

Gazette

The Alpine Club of Canada

le club alpin du Canada

Qat'muk Climbs

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Gazette

The Alpine Club of Canada

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Contributor Profiles



Stefanie Mclellan

Qat'muk Climbs (pg. 12)

Stefanie Mclellan is a physician in Invermere, BC. She likes exploring the Purcells with her husband Cam, both on skis and on foot, and enjoys reading maps and old guidebooks.

Stefanie Mclellan est médecin à Invermere, C.-B. Elle aime explorer les monts Purcell en ski ou à pied avec Cam, son mari, ainsi que lire des cartes et feuilleter de vieux guides.



Christian Stenner

Under the Icefield and Inside the Mountain (pg. 22)

Christian Stenner is primarily a cave explorer and a slow ultramarathon runner. As a member of the Alberta Speleological Society, he has assisted in the exploration of Canada's longest and deepest caves, and is a co-leader of the Bisaro Cave project, now the deepest cave in Canada. He has specialized in exploration of glaciovolcanic cave systems on volcanoes in Canada and the Pacific Northwest, USA, mapping the world's largest of that type: the summit cave system of Mount Rainier.



Jim Everard

The Past is Present (pg. 28)

Jim and his climbing partners have completed dozens of first ascents/new routes in Western Canada and Ontario. He has lost or abandoned climbing gear in ranges as diverse as the Pamirs, the Andes, various Alps, and the Himalaya. It's unlikely you will find Jim on the shortest route between two points on a map. He is a Heritage Member, has served on various Toronto Section committees, and contributes to Section publications.



Geneviève Favreau

The ACC Yukon Section (pg. 32)

Geneviève moved to Whitehorse, Yukon in June of 2017 and soon became involved with the ACC Yukon Section as a top rope night leader. She took part in the leadership course at the Westfall Glacier GMC in August of 2019 before co-leading the Nahanni National Park Reserve Trip that same year. She is currently the trip coordinator and Chair of the Yukon Section.



Marty Pinemarten

A nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to stay there (pg. 38)

Marty has written several reviews for Pestadvisor chronicling his travels in western Canada, and most recently the continental divide region. When Marty isn't travelling he lives in his subterranean lair with his wife Martes and their three pups. In his leisure time Marty is a connoisseur of fine single malt whiskey, vintage vinyl and lava lamps.

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but I wouldn't want to stay there

Cover photo: Stefanie Mclellan scrambling on good rock on the Egyptian Peaks.
Photo en couverture : Stefanie Mclellan en scrambling sur de la roche ferme sur les pics Egyptian.
Photo Cam Mclellan.



Stefanie Mclellan, author of Qat'muk Climbs on page 12, approaching the first peak of the Egyptian peaks traverse, an easy scramble from Jumbo Pass. Photo Cam Mclellan.

Exploring is in our DNA

L'exploration est dans nos gènes

Typically, we don't name or theme each edition of the ACC Gazette, but if we did, the Spring 2021 magazine would have to be called the "Exploration Issue."

We know you're going to enjoy the adventure stories we've selected for you here as three of our members bring you along high on remote ridges, far under glaciers and deep into the ancient past. These stories speak to that wonderful pull that we've all felt of "What's over there? Let's go find out."

Last summer, from her home in Invermere, Stefanie Mclellan set out to explore the rocky, rarely-trodden ridges of Qat'muk territory in the Purcell Range of BC. Though it was made famous by the recently overturned Jumbo Resort development, the peaks overlooking this critical grizzly habitat and spiritual territory have remained relatively unexplored.

In *Under the Icefield and Inside the Mountain*, Christian Stenner gives a

first-hand account from below Castleguard Mountain with an international caving team that followed and mapped Canada's longest cave, deep below the Columbia Icefields.

Inspired by rough maps and century-old texts, Jim Everard tells the story of how he sleuthed out the location of some ancient fossil formations. Tag along with Jim to learn all about the prehistoric origins of the Rocky Mountains in *The Past is Present*.

Since the ACC's beginnings in 1906, 115 years ago, most of the country's peaks have been summited, ridges climbed, and deepest corners explored. Backcountry adventure has become more common, and many of the gems of our alpine areas have become overrun and spoiled. Google Earth and logging roads and GPS have shrunk our world, removed many elements of the unknown, made true exploration rare.

But exploration is about curiosity and desire and motivation. It's the appetite to experience what's beyond the next ridge or peak, what's under the rocks in front of us or, in the case of Castleguard cave, what's at the end of that pitch black corridor beyond the sump dive. There may be fewer large plots of unclimbed peaks than there were a century ago, but this issue reminds us that Canada's wilderness has endless secrets to show us yet.

Although Elizabeth Parker and our club's founders probably could never have imagined what our 2021 world would look like, they definitely would have recognized, with great clarity I expect, the desire that pushes us to explore *what's over there*. And they would be pleased that the fire still burns so bright in our membership.

— Keith Haberl

D'habitude, nous n'attribuons pas de nom ou de thème aux numéros de la Gazette du CAC, mais si c'était le cas, cette édition du printemps 2021 s'intitulerait Spécial exploration.

Nous savons que vous aimerez les récits d'aventures sélectionnés ici pour vous, où trois de nos membres vous font monter sur des crêtes éloignées, descendre sous des glaciers, et plonger dans le passé lointain. Ces récits interpellent cette magnifique attirance que nous ressentons tous pour « qu'est-ce qu'il y a là-bas? Allons le découvrir. »

L'été dernier, depuis sa maison d'Invermere, Stefanie Mclellan entreprenait d'explorer les crêtes rocheuses et rarement parcourues du territoire de Qat'muk dans la chaîne Purcell en Colombie-Britannique. Malgré leur notoriété, due à l'annulation récente du projet de la station de ski Jumbo Glacier, les sommets qui dominent cet habitat crucial du grizzly et ce territoire spirituel restent assez peu explorés.

Dans *Under the Icefield and Inside the Mountain*, Christian Stenner offre un compte-rendu de première main sur les dessous du mont Castleguard, accompagné d'une équipe internationale de spéléologues qui a suivi et cartographié la plus longue caverne du Canada, en profondeur sous le champ de glace Columbia.

Inspiré par des cartes rudimentaires et des textes centenaires, Jim Everard raconte comment il a découvert l'emplacement d'anciennes formations fossiles. Suivez-le pour tout connaître des origines préhistoriques des Rocheuses dans *The Past is Present*.

Depuis les débuts du CAC en 1906, la plupart des sommets du pays ont été atteints, leurs crêtes escaladées, leurs coins les plus profonds explorés. L'aventure en arrière-pays s'est popularisée, et plusieurs joyaux de nos régions alpines ont été envahis et gâtés. Les chemins forestiers, Google Earth et les GPS ont rétréci notre monde, lui ont retiré beaucoup d'éléments d'inconnu, et fait

de l'exploration véritable une activité de plus en plus rare.

Mais l'exploration est affaire de curiosité, de désir et de motivation : la volonté de découvrir ce qui est au-delà du prochain sommet ou de la prochaine crête, ou ce que recouvrent les rochers devant nous ou, pour la caverne de Castleguard, ce qui se trouve au bout de ce couloir obscur. Les grandes étendues de sommets non encore visités sont peut-être moins nombreuses qu'il y a un siècle, mais ce numéro nous rappelle que les régions sauvages canadiennes ont encore une foule de secrets à nous révéler.

Elizabeth Parker et les fondateurs de notre club n'auraient sans doute jamais pu imaginer ce à quoi ressemblerait notre monde en 2021, mais ils auraient certainement reconnu, très clairement selon moi, le désir qui nous pousse à *explorer ce qu'il y a là-bas*, et qu'ils seraient heureux de voir cette flamme briller toujours aussi fort parmi nos membres.

— Keith Haberl

Nominations de 2021 au conseil d'administration du CAC

Les règlements du Club requièrent que le comité de nomination du CAC conçoive et recommande au conseil d'administration du CAC et aux membres du club une liste de candidats à élire pour chacun de ses postes. Le comité a la responsabilité de désigner des personnes qualifiées ayant les compétences requises pour chaque poste, et de recommander aux membres votants un candidat qui, selon l'opinion du comité de nomination, répond actuellement le mieux aux critères et aux besoins du conseil.

Chaque année, trois des neuf postes du comité du CAC sont ouverts aux nominations. Quand il n'y a aucune nomination pour un poste, le titulaire est élu par acclamation et exerce un nouveau mandat de trois ans.

Pour 2021, les titulaires de deux postes ont été élus par acclamation. Une élection sera tenue pour les sections V.-P.

Pour plus d'informations, consultez la page www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/elections, qui comprend :

- 1) Une courte présentation vidéo (3 min) par chacun des candidats ayant accepté de soumettre une vidéo à la demande du comité;
- 2) La transcription des réponses de chacun des candidats à quatre questions standard posées en entrevue par le comité.

Au nom des membres du comité de nomination : Peter Muir (président, Winnipeg, Man.), Cam Roe (Salt Lake City, É.-U.), Josée Desjardins (Chelsea, QC), David Roe (Calgary, Alb.) et Mary Sanseverino (Victoria, C.-B.).

Poste Position	Mandat Term	Titulaire/candidat (et section du CAC) Incumbent/Candidate (ACC Section)
VP Culture alpine VP Mountain Culture	3 ans 3 years	Zac Robinson (Edmonton) Acclaimed / Élu
VP Sections	3 ans 3 years	Cindy Doyle (Outaouis)
	3 ans 3 years	Paul Mower (Centre de l'Alberta / Central Alberta)
	3 ans 3 years	Steve Traversari (Montréal) Recommended / Recommandé
VP Services	3 ans 3 years	Toby Harper-Merrett (Montréal) Acclaimed / Élu

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ACC Board of Directors – 2021 Nominations

Club bylaws require the ACC Nomination Committee to develop and recommend to the ACC board of directors and club members a slate of candidates for each board position to be elected. The committee is responsible for identifying qualified individuals with the requisite competences for each position and for recommending to the voting members an applicant who, in the opinion of the Nomination Committee, best meets the criteria and needs of the position and the board at this time.

