

# The Alpine Club of Canada Gazette

le club alpin du Canada

FEATURE

Winning images  
from the Chess  
Group GMC  
photo contest



Vol. 39, No. 2 Winter | hiver 2023



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■ RIVER BARRY  
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# SEEK WILDER PATHS



# The Alpine Club of Canada Gazette le club alpin du Canada

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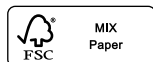
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## Submissions

Submissions to the Gazette are welcome!  
For submission guidelines email your  
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## Corporate Partners

The Alpine Club of Canada recognizes all of our outstanding corporate partners who support our club in so many ways. Without the support of these companies, the ACC could not run the programs we do or have the success we've had. We thank them sincerely for their support.



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## Bibiana Cujec

Bibiana is a retired cardiologist with a lifelong passion for the mountains. She enjoys hiking, backcountry skiing and mountaineering and is very grateful to the mountain guides who have taken her to many high places in Western Canada, Nepal, New Zealand, Iceland and Ecuador. Bibiana has recently moved to Canmore to fulfill a dream of living in the Rockies.



## Donna Naprstek

Retirement started a whole new life of hiking and skiing in the alpine for Donna and her husband when they moved west in 2013. BC and Alberta offer endless opportunities to pursue their passion for the mountains. Kayaking along the Columbia River also brings them joy and contentment.



## Joshua Lavigne

Joshua Lavigne is an ACMG mountain guide and chair of the Bugaboo Section. Some of his first mountain adventures started at the ACC Clubhouse in Canmore, which inspired decades of alpine pursuit. He lives in Invermere with his wife and two kids.



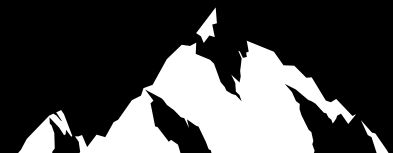
## Doug Latimer

Doug Latimer is the lead winter guide for the ACC. He is a ski and apprentice rock guide living in Canmore. Doug has been teaching and guiding for over 20 years. In an effort to support his guiding habit, Doug is also a partner in a video and multimedia production company, Shadow Light Productions.



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*Cover: GMC Week 1. Photo Xavier Bonacorsi.*

*Here: Exploring the Chess Group at the 2023 General Mountaineering Camp. Photo Xavier Bonacorsi.*



## Place your bids in this year's Summit Bid Auction

The 2023 Summit Bid charity auction is happening this October. You can bid on Canada's best mountain gear, art, and experiences from the comfort of your living room!

Help us make this year's online auction our most successful event yet, while at the same time supporting the ACC Facilities Fund and landing yourself some amazing prizes.

The auction will be open for bids the week of October 24th, with winners announced the night of this year's **Mountain Guides Ball on Saturday, October 28th**, where the auction will also be held live in person.

This year, all proceeds will be directed to the ACC's Facilities Fund, which helps the club make renovations and upgrades to our hut system, as well as work toward the installation of more renewable energy systems.

You can check out the auction items and place your bids on the Summit Bid website at [summitbid.ca](https://summitbid.ca) beginning on October 24th.



## New patches in the ACC store!

### Elizabeth Parker Hut embroidered, sew-on patches now available

Carry the good times and good climbs with you by wearing one of these beautiful new patches in our Artist Series. Robyn Mulligan's design features one of our most iconic huts at Lake O'Hara in Banff National Park. Shipping is included.

Go to [bit.ly/EP-HUTPATCH](https://bit.ly/EP-HUTPATCH) or scan the code below.



**Join us for the**  
**2024 Remillard GMC**

Since 1906 the Alpine Club has hosted the General Mountaineering Camp each summer. Next year we are excited to be exploring the Remillard Group in the Selkirks. Come join us for some modern day mountain exploration!

Register at: [bit.ly/ACC-GMC2024](https://bit.ly/ACC-GMC2024)

# We're back — in green!

**Our Banff Mountain Film Festival Happy Hours have been a huge hit over the years.**

Started in 2015, the event has raised tens of thousands of dollars for ACC funds and causes, including our Environment, Leadership, and Greatest Needs Funds. The Happy Hour will be back for the 2023 Festival with our partners MEC and YETI.

**A \$30 minimum donation gets you a signature Festival YETI Rambler that includes a Wild Rose Brewery beer or Core Values cider as well as a chance to win great prizes. Join us!**



**Saturday, November 4th  
4:00 - 6:00pm**

**Mountain Marketplace, Kinnear Centre**, second floor, at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity.

*All proceeds from the 2023 Happy Hour will support the Facilities Fund of The Alpine Club of Canada.*

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**December '23, January, February '24 - Christmas Trek, Island Peak, Aconcagua & Ojos Del Salado or Kilimanjaro**

**April - May '24 - Everest Summit Climbs: Nepal or Tibet, Everest Camp 3 Training Climbs, North Col Tibet, Mt. Lhotse, Everest's Sister. Also, Everest Glacier School, EBC Nepal Trek, or ABC Tibet Trek with leader Dan Mazur 12 Successful Everest expeditions.**

**June - July - Aug '24 - Gasherbrum 1 and 2, K2 Summit, 8000m Training, Broad Peak, K2 Base Camp Trek, Pastore Trekking Peak (near K2). 3 time K2 Leader Dan Mazur Leader: 3 time K2, 2x Broad Peak, 1x Gasherbrum and Sherpas!**

**September '24 - Manaslu, Cho Oyu, Shishapangma**

**October / November '24 - Baruntse - Mera Peak, Ama Dablam, Lobuche, Island Peak, Everest Base Camp and Remote Service Trek**

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# ACC Board of Directors

Each year, three of the nine positions on the ACC Board of Directors are up for election for three-year terms. The results of the 2023 election were announced at the club's Annual General Meeting in May:

## Election 2023

- Vice President for Access & Environment: John Andresen
- Vice President for Facilities: Jim Gudjonson
- Treasurer: Keith Sanford

## Election 2024

The ACC Nomination Committee is identifying qualified individuals to develop a slate of candidates for the 2024 election for the positions of:

- Vice President for Sections
- Vice President for Services and Athletics
- Vice President for Mountain Culture

For a term of three years, from May, 2024 to May, 2027.

This is a great opportunity to learn more about the club and to get involved with the club's strategic direction.

Interested club members should review the application requirements on the ACC website and complete the online application process by October 31, 2023.

[www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/acc-board-elections](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/acc-board-elections)

## Nominate a volunteer

Each year the ACC Awards Committee undertakes the task of sifting through numerous nominations to identify and acknowledge those deserving of The Alpine Club of Canada's Volunteer Awards.

Nominations are now open for exceptional ACC volunteers. The following awards recognize and celebrate ACC volunteers for their contributions to the club and its members:

- A.O. Wheeler Legacy Award
- Honorary Membership
- President's Award
- Silver Rope for Leadership Award
- Distinguished Service Award
- Don Forest Service Award
- Eric Brooks Leader Award

For details on how to nominate a volunteer and nomination forms, visit [alpineclubofcanada.ca/awards](http://alpineclubofcanada.ca/awards) or call the ACC National Office at (403) 678-3200 ext. 222 to receive the information by mail.

