

# Seldom Seen, Seldom Heard

Ode to the unsung mountain wanderer

Not long ago, a friend told me the story of Gary Donald Camozzi. “I met him in the Rossland Vortex,” he told me. “That’s what Gary calls this place. That’s why he’s here.” The Vortex. That place where everything aligns, where peace and spirituality and freedom converge at a point.

Fifteen years ago, Gary’s house in Rossland was condemned and the city evicted him. Soon after they demolished his house, Gary walked into the woods up on Red Mountain. It was so black he could hardly see his hands. He lay down and decided he wanted to live in the forest. He’s been there ever since.

Gary is a self-proclaimed ski yogi. Born and raised in Rossland, and rumored to have the highest high school marks in the town’s history, Gary loves to ski. He straightlines the steep, wide open face of Red Mountain in the springtime. He once poached a national downhill course on Red Mountain Resort’s Granite Mountain, claiming to have blown right through one of the safety nets he was going so fast. He wears a downhill suit given to him by an ex-national team racer. His downhill poles were passed on to him by a local coach. He’s even got Fischer RC4 downhill skis with holes in the tips.

Gary reads about Buddhism and other spiritualities in his mountain hide-away. He still straightlines Red after the hill closes. He makes money by building beautiful dry mortar rock walls and pruning trees with great respect.

My friend runs into Gary at the liquor store where he finds him buying his favourite cherry-flavoured beers from Quebec. Gary talks about how skiing is a higher level, how it helps him reach balance with the planet, how it’s like riding a magic horse, accelerating into connection and freedom, straightlining the natural curves of the mountain. Right now he’s building a stone hut up way back in the woods, but nobody knows where it is.

My friend tells me, “We need to have time in our life for Gary—a child with a great intensity. Gary made a big sacrifice in not being integrated into society. I don’t think it’s a conscious one. That’s where he ended up. He’s found a balance, looking at the stars every night, finding peace in an otherwise hectic world. In the comfort and warmth of the Vortex.”

★ ★ ★ ★

The following stories are about those who, like Gary, have found their own mountain vortices. They travel in groups or by themselves. They come from different backgrounds, with different purposes. Some steal away while the children are at daycare, others spend most of their waking lives roaming the alpine. Drawn to distant countries, intimate with their backyard, they are seldom seen and seldom heard. Humble in their alpine exploits and content in their mountain afflictions, they are void of the need to broadcast their accomplishments to the rest of the world. Snowboarders, telemarkers, girls, guys, old dogs, young bucks, they all share one thing in common: to be far and away in the great mountains of the world.

—Mitchell Scott

Ski yogi and Rossland Vortex resident,  
Gary Donald Camozzi. Photo: Dave Heath





# BEASTS OF THE EAST

Deep in the Rocky Mountain Trench, two badass Kimberley multi-glisse artists give new meaning to the word “rip”

By Dave Quinn

Kimberley Alpine Resort wears the smirk of a quiet, unassuming family hill that knows something the rest of the world doesn't. Behind the resort's grooming and lack of obvious gnarly terrain, Kimberley's steep fall lines and incredible snow have bred some of the world's top skiers: Olympians like Nancy Greene, Stan Hayer and Trennon Paynter, as well as dozens of local rippers whose names you've probably never heard.

Two local skiers embody the understated high-calibre spirit of shred that swirls through the Bavarian-themed town of Kimberley: Monte Paynter and Russ Peebles.

These two multi-glisse athletes have come a long way since their teenage ski days of stretch pants and french fries in the old Kimberley day lodge. Plucking descents off of some of the steepest, gnarliest lines in the Kootenays, the two have skied new lines down the 600-metre, 45-to 50-degree Banana Couloir on the North Face of Fisher Peak, the 550-metre, 50-degree couloir off the 3,360-metre summit of Mount Harrison in the Southern Rockies, and the north faces of Mount McKay, Bootleg, and dozens of wild, unnamed summits throughout the Purcells. No north facing couloir is safe.