Each year, three of the nine positions on the ACC board are open for nominations. When there are no nominations for a position, the incumbent is acclaimed and serves another three-year term.

For 2021 two positions have been acclaimed. There will be an election for V.P. Sections.

You can learn more at www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/elections, including:

- 1) A short video presentation (3 min.) by each of the candidates that accepted the committee's request to submit a video;
- 2) Transcripts of each candidate's answers to four standard questions from each interview done by the committee.

On behalf of the Nomination Committee members Peter Muir (Chair, Winnipeg, Man.), Cam Roe (Salt Lake City, USA), Josée Desjardins (Chelsea, Que.), David Roe (Calgary, Alta.) and Mary Sanseverino (Victoria, BC).

Edmonton Section ice wall a hit

Like many ACC sections, Edmonton section members sought a way to engage the public and enable COVID-safe activities during the past year. The section, in conjunction with the Edmonton Ski Club, built an ice wall to promote the sport of ice climbing and service existing local ice climbers.

The ten-metre-tall wall of ice was constructed in the river valley just minutes from downtown Edmonton and was the first of its kind within city limits in western Canada. The ice wall opened on January 12th for all interested members of the public to take part in outdoor recreation at the hill in a physically distanced manner.

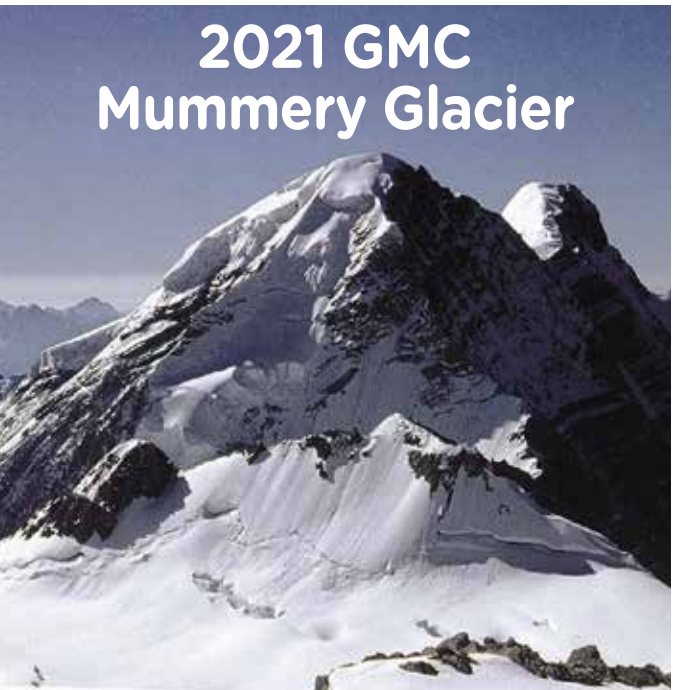
"We actually had to close March 13th due to some rapid deterioration of the ice wall," said Tim Hankinson, Edmonton Section Urban Chair. "Hopefully next year we can open a lot earlier."

The section reported roughly 1,100 visits to the ice wall with 20 plus volunteers helping put together and manage the site. ~ACC



Photo Vignettes x Thirdspace
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2021 GMC Mummery Glacier



Since 1906 the Alpine Club has been putting on the General Mountaineering Camp each summer. This year we are excited to be exploring the Rockies on the Mummery Glacier. Come join us this summer for some modern day mountain exploration.

alpineclubofcanada.ca/gmc2021

Trips organised and led by Dan Mazur, with 12 successful Everest expeditions, 3 successful K2 expeditions and many others. High altitude rescues: Roman Giutashvili from Everest, Gary Ball from K2, Lincoln Hall from Everest, and Rick Allen from Broad Peak.

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April-May '21-'22 - Everest Nepal, Everest Tibet, Everest Training Climbs Nepal & Tibet, Lhotse, Island Peak, Lobuche Peak, Base Camp Treks - Nepal / Tibet

June-July-Aug '21-'22 - Gasherbrum 1 and 2, K2 Summit, 8000m Training, Broad Peak, K2 Base Camp Trek, Pastore Trekking Peak (near K2).

Sept-Oct '21-'22 - Manaslu, Cho Oyu, Shishapangma.

Oct-Nov '21-'22 - 7000m Peaks! Ama Dablam, Baruntse.

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QAT'MUK CLIMBS

Story by Stefanie Mclellan

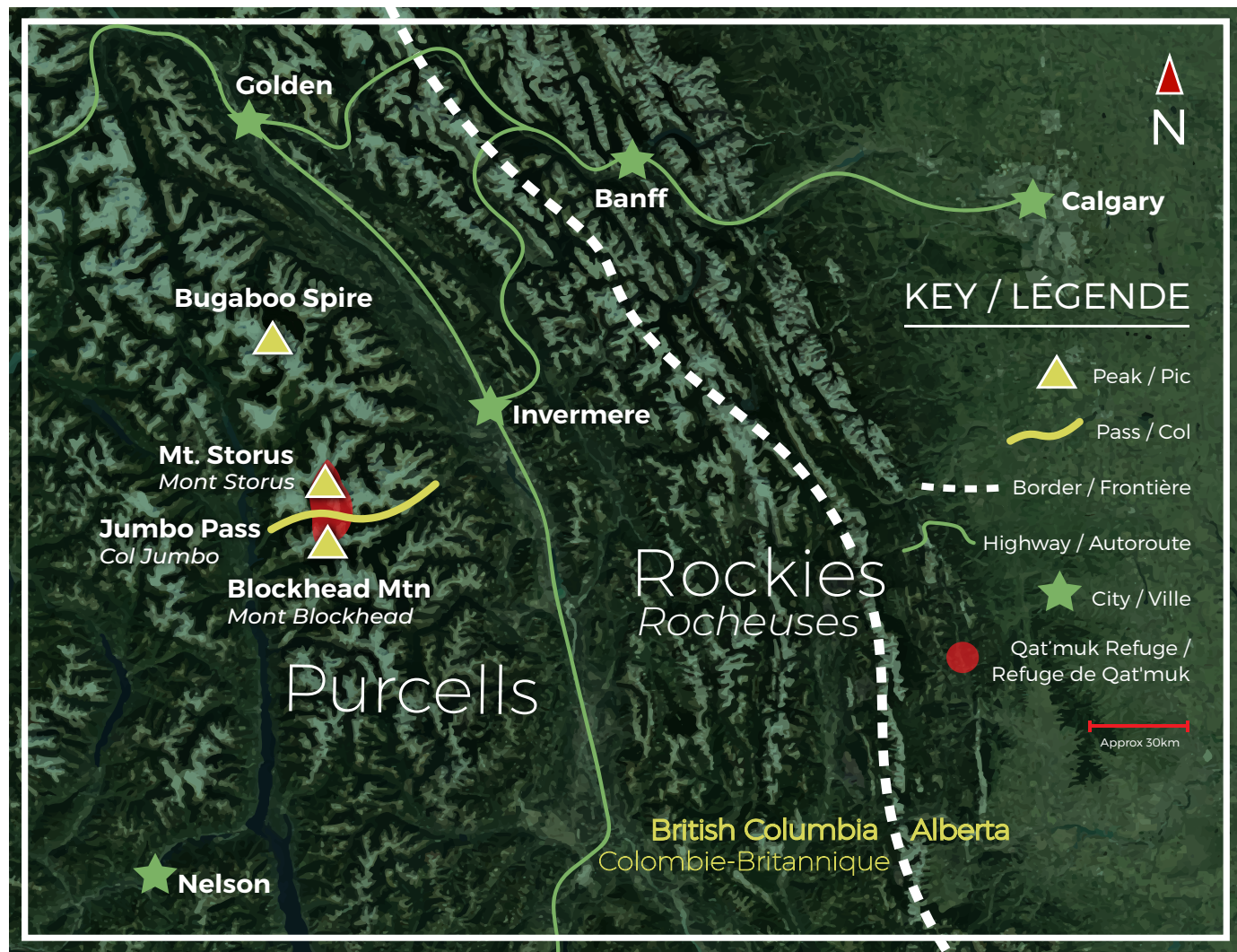
Jumbo Pass, the heart of the Qat-muk. Le col Jumbo, cœur de Qat'muk. Photo Cam Mclellan.

I live in Invermere BC, in the Purcell Mountains, in the ancestral and unceded territory of the Ktunaxa First Nation. Deep in the Purcells is an area called Qat'muk, the sacred home of the grizzly bear spirit. It was subject to a 30-year battle over the proposed Jumbo Glacier ski resort that ended with a nail biter of a court decision in 2019 after the resort's environmental assessment certificate had run out. Desperate to prove that they had substantially started construction, Jumbo Glacier Resorts had poured concrete foundations for the day lodge just before the onset of winter, in an avalanche path, no less. The courts finally decided that was not sufficient to grant an extension and Jumbo Glacier Resort was officially dead. In January 2020, Qat'muk (GOT mook) was declared an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area, forever protecting the home of the grizzly spirit.

Traverse in the heart of Qat'muk

I was excited to explore this area. While Covid has made travelling impossible, I feel fortunate to have a lifetime's worth of adventures so close to home. With the exception of the Bugaboos, the Purcells have been largely ignored by climbers. This subrange of the Columbia Mountains has a reputation for difficult access and rotten rock. While this is certainly true for some areas there are also many hidden gems. A few years ago I was happy to find a copy of the "Climber's Guide to the Interior Ranges of British Columbia - South" by Kru-szyna and Putnam in a used bookstore. Even though the book is from the 1970s it is still the only guidebook for the Purcells outside of the Bugaboos. One intriguing entry about the Egyptian Peaks stated "firm high-angled granite on the east side, exceedingly steep quartzite on west." This prominent string of peaks connects Jumbo Pass to Mount Monica and the Starbird Glacier. Curt Wagner unofficially named them after Egyptian gods back in 1973 when he first climbed in the area (1). Official maps do not name the peaks at all and Google Earth seems to have them in a different order than Wagner's. I wondered if it might be time to assign Ktunaxa (Too NAH ha) names to these peaks in the heart of Qat'muk.

