a year.
- Contribute to the days events – put others before yourself, keep safety at the forefront of your mind, offer a belay, help with a harness, help setup/tear down, carry group gear, take a couple nice photos of a fellow ACCer, smile lots, offer to drive or help pay for gas and thank your trip leaders.
- Call as early as possible to sign up for an event with limited spots, and definitely NO later than the Wednesday before a scheduled weekend event. Phone the Events Coordinator or listed trip leader and double check that you are indeed signed up for sure in the "black book". A brief mention of interest in passing will be forgotten. If an event is full, respect the trip leader and those who called in quick enough and don't give them an earful on the phone. If you don't think we have enough room for participants, learn how to get involved as a trip leader so we can accommodate larger groups!
- Keep safety at the top of your concerns on club outings, for yourself and your fellow members.

- Nick Buda, Section Chair-

### Writers Wanted!

Hey, think YOU can write better than us? Well lets' find out! This is YOUR Outcrops! We are looking for articles from all members! Do you have an interesting story about a recent trip? Got an opinion about gear? Tips and tricks you want to share? Email Bryce at [brycebrown99@gmail.com](mailto:brycebrown99@gmail.com). Deadline for the Winter Outcrops is October 31.



*"When's winter coming?!"*

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## A Rant from a Hypocrite [consider that a warning!]



Lately I've been paying a lot more attention to my climbing gear than I ever have in the past. Part of the reason is there's been a lot of new exciting gear hitting the market and as I'm pushing my own personal limits higher than ever before in the mountains I'm always looking for that piece of gear that will make a particular task easier or faster (I'm incredibly impatient at belays and other delays on long routes). Another reason is I have a close friend who's a tech-weenie and is on the cusp of developing new climbing gear for a leading manufacturer. The biggest reason though is my constant (obsessive-compulsive) underlying concern for safety while in the mountains – and I'm not referring to the calculated risks you might take running it out or leading a difficult pitch with poor protection or free-soloing or choosing to climb in poor weather. I have and will likely continue to make choices to do all of the above in the future, as will my partners.

What I am getting at are the risks many of us are taking, some without realizing it, and many that would contradict our own "self-proclaimed" safety ethic. Some spectacular equipment failures have blazed through the climbing media and the internet in particular in the

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### *A Rant*

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last little while:

- The climbing rope that literally snapped in a lead fall causing the climber to hit the ground in a climbing gym. Traces of battery acid were found on the rope fibers where the failure occurred.
- The absolutely tragic death of one of my early climbing heroes due to his apparently very worn out belay loop failing while he was rappelling.
- A close call experienced by a very respected alpinist when his new ultralight (and ultraskinny) dyneema sling failed in a relatively standard top anchor set up. A manufacturer's examination of the sling in question showed prior (likely not readily visible) damage involving cut strands.
- An incident where a climber began leading below another party on an ice climb and was knocked off the route and hospitalized by ice falling from the upper party. The climber was impatient, and had invested a lot of time and effort to get there and was going to do the route come hell or high water. He should have got up earlier, waited for the other party to finish, chose another route or just hit the bar early.

While looking at these events in hindsight, it's easy to see how they could have been prevented (e.g. regular inspection of equipment after/before every outing, not tossing your gear in the trunk of your car if there's acid leaking there, replacing worn out gear). It's easy to point out the critical flaws in the activities of others (which is precisely what I'm going to do here ...), but I think many of us (beginner and experienced alike) would benefit from some candid reflection here. Some of the things I've seen folks that should know better doing (definitely NOT on club outings though):

- Toproping and rappelling/belaying

with excessively worn out (nearly half way through the stock!) locking carabiners. A new top of the line locker is \$25. What's your life worth?



• Pulling an old v-thread or top anchor and replacing it with a new one (courteous to others and the environment), only to re-use it later (stupid to yourself and others). A good piece of 7mm cord to build to equalized v-threads will cost about \$7, and you also know the history, know that it isn't UV damaged or used to pull a car out of a ditch, and that it has not been burned from rap lines being pulled through it. If you remove it or find it, throw it in the garbage! What's your life worth?



- Using a hardware store chain link for a rap station. While these may have high strength ratings, they are not constructed with the same high standards and testing as quicklinks, rings or biners made by

climbing gear companies. Either spend the extra dollar or two or at least double them up. What's your life worth?