A typical big mountain descent with Monte and Russ goes something like this: In typical Kootenay fashion, there is some half-hearted, gentlemanly discussion over who should go first. Monte gracefully

Monty Paynter skiing the Bootleg Couloir on Bootleg Mountain, Kimberley, BC.  
Photos: Kari Medig (main), Dave Quinn (inset)



**“IT WAS EITHER FLAPPY GORE-TEX OR JEANS, AND I FIGURED I’D GO FASTER IN THE JEANS — THEY WERE TIGHTER.”**



Clockwise from left: Monte Paynter in Bulgaria. Photo: Kari Medig. Russ in his favourite hotel. Photo: Patrice Halley. Monte drops the jeans for spandex and sends it. Photo: Kari Medig.

Look closely, Monte and Russ appear as ants ascending the Banana Couloir, backside of Fisher Peak, Cranbrook, BC. Photo: Dave Quinn

slices up the steep upper chute, opening it up into long, powerful tele GS turns in the powder field below. Russ skis couloirs with as few turns as he can get away with, laying down only a handful of high-speed arcs to the bottom, always arriving with the breathless grin of a kid in a candy store.

About the only thing that outshines their skill with gravity is their passion for all things winter and mountain. Monte and Russ dabble in pretty much anything that floats on snow. While Monte focuses on telemark, Russ dabbles in tele, alpine touring, downhill, and snowboards. On deep days, they have both been seen shredding on a pair of snowboards mounted with alpine bindings. The two combined their talents for a win at the 2003 Fernie Powder 8 competition.

**The Zen of Telemark**

The story of how 36-year-old Monte Paynter won his first Canadian National Telemark Championship has risen to Norse saga proportions. Imagine a tense scene of neon and cattle-patterned spandex, dozens of hard-core racers warming up nervously in flashy tights and sponsorship paraphernalia. At the end of the day, though, amidst all the flash and dash, the winning time was brought in by a laid-back fellow from the Kootenays, in his second telemark

race ever, wearing, quite simply, a pair of blue jeans.

When asked to explain his choice of apparel, Monte states, with his typical one-word style of answer: “Aerodynamics.” When pressed for more, which one often has to do with the perennially modest, always-grinning Monte, he explains: “It was either flappy Gore-Tex or jeans, and I figured I’d go faster in the jeans — they were tighter.”

“All Monte ever wanted to do was ski”, says his mom Karen. “He spent his time perfecting his jumping technique off the roof of the chicken coop in the backyard instead of working out.” Monte’s family has skiing in their blood. His mom is still on pro patrol at Kimberley Alpine Resort, and his brother Trennon freestyle skied for Australia at the Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah.

A structured training regime, which included running gates on powder days, drove a young Monte away from the racing scene to the deep powder of the Purcell Mountains. It was here, in the steep couloirs and endless untracked alpine bowls of his backyard, where his passion for telemarking evolved. Even though Monte wasn’t officially training, he still managed an impressive seven-year stint as the Canadian Telemark Champion and World Cup rankings as high as 11th.

On-or-off piste, Monte is one of the most solid skiers people will

get to see rip up a slope. His charging, never-hesitating, aggressive style is a gravitational inspiration and contrasts his quiet, observant nature. When there’s no snow to be found, he works in bioengineering and raft guides for Kimberley-based Canadian Rockies River Expeditions to finance his ski habits. In his downtime, he plays his shakahachi flute or didgeridoo, or sculpts bonsai trees in his backyard, waiting for snow to fill the couloirs.

**The Skidonist**

Russ Peebles is a self-described gear junkie and “fun-hog.” A high-speed camera pointed at Russ’s basement door would reveal a chaotic fast-forward scene of 36-year-old Russ and his partner, Denise, endlessly carrying kayaks, fly-fishing gear, skis, snowboards, canoes, longboards, bikes, and surfboards in and out of their home.

As darkness falls over Kimberley, Russ can often be found riding his BMX backwards down the hilly main street or carving the local golf course trails on his longboard, milking the last drop of adrenaline from a day that always seems to end too soon.