>>>



In mid August of 2020, my husband Cam and I hiked up to Jumbo Pass early in the morning after sleeping in the back of the truck. A well-used trail goes up the peak behind the Jumbo Pass cabin. It is easily gained in 45 minutes and probably sees a fair number of visitors. From this peak, we could see the next peak. Though the climbing looked imposing, it turned out to be no more than 3rd class. At first there was a band of loose shale to navigate but then we got into solid quartzite. We were surprised to find that the summit register had only three entries, the last one from 1998 (2). It had taken us only two hours from Jumbo Pass yet we were the first party in over 20 years to write in the summit register. There was no pen so perhaps there were others before us.

We continued north and down climbed on solid, blocky quartzite to a broad pass overlooking a beautiful tarn to the west and the rock arch made famous by the climb “Grizzly Groove”, which is named to honour Qat’muk (3). We continued easily up to a broad peak made up of very clean grey talus. Here we were stumped for a bit. Straight ahead was a shear drop off and below us was a crumbly-looking traverse ledge to a notch. We carefully picked our way along the ledge and then decided to put on the rope as there were a couple of 5th class moves above a drop off. Cam lead down a gully and then up on a steep wall above. Once back on the ridge, the climbing was quite

a bit easier again and we gained the next summit that had a cairn but no register. From here we continued north along the ridge on beautiful blocky quartzite. At times we had to down climb or go left or right to circumvent any difficulties but it was no harder than 4th class.

At this point it was getting on in the day and we found ourselves below the steep peak Wagner called Storus. It did not look like there was an easy way up so we decided to traverse around the summit on a loose ledge to the east and were able to regain the ridge for one final peak, where we built a cairn.

It had taken us 12 hours to get to this point. We scrambled down to a snowfield below us to the east, down climbed a steep snow-filled couloir and reached the flats below. But we hadn’t escaped yet! Steep knee-knocking moraine lead to shifting talus that eventually dumped us into thick slide alder. After some intense bushwhacking we reached the creek, waded across and continued bushwhacking down valley until we finally reached an ATV trail just as it got dark. In the fading light we passed the Jumbo Glacier Resort’s remnants, which continue to defile Qat’muk. We finally reached the truck at 11:00 pm. We thought it was possibly a first traverse, given that we could find no other reports. However, the week after our outing our friend David Lussier told us he had done this traverse back in 2000 from the west side.

Blockhead Mountain

A few weeks later, after some more perusing of the old guidebook, we set our sights on Blockhead Mountain. This oddly named but impressive looking peak sits just south of Jumbo Pass up the Leona Creek drainage, which connects Qat’muk to the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy. The guidebook again mentioned granite and quartzite, but detailed information about previous ascents was hard to find.

In order to facilitate a one-day ascent, we rode our mountain bikes up the decommissioned logging road for 5 km. It was late August and there was frost in the valley. We had visions of difficult bushwhacking — therefore we were pleasantly surprised to find open forest, due to glading done by the local heli-ski company. In short time we reached the moraines below Blockhead Pass.

We put on crampons to climb up firm snow on a pocket glacier, climbed into the bergschrund and out again on some loose blocks and gained the pass itself. The lower part of the east ridge of Blockhead Mountain was mostly 3rd class granite boulders and slabs. After a short flat section we reached the crux. It was not overly difficult climbing but it was dripping with water from the snowfield above, covered in moss and exposed. We roped up and gingerly maneuvered through this short section. Then we had a choice: a large snowfield on the right or a low-angled granite slab to the left. We chose the snowfield and climbed up several hundred metres, finally reaching the summit.

Surrounded by peaks and glaciers we were in the heart of Qat’muk. We looked for a summit register in vain and then quickly started down the east ridge again which was already in shadow and starting to freeze up. We retraced our steps to where we had stashed the bikes. We happily coasted down the old road in the fading light, grateful that the home of the grizzly spirit was protected for future generations.

There was an odd feeling in the air that night as we gathered around the table, enveloped in the haze. It had been an amazing day but a sobering reminder of the changing climate. We discussed our duty as artists to record the events of the world we live in the intersection of science, art, history, and culture.

It was a wonderful and heartbreaking trip, and I am grateful to still be able to experience these places. We will continue to film and explore these issues over the next year, and I hope that our work will help in some small way to preserve them for generations to come. ~ACC



Cam Mclellan happy to be past the crumbly traverse ledge. Cam Mclellan heureux d'être tiré d'une corniche friable de la traversée. Photo Stefanie Mclellan.



The author climbing the pocket glacier below Blockhead Mountain. L'auteure escaladant le petit glacier en bas du mont Blockhead. Photo Cam Mclellan.

ESCALADES À QAT'MUK

Un récit de Stefanie McLellan



Je vis à Invermere, C.-B., dans les monts Purcell, sur le territoire ancestral et non cédé de la Première Nation de Ktunaxa (Kutenai). Au cœur des Purcells se trouve une zone appelée Qat'muk, l'habitat sacré de l'esprit de l'ours grizzly. Ce territoire a été l'objet d'une dispute de 30 ans autour du projet de station de ski appelée Jumbo Glacier, qui s'est conclue par une décision de la cour en 2019 après que le certificat de l'étude d'impact environnemental de la station ait été périmé. Cherchant à prouver que les travaux avaient plus que commencé, Jumbo Glacier Resorts avait coulé les fondations en béton du pavillon d'accueil dans un couloir d'avalanche (rien de moins) avant que l'hiver ne s'installe. Les tribunaux avaient finalement conclu que cela ne suffisait pas pour accorder un délai, signant ainsi l'arrêt de mort officiel de la station Jumbo Glacier. En janvier 2020, Qat'muk (GAT mouk) était déclarée aire protégée et de conservation autochtone, protégeant pour toujours l'habitat sacré de l'esprit du grizzly.

Une traversée au cœur de Qat'muk

J'étais impatiente d'explorer cette région. Si la COVID empêche de voyager, j'ai cependant la chance d'avoir près de chez moi assez d'occasions d'aventures pour remplir une vie. À l'exception

des Bugaboos, les grimpeurs ont largement ignoré les monts Purcell. Cette sous-chaîne de la chaîne Columbia est surtout réputée pour son accès difficile et sa roche friable. Or si cela est vrai pour certaines régions, elle a aussi bien des trésors cachés. Il y a de cela quelques années, j'avais eu le plaisir de trouver un exemplaire du Climber's Guide to the Interior Ranges of British Columbia — South par Kruszyna et Putnam dans une librairie d'usagés. Bien que publié dans les années 1970, l'ouvrage demeure le seul guide à aborder les Purcells à l'extérieur des Bugaboos. Une entrée intrigante sur les pics Egyptian y mentionnait « du granite ferme à angles aigus à la face est, et du quartzite extrêmement raide au côté ouest. » Cette série de pics importants relie le col Jumbo au mont Monica et au glacier Starbird. Curt Wagner les avait officieusement nommés d'après des divinités égyptiennes en 1973 après sa première escalade dans la région (1), mais les cartes officielles ne nomment aucun de ces pics tandis que Google Earth semble les distribuer dans un autre ordre que celui de Wagner. Je me suis demandé si le moment était venu d'attribuer des noms Ktunaxa (Tou NA ha) à ces sommets au cœur de Qat'muk.

Au milieu du mois d'août 2020, mon mari Cam et moi nous

sommes promenés en matinée jusqu'au col Jumbo après avoir dormi à l'arrière du camion. Un sentier monte jusqu'au pic derrière le refuge du col Jumbo, facilement joignable en 45 minutes et sans doute assez visité. À partir de ce pic, nous pouvions voir le pic suivant. Son escalade semblait en imposer, mais ne se révéla pas supérieure à la classe 3. Il fallut bien négocier, au départ, une bande de schiste meuble, avant de passer au quartzite solide. À notre grande surprise, le registre du sommet contenait seulement trois entrées, la dernière remontant à 1998 (2). Il nous avait suffi de deux heures à partir du col Jumbo pour arriver, et nous étions les premiers à y écrire depuis 20 ans. Mais d'autres étaient peut-être venus avant nous sans pouvoir le faire, car il n'y avait pas de stylo avec le registre.

Nous avons poursuivi vers le nord et grimpé sur du quartzite solide, en blocs, vers un large col qui surplombait à l'ouest un joli lac de cirque et l'arche de pierre rendue célèbre par l'escalade nommée « Grizzly Groove » en l'honneur de Qat'muk (3). Nous avons continué facilement jusqu'à un large pic de talus gris et propre, où nous sommes restés indécis quelque temps. Devant nous se trouvait un dépôt de cisaillement et en dessous de nous, le passage d'une corniche d'allure friable vers une encoche. Avec précaution, nous avons choisi notre chemin le long de la corniche et décidé de nous attacher, en raison des quelques mouvements de classe 5 à réaliser au-dessus d'une dénivellation. Cam a descendu une rigole, puis monté un mur abrupt au-dessus. Une fois revenus sur la crête, l'ascension a repris de sa facilité et nous avons atteint le prochain sommet, qui disposait d'un cairn, mais qui n'avait pas de registre. Puis nous avons continué vers le nord le long de la crête de quartzite en blocs. Nous devons parfois descendre ou aller à gauche ou à droite pour contourner des difficultés, mais le tout n'était pas plus difficile qu'une classe 4.

Arrivés à ce point l'heure avançait, et nous nous sommes retrouvés sous le pic abrupt que Wagner avait appelé Storus. Comme aucun chemin ne semblait facile, nous avons décidé de contourner le sommet sur une corniche instable vers l'est et avons pu regagner la crête vers un dernier sommet, où nous avons bâti un cairn.

À gauche/left: L'auteure sur la traversée des pics Egyptian. The author on the Egyptian peaks traverse. Photo Cam McLellan.