Deadline for nominations is December 31.

## Nommez un bénévole

Chaque année, les membres du Comité des prix du Club Alpin du Canada consacrent de leur temps libre à passer au crible de nombreuses nominations pour déterminer les lauréats des Prix de bénévolat du club.

Les candidatures sont maintenant ouvertes pour les bénévoles exceptionnels du Club Alpin du Canada. Les prix suivants reconnaissent et célèbrent les bénévoles du CAC pour leurs contributions au club et à ses membres :

- Prix A.O. Wheeler Legacy
- Membre honoraire
- Prix du président
- Prix Silver Rope du leadership
- Prix pour le service remarquable
- Prix de service Don Forest
- Prix leader Eric Brooks

Pour plus de détails sur les formulaires de candidature et la façon de nommer un bénévole, visitez [alpineclubofcanada.ca/awards](http://alpineclubofcanada.ca/awards) ou appelez le Bureau national du CAC au (403) 678-3200 ext. 222 pour recevoir l'information par la poste.

La date de tombée des candidatures est le 31 décembre.



**A**s we move into the fall, I am happy to share with you some of the highlights of the summer and the exciting prospects of the next few months.

Our maintenance team is just finishing a major undertaking at the Bow Hut, which will feature a new vestibule, a renovated breezeway, solar panels, a battery bank, ventilation, and LED lighting throughout the hut. This is the first of a series of projects aimed at installing renewable energy systems in our backcountry huts to reduce our environmental footprint. It comes on the heels of other significant projects completed this summer, including a new roof at the Fairy Meadow Hut, a new micro hydro and renewable energy system at the Kain Hut, and recladding and renovation of the Peyto Hut. It's been a busy and successful summer, with only the long-awaited replacement of the Castle Mountain Hut being pushed back to next spring because of permitting delays. (See "A Summer in the Life," page 28)

Among our flagship programs, the GMC was once again an opportunity for our members to reconnect and experience the unique remoteness of the mountains. Artists Week was particularly successful, with Chic Scott and Brad Harrison regaling guests with stories of their many adventures.

We are now actively planning the fall section forum and Mountain Guides Ball. The forum is a unique opportunity for the team in Canmore to gather feedback from our sections on a broad range of topics, covering safety, leadership training, booking policies, and IT support. We will also work together on our vision and mission and how we can better convey our purpose of changing people's lives through mountaineering experiences, so that we remain relevant as a club for the next hundred years.

We hope to see many of our members at the upcoming Mountain Guides Ball, our annual community event in partnership with the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides (ACMG). At the Guides Ball, we'll pay tribute to Dan Verrall, an iconic ACC member who has touched the lives of so many within our community, and host a silent auction, the Summit Bid, to raise money for our backcountry huts. We have much to look forward to and I feel privileged to be part of such a vibrant and engaged group.

**E**n ces premiers jours d'automne, je suis heureuse de partager avec vous quelques-uns des faits marquants de l'été et les belles perspectives des prochains mois.

Notre équipe d'entretien vient de terminer un projet d'envergure au refuge Bow, avec un nouveau vestibule, une passerelle rénovée, des panneaux solaires, un parc de batteries, et un système de ventilation et d'éclairage LED dans l'ensemble du refuge. C'est le premier d'une série de projets visant à installer des systèmes d'énergie renouvelable dans nos refuges d'arrière-pays afin de réduire notre empreinte écologique. Il s'ajoute à d'autres projets importants réalisés cet été, notamment un nouveau toit au refuge de Fairy Meadow, une nouvelle microcentrale hydroélectrique et un système d'énergie renouvelable au refuge Kain, ainsi que la rénovation intérieure et extérieure du refuge Peyto. L'été a été chargé et fructueux, seul le remplacement tant attendu du refuge de Castle Mountain a été repoussé au printemps prochain en raison de retards dans l'obtention des permis.

Parmi nos programmes phares, le GMC a été une fois de plus l'occasion pour nos membres de se retrouver et de profiter de la beauté de nos montagnes reculées. La semaine des artistes a été particulièrement réussie, profitant de la présence de Chic Scott et Brad Harrison et leurs récits d'aventures.

Nous planifions activement la rencontre d'automne de nos sections et le bal des guides de montagne. La rencontre d'automne est une occasion unique pour l'équipe de Canmore de recueillir les commentaires de nos sections sur un large éventail de sujets, notamment la sécurité, la formation des leaders bénévoles, les politiques de réservation et le soutien informatique. Nous travaillerons également ensemble sur notre vision et notre mission et sur la manière dont nous pouvons mieux transmettre notre objectif de changer la vie de nos membres au travers d'expériences alpines, afin que notre club reste pertinent pour les cent prochaines années.

Nous espérons voir beaucoup de nos membres au prochain bal des guides de montagne, notre événement communautaire annuel en partenariat avec l'Association Canadienne des Guides de Montagne (ACMG). Lors du bal des guides, nous rendrons hommage à Dan Verrall, un membre emblématique du CAC qui a touché la vie de tant de personnes au sein de notre communauté, et nous organiserons une vente aux enchères silencieuse, le Summit Bid, afin de collecter des fonds pour nos refuges dans l'arrière-pays. Nous avons de beaux projets et je me sens privilégiée de faire partie d'un groupe aussi dynamique et engagé.

*Carine Salvy*  
Directrice générale du CAC

# HERITAGE AWARDS

**Every year, the ACC celebrates members** who have been with the club for 25, 35 and 50 years. We present these members an official lapel pin along with an official certificate (for 25 and 35 year members) or a wall plaque (for 50 year members).

Since 2022, 40 members reached the 25-year milestone, 25 members reached the 35-year mark, and 11 became members of the 50-year Heritage Club!