Not a man of many words or a skier of many turns, Russ skis with his heart on his sleeve. He likes it big and fast. On a run where most would crank out 50 turns, with a rest stop halfway, Russ carves

out a non-stop ripper’s dozen of effortless-looking high-speed turns. An insatiable appetite for all things that exploit gravity, he’s legendary for busting out huge 30-foot double daffies on CMH fat skis at the annual Kimberley Big Air competition, much to the enjoyment of the young twin-tippin’, baggy-pantin’ punks.

Not only is Russ an athlete, he also runs a successful second-hand gear business in Cranbrook called, appropriately, Funhogz. He is also an amazing dad. Russ’s two-year-old son Rylan not only looks like his pops, but already has quads of steel from hucking himself off every concrete embankment he can waddle to, ensuring the Kootenay skidonist lineage will remain unbroken.

Monte Paynter and Russ Peebles have come a long way from humble beginnings on the bunny hill at Kimberley Alpine Resort. These two inspirational athletes are pushing the limits of what can be skied. All this in true Kootenay fashion: on their own time, in their own way, true to their roots on what appears, on the surface, to be just another ordinary ski hill. Paynter and Peebles embody the spirit of understated excellence that permeates the Kootenays, a region defined by the unspoken quest for a permanent, ever-blissful state of stoke. □



Ski: Marcus Greber Photo: Michael Reusse  
Rider: Scott Newsome Photo: Chris Ankeny



Khyber Splitboard



Doughboys

Handcrafted in  
*Whistler*  
canada 

# Dad's Day Out

Balancing daycare, sipping juice boxes, dropping steep couloirs: it's all in a day's work for two Nelsonsites unwilling to let fatherhood diminish the dream

Story and photos by Steve Ogle



The roads are a bit icy on this cold, clear Nelson morning, but it's nothing the all-wheel drive on Scott's new family wagon can't handle. He blends in with the conveyor belt of traffic, eventually reaching Victoria's school where he drops her off for the day. At a determined, yet legal pace, he returns home via a pre-established stop-free route for breakfast at 8:28 a.m. Mom leaves for work and Scott gets Christopher dressed for daycare and puts some food out for the cat. For some parents, this is as crazy as their day gets. For others, it's just a warm-up run.

Father of two, Scott Jeffery deals with nipple chaff and heavy exposure in the Grays Peak Couloir, Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park, BC.



## Seldom Seen, Seldom Heard

Another dad, Craig, father of one, honks his Subie outside my house at 8:44 a.m. Fifteen minutes ago I was asleep, but now I find myself on the way to local coffee house Oso Negro—a place with buckets you can dunk your head into, in the form of a double espresso. How is it Craig's only task this morning is getting a coffee? It seems too easy. I make a mental note that he's probably sleep-deprived, having spent all night organizing. When on a mission with the dads, you often have to factor these things in: the late nights, the multi-tasking, the chronic scheduling.

Clad in 90s Gore-Tex, Scott pulls out of daycare and streaks back home again, just in time for our scheduled rendezvous. Craig and I already have the sleds loaded, and together we depart for Kokanee Glacier at 9:12 a.m.—a late start—but in this case “better late than never” isn't far from the truth. After all, just getting these guys out lately has been hard enough, and by lately I mean the last five or six years. The fact that it's the first bluebird day in over a month makes the timing a minor miracle, but for me the real bonus is that it's not one of those be-home-by-breakfast assaults. So the day already feels like a success story before we hit the open road.

Wait. We still have to gas up because Victoria had gymnastics last night. Somehow the two variables are intrinsically linked.

We're on skins by 11:02 a.m. at Gibson Lake, after a clockwork snowmobile ride in. We stop briefly for lunch at 11:38 a.m., and Craig notices he's forgotten his Nalgene bottle, but Scott pulls out an extra juice box and spirits remain high. So far the day's been typical, like we have been loaded into a giant slingshot, and now we're finally rocketing upwards in rapid fashion.

At 1:30 p.m. we arrive at the target: a couloir that Craig saw in his twenties but has been on the backburner until now. The weather is holding, but still we discuss our turnaround plans, giving ourselves just enough time to get back and pick Christopher up from daycare. Then we start booting 'er straight up.