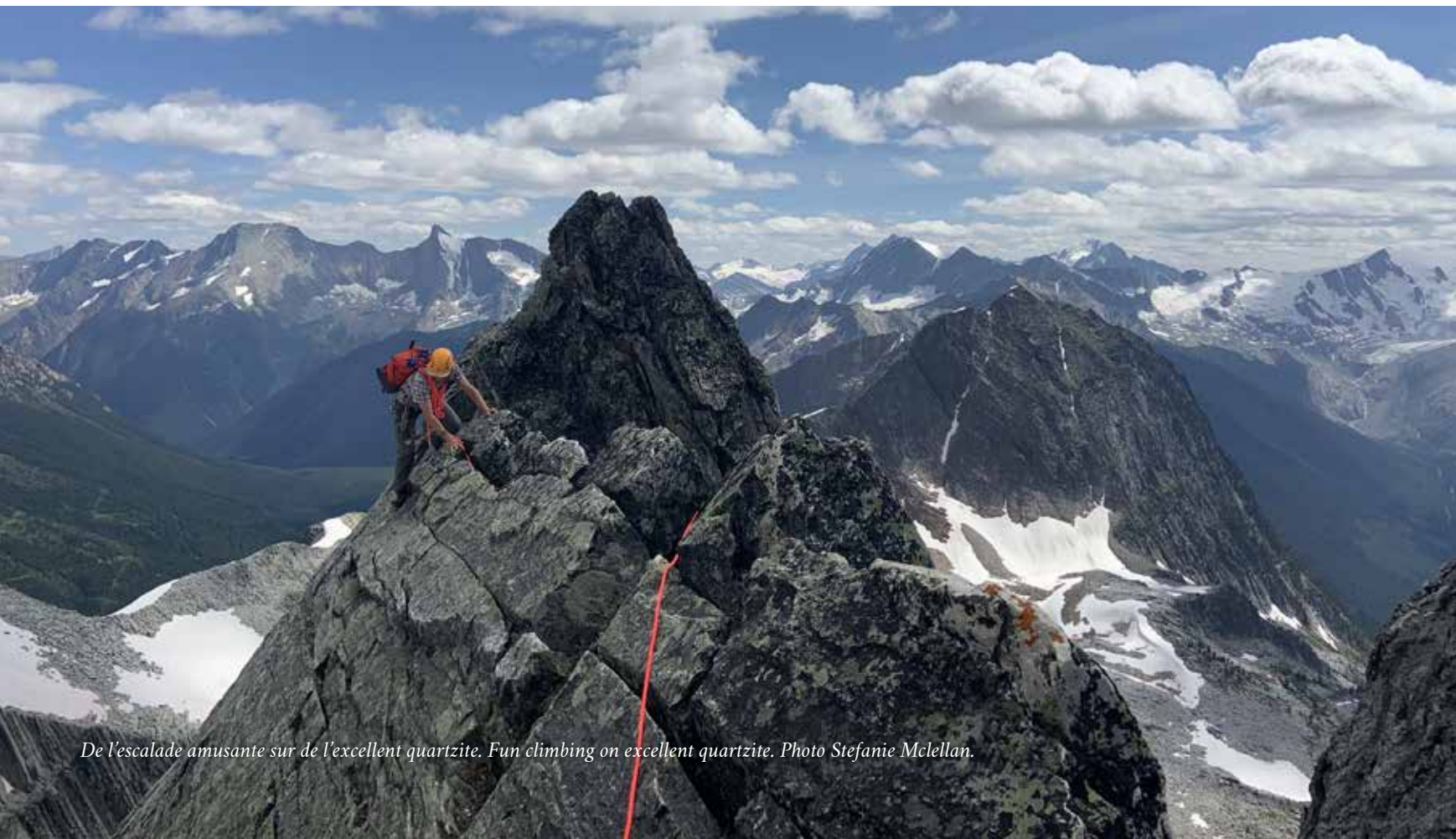
Ci-dessous/below: La traversée des pics Egyptian, vue du pic au-dessus du refuge du col Jumbo. The Egyptian peaks traverse as seen from the peak above Jumbo Pass Cabin. Photo Stefanie McLellan.

Bas/bottom: L'itinéraire de la traversée des pics Egyptian. The Egyptian peaks traverse route. Photo Cam McLellan.





*L'auteure s'approche du point crucial de la traversée des pics Egyptian.
The author approaching the crux of the Egyptian Peaks traverse. Photo Cam McLellan.*



De l'escalade amusante sur de l'excellent quartzite. Fun climbing on excellent quartzite. Photo Stefanie McLellan.

Il nous avait fallu 12 heures pour arriver à ce point. Nous sommes descendus en « scrambling » jusqu'à un champ de neige en bas de nous à l'est, et escaladé en descente un couloir escarpé rempli de neige pour atteindre les plaines en contre-bas. Mais ce n'était pas encore terminé! Une moraine abrupte et dure aux genoux conduisait à un talus instable qui nous a jetés dans une aulnaie épaisse. Après un intense débroussaillage, nous avons rejoint le ruisseau, traversé à gué, et continué de débroussailler en descendant la vallée jusqu'à rejoindre enfin un sentier de VTT à la tombée de la nuit. Dans le jour déclinant, nous avons vu les restes de la station Jumbo Glacier, qui profanent encore Qat'muk. Nous avons enfin rejoint le camion à 23 heures en pensant que notre traversée était peut-être une première, car nous n'avions pas découvert d'autres rapports. Une semaine plus tard, notre ami David Lussier raconta cependant qu'il avait fait cette traversée en 2000 depuis le côté ouest.

Mont Blockhead

Quelques semaines plus tard, après avoir feuilleté mon vieux guide, nous avons fixé notre objectif sur le mont Blockhead. Ce pic impressionnant et au nom étrange se tient près du col Jumbo, au sud, au-dessus du drainage du ruisseau Leona qui relie Qat'muk au site de conservation de la nature de Purcell. Le guide parlait encore de granite et de quartzite, mais il était difficile d'avoir plus de renseignements sur des ascensions antérieures.

Dans le but de faciliter une ascension d'une journée, nous avons parcouru 5 km du chemin forestier désaffecté sur nos vélos de montagne. C'était la fin aout et il y avait du gel dans la vallée. Comme nous étions préparés à un débroussaillage intense, nous avons été agréablement surpris de découvrir la forêt dégagée par la compagnie locale d'hélicoptère, et nous avons atteint les moraines sous le col Blockhead en peu de temps.

Nous avons mis des crampons pour escalader la neige ferme d'un petit glacier, grimpé dans la rimaye pour en sortir sur des blocs détachés et gagner le col même. La partie inférieure de la crête est du mont Blockhead se composait surtout de blocs et de dalles de granite, classe 3. Après une courte section plate nous avons atteint le point crucial, qui n'était pas si difficile à escalader, mais qui était dégoulinant de l'eau du champ de neige au-dessus, exposé au soleil et couvert de mousse. Attachés, nous avons négocié prudemment cette courte section. Puis il a fallu choisir entre un grand champ de neige à notre droite et une plaque de granit peu abrupte à notre gauche. Nous avons opté pour le champ de neige et grimpé plusieurs centaines de mètres pour atteindre enfin le sommet.

Entourés de glaciers et de pics, nous étions au cœur de Qat'muk. Nous avons cherché, mais n'avons pas trouvé de registre, puis nous avons rapidement commencé de descendre la crête est, qui commençait à geler et se trouvait déjà dans l'ombre. Nous sommes revenus sur nos pas jusqu'à l'endroit où nous avions laissé nos vélos, avant de descendre joyeusement sur la vieille route dans la lumière déclinante, heureux de savoir que la demeure de l'esprit du grizzly était protégée pour les générations futures. ~CAC

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1. Wagner, C. CAJ 1974, p 52-53
2. Mutch, H. CAJ 1999, p 117-118
3. <https://mountainculturegroup.com/unique-rock-climbing-feature-canada/>

SUMMER 2021 AT ACC BACKCOUNTRY HUTS

24 ways to experience the beauty and freedom of the alpine backcountry this summer at an ACC hut.



We will begin taking booking requests for summer 2021 first week in April.

The ACC's huts will be open for summer 2021 to allow mountain lovers to recreate, spend time with friends and family and to connect with Canada's wild places.

- All hut bookings continue to be exclusive (whole hut) for your party
- First-come reservations will be taken through our booking request form on a 90-day rolling window
- Hut capacities may fluctuate with AB and BC provincial health orders