**Congratulations and thanks to our new Heritage Club Members listed below.**

## 25 years

André Fink  
Andrew Fisher  
Ann Bussell  
Arno Dyck  
Bobbie Rathbun  
Brian Sansom  
Catherine Wirt  
Charles Price  
Chris Nadeau  
Christopher Andrews  
Dan Field  
David Chick  
David Williams  
Debra Hornsby  
Diane Casurella  
Dick Benoit  
Eszter Simon-Berci  
George Borchert  
Gordon Ferguson  
Harold Waters  
Isabelle Daigneault  
Jennifer Cordeiro  
John Mollison  
Josefine Dyck  
Julie Muller  
Karen Williams  
Knut von Satzen

Leandrea Kane  
Marc Harden  
Mike Royan  
Monir Taha  
John DeBruyn  
Myrene Mollison  
Neil Bosch  
Peter Ilott  
Rob Denson  
Roger Rathbun  
Tom Fransham  
Tony Nadon  
Wendy Bosch

Julie Timmins  
Keith Thompson  
Ken Little  
Malcolm R. Talbot  
Mary Ann Thompson  
Tim Jellard  
Nancy Townshend  
Paul Erickson  
Richard Higgins  
Richard St. Pierre  
Robyn Bowles  
Tony Lewis  
Willa Harasym

## 35 years

Andrew Riggs  
Bob Jones  
Bob Olinger  
Carolyn Cousins  
Christine Higgins  
Claude Mongeon  
David Cousins  
Diane Erickson  
Gerald Youzwa  
Jiri Novak  
Jon Fletcher  
Judy Linkletter

## 50 years

Charles (Chic) Scott  
Barry Narod  
Chester Davis  
Doris Davis  
Ellen Woodd  
Hans Fuhrer  
Harold Keushnig  
John Gray  
Peter Stockdale  
Robert Brusse  
Robert Rick

# VOLUNTEER AWARDS

**Volunteers are the heart and soul of our club.** Season to season, day in and day out for over a century, volunteers run the sections, write articles, lead trips, protect the alpine environment and demonstrate their commitment to the club. Every season, and in every part of Canada, volunteer trip leaders take enthusiastic groups and new members on climbing, hiking and skiing outings. They are skilled, dedicated, giving and tireless. Without them there is simply no ACC.

**The ACC Volunteer Awards** recognize those members who have made significant contributions in furthering the aims and goals of the club and Canadian mountaineering in general. This year, please join us in recognizing the outstanding volunteers mentioned below.

## Recipients of the 2022 Volunteer Awards

### DON FOREST SERVICE AWARD

Recipients of the Don Forest Service Award have contributed significant service to the club or a section over a minimum period of one to five years, such as:

- Furthering the aims of the club or a section
- Joining a committee or project of the club or a section
- Contributing to a large ACC undertaking
- Furthering the activities of the club or a section

Heather Chamberlain – Rocky Mountain

Janelle Curtis – Vancouver Island

Katarzyna Dyszy – Manitoba

Lida Frydrychova – Calgary

Ray Hope – Manitoba

Wayne Campbell – Jasper/Hinton

William (Bill) Barrett – Ottawa

Bryan Thompson – Toronto

Ben Wilkey – Columbia Mountain

Bill Pacholka – Great Plains

Frank Spears – Prince George

### ERIC BROOKS LEADER AWARD

Members who have demonstrated a strong, consistent commitment to learn and apply technical and leadership skills in mountaineering or ski mountaineering on club or section-organized activities for a minimum of one to five years.

Marcus Tomlinson – Vancouver

Derek Sou – Vancouver Island

Phong Nguyen – Ottawa

Tyler Hallman – Calgary

### DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Members who have contributed outstanding service to the club or a section over a period exceeding five years:

- Furthering aims of the club or a section
- On a committee or project of the club or a section
- Providing leadership for a large undertaking for the club or a section
- Contributing towards the activities of the club or a section
- Been awarded the Don Forest Service Award prior to consideration for this award

Dave Dornian – Unaffiliated

### SILVER ROPE FOR LEADERSHIP

This award is presented to members in good standing with the ACC who have demonstrated technical skills and leadership abilities of a high calibre in mountaineering or ski mountaineering over a number of years. It is intended that the Eric Brooks Leader Award be awarded before qualifying for the SRLA.

Zac Robinson – Unaffiliated

Helen Sovdat – Rocky Mountain



## Featured Volunteers



### Bryan Thompson

#### Don Forest Service Award

*By Susanna Oreskovic, Montreal Section Member and author of Expedition to Mystery Mountain*

Bryan Thompson's years of service to ACC Toronto Section and his local community can be seen as an extension of his approach to life; engaging people's hearts and minds with his jovial storytelling often over feasts he has prepared for various fundraisers and events.

Highlighting Bryan's service is a long laundry list that encompasses ACC Toronto Chair, Activities committee chair, Leadership and Training committee chair, and the unofficial social director hosting the popular monthly pub nights. His initiative in developing new leaders with the Showing You the Ropes events, held twice yearly as a half-day seminar, helps new leaders understand the process of developing and executing section events.

His outreach efforts extend to Park Staff Day, an opportunity to introduce and educate new staff at Bon Echo's Provincial Park about climbing the 330-foot cliffs with an introductory climb. Bryan is always seeking ways to reach new people to share his passion for climbing, the ACC and the outdoors. One example is serving a chili cook-off for the Southern Ontario Ice Climbing Festival and donating the proceeds to the festival on behalf of the ACC.

He is also the founder of the Canadian Explorations Heritage Society, encouraging Canadians to know more about Canada's history and the pioneering adventurers and explorers through re-creating classic adventures and documentary films.



### Marcus Tomlinson

#### Eric Brooks Leader Award

*By Paul Geddes, Vancouver Section*

Marcus is the ideal candidate for this club award. For over ten years Marcus has put in a concentrated effort to learn an array of climbing skills. The Vancouver Section supported Marcus in his goal to participate in the club's 2017 Winter Leadership Development Course. He sees the wisdom in getting out in the field with ACMG guides both close to home in the Coast Mountain Range and in varied terrain to be found further afield.

It was a natural progression when he started posting a variety of trips on the Vancouver Section calendar. Marcus takes the time to pre-screen his trip signups to ensure that all participants are compatible and possess the skills necessary to complete the outing safely. He exhibits patience when teaching and acts as a mentor to less experienced members.

Marcus ensures that all of the details of trip planning are checked off, the trip itinerary is planned out in advance, repair kit and first aid kit accounted for. Equally important, his soft skills encourage participant input in the decision making process.

Marcus has been one of the Vancouver Section's most active volunteers. He regularly leads trips, workshops and assists in teaching section courses. His dedication is evident when he gives up 'powder days' to ensure that others are getting out into the mountains.



### Heather Chamberlain

#### Don Forest Service Award

*By award nominator Peter DuBeau, Rocky Mountain Section*

Heather has been a member of the ACC Rocky Mountain Section since she moved to the Canadian Rockies ten years ago. For over five years she has been involved in volunteering with her local section. Heather is an experienced trip leader who regularly attends training course to learn skills to pass on to her trip participants while leading scrambles in the local mountains.

Heather has held several roles on the Rocky Mountain Section executive committee over the past several years. Currently she is the Rocky Mountain Section representative acting as the liaison between her local section and the national office.

Heather continues to exemplify the positive traits necessary to meet the section's mission. She serves as a member of the board and also leads members to actively engage with our beautiful and fragile mountain environment.

## Nominate a volunteer!

The ACC Volunteer Awards recognize the significant contributions members have made in furthering the goals of The Alpine Club of Canada. Show your appreciation by nominating a deserving member by this year's deadline, December 31, 2023.

[bit.ly/acc-nominate-a-volunteer](https://bit.ly/acc-nominate-a-volunteer)

# 2023 ACC GRANT RECIPIENTS

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**With contributions from many generous donors,** The Alpine Club of Canada has established funds to support mountaineering-related projects and initiatives. Support is provided in the form of annual cash grants and scholarships to individuals and groups who are judged as best meeting the selection criteria. Each year the ACC grants over \$15,000 through the grants listed below.