Things go well until a few hundred metres from the top, when our nipples start chaffing on the snow. Craig ponders aloud the fact that this mountain is quite a bit steeper than he remembers, and he expresses doubts about our schedule. However, like all dads everywhere, these two are masters at being on time for dinner, no matter what, and they draft a plan in a language I don't quite understand. Untold experience in similar situations has the dads rotating on lead while I trail in their wake, so they reserve a burst of energy they know they won't have for the final push up to the Himalayan cornice—a task delegated to the only team member with seemingly nothing to lose—me, the kidless guy.

Finally at the top, we pull over the lip and fear instantly takes a grip: we're going to be late. At this realization, I bear witness to the fastest changeover into ski mode ever recorded in the mountains; meanwhile, I'm fiddling with my Dynafits on a platform big enough for only one ski at a time. I'm quite nervous looking down the maw, but the dads reassure me that everything will be okay, especially if I go first. This must be another one of their calculated plans, so I just shut up and go.

These dads and others are my steadfast ski buddies, and I trust them in times like these. Yet, in a way I curse their opportunistic skiing patterns and my own complacency brought about from too many quick trips to the tree runs at Evening Ridge. But I keep going out with them and am grateful for learning how to adapt and charge hard when opportunity knocks. So I launch into the couloir with a daring sideslip they promise not to tell anyone about. The two dads follow humbly in turn, or without turn, as it were, and once we all maneuver into the family-friendly zone, our descent becomes a free-for-all.

We exit Grays Peak Couloir, hooting at 4:20 p.m. with darkness prevailing. This is followed by another 800 metres of non-stop pillow-bashing down to the lake, and then like homing pigeons, we fly directly back to the coop.

The daycare is still open at 6:16 p.m.—thank goodness the caregiver is a friend—when Scott arrives with his boots still on, two tired ski partners in the truck and two sleds still on the trailer. Christopher says he's having too much fun and wants to stay longer, so Scott goes home to start making dinner and will pick him up later.

Craig has his own routine, which includes prepping for a day at Whitewater with his daughter Katie. “Good luck with that” are my parting words. Knowing the day's action is not merely a third of the way over for me, I submerge myself into a steaming hot bath. But just then the phone rings: it's Graeme. He wants to go to Evening Ridge tomorrow, and he'll pick me up at 5:30 a.m.; an early mission because he has a baby appointment at 9 a.m. I tell him that's pushing it, but call me in the morning anyway and we'll see how it looks.

Another dad's day out. □



With the kids safe at daycare and the wives back in town bringing home the bacon, Scott and Craig finally get a chance to get their dad on.



passion | powder | paradise

- Small group heli skiing & boarding
- Legendary high alpine terrain
- Selkirk and purcell mountain ranges

E: [info@stellaraheliskiing.com](mailto:info@stellaraheliskiing.com) P: 250.366.0067

[WWW.STELLARHELISKIING.COM](http://WWW.STELLARHELISKIING.COM)

# Line of Control

One man's solo ski outing, far away in the politically embattled and wildly mountainous border between Pakistan and India, is rejuvenation for the soul

By Eric V. Segalstad

**I MISS THE JOKES, BUT THEY'RE REPLACED WITH A KEEN SENSE OF AWARENESS AND THE LUXURY OF DOING WHATEVER I WANT. I CAN CHARGE UNINTERRUPTED DESCENTS, EXPLORE WITHOUT A LINE IN MIND OR WAIT FOR PERFECT LIGHT AT A VISTA, CAMERA IN HAND.**

The top gondola isn't about to run today either. It's way after noon, and although everything is ostensibly in place for a well-oiled resort, the ski-resort town of Gulmarg, in the region of Kashmir, limps along like the rest of India. Good thing I didn't expect Western-style convenience and efficiency. I purposely left all that behind, trimming the ski experience to its bare minimum: an impressive mountain, backcountry gear and myself. I'm in the Pir Panjal Range, one of the smaller ranges that make up the Himalayas, the highest mountain range in the world. Instead of convincing friends to come along, I figured I'd make new friends in a remote region.