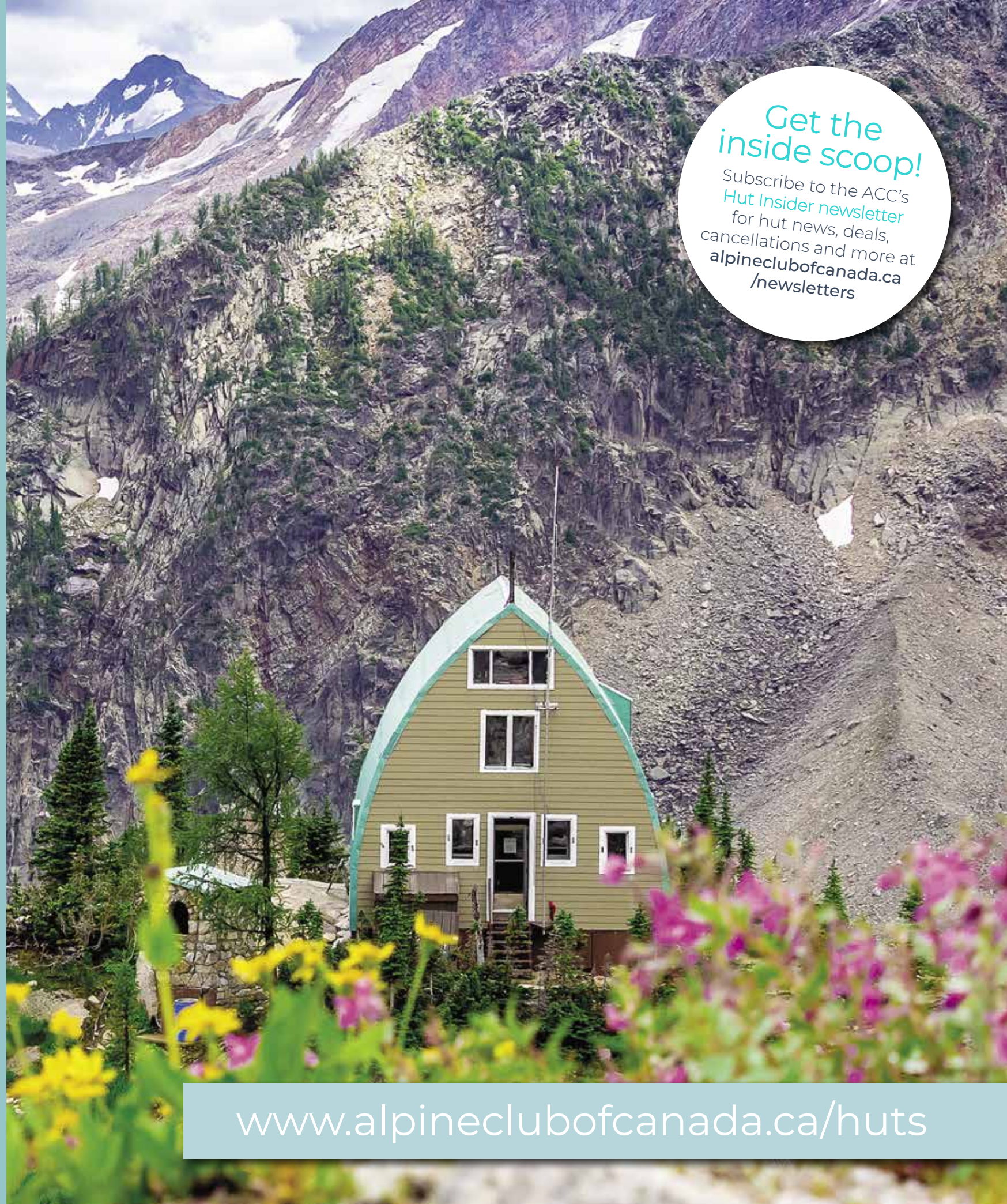
Rolling with it...

Covid variants, vaccinations, travel restrictions, provincial health orders... There's a lot of things that we don't know yet about how summer 2021 is going to look and how our hut bookings will be affected. We'll continue to monitor things closely and provide as much notice and as much flexibility for our guests as we can.

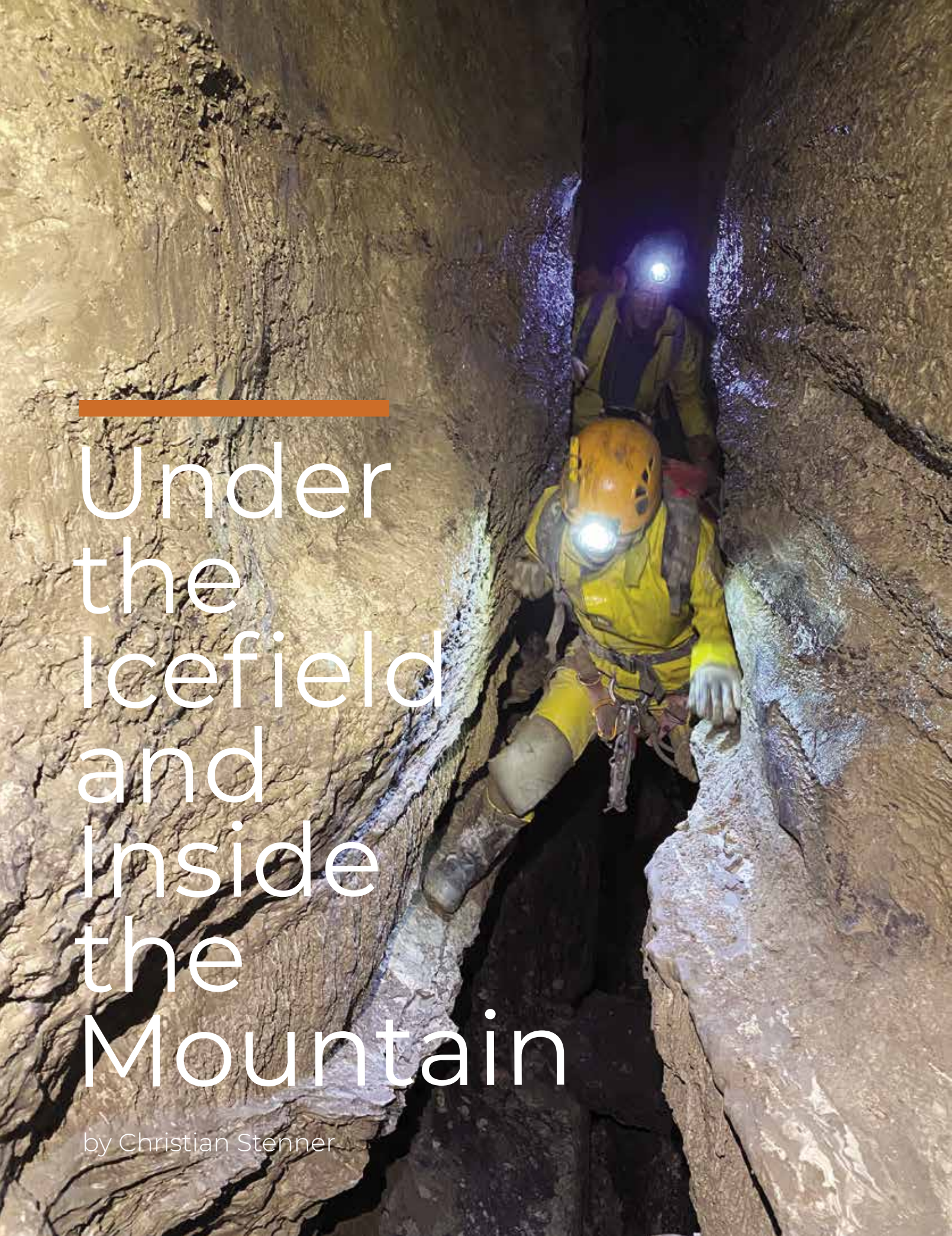
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Under the Icefield and Inside the Mountain

by Christian Stenner

Typical vadose passages of the First and Second Fissures in Castleguard. Photo by Christian Stenner.

ACC member Christian Stenner takes us below the Columbia Icefield in Banff National Park with the 2020 Castleguard Cave Expedition.

Castleguard. For a caver, the name invokes imagination and emotion. As Canada's longest cave, it has enchanted expedition cavers from around the world who have contributed to its exploration over the last 50 years. A few unexplored leads still beckon, and armed with clear scientific and exploration objectives, a research permit from Parks Canada grants access for experienced teams.

I was first there in 2009, fulfilling a dream of my own. And by 2012 I was the leader of a team at Castleguard supporting British cave diver Martin Groves. He was planning dry cave exploration beyond Boon's Sump, a submerged tunnel nearly one kilometre in length. That year, an unprecedented ice blockage in a passage called the Ice Crawls scuttled the trip. Since then, a couple of teams have attempted to continue exploration, but with unpredictable ice blockages it is hard to commit to the logistics required to explore Castleguard.

Years passed until a seed was planted with a few visiting cavers who were in Canada decompressing after the massive 2018 cave rescue in Thailand. Australians Richard Harris and Craig Challen, along with another caver in our network, New Zealander Tom Crisp, were enchanted by the prospect of continuing where Martin left off in 2012. Our 2020 expedition was organized by Katie Graham of the Alberta Speleological Society.

The massive effort would require transporting loads of scuba diving and caving

equipment within the cave to Boon's Sump. A dozen volunteers were needed on the front and back end of the expedition, along with an exploration group that would continue on pursuing underwater and dry cave exploration. Reaching out beyond the caving community to the ACC and ACMG meant a few folks who were not primarily cavers were able to experience Castleguard, a rare opportunity.

Claustrophobia level: ice crawl

On the evening of March 8th, 2020, we received a desperate message from our support team who had arrived at the cave in advance. The ice crawls were tight. Not totally blocked, but not everyone could squeeze through them. Our solution to save the expedition? Chainsaw a channel through the ice restriction. So, the next morning while the main contingent started skiing the 20-kilometre route to the cave, I stayed back with our two Société québécoise de spéléologie cavers to scour Canmore hardware stores for 18-volt chainsaw batteries.

The ski to the toe of the Saskatchewan Glacier was familiar, and bluebird skies made for a pleasant outing if not for the crisp wind coming from the Columbia Icefield. The most treacherous part of the route is ascending the moraine to join Castleguard Meadows. The steep, windswept slope contained no trace of the previous ski track and we progressed slowly upwards with eighty-pound

pulks — albatrosses constantly pulling us down. The last kilometre descending towards the Castleguard River Valley was lit by headlamp and characterized by lots of swearing. Tree wells had exponentially increased the albatross factor of our pulks. Salvation was at Entrance Camp just inside the cave.

"The ice crawls were tight. Not totally blocked, but not everyone could squeeze through them. Our solution to save the expedition? Chainsaw a channel through the ice restriction."

The next morning my "work shift" was with Tyler Neiss, our lone American caver. Beyond the imposing metal gate, the passage meanders until you arrive at an 8-metre drop. We rappelled down to the base of the pitch and ducked into the start of the ice crawls. Laying flat out on the ice we slid along and eventually came to the blockage. Roughly 20-centimetres





Deep caving team at the Ice Plug, underneath the Columbia Icefield.
Photo by Jeremy Bruns.

of airspace was between the ice floor and limestone ceiling. Tyler started first. The process was to cut some grooves with the chain-saw and then hammer out the ice with a hatchet and chisel to cut a trough a few centimetres deeper. Laying flat on the confined ice surface while damp and being blasted by the cold 25 km/h draft necessitated short work shifts. I was anxious to get chiseling.

Taking over from Tyler I slid forward into the trough with my head tilted to the side and my torso squeezed between the ice and rock. It didn't take long for me to notice my heart pounding and the intense sensation of breathlessness that was overtaking me: panic. Completely overcome with the desire to extricate myself I hurriedly backed out of the trough and caught my breath. After a few minutes I made a second attempt. Trying again didn't help, and I was left to watch Tyler take another crack at chiseling before sulking back to Entrance Camp.