- An old rack of cams (10-15+ years) with the original slings still in use. Check with your manufacturer about recommendations for reslinging (5 years is about the longest that I've heard). About \$40 plus shipping to get 'em redone with nice colour-coded sewn slings. Or, spend the \$40 on beer and pizza and then wonder if it will hold when you're about to take that 20-footer or it's your only piece in your belay 12 pitches up. What's your life worth?
- Old quickdraws or "lucky" runners that their owner wouldn't use to tie

their dog with, yet still trust to climb on. A new set of replacement runners and dogbones will run about \$60 for standard dyneema slings. What's your life worth?

- Inadequate or no drying of wet gear. It takes an extra 15 minutes to properly hang up ropes, runners, harnesses and other soft goods to dry properly after a big day of climbing. All that keeps you from your dinner and your bed that much longer. And then you have to get up 15 minutes earlier to recoil and pack it all in time for that alpine start. However, wet ropes are substantially weaker and poorer at absorbing impact forces, and wet gear can mildew. Aside from stink, the mildew can weaken your gear. I'm lazy, and I've noticed wet gear is also heavier, which makes my day suck more. An extra 20 minutes of unpacking/repacking, or more sleep? What's your life worth?
- An old harness that is in constant use and just plain looks old. "Hmmm...I guess I'll just tie a piece of cord through the belay loop to back it up." If you don't trust one part of the harness, you should destroy it to prevent further use and replace it. A top of the line new harness starts around \$50-60. What's your life worth?
- Here's one that takes the cake – patching the sheath of a damaged climbing rope with tape and calling it good ("well...the core is okay.." – you should've seen the look on one well-known visiting climber's face when he saw this). I have seen this twice now – WTF?! A new pair of good double ropes can be had for a little over \$250 if you catch a sale. What's your life worth?
- Dumping your pack/rack/rope on the ground in the parking lot, on the side of the highway, in the mud or on the railroad tracks when you arrive back at the car or at the end of the day, or dumping it all on the floor of your dirty and well-

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### A Rant

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used garage or workshop when you get home at the end of the day. You carried it all that far, hold your gear for two more minutes and put it directly in the clean part of the car. Think of all the corrosive chemicals (battery acid, gas, tranny fluid, salt) that reside there, and whether or not you want it on your gear (see rope snapping example above!). If a new prospective partner shows up with dirty/sticky ropes or rusty gear, I typically find a new partner. Do you really want to be wondering if your crampon toe bail is about to snap on your first WI5 lead or if that rope will fail as you're topping out?

- Over-protecting every lead and building super-safe and redundant anchors all the time, yet never backing up even the most dangerous or exposed rappels (and then whining at your partners to give you a fireman belay when you're scared, or worse yet burning out one of their shiny new slings backing yourself up). There are occasionally good reasons to rappel with/without a backup. Twice it has saved me from disaster – once while being knocked nearly unconscious by falling ice and once when a juniper needle lodged in the rope sliced open my brake hand and caused me to let go of the rope. It really only takes an extra minute (if that) to rig a back up knot and a piece of cord for a prussic or similar knot is about \$2. What's your life worth?

- Using several short slings girth hitched together and girth hitched directly through a bolt hanger (!) instead of a proper length of cordelette and webbing and appropriate number of carabiners. A basic TR set up of a handful of bargain lockers and a few long pieces of webbing will cost well under \$100, last a long time if taken care of and build a solid, safe anchor. How much did you spend on dinner and a movie for you and your sweetheart last week?

What's your life worth?

- Using a single old, fuzzy, faded, dirty daisy or other sling to clip into the belay or spider rappel with. This piece of gear probably sees more abuse than any other single piece of equipment (constant use, small but frequent static shock loads as the climber shifts around a belay, wear and tear as it rubs against the rock while climbing), yet is the most neglected. A solid, new daisy, or sling can be had for less than \$10. An even safer alternative, such as the Metolius PAS, is \$40. What's your life worth?

- Using an excessively worn out belay/rappel device to the point where sharp edges are appearing. A new Reverso or ATC-XP is less than \$30. What's your life worth?

- Blindly clipping, belaying and rappelling from an established top anchor without giving it a through inspection or backing it up. Webbing fades, is damaged by falling ice or chewed by critters. It takes just a few seconds to look it over carefully or dig it out from the snow.

- Climbing without a helmet. Duh!

- This one was definitely nobody I know, but it's too good to leave out – using lawn chair webbing to build a rappel anchor... what more needs to be said?