"Hey Billa, want to go to the top?" I ask. "I didn't bring my skins," he responds. Billa is a local guide and my ski partner when he doesn't have clients.

I'm used to soloing, so I put my skins on and begin the three-hour slog to the top. At least the track is set. Place one foot in front of the other. I recite the Buddhist mantra: *om mani padme hum*—skinning is meditation, deep even breaths coupled with repetitive

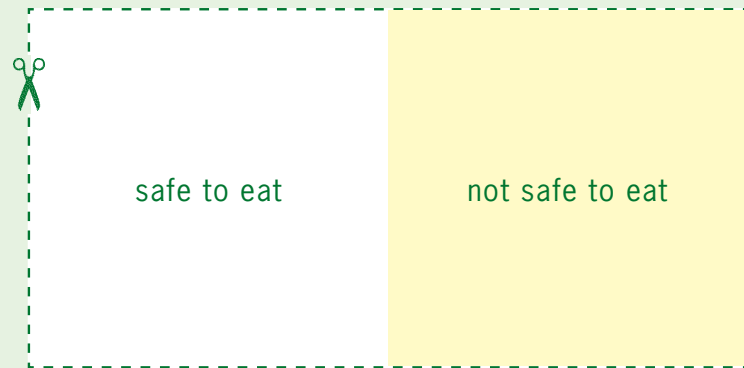
motions. It connects me to the mountain in a different way than skiing down, and I couldn't live without either. They belong together. Even the words share a brotherly bond: add "nn" to the middle of "skiing" and you get "skinning."

Halfway up, I leave the track and set my own to reach another part of the 5.5-kilometre summit ridge. I stop on a ledge above the treeline for a breather, leaving my meditative world. Without conversations to fill the emptiness of the landscape, my thoughts surface, like fish on a lake bathed in the clear light of dusk. Even though I can't recall most of the epiphanies jumping from the glass, they somehow stay with me, adding layers to the fabric of my soul.

I love being out alone as much as I love skiing with a good crew, but when I'm unaccompanied, there's nothing between me and everything else. I miss the jokes, but they're replaced with a keen sense of awareness and the luxury of doing whatever I want. I can charge uninterrupted descents, explore without a line in mind or wait for perfect light at a vista, camera in hand.

The push to the top takes an hour, but instead of picking a line, I head south. Seven pole pushes is enough to slide across the plateau. Huge slabs of sastrugi scrape underneath my boards, creaking like the riggings of an old sailboat.

Skier Chris Winter makes his mark in the Himalayan foothills, near the Kashmir region's hotly contested Line of Control. Photo: Kari Medig



130 West Broadway, Vancouver | 1341 Main Street, North Vancouver | mec.ca | hydration systems | helmets | skis | skins



Indian soldiers work on improving communications along the Line of Control, high in the Pir Panjal Range, near the border between India and Pakistan. Photos: Eric Segalstad/thelineofcontrol.com



## "Wake up to This View"

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



### World Class Views

**5** exclusive waterfront cottages on 10 acres  
Nearly 500ft of shoreline on spectacular Slocan Lake

### a Natural Playground

... at your doorstep




For information on our remaining cottages please contact:  
**Andrew Macrae** – [andrew@epicres.com](mailto:andrew@epicres.com) 866.679.3742

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

Project Marketing by: EPIC Real Estate Solutions  
 This is not an offering for sale, which may only be done by Disclosure Statement, E, Et O.E

The plateau rolls and unveils numerous spines on the other side of a steep, 700-metre drainage. Billa told me they call it *Bhanala*, which translates to "twelve fingers." We'll be hiking up there if the gondi starts running before noon.

Close to the edge I see two soldiers, which isn't an unusual sight at 4,000 metres here in the Pir Panjal Range. The sensitive border between India and Pakistan, called the Line of Control, is only two miles away, but the soldiers don't usually leave their border outposts, which dot the landscape every few kilometres.

I slowly approach the soldiers to make sure they see me. I don't exactly look like a terrorist or Pakistani storm trooper, but still. A nervous trigger is of no consequence for anybody but me.