Katie confronted me that night. If we could solve the ice crawl problem, we were going to do a six-day journey deep into the cave and if I couldn't pass the ice crawls then I would have to stay at Entrance Camp. I felt like it would be more acceptable to have a broken leg, like somehow a physical injury would have been a better excuse. The thought of not being able to go deep with my team was devastating. My personal Sagarmatha was to reach Castleguard's famous ice plug, where the cave ends underneath the Columbia Icefield. Our objectives in the farthest reaches of the cave would bring us there, and I was going to miss the opportunity.

The next day everyone mobilized to get the diving equipment to the sump and I kitted up with the team to try again. News that larger team members had fit through the trough was comforting. When my turn came, I felt my way forward with one arm stretched out in front pushing the cave pack ahead of me and the other arm to my side. The trough meandered until it opened up to where I could turn my head and see where I was going, and finally to where I could crawl on hands and knees. I had made it through.

The haul past the ice crawls consisted of a kilometre of crawling over sharp rocks. The team effort had moved all the rebreathers, dive cylinders, lead weights, and other equipment to the sump by nightfall. Tom, Richard, and Craig would spend the next few days alone at Entrance Camp executing the dive. Our support team would leave the next morning, and Katie, Tyler, Jeremy Bruns, Christian Chenier, Catherine Tardy-Laporte and myself would spend the next six days doing exploration projects based from camps deeper in the cave.

Progress at the deep camps

Obstacles characterize the passages carving further into the mountain. After the ice crawls the next obstacle is the pools, a series of ice-cold waist deep ponds. Further along is a 24-metre rappel, and then The Subway, a near perfect example of a phreatic tube that goes arrow-straight for half a kilometre. After this is The First Fissure: a vadose canyon sometimes ten metres deep. Cavers must bridge the passages that climb and

descend within the rift. A day's worth of hard travel finally brought us to Camp I, where flat ground with nearby pools of water in ancient drip cups were an oasis amongst the rifts and rubble.

From Camp I our team split up to tackle our exploration objectives. Katie, Jeremy, and Catherine tackled F7, an inhospitable passage yet to be fully explored. My team went to The Next Scene, a tight passage described both as a "terrific" lead by a British team and "terrible" by the last Canadians to see it. We brought a chisel and folding shovel to make The Next Scene's lead bigger if necessary. The lead was too tight and we tried digging, but left convinced that it would take weeks to make meaningful progress. We returned to Camp I to find Katie's team had been skunked too; the F7 passage being dreadfully wet, drafty and tight. Dejected, we were hopeful for better results deeper in the cave.

Rousing from a cold, damp sleep to put on cold, wet cave suits, our team was excited to get moving for the next phase. I was the only member of our team who had previously been as far as Camp I, so

unfamiliar ground lay ahead for all of us. Beyond Camp I, Holes-in-the-Floor provides a series of 19 pits to traverse. Then comes Second Fissure. Within the

We were able to resurvey approximately half of the passage, a mixture of walking, crawling, and flat-out munchkinning before returning to Camp II.

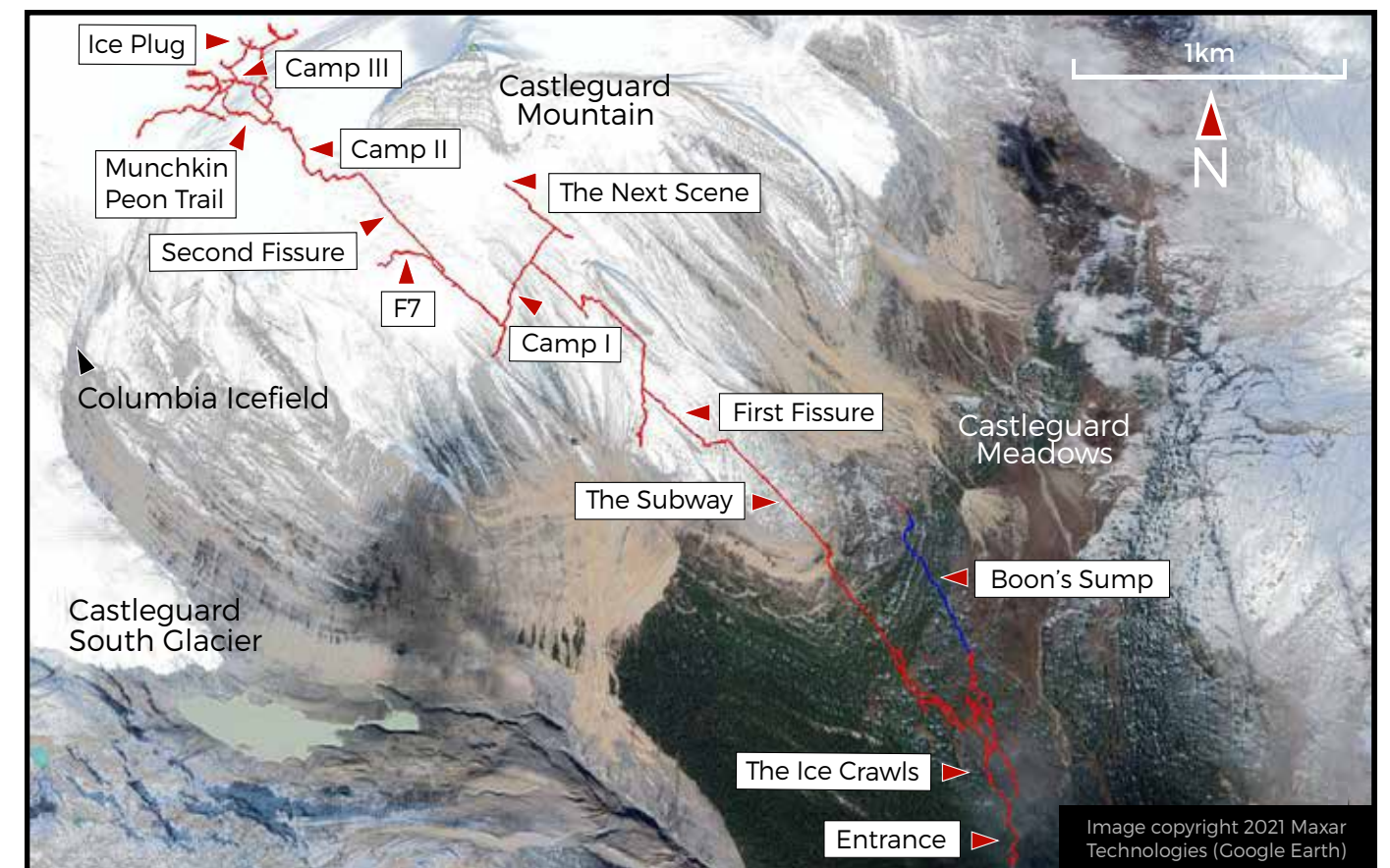
start of this new rift is the most sporting passage in the entire cave. The crux is fissure-eroded by a small waterfall requiring long legs and teamwork to cross.

Finally, we reached Camp II, a bizarre

anomaly within the Fissure where a 50-metre section of the rift has an actual floor.

With time left in the day we continued to our objective, the Munchkin Peon Trail. This passage was partially explored from the north in 1980 and then from the south in 1984, but the second expedition's connection to the 1980 survey did not line up. This survey error cast doubt into the accuracy of documented passages in the headward complex of the cave.

Climbing into the Munchkin Peon Trail from Second Fissure involved wedging seven metres up a side rift. Catherine and I started the resurvey at the top of the climb. Christian Chenier and Tyler went through the passage to where it nearly connects to the main passage and surveyed back towards my team. We were able to resurvey approximately half of the passage, a mixture of walking, crawling, and flat-out munchkinning before returning to Camp II. Progress was good, and we excitedly planned to reach the ice plug the next day.





Captions, this page:

1. Kathleen Graham at Boon's Sump. The start of an 845-metre underwater tunnel. Photo by Matt Kennedy
2. Lewis Clarey on the approach to the Saskatchewan Glacier. Photo by Scott Baker
3. Cavers traverse through a famous obstacle in the cave known as "Holes-in-the-floor." Photo by Christian Stenner.
4. Crawling passage on the way to Boon's Sump; 5-6 hours moving diving equipment. Photo by Jason Lavigne

The ice plug

There is something about being so incredibly remote and to finally find yourself in a place of your dreams. The juxtaposition of being within Banff National Park, but also being incredibly isolated, takes time to fully comprehend and appreciate. There was a time when the ice plug was the furthest one could get from a cave entrance anywhere in the world. 234 metres of rock and ice lay between us and the surface of the Columbia Icefield above. Simultaneously inside a mountain and underneath the glacier, for a moment we were in what has been described as the most inaccessible place in Canada. The team was smiling all around. Katie and Catherine became the third and fourth females to reach the ice plug.

At Camp III Katie and Jeremy left for a scientific sample mission at Dessert Glacé. The Swiss team that first explored that section of cave in 1987 had found peculiar organic matter in the passage and a new collection of this material was needed to

facilitate further research. Christian, Tyler, Catherine, and myself resumed the re-survey of Munchkin Peon Trail. We connected the surveys and gleefully returned to Camp II for the night. Reviewing the results in camp by the glow of our PDA screens, we knew we had fixed the survey error that had persisted for 36 years. It was a great success, but the statistics would have to wait until I could crunch the data on my computer back home.

Returning to the entrance took two days. Emerging from darkness I was struck by the scent and the magnificent colors of the world, of pine forest and Watchman's Peak across the valley. While we were away Craig and Tom had dived Boon's Sump, and surfaced in what became a fissure-like rift. With the high risk of puncturing their dry suits on sharp projections within the passage, they safely surveyed what they could, and returned for the dive home.