**Congratulations and thanks to our grant recipients.  
The application deadline for 2024 grants will be Dec 31, 2023**

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## JEN HIGGINS GRANT FOR YOUNG WOMEN

This grant promotes creative and energetic alpine-related outdoor pursuits by young women. These projects should demonstrate initiative, creativity, energy and resourcefulness with an emphasis on self-propelled wilderness travel and should provide value and interest to the community.

**Amanda Bischke and Shira Biner**  
*Exploratory Climbing: A Human-Powered Expedition to the Coronation Glacier — \$2,245*

*The Coronation Fjord and Coronation Glacier on the remote east coast of Baffin Island are lined with impressive rock faces up to 1000 metres high that have no record of being explored by climbers. There are three main components to their objective: establish first ascents of big wall free climbs, complete an all-female first ascent in the Arctic, and complete the expedition in the most human-powered way possible by traveling 70 kilometres by sea kayak followed by 12 kilometres of glacier travel by foot to basecamp.*

**Sara Lilley, Isobel Phoebus and Sasha Yasinski**  
*First Ascent to the Great Hall of the Gods — \$2,000*

*This team's specific target is to climb one of a few potential new routes on the southwest face of Gladshiem Peak, the highest peak in the Valhalla Range. They hope the learning process ignited during this expedition will inspire continued female contribution to both local and international climbing communities. The upcoming guidebook for the Valhallas, alongside most guidebooks, contains an overwhelming majority of male first ascents. They hope to strengthen the representation of the female climbing community of Canada as capable, independent climbers.*

## JIM COLPITTS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The financial costs of learning, developing and certifying mountaineering skills can be substantial, particularly for young people. Through the Jim Colpitts Memorial Scholarship, we aim to help out with those financial costs.

**Antje Gille**  
*ACC Intro to Mountaineering — \$1,065*

*Antje is 19 years old and from Edmonton. She's beginning a degree in Environmental Science at the University of Alberta. Antje would like to take this course in order to gain practical knowledge on glacier travel and basic mountaineering skills.*

## KARL NAGY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship was established in 2001 to assist aspiring guides and volunteer leaders in the development of their skills.

**Corey Woolnough**  
*GMC Spot — \$2,995*

*Training for the Alpine Guide's Exam for fall of 2023. Corey's goal in becoming a guide is to teach and help others develop their skills.*

## ACC ENVIRONMENT GRANT

The purpose of the grant is to provide support that contributes to the protection and preservation of mountain and climbing environments, including the preservation of alpine flora and fauna in their natural habitat.

### Heather Shaw – Living Lakes Canada

**High Elevation Monitoring Project — \$4,000**

*Heather works with LLC's team of experienced advisors, hydrologists, and two professors of biology with years of experience in alpine lake monitoring. This program fosters a greater understanding of high elevation regions and alpine ecosystems, and is crucial for making science-based management decisions in the face of climate change.*

### Marc Piché - Friends of Bugaboo Park

**East Creek Diversion Toilet Upgrade — \$2,303**

*The FOBP plans to replace the East Creek toilet (outside of Bugaboo Glacier Provincial Park) with a urine-diverting system. These toilets have been tried and proven effective worldwide, including in several BC Parks. Replacement of the barrels associated with the current "green throne" toilet system has proven difficult due to the remote nature of the site which results in overflowing barrels and occasionally running out of barrels at the site altogether.*

### Mary Sanseverino and Zac Robinson

**Mountain Voices: The Mountain Legacy Project and a Century of Change in Western Canada — \$2,000**

*This is a book project. Mountain Voices chronicles change in Canadian mountain landscapes told by those intimately acquainted with the mountains. Powered by the largest systematic collection of historical mountain photographs, and animated by a two decade-long effort to document change with repeat photography, this book will be a beautiful and compelling display of mountain photographs, past and present.*

## PHILIPPE DELESALLE MEMORIAL GRANT

The Philippe Delesalle Grant, given annually to underprivileged youth from across Canada, aims to expand access to alpine experiences, knowledge and culture for more Canadians.

*The ACC is currently working with Spirit North to put on a climbing course in the fall of 2023 for Indigenous youth. We are hoping to welcome back participants from last year's course to help mentor the new participants.*

## JOHN LAUCLAN MEMORIAL AWARD

The John Lauchlan Memorial Award is a cash and mentorship award designed to assist Canadian climbers. The award exists to perpetuate the bold and adventurous spirit which John Lauchlan exemplified in his climbing exploits. Specifically, the award strives to promote the development of Canadian alpinists through the support of worthy expeditions and mountainous adventures in Canada and abroad. More information is available at [JohnLauchlanAward.com](http://JohnLauchlanAward.com). The ACC assists with the award administration.

### Zac Colbran and Grant Stewart

**Canadians on Mt Huntington in Denali National Park — \$5,000**

*Our main objective is to establish a new route up a buttress on the West Face of Mt. Huntington. The route follows very steep mixed terrain linking rock corners into large ice features to establish 700 metres of highly-technical new ground before intersecting with the upper climbing of the Colton/Leach route and reaching the summit of Mt. Huntington.*

## How to apply

Receive financial support for your mountain-related projects and initiatives!

*Support is provided in the form of annual cash grants and scholarships to individuals and groups who are judged as best meeting the selection criteria. Each year the ACC grants over \$15,000 through the grants listed above.*

Apply by December 31st, 2023 at [bit.ly/ACC-Grants](http://bit.ly/ACC-Grants)





The Alpine Club of Canada

# Winter 2023/24 Programs

## \* Courses

- Winter Crevasse Rescue
- AST 1 and AST 2
- Avalanche Basics Course (AST 1 + day of guided skiing)
- Intro to Ice Climbing
- Intro to Ski Mountaineering
- Intro to Backcountry Skiing
  - Women and Non-binary Edition
  - Split Board Specific Edition

## \* Camps

- First Freeze Ice Camp
- Rogers Pass Powder (Wheeler and Asulkan offerings)
- Wapta Traverse
- Bow Yoho Traverse
- Fairy Meadow Ski Week
- Kokanee Cabin Ski Week

Sign up today at: [adventures.alpineclubofcanada.ca](https://adventures.alpineclubofcanada.ca)