They see me. I wave, take my skis off and walk over. I say *namaste* and peek down a freshly dug cubbyhole. An officer crouches six feet inside, clutching pliers in one hand and wire that runs from a wooden spool in the other. "Radio no working," he tells me. The officer stashes a plateful of spaghetti wire into an empty bottle of Officer's Choice whisky, presumably to keep out the elements.

They test the connection with a *M\*A\*S\*H*-style radio, the kind

with the old phone receiver, and successfully reach the next picket along the Line of Control.

They pack up, leave, and walk back toward their picket. Alone, I tune back into the scenery. The wind rolls gently over the plateau, buffing the hard-pack snow. I click in and push off towards Sunshine Peak, sipping air from the vast expanse. I reach the far east traverse and notice fresh tracks past the first bowl. The cornice released a small slab avalanche here three days ago. I've studied it

I SLOWLY APPROACH THEM TO MAKE SURE THEY SEE ME. I DON'T EXACTLY LOOK LIKE A TERRORIST OR PAKISTANI STORM TROOPER, BUT STILL. A NERVOUS TRIGGER IS OF NO CONSEQUENCE FOR ANYBODY BUT ME.

through my binoculars every day from the village below: the snow has been immobile since and temps have been steady. I'm by myself and make the call after a quick stability test.

I drop in from the northwest, to the side of the cornice and the icy three-day-old wreckage below it. My fatties accelerate through a fluffy cache of powder. Instead of diving into the narrow choke and riding the belly of the bowl, a guaranteed avalanche trap, I round the knob and use my speed to gain elevation towards the ridge. I stop and look around from the top of a 200-metre-long buttery spine. The bottom of the drainage, where I'll end up, is another 800 metres below. In the distance Nanga Parbat, the world's ninth tallest mountain, rises



Photos: Karl Medig

**I COULD'VE STAYED IN MONTANA OR GONE TO THE TETONS, BUT THEN I WOULD HAVE MISSED THE DAILY RITUAL OF GAZING AT THE ROOF OF THE WORLD BEFORE ANOTHER DESCENT THROUGH KASHMIR'S EXOTIC PAPER TREES AND SNOW MONKEYS AND BIG GRIZZLED CATS.**

from the rest of the Himalayas like a jewel cast against a deep-blue sky. This is why I'm here.

I could've stayed in Montana or gone to the Tetons, but then I would have missed the daily ritual of gazing at the roof of the world before another descent through Kashmir's exotic paper trees and snow monkeys and big grizzled cats.

I rip the spine with a few dozen slashes, straight-line to the first patch of paper trees, swerve through the clusters, gun through a narrow opening between a pair of tattered trunks, catch air from the root, crouch, soft landing, snow slaps my face, hard left, ears pop, steep rollover into the gut of the bowl and up on the other side.

I sidestep and reach the top of the knob where I run into a crew from the Rockies. We exchange hellos and talk about the snowpack. They're surprised to find out I'm skiing alone.

Groupthink goes both ways. On bogged-down powder days we tend to be careless—"Come on man, let's tear it up!"—and then, when there are enough safe lines to choose from, we collectively underestimate stability. I trust my own instincts in the backcountry; it's the only way I can let myself be out here. Backcountry democracy often leads to bad decision-making, at least worse than having one semi-experienced skier make the calls. That's why I prefer skiing in small groups with people I know or by myself.

I push down the fall line toward a group of stoic conifers. My

favourite line on the mountain is hidden somewhere in those trees, and it goes all the way down to the deep drainage below. It's one of those lines that slough out after two runs. Fortunately, it's left alone since it's invisible from above and requires a skin to get back out.

I veer right to try a new approach. The first section is flat and getting across is like treading water wearing baggy pants. It tips over into steep, tight trees and choppy snow. I duck, have to drop a 10-footer in slow speed, and have a sketchy landing with one ski in the well next to a snow-covered log and the other on a pillow. All right, enough of this bullshit. I aim for the original line, reach it, carve a dozen long GS turns, hard right and dive into the 45-degree declivity. I know there's only wiggle room for the last 200 metres, so I'm mentally prepared to eleven all the way down. A few notches faster for sure. I sit with elastic legs through the compression, and the momentum propels me to the other side of the drainage.