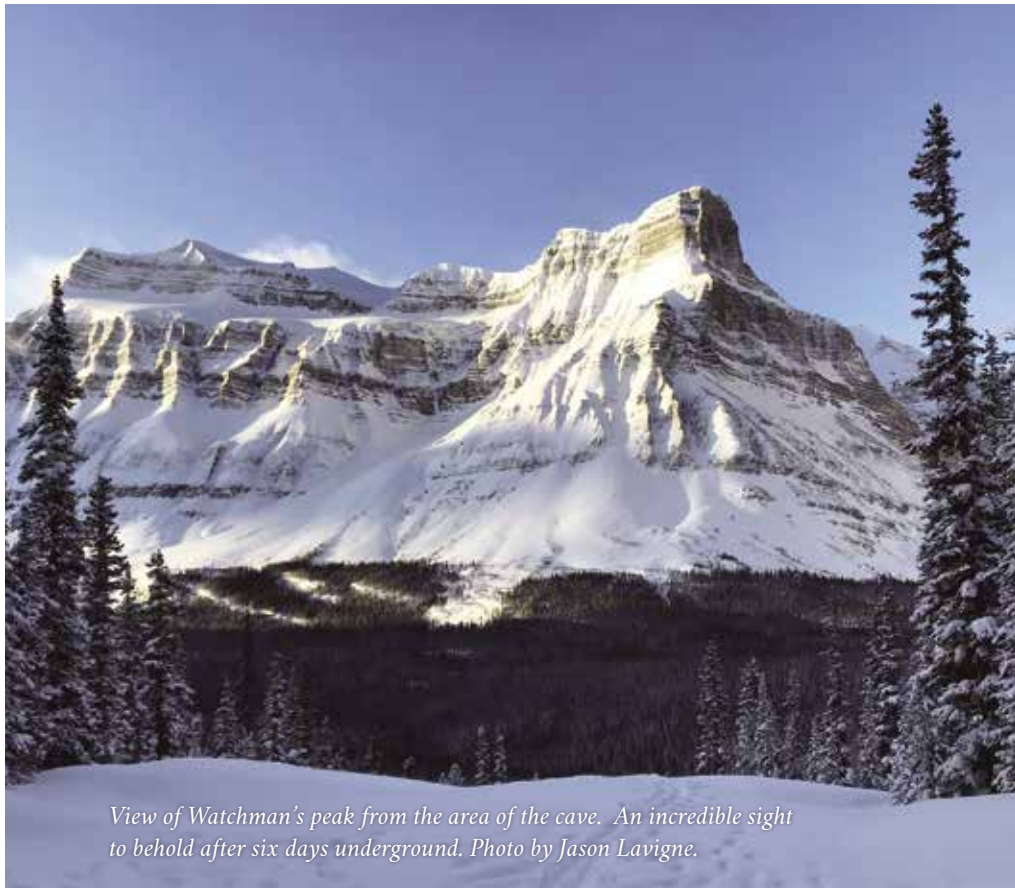
Our support team arrived with the freshness required to move the equipment from the Sump back to the en-

trance, and over two more days all was ready for our departure.

Unlike other caving trips, returning after 11 days from the underground to the regular world had a different flavour this time around: despite the highlights of the news that our support team had provided, nothing could have prepared us for a world changed by COVID-19. We emerged from under the Earth into a new reality, one which still persists a year later.

Moving the needle

Post-expedition cartography revealed the outcome of our trip's work; a kind of delayed gratification that often comes with cave exploration. Between the new section beyond Boon's Sump, the revised Munchkin Peon data, and our other new "dry" passages explored, the needle was moved in Canada's longest cave. Castle-guard is now 21,311 metres long and 388 metres deep. Unfulfilled objectives persist, and some of what lies within will be unlocked in our next attempt, scheduled for the winter of 2022. ~ACC



View of Watchman's peak from the area of the cave. An incredible sight to behold after six days underground. Photo by Jason Lavigne.

Dive Deeper

Watch the crew's nail-biting adventure in the film **Castleguard Cave: Hindsight Twenty**, viewable on the ACC Aspects Blog at blog.alpineclubofcanada.ca/blog/castleguard-cave

Christian Stenner is also a co-author of **Dark Frontiers: Exploring Western Canada's Underground** in the ACC's 2020 State of the Mountains Report. The overview of Canadian caving and explanations of cave science in Dark Frontiers is the perfect compliment to this first-person recollection of the adventure and discovery of pushing the boundary of Canada's longest cave. Dark Frontiers can be found at stateofthemountains.ca/DarkFrontiers



Conical stromatolite on Mount Murchison, overlooking Saskatchewan River Crossing, Mount Wilson in the distance. Photo by Jim Everard.

The Past is Present

In search of Norman Collie, Hugh Stutfield and Hermann Woolley's Fossil Forest

by Jim Everard

Sometimes a few minutes with an old book can lead to years of exploration in the mountains. For me, it led to trips in search of Norman Collie, Hugh Stutfield and Hermann Woolley's "fossil forest."

I first read the words "fossil forest" as the caption to a photograph in Collie and Stutfield's book *Climbs and Exploration in the Canadian Rockies* (1903). In the text, the unusual feature was described as

... a group of rocks, consisting, as it seemed, of petrified stems of pine-trees that had been broken off about a foot from the ground, with numerous fossilized remains around their base. [1]

Later, I found the words again on a sketch map by G. Baker and N. Collie dated 1897-8 and included in *The Geographical Journal* of April 1899. I was intrigued. If the authors really had stumbled on an actual fossilized forest at that location, the discovery would have set science on its head by implying that trees existed 160 million years before the commonly accepted timeline. Something else was there. An exploratory fuse was lit.

The map places the trail to the fossil forest on the vast northern flanks of Mt. Murchison, about one hour north of Lake Louise. The cool, wet weather of late spring/early summer 2020 kept my usual high-alpine rock objectives in white limbo. Scrambling on Murchison's northern flank would be an ideal alternative. I set out, guided by my personal hunches about the photographs and previous trips through the geological Mistaya Formation on Mt. Murchison. One last clue was provided by Collie and Stutfield; the fossil forest was located near

... a tall column of rock that had become detached from the cliff, forming a slender pillar four or five hundred feet in height, and tapered towards the summit and base. [2]

A few kilometres south of the Parks Canada warden station at Saskatchewan River Crossing, several creeks tumble down the Murchison massif and under Highway 93. The creek I chose to ascend had ample room to navigate around boulders, over and under downed trees and up multi-stepped waterfalls while gaining 600 vertical metres. Beyond that rose black walls, snow-choked couloirs, and slopes covered with a farrago of room-sized boulders, possible remnants of a collapsed rock column. The couloirs provided access to the uppermost scree terrace, where the altimeter readings better matched the elevations described in the 1903 book and on the sketch map.

The couloirs were unlikely to yield the sought-after fossil forest, since rockfall and avalanches regularly scrub those surfaces. However, just above the couloirs, rock prows remained isolated from the scrubbing, but must endure the forces of Keewatin.

Navigating the boulder labyrinth and side-hilling brought me out near the end of one of the prows and a remarkable feature: a field of unusual rock fragments. Another forty paces brought me to tiers of wildly angled columns. I had found what I had been looking for!

These were stromatolites, as later confirmed by a geologist who looked at my photos. Stromatolites are domed layers of the mineral calcite (CaCO₃, lime) created by cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae. Stromatolites are the world's oldest visible microbial communities.

The conical forms littered the mountain-side, some angled horizontally, some vertically, most of them broken off, per the photograph in the Collie/Stutfield book. Some stood a metre tall and measured over 40 cm in diameter at the truncation, while others tapered to mini-summits.

Hours ticked by during my mental and physical wanderings among the stromatolites in this awesome place. Mt. Murchison's shadows began to lengthen. Across the valley to the north, Mt. Wilson's thick band of white quartzite glowed near the summit. To the west, the sun's incandescence flickered off the Howse and North Saskatchewan rivers. Unchanging, the stromatolites anchored the scene. I carefully retraced my path down, hungry to learn more.

In the ensuing weeks I learned that stromatolites appeared about 3.6 to 3.7 billion years ago. To put that in perspective, and using our annual calendar as a scale, if stromatolites appeared on January 1, dinosaurs appeared on December 14 and non-avian dinosaurs were extinct by December 25. *Homo sapiens* appeared just before midnight on December 31.

Today I feel almost embarrassed that I have scrambled and climbed, unaware, through the "stromatolite epoch" dozens of times at multiple locations in the Canadian Rockies. Stromatolites can be seen at Robson Pass, Fool's Gold-Fried Rice Col, Nigel Pass,



Know Your Geobiology

In the Cambrian geological period, long before the Canadian Rockies existed, this region was part of a wide continental shelf. Colonies of stromatolite-forming cyanobacteria lived in very shallow seawater. They would be exposed at low tide, and for protection against drying out they made a protective mineral crust from calcite dissolved in the water. At high tide, when the colonies were submerged, very fine limy sediment would become trapped among the cyanobacteria's sticky filaments.

The seabed was gradually sinking, so the colonies kept growing upward to stay in their preferred zone between high and low tides. One geologist and alpinist friend likened this process to "an endless supply of Airbnb guests who leave behind enough material to allow construction ever upward."