## Section Adventures

# Restoring BC's Athabasca Pass Heritage Trail

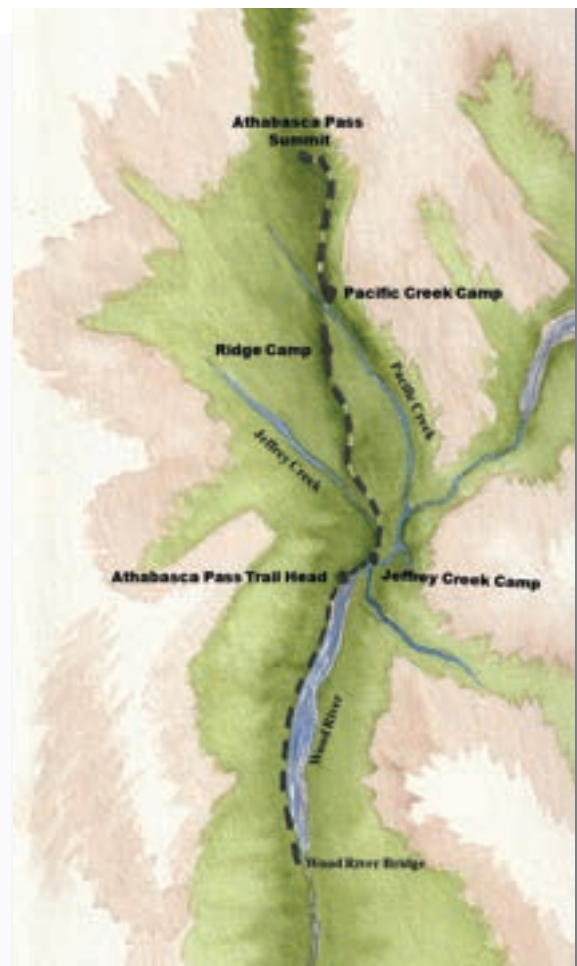
Members of The Alpine Club of Canada Columbia Mountains Section are hard at work restoring the western side of an iconic trail.

by Donna Naprstek

The Athabasca Pass Heritage Trail brings to mind the epic explorer, cartographer and surveyor David Thompson who completed the first recorded crossing of Athabasca Pass in 1811. Led by an Iroquois man by the name of Thomas, Thompson and his team opened up a significant new route across the Rocky Mountains, leading to the Columbia River and ultimately to the Pacific Ocean for the fur trade. Thompson's wife was Charlotte Small, a Cree woman who often joined his expeditions with their many children in tow. She brought with her knowledge of five languages, invaluable abilities and connections. Thompson, Small and their team incorporated innovative Indigenous travel techniques, including making and using snowshoes and using pemmican as a means of survival. This trail is of major importance in Canadian history. The eastern side of it is in Jasper National Park and is maintained. The western side, from Athabasca Pass on the Continental Divide down to Kinbasket Lake, is largely not.

In July of 2021 Trevor Willson from Calgary and another volunteer spent four days including travel time, making their way halfway up the trail on the British Columbia side, flagging their route as they went. The official trailhead starts at the confluence of Jeffrey Creek and Wood River where the Jeffrey Creek campsite is located. At times, the trail became faint and difficult to follow because of forest overgrowth and fallen trees. Devil's club was plentiful and made the going tough. It was last cleared by the BC Wildfire Service in 2002 and some work was done on it in 2010.

Trevor returned a second time, in September 2021, with two more volunteers and chainsaws. This time they were able to start at the trailhead and clear and flag eight more kilometres of



trail. Each of these ventures required a drive from Revelstoke to Sprague Bay, then a ride across Kinbasket Lake on the Downie Timber barge. They continued as far as the Wood River bridge where they had to leave their vehicles and walk another eight kilometres to the Jeffrey Creek campsite.

## History of the trail

Any travel on these trails involves walking in the footsteps of the fur traders. A plaque at the Sprague Bay Recreation Site points across Kinbasket Lake to the location of Boat Encampment, between Canoe River and Wood Arm. This is the site where David Thompson wintered with his crew in 1810-11 after descending the steep terrain on the west side of the Athabasca Pass. They built boats in preparation for spring travel on the Columbia River, which took them all the way to the Pacific Ocean. For nearly 50 years the site remained an important transfer point on the trade route between Montreal and the Pacific ports. Because of the Mica Dam, the Boat Encampment area is now flooded.

Artist, Paul Kane, also spent time on the Athabasca Pass Trail. Kane met with Sir George Simpson, the inland governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, to ask for permission to travel to the west coast in order to document the lives and customs of the Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific Northwest. Kane set out with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1846 and his wanderings lasted two and a half years. Each snowy crossing of the Rockies was a particularly challenging part of his adventure. But his sketches, paintings, and notes from his diary made it safely back to Toronto and are admired to this day for their artistic value and for the recordings of Indigenous life before it was irreparably altered.

## Reviving the trail

In 2022, Trevor Wilson led another five-day work party over Labor Day weekend. Their goal was to clear and mark the western side of the trail the rest of the way to the summit of Athabasca Pass, as well as construct bridges where needed. After months of organizing and planning, 16 volunteers were formed into three groups consisting of a Jeffrey Creek team, a Ridge team, and a Pacific Creek team. Because of the need to bring in equipment and supplies, they arranged for a helicopter to meet them at the Wood River bridge which took them and their gear to the three sites along the trail. Volunteers that weekend came from Calgary, Rossland, Nelson, Kelowna, Vallican, and Revelstoke.

Particular attention was paid to safety and only very experienced people were chosen for the type of work that they were assigned to do. Safety glasses, helmets, and sturdy work gloves were provided and even life jackets were available for working in the fast-running creeks. The remaining eight kilometres of the trail were cleared and fifteen of the sixteen total kilometres were brushed. When blowdowns were being removed, chainsawing the deadwood started at the highest point and logs were rolled downhill to where no one was in danger of being hit. But before this could happen, parts of the trail still had to be found and marked. This was no easy task for the Ridge team on the steep slope of La Grande Cote or for the Pacific Creek team, working their way up to Athabasca Pass.

Two bridges were built; one over Pacific Creek near that camp, using a tree that had fallen across it, and one at the Jeffrey Creek camp. An immense log lying across Jeffrey Creek was used as a base for a 96-foot bridge. First, branches had to be removed and while two people sat on the log, a chainsaw was used to create a level surface for walking on. Decking, posts, and supports were attached to this to give stability as well as a railing to hold on to. A food hang was also set up between two tall trees, benches were constructed, and new signs were installed to give direction to backpackers.

When all the work was done some of the teams hiked to the Pass. As they did, spirits soared and a feeling of pride in their accomplishments prevailed. A small lake or tarn called Committee's Punch Bowl sits at the Height of Land. In the days of the Hudson's Bay Company travelers gave a toast to the London Governor and Honourable Committee, hence the name. This is also on the Alberta-BC border and the Continental Divide; from here, water flows west to the Pacific on one side, and north to the Arctic Ocean on the other.

This remote trail is a link to our past. If you decide that hiking through pristine wilderness on a trail of such historical value is for you, keep an eye open for notched trees from those who came before us. — ACC



*Jeffrey Creek bridge, reconstructed, on the west side of Athabasca Pass. Photo Trevor Willson*

# 2023 Trip UPDATE

Unfortunately, the planned 2023 Athabasca Pass Heritage Trail maintenance trip did not go ahead due to a variety of issues. However, several people did paddle and bike, then hike to the top of Athabasca Pass from the west side.