I catch my breath and look at my line before I get those skins back on. If I push, I'll watch the sunset from the top of the hill. From there my commute is a quick ski to the base followed by a 15-minute walk back to food and company at the Bakshi Guesthouse. Dinner? A generous plate of spicy Kashmiri food served with a stack of pan-fresh *chapatis*. I wonder what Billa and the Kiwis next door skied today? We'll catch up in the warmth of the *bukhari*.

*Eric V. Segalstad spent last season documenting ski culture in Kashmir for thelineofcontrol.com, a Stellar Transmedia and Black Diamond-sponsored gig. He's sometimes in Boulder, Colorado, where his car and spare skis reside along with a pile of recent articles penned for The Ski Journal, Skiing, Ski, and Warren Miller's SnoWorld.*

## "...deep in the Monashees"



Skier: This could be you. Location: Revelstoke, BC. Photo: Bill Hafidson



www.eaglepassheliskiing.com Revelstoke, BC Canada

# The Dogtooth Rangers

How a group of pleasantly modest glisse mountaineers charge through Golden's endless peaks and valleys

By Ptor Spriceniaks

The Dogtooth Range is an unheralded group of mountains forming the northern tip of the Purcell Range, which flanks Golden, BC. Simply put, a ranger is a person or thing that wanders over a particular area or domain. The Dogtooth Rangers are a self-dubbed group of five friends in their late twenties whose like-minded philosophies and lifestyles have converged in Golden. Aaron Enns, Lisa Jenni, Issac Kamink, Cody Lank and Ty Mills were originally attracted by the opening of Golden's Kicking Horse Mountain Resort (KMHR) and life in a mountain town not yet impaired by overdevelopment. Over the last seven years, the Rangers have evolved together, sharing vibes of health, home, consciousness, partnership, and adventure. Starting out with ski-hill jobs and learning in the KHMR "slack-country", they have evolved into an increasingly rare breed of glisse mountaineers.

Collectively the group has logged numerous first ski descents in the burly mountains around Golden. Their lives are an endless scheme about how to bag unskied couloirs and drop off of desolate peaks, all in the pursuit of being a part of, and committing to, the mountains.

The modern resort reality often leads to a marginalization of the complete mountain education. The allure of popular bling, sledding and jib cultures traps riders within confines that are not true to all the mountains have to teach. The Dogtooth Rangers, however, have

been inspired not only by the revealing views that ski-hill access affords, but also by the legacies of previous generations of Rangers. People like Peter Bowles Evans and Rich Marshal, true ski-mountaineers who have already discovered the ski potential of the Dogtooth Mountains and the northern Columbia Valley, living out their passions despite the sometimes challenging social realities of small-town BC. As a testament to their elders, this new generation of Rangers have not chosen the easy or ego-boosting path but rather the holistic apprenticeship of the mountains, embracing the slog ethic over motorized access, committing their winter entirely to skiing lines very few ever do.

Aaron Enns developed his classic skiing style during youthful years racing at Batawa Ski Club in Ontario. It was his family's business at the Goat Mountain Lodge in the Blaeberry Valley, just north of Golden, that brought him to the west. Taking clients hiking and on horseback exposed him to the natural beauty of the mountains. On occasional heli-hikes with Sid Feuz, a local Swiss guide, he learned old mountain tales. His artistic nature resulted in several semesters at the Emily Carr Institute in Vancouver. Becoming one of



THEIR LIVES ARE AN ENDLESS SCHEME ABOUT HOW TO BAG UNSKIED COULOIRS AND DROP OFF OF DESOLATE PEAKS, ALL IN THE PURSUIT OF BEING A PART OF, AND COMMITTING TO, THE MOUNTAINS.





Steeps, chutes and couloirs. The Dogtooth Rangers on patrol in their backyard. Photos: Ptor Spriceniaks

the original members of the ski patrol at Kicking Horse, however, brought him the greatest satisfaction. Now his acquired patrolling skills are transposed to backcountry adventures, like skiing the south face of the South Goodsir, a burly, 1,800-metre, 50-degree face that has only been skied a handful of times.