Granted, we may not always have the best gear for the job and often have to improvise. But, it does seem to me that the psychology and our perception of risk is often tempered by convenience, downright closed-mindedness and our wallets. Take the climber who patches his damaged ropes (don't ever do this! Get new ones), yet refuses to rappel (on those same ropes!) without a backup... or the climber who saves 50 cents with a hardware store quicklink (his ONLY

point of connection on a rappel), but refuses to be anchored to the belay with no less than two points of connection... or the climber that has always used a specific system for building an anchor, despite his awareness of newer, safer techniques...the list is endless, and we (myself included) are all guilty of it. We would all do well to inspect our gear regularly and perhaps give up a pint or two to have money to replace or upgrade gear when needed – which isn't necessarily often if you take care of your stuff or use it infrequently. The ironic thing is, most of the worst perpetrators are those who certainly have the financial means to avoid issues such as these.

Also consider the \$ value of your life, not just to yourself but to your family or climbing partner (who will have to deal with the aftermath of any accident, or worse yet, could become a victim of your negligence). Taking the time to do so will leave you free to explore your own personal limits in climbing by taking risks of your choosing and reaping the rewards of doing so. Such is the essence of climbing for me.

Gravity is always turned on and doesn't care about the condition of your gear or how much money you're saving. Let's not give the Darwin Awards any new material!

End of lecture....now I have to get down to the hardware store and get some climbing gear for tomorrow... JUST KIDDING!

- Nick Buda-



Nick's other climbing helmet

### To Be a Mentor

-Wes Bender-

I would like to share my feelings of what it has meant to me to be a mentor.

In the fall of 2004 I began climbing fulltime with Brian Bottan, not only as new friends but to teach him the skills he would need to lead ice safely. We started his apprenticeship on Tempest, our area WI2 classic. During this ascent I paid attention to his awareness and his willingness to ask questions more so than his skills. Very few new leaders are going to lead their first ice climb without making a mistake or two. What I noticed was that he wasn't afraid to ask questions and didn't care that he was only leading WI2; that was the main reason I stuck with him to teach him my skills. Also, I knew I wasn't going to waste his time or mine.

As the season went on Brian continued to progress at an astounding rate, at times I would ask myself, "What do I have to do to tire this guy out?" During the good old times of Eagle Canyon, I would regularly drag Brian up the "High Wall" only to have him get to the top, congratulate me on the lead, and in the same breath ask what we should climb next. I don't think he knew that you weren't supposed to be leading WI5 in your first season of leading. Brian went on to lead a 40 metre, WI5 line up the "High Wall" at Eagle Canyon that season. That was probably the single greatest experience I have had during an ice-climbing day, even more so than my own first WI5 a few years prior. Well... maybe the second, the first was watching my wife lead her ultimate nemesis Amy R. Watching Brian I remember feel-

ing like a proud father watching his son score a goal at the championship hockey game. Yes I know, a little mushy but that's the only analogy I can think of!

Becoming a mentor doesn't mean you have to give up pushing your own limits. I didn't. I was just getting lucky on WI5's when I met Brian. Having Brian along watching me push my limits, in my opinion, was beneficial to his progress. He could get first hand beta on what is required mentally and physically to push ones limits.

I encourage all trip leaders to step up and take on a protégé. It is a very rewarding experience. Not only did my stock as a mentor go way up, but also I gained a very good friend with whom I share other hobbies and interests. Not every protégé will go on to lead WI5 as quickly as Brian; but, as long as they are climbing safely and have the confidence that they can avoid or get out of a bad situation, then your hard work as a mentor will be a success.

For those of you who want to "step up" and become a trip leader and eventually a mentor you don't have to be an Ace climber! The ACC is here to help you to become the trip leader you want to be; all it takes is commitment and the initiative by you.

-WB-



*Wes and Brian*

### News from the ACC National Office

#### Early Bird Activities Program

Are you thinking about attending one of the National Winter Ski or Ice Camps? Make your decision before November 30, 2007 and you could win a Sawtooth Sleeping Bag (Rated -9°C, 600 Fill Power) from Marmot. This year's ski camps include a return to Fairy Meadow, the crowd-pleasing Clemenceau to Columbia Traverse, a visit to the Lyells, the incomparable Wapta Traverse, First Summits, and of course The Marmot Women's Ski Camp. Also returning this year is Rockies Ice with Rob Owens and Sean Isaac - two guides who are forerunners in ice and mixed climbing in the Rockies. Call us soon at (403) 678-3200 ext 112 and we'll help you choose the camp that's right for you.

#### Membership Referral Program

What better way to get the most out of your membership than to share the experience with one of your closest buddies? Starting September 1, bring a new member into the club and you could win one of these great prizes:

- one of 2 L45 packs from Black Diamond (for Sep and Oct)
- one of 2 Alp 40 hydration packs from BCA (for Nov and Dec)
- a pair of climbing skins from G3 (for Jan and Feb)

Simply ask your friend to enter your name in the box marked "I was referred by" on the membership application form and both of your names will be entered into the draw... it's that easy!