## They reported that:

- the trail is in excellent condition
- the Jeffrey Creek Bridge is in excellent condition
- the old trail markers from 20 to 40 years ago should be replaced by our new UV-resistant ones
- about five to ten trees had fallen across the 16 km trail

Uri Naprstek of the ACC Columbia Mountains Section is currently applying for funding for a maintenance trip that would take place in early September, 2024.



*Clearing the west side of the Athabasca Pass Heritage Trail. Photo Trevor Willson*

# TREKKING IN THE DOGTOOTH RANGE

## ACC Dogtooth Traverse

July 21-30, 2023

*Guides: Nathalie Drotar, ACMG Hiking Guide and Via Ferrata Guide and Lenora (Lenny) Carbonetto, ACMG Hiking Guide*

*Participants: Dean Albrecht, Diane Albrecht, Fabienne Cahour, Bibiana Cujec, David Hanna, Margaret Ford, Brian Rand, Louise Rand, Alex Romanek and Jamie Scoular*

*Hiking in the alpine, Dogtooth Range. Photo Jamie Scoular*



by Bibiana Cujec

I lie awake, watching the stars framed by the tall spruce and pine trees at the Quartz Lake campsite. Now all that remains of our ten-day Dogtooth Range traverse is a trail that descends to the logging road where our cars have been left, wrapped in chicken wire to fend off local wildlife. Despite a leaky Therm-a-Rest, I lie comfortably atop the moss heather on the forest floor reflecting on a wonderful trip to a seldom-visited area of the Purcell Mountains of eastern British Columbia.

I knew I wanted to go on this trip the moment I saw it advertised on the ACC website. I easily convinced my partner to join me; both fans of multi-day ski traverses, we had never tried a summer trip together before.

Our group was comprised of ten people from across the country and we met each other, and our hiking guides Nathalie Drotar and Lenora (Lenny) Carbonetto, at the Bluebird Café in Golden early on July 21. While some members left to deposit four vehicles at our exit site near Quartz Lake, the rest of us divided the PeakEats dehydrated food and group gear and stashed the remaining vehicles at the Golden airport. After regrouping we rode in a van for a bit more than an hour up a rough logging road to the start of the 12 Mile Creek trail. We shouldered our 15 kg backpacks and started walking slowly uphill, through forests, into alpine meadows and to our first campsite near two lakes.

Our days settled into a comfortable pattern. We had coffee at 6:30 a.m., ate breakfast while taking down the tents and packing up, and were hiking by 9:00 a.m. We walked through heather-covered meadows dotted with vibrant alpine flowers: red and yellow paintbrush, purple fireweed and river beauty, pink moss campion, yellow mountain arnica. From high on ridges, we saw the glacier-covered Selkirk Mountains across the valley and a rainbow forming behind Kicking Horse Mountain Resort. Every day, clouds moved through the jagged peaks as we ascended to cols and descended the other sides over talus and scree.

*Group photo at the completion of the Dogtooth traverse. Photo Jamie Scoular*

*Back row from left: Jamie Scoular, Dean Albrecht, Alex Romanek, Louise Rand, Brian Rand, Bibiana Cujec, David Hanna.*

*Front row, kneeling from left: Diane Albrecht, Lenora (Lenny) Carbonetto, Margaret Ford, Fabienne Cahour, Nathalie Drotar.*



There were some long days, including one that involved bushwhacking through South Canyon over logs and alders in the drizzle until we finally came to a meadow bathed in sunlight and were able to set up camp. Most days averaged around seven hours of hiking, including breaks.

On the fifth day we approached Gorman Lake with light packs, anticipating a refill from a cache that had been arranged. Descending the ridge from Dawn Mountain on steep hard-packed scree delayed our arrival until twilight. Despite their fatigue, Nathalie and Lenny heroically staged a festive “hamburger night” while enduring a steady downpour in the dark.

We had a much-needed rest day at Gorman Lake and spent it drying out in the sunshine, reviving our spirits.

Our guides navigated through some difficult terrain, carried heavy loads and were always encouraging, caring and fun to talk with. We survived temperature extremes, falls in boulder fields and steep brush, stream crossings, bites from horse flies, rain and graupel but those memories are quickly fading,

replaced by fond recollections of companionship. The people you travel with make all the difference to the success of a trip, and the group on this trip was exceptional. Although our backgrounds and life experiences varied, we were united by a shared love of the mountains.

As I watch the stars, a sense of peace and contentment fills me. Although there were difficult moments when the pack felt too heavy and I felt tired and frustrated, there remains a sense of accomplishment and awe at the beauty of this mountain range full of meadows, lakes and ridges that we traveled through.

I am very grateful to our hiking guides for putting this trip together and hope to be able to go on similar ACC backpacking trips in the future. We traveled 75 kms with about 4,100 metres of elevation gain and 4,500 metres of elevation loss over nine days of hiking. These mountain trips remind me of how far you can get by focusing on one step at a time, and the freedom that comes from disconnecting from life’s many distractions. — ACC



**Clockwise from top left:**

*Red paintbrush, purple fireweed and yellow arnica. Photo Nathalie Drotar*

*Sheltering from the rain under the tarp. From left, Lenora (Lenny) Carbonetto, David Hanna, Jamie Scoular, Margaret Ford, Alex Romanek, Fabienne Cahour and Bibiana Cujec. Photo Nathalie Drotar*

*Pika at Gorman Lake. Photo Jamie Scoular*

*One of many stream crossings. Photo Jamie Scoular*

*Adjusting packs, talking and looking at the Selkirks across the valley. Photo Jamie Scoular*



*Landing area at Kain Hut. Flying equipment in for the opening as well as for the power system project. Photo Kish Begum.*

# A SUMMER IN THE LIFE

Take an inside look at a season of hut servicing and building projects of the ACC facilities maintenance team.

*When you operate the largest network of backcountry huts in North America, spread across a couple of different mountain ranges and with a couple dozen structures exposed to wild mountain conditions, staying on top of chores will keep a team busy.*

*The ACC's hut maintenance team is a dedicated, skilled bunch that work hard all year long, but the summertime is when their calendars are blocked off and stacked up to make big progress. Here's a look at what they've been up to this past summer.*

---

**H**ut maintenance work falls into two broad categories: service work and capital projects. The larger capital projects include any renovation or construction work on the outside or the interior of the huts and outbuildings (outhouse, woodshed), and are different for each trip. Service trips are for the more regular, recurring—but never boring—tasks.



## Firewood in, poop out

ACC huts run on propane, firewood, and to a lesser extent, solar and wind power. Guests in the club's huts will burn 50 to 60 cords of firewood in a year!

Helicopters fly into huts with nets of firewood, 600-pound propane tanks (pigs) and fly out with full outhouse barrels. Barrels are emptied at the staging area with a pumper truck, and then cycled back into inbound flights. Service trips are labour-intensive, with chimney sweeping, fire extinguisher replacement, small repairs and wood chucking all part of a regular day.