Issac Kamink and Lisa Jenni are the couple within the Rangers. Issac, one of the lead raft guides for Glacier Rafting, also did his first skiing at Batawa but never met Aaron there. Now he telemarks Norse god-style, alternating with classic AT equipment for practical reasons. Lisa, originally from the Yukon, shares her exceptional snowboard abilities as an instructor at Kicking Horse. In the off-season she's a pro painter. Lisa has embraced the splitboard to shred steep couloirs more efficiently, even though she always manages to charge on snowshoes. It would be difficult to find a young woman with more stamina for epic approaches, such as the 20-kilometre-long bushwhack up the Ice River Valley. Together, the couple has joined the local Search and Rescue outfit. Their modest Golden homestead serves as the unofficial Ranger base.

Cody Lank is a pure BC boy, hailing from nearby Salmon Arm where he began riding mountains as a snowboarder. At KHMR he was a snowboard instructor, then got turned on to skiing, an incredible process to witness. Within a couple of years of part-time skiing, Cody was launching himself into huge mid-air grabs, venturing

**THEY DON'T NEED OR PURSUE MASS APPROVAL OR SPONSORSHIP IN ORDER TO GROOVE OUT ON THEIR PASSIONS. THEY DON'T WANT FAME OR ACCOLADES FOR THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS. LIKE THE PREVIOUS GENERATIONS OF DOGTOOTH RANGERS, THEY WILL REMAIN CONTENTEDLY AND COMFORTABLY OBSCURE.**

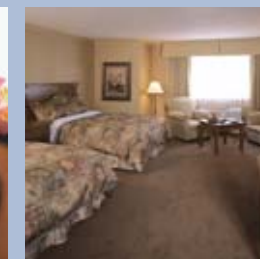
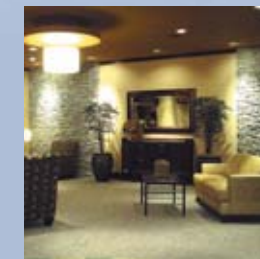
on multi-day ski traverses in the Selkirks and descending unskied 50-degree slopes like those found in the Rockies' Cirque of the Unskiables. Cody also excels at rock climbing, working part of his summers as an instructor. His paintings of mountain landscapes hang at Jitta's Cafe in Golden.

Ty Mills grew up in BC as well, and after moving from Vancouver, Ty shared his high school years with Cody in Salmon Arm. Ty, like Lisa, remains a pure mountain surfer, embracing the splitboard in pursuit of pristine powder and challenging descents, like the north face of Swiss Peak in Rogers Pass. Inspired by the likes of Frenchman Marco Siffredi, the first person to ever snowboard from the summit

of Everest, Ty's surf-mountaineering pursuits have him fantasizing about the evolution of what many consider to be the current stagnant state of splitboard technology.

His focus on the natural world remains strong through his summer work as a treeplanting foreman and salmon-fishing guide for Salmon King Lodge on BC's coast, which enables him to have his winters free to shred at will. Ty also devotes his energies to MAWO (Mobilization Against War and Occupation), an organization dedicated to public enlightenment on global realities and Canada's involvement in them.

Whether they are hammering through long approaches into the occult valleys of the northwestern Kootenays, growing their own food or actively participating in their community, the Dogtooth Rangers are committed to embracing higher values. They don't need or pursue mass approval or sponsorship in order to groove out on their passions. They don't want fame or accolades for their accomplishments. Like the previous generations of Dogtooth Rangers, they will remain contentedly and comfortably obscure. You may meet them by chance one fine day in the mountains. There'll be a Ranger out there in the early season, snapped back into the mode by the crystalline magic of the first snows, right until the last traces of corn in July. □



TOLL FREE RESERVATIONS  
**1-87-PRESTIGE**

Located in the Okanagan and Kootenay Rockies

[www.PrestigeHotelsAndResorts.com](http://www.PrestigeHotelsAndResorts.com)