Some of the smaller, more remote huts see service every two years, but most huts are visited each year by the team. Elizabeth Parker, Bow and Conrad Kain Huts are serviced at both the beginning and the end of the summer season.



*Above: Lex releases a wood payload before unpacking quickly and preparing for another load. Photo Pete Hoang*

*Right: Empty barrels in, full ones out. Photo Pete Hoang.*





## Capital projects

Bigger projects such as hut upgrades, renovations or any kind of larger construction jobs are planned separately from the annual service trips. They'll involve the team flying into the hut with the plans, materials, tools and supplies they need and staying in the hut until the job is completed.

With 26 huts to maintain, the list of projects is long. Typically, a summer will see a few capital projects planned but 2023 was a busy season as we catch up after some slower summers during COVID.

### *Facing page, clockwise from top left:*

*Installation of solar panels at Kain Hut. Photo Tom Fransham*

*Tom Fransham and Anthony Baker of Bugaboo Contracting with the Kain Hut micro hydro unit. Photo Tom Fransham*

*Bow Hut solar panel installation, September. Photo Tom Fransham*

*New furniture at Peyto Hut. Photo Bill Cardinal*

*New cladding in process at Peyto Hut. Photo Bill Cardinal*

### *This page:*

*Bow Hut breezeway, before (Photo Bill Cardinal) and after renovation with cedar tongue and groove (Photo Tom Fransham)*



# 2023 Capital Projects

## *Conrad Kain Hut*

The annual start in the Bugaboos is scheduled for late June when the winter snow is almost gone, and the electrical system can be fired up. This year the micro-hydro was replaced with a new, smaller system, which was offset by the installation of a new solar array and battery bank.

## *Kokanee Glacier Cabin*

In early July, the team stained, painted and took care of repairs and upgrades to the bridges, outhouses and campground cook shelters that the club maintains.

## *Woodbury and Silver Spray Cabins*

While the team was in the Nelson area servicing Kokanee, they spent some days at the other two huts that the club operates in the park, and took care of repair work to decks, roofs and foundations.

## *Fairy Meadow Hut*

A major 10-day construction project in August saw the roof of the hut replaced, along with significant interior upgrades.

## *Peyto Hut*

Another major project in August, the most northerly hut on the Wapta got a new roof along with new metal cladding and insulation for all the walls.

## *Bow Hut*

September saw the team back on the Wapta for two weeks, making big upgrades to one of the club's busiest huts. A vestibule was added at the front door, the breezeway was renovated, and new moisture control systems were installed, including a heat recovery ventilator, hood fans and venting. These systems are powered by a new solar array and guests will notice LED lighting replacing the old propane lights as well as new USB charging stations (BYO cables).



## Logistics

On the macro scale, planning for a summer's work begins in the winter: lining up schedules and permits, procuring materials, arranging staging areas and coordinating vehicles, pumper trucks and outside contractors. It's also a time to build hut furniture in the shop in Canmore.

On flying days, however, the planning takes on a more fluid quality, becoming a complicated dance of coordinating loads, personnel and flight times: triangulating huts and flying distances, and working within the constraints of shifting mountain weather to keep the flight time and costs to a minimum.

When it comes to managing helicopter fuel levels, at first look it would seem to make sense to fill the helicopter's tank to full and to fly loads until the machine needs to refuel. But fuel is heavy, and it turns out there are significant efficiencies in running the machine with just enough in the tank, carrying more weight on the long lines and refueling more often.

Another counterintuitive trick for shaving flight and fuel time is to spread out the loads over several return flights. An unladen helicopter, flying with a long line dangling free, must fly very slowly to prevent the hook from flying up into the rotor. If you add a single 500-pound outhouse barrel to the trip out from the hut (the machine can carry three), the flight out can be done at full speed and save time and money.

---

It's been a productive summer. Winter will come, guests will be cozy in our huts, and the cycle of planning, scheduling, and gearing up for another busy maintenance season will begin again. — ACC

***This page:***

*Hucking firewood at Elizabeth Parker Hut.*

***Facing page, clockwise from top:***

*Claude Durupt hooking up a propane tank for longlining.*

*Elizabeth Parker Hut.*

*Helicopter work at Elizabeth Parker Hut.*

*Matt Lapinskie preparing slings for barrels at Elizabeth Parker Hut.*

*All photos Reece Mysko*



# Bugaboo: the newest ACC section

The Alpine Club of Canada  
proudly welcomes its 25th  
local section

by Joshua Lavigne

*Board Chair, Bugaboo Section*

**T**he Bugaboo Section of the ACC came to life this spring with a mission to serve the thriving mountain community of the East Kootenays from Cranbrook to Golden, BC. Tucked between the towering Rockies and majestic Selkirks, this section finds its home in the heart of the Columbia Valley, a region with a rich history of mountain guides and ACC members exploring the untamed Purcell Mountains, including the iconic Bugaboo range.

## Connecting mountain enthusiasts

Despite the Columbia Valley's deep mountain heritage and famous attractions, climbers and skiers are scattered across vast distances. When you add to this the fact that the local approach to access and development is characterized by humility and a commitment to leaving little to no trace, you end up with a situation where finding a climbing partner is like searching for keys in a snowdrift.

A goal of the Bugaboo Section is to bridge this geographical gap. We aspire to bring the mountain community here together, with the intention of sharing our common passion and preserving the area for the future generations.

## A dedicated leadership team

The Bugaboo Section leadership team consists of three experienced guides, two dedicated physicians, and a seasoned ACC treasurer. After being officially recognized by the ACC this spring, the leadership team quickly got to work and hosted the first section event in early June in Invermere BC, both to get the word about the section and also to launch a community survey.

## Engaging the local community

The feedback indicated strong interest in volunteer-led trips, social events, youth programs, and advocacy initiatives around access. This proactive approach of requesting input as we start our section, ensures that the club aligns its activities with the needs and desires of the local community and members. The Bugaboo Section is committed to supporting local initiatives and working alongside the Valley residents to address the challenges they face in accessing and enjoying these pristine mountain areas.

## The path ahead

As the Bugaboo Section continues to grow, there will undoubtedly be many challenges and hopefully even more exciting adventures. The 25th branch of the ACC is set to become a beacon for mountain enthusiasts in the East Kootenays, connecting like-minded individuals and fostering a spirit of exploration and preservation for generations to come. — ACC

*The Bugaboo Section is open to everyone, including existing ACC members. Bugaboo members have access to local programming and events regardless of where they're located. Adding an additional section to your membership can be done online or by calling the ACC national office.*



***Clockwise from top left:***

*The author's daughter learning the ropes before her fourth birthday.*

*Walking towards Pigeon Spire, Bugaboo Provincial Park.*

*Bugaboo skyline.*

*Delano Lavigne on the summit of the North Howser Tower as the sun sets.*

*Youth climbing trip with the youngest section members enjoying the quartzite of the Columbia valley.*

*Photos supplied by Joshua Lavigne.*



Mountain Art





HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE

# 2023 GMC Photo Contest

The annual GMC Photo Contest is open to anyone attending a week of the General Mountaineering Camp that year. Participants, artists, volunteers, and guides can submit their photos for a chance to win some very nice prizes from our contest sponsor, Mountain Hardwear.

We are excited to share this year's contest winners and a glimpse into our editorial team's reasons for selecting them. This year's winners will receive an AC2 tent, Phantom 15F/-9C sleeping bag, or an Alpine Light 35L pack from Mountain Hardwear.

**Editor's note:** It's worth mentioning that photos hold subjective values—judging them is a bit like ranking flowers from prettiest to least pretty—you cheapen the beauty in the process of comparison. We did our best to dial back our biases and also set some parameters to guide a loose process. These parameters are as follows:

- The photo should have some quality unique to the GMC or this year's location/experience.
- There should be some consideration of the more technical aspects of photography.
- Most notably, the photo should stir some emotion in the viewer.

## FIRST PLACE TANIS MALKOSKE

Tanis's photo hits all the notes, particularly on the rock quality in the Chess Group. The composition is clean and clear, the snow and faint background provide a sense of height, and a loose rope on loose rock adds to the excitement of the situation. Well done, Tanis!

*"Teresa downclimbs a crag along the southeast ridge of King Peak."  
- Tanis Malkoske*



## SECOND PLACE

# ALEX WILLIAMS

Speaking from a purely technical and emotional standpoint, Alex takes the cake with this photo. The composition is perfect to show scale, depth, and clarity. The colours are stunning, our main subjects have a clear definition, and the clouds add enough uncertainty to keep things tense. Fantastic job, Alex. This is one we'd hang on our wall!

*"The Pyramid". August 10, looking down from the peak of the Princess Pyramid as guide Mike Adolph (in blue) and his team (Jon Smith seen in red) descend ahead of us. Only 20 minutes before, there had been a hail and rain storm swiftly blowing through with little to be seen, but we were thrilled to see the entire valley and beyond from this point!"*

- Alex Williams

RIGHT: *Honorable mention* - Photo by Rob Denson





THIRD PLACE  
**XAVIER BONACORSI**

Xavier's photo spoke to the climber in us: so often, the approach to an objective is a long, drawn-out process, and then the mountain appears, and you're faced with the reality that your day's just begun. The towering wall of rock above the roped party, with its vertical striations and summits in haze...it's a statement on why we like to climb, and that's not because it's easy. Nice one, Xavier!

*"On day one, a wonderful day on the ice!"*

*- Xavier Bonacorsi*

*RIGHT: Honorable mention - Photo by Dean Cameron*



*Honorable mention: "A smoky morning while we were going up towards Lavoix Peak, named after my friend Josée as it was her 100 GMC summit." - Photo by Thierry Levenq*



*Honorable mention: "After a good day spent refreshing our glacier travelling skills the day before, everybody was keen to climb and bag our first summit. Unfortunately the weather had other plan, and with thunder and lightning in the forecast, our guides cancelled all glacier and ridge travel. Instead the day was spent exploring the meadow just down from the camp... which was absolutely littered with beautiful and fragrant wildflowers. GMC is not only about sunny days and big peaks. It's also about enjoying the little things like flowery meadows with good friends." - Photo by Aurore Kurc*

# Where humanity and decision making meet

*ACC Winter Guide Doug Latimer shares a quick mental trick we can all apply to help ensure the group's safety when heading out into the wilderness.*

by Doug Latimer

*ACC Lead Winter Guide*

In the Mountain Safety column of the last few Gazettes, I've been ranting about risk and hazard, with a focus on the inherent tendency towards shortsightedness we humans possess. Well, it's one thing to identify a problem, but always much more difficult to identify solutions. Of course, the answer involves data gathering, checklists, training, and a whole list of hard skills, but this is not the essence of the solution. The essence of the solution is our humanity.

## Recreation is part of our humanity

Leading trips, we break things down into logical quantifiable specialties such as navigation, rope skills, and first aid. But what we tend to forget is that recreational wilderness travel is not exactly a logical activity in the first place. We put ourselves into some degree of danger every time we go out.

As I write this article, I'm sitting under a tarp in the rain, watching a seal swim in the ocean. Yesterday a humpback whale surfaced less than 30 metres from our kayak. My spouse and I are spending a week paddling and camping along the west coast of British Columbia. Summer kayak trips have been a staple in our lives for 14 years. We did not set out to go kayaking so we could take more courses and buy additional equipment; we wanted to see whales. This vacation is not logical, but also there is no place we would rather be. We need this just as much as time with family and friends.

As a child, our son was infatuated with orcas. At the age of six, we paddled BC's coastline with the hopes of crossing paths with wild whales. Paddling out on multi-day tours in kayaks offered us means to our desire. Our family has been on the ocean looking for whales every summer since. I climb and ski for the same sense of joy and wonder. In short, it is part of our humanity.

## Coming home safely

So, our humanity gets us out the door, but how does it help us get home safely? How does it relate to making good decisions and having a well-structured emergency response plan? Let me connect the dots.

When we decided to take our young son out on the ocean for days at a time, one thing dominated my thoughts: our son is always going to come home safely. I fully recognize that it is impossible to make anything completely safe, but we decided that the risk must be comparable to that of, say, a drive to his grandfather's home in good weather.

When making decisions that could threaten the safety of someone under your care (professionally or recreationally), where do you draw the line? I have seen guides make decisions to proceed with guests that they have confided to me later, they would never do with their kids.

Over the years I have struggled to find the tools that would ensure reasonable and practical decisions and I have come to a simple solution that takes my humanity and applies it against our flaws in decision making and managing risk in any dangerous environment. I think of my six-year-old, whale-loving son. Assuming he had the strength and basic skills to participate in the activity that I'm undertaking, would I bring him along? If the answer is no, then no one is going. This has become my personal shortcut to defining acceptable levels of risk for me and people in my care. — ACC

# Dan Verrall and the ACC



**1970s**

Dan poses on summit of Mt. Lefroy for what will become the iconic ACC Throwback T-shirt.



**1984**

Dan is employed by the ACC, moves his family into the Canmore Clubhouse.



**1990-2006**

Dan's job grows to include facilities manager. He renovates every single hut, builds some new ones.



Dan packs 30kg cast iron commemorative ACC plaque to Yoho Pass. A much younger Lawrence White, left, packs the glue.

**2019-today**



Dan is recalled from retirement again to transition logistics and mechanical systems for Shadow Lake Lodge. **Don't go anywhere, Dan...**

**2006**

Dan retires from the ACC.

**2011-14**

Dan is recalled from retirement to run the General Mountaineering Camp. Leaves all sites in pristine condition.



**2023**

**Dan is honoured as Patron of the Mountain Guides Ball. Thank you and congratulations, Danny!**

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Team Athlete, Dawa Yangzum Sherpa