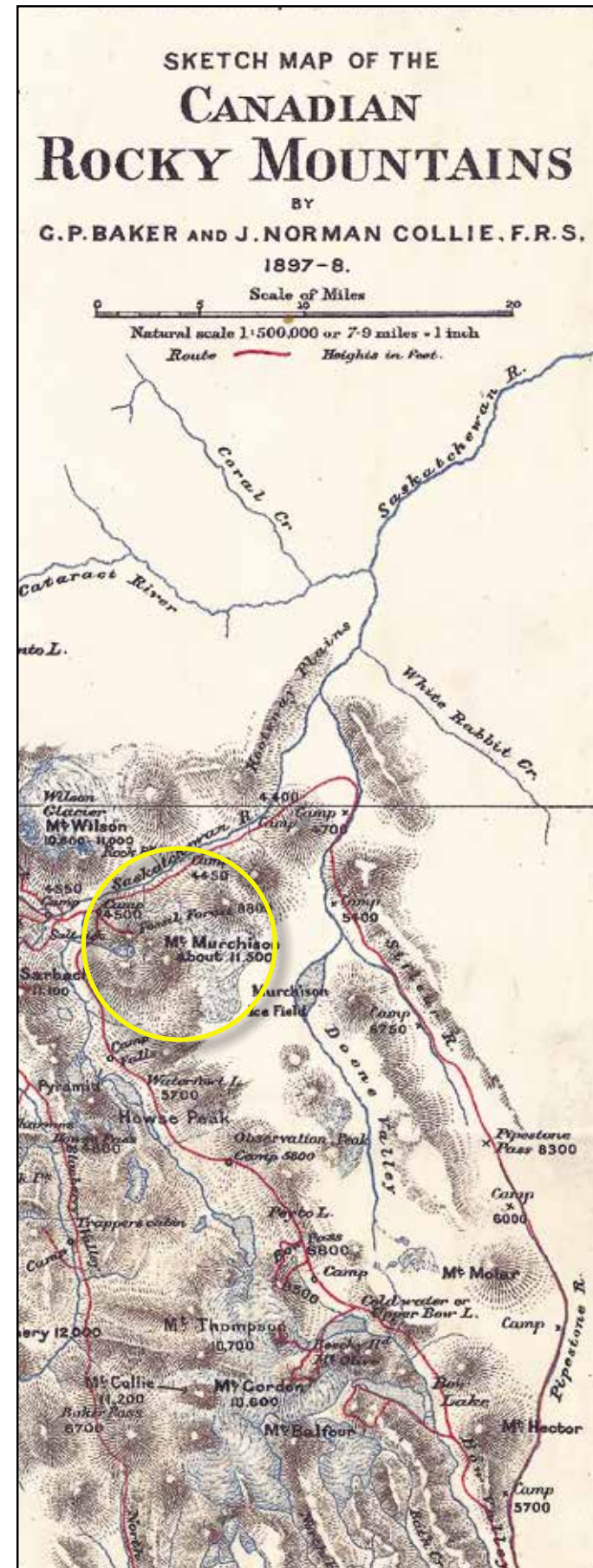
~JE



Top: Three large stromatolites protrude from the geological Mistaya Formation of Mount Murchison. Photo by Jim Everard

Left: The photograph that started the search. Original photo caption by Norman J. Collie reads: “Fossil remains of trunks of trees – cut off? Mt. Murchison, 1898.” Norman J. Collie/photographer, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Alpine Club of Canada fonds (V14/AC0P/62)

Facing: Part of the “Sketch map of the Canadian Rocky Mountains” by G. P. Baker and J. Norman Collie (ref. Canada S/S.79), *The Geographical Journal*, Vol 13, No. 4, April 1899. Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers), London, UK. The Fossil Forest is located on the north aspect of Mt. Murchison, circled in the middle of the map.



below the Mons Glacier and some other Mistaya Formation outcrops.

Remarkably, stromatolites continue to survive and grow on our planet at a few locations in Mexico, Australia, and the Bahamas. Their existence nowadays may seem tenuous, but over an enormous span of time nothing has wiped them out completely.

Simple as they look, stromatolites are not fully understood. The geobiology literature on them reflects hypothesis and conjecture regarding their most basic nature. I couldn’t help but chuckle that, like peeling back an onion, the original location mystery of the fossil forest led to additional mysteries, highlighting the paradox that the search for certainty can lead to more uncertainty.

My newfound knowledge of such early manifestations of life on Earth leave me with feelings of respect and privilege. For me, they now invite deeper consideration than a quick glance during a quest to tag a mountain summit.

In 1902 Norman Collie, Hugh Stutfield, George Weed and Hans Kaufmann ascended Mt. Murchison hoping to reach the elusive northwest summit. The day’s alpinist goal was achieved. But Collie was also a scientist, and his scientific desire was left unsated. The party intended to

...descend by the southwestern arete, in order to make a more detailed examination of the remarkable fossil forest we had discovered four years previously; but the evening shadows were already falling, and we had no wish to be benighted... [3]

Six years later, academic E. Kalkowsky introduced the term *Stromatolith* to describe the microbial columns and domes. [4] I wonder if professor Collie, during his retirement years on the Isle of Skye, came to realize what he had seen, yet missed being a contributor to scientific discussions on the subject.

Less vague is the enduring fact that the stromatolites of the Canadian Rockies are sentinels from a period when the Earth was not threatened by humans. They represent touchstones where the past is present. In other countries, stromatolites continue to extend upward despite sweeping evolutionary and climatic changes. Defying the odds, they act as a source of hope while the shadows of the Anthropocene lengthen. ~ACC

References:

1. Hugh E.M. Stutfield and J. Norman Collie, *Climbs and Exploration in the Canadian Rockies* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1903), pages 138-139.
2. *Climbs and Exploration in the Canadian Rockies*, page 138.
3. *Climbs and Exploration in the Canadian Rockies*, page 256.
4. Robert Riding, “The Nature of Stromatolites: 3,500 Million Years of History and a Century of Research,” *Advances in Stromatolite Geobiology* (Springer, 2011), pages 29-74.

The ACC Yukon Section

Home of the Mighty Generalists

Representing Canada's North since 2011, the Yukon Section's 100 members can be found in their home range of the St. Elias Mountains as well as in neighbouring areas of Alaska and Canada. The Gazette has twice published stories of the Yukon Section exploring deep into NWT mountain ranges.

by Geneviève Favreau
Photos by Alexandre Mischler

I don't think it would be true to say that the territory of the Yukon Section has a staple sport the way ice climbing is central to the Rocky Mountains and rock climbing defines Squamish. Our community is mainly based out of Whitehorse and, well, as much as many of us love to backcountry ski, our ski season is not exactly what you find at Rogers Pass. We do have some good rock to climb but access is sometimes our limitation. And some years we have ice, and others less so. We have the big mountains though and a population of quirky outdoorsy people willing to pick up almost any sport at any given time of the year to have a chance to do something outside. Yes, the classic Yukoner is a true generalist: good at everything, hardly exceptional at anything.

It's common for people to pick up road cycling for four weeks every year to race the Kluane Chilkat Bike Relay and when you get to the race there's a good chance of seeing a 15 year-old racing a 70 km segment on a mountain bike as well as a unicyclist braving the high winds along Dezadeash Lake... you get the picture.

February 2020 was marked by two Yukon Section ice climbing trips – warmer weather had settled in after the -40 cold

snap of January that had left us all homebound and the stoke was high. The group I joined was headed to a crag commonly referred to Spicy Meatballs although consensus in this community is hard to find (I am not sure I was able to identify this location by reading Alain Dallaire's Yukon Ice Climbs ~ Whitehorse and Surrounding Areas). The group was formed of an eclectic combination of interests and skills: some mountain lovers looking to add another skill set to their bag, at least one injured skier who retreated to ice climbing to spend some time outside (sounds familiar?), two avid ice climbers, one photographer who happened to find an ice cave and others looking to socialize while doing a sport they love. The climb is technically in Alaska but the site is before the US border on the South Klondike Highway close to Skagway. There, the coastal climate brings warmer weather and some of the best waterfalls we get to climb...when we are allowed to go to the States. ~ACC

Photos are from a trip to "Spicy Meatballs" climbing area. Details and more photos at: alexmisch.exposure.co/spicy-meatballs





Participants on the 2012 Summer Leadership Development Course train at the Mt. Sir Sandford GMC. Photo by Matt Reynolds



The North Face has been a corporate partner of the ACC for nearly 20 years. What does that mean for our club and for our members? Read on to find out.

Leadership Development Course

The ACC's 24 local sections across the country each offer our members trips, courses and outings in the local area, which are mostly free. These trips are some of the greatest benefits of being a member of the ACC and one of the great ways our experienced members give back to their communities by volunteering.

Each year in the summer at the GMC, and every other year in the winter at the Fairy Meadow Hut, we invite dedicated leaders from our local sections to join in our Leadership Development Courses to improve their skills. The North Face is a huge part of these courses and we couldn't run them without their help.

This is all part of a larger mandate of the club to promote excellence in mountain skills and leadership. Our volunteer leaders all across Canada who plan and lead local outings are the true

heart and soul of our club and we're able to do that better with TNF.

Gear Discounts for Members

Everyone who recreates in the outdoors needs gear and when you factor in different sports and seasons, the costs can add up. The North Face is helping out our members by offering discounts on apparel and equipment as a benefit of ACC membership. This is a benefit for all members of the ACC in good standing and something that we think could benefit our members whatever they do outdoors and wherever they live. The system is as simple as it is awesome with a simple sign up process and straightforward purchasing (see the graphic above for details).

Beyond the ACC Leadership Development Course and gear discounts, The North Face has also stepped up to support ACC initiatives and projects over

The ACC works closely with a number of outdoor equipment manufacturers that share our goals and that help us to fulfill our mandate. This section profiles an ACC partner, what they do for the club and what it means to our members.

the years like our Summit Bid benefit auction with generous donations.

The ACC is fortunate to have The North Face as a partner as they share our goals of encouraging mountaineering and outdoor recreation for Canadians. They believe in what the ACC is doing and they back it up with support for the ACC each year.

The North Face Pro Programme

To receive your code, please visit: www.thenorthfacepro.com.

1. Click APPLY NOW
2. Fill out the form and include your Member number under employee number
3. You will receive a communication from TNF within 24-48 hrs with your redemption code to use on www.thenorthface.ca
4. Enter your code in the shopping cart and hit apply

For any questions, please reach out to: tnfcnadapro@ipa-connect.com

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Photo J. Ariano

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Image: Yamniska / Mason Lindquist



Mountaineering



Trail Running



Rock Climbing



55+



Backpacking

Alpine Club of Canada

Adventures

Summer 2021 camps are now live and up on the website! Please contact the office for more info on Covid protocols, cancellation policies and insurance if you have any questions and visit the website adventures.alpineclubofcanada.ca for more information. We are looking forward to recreating with you safely in the mountains this summer.

Mountaineering: Come learn the basics and set yourself up for tackling bigger peaks with snow and ice travel.

- Intro to Mountaineering – Bow Hut
- Intro to Mountaineering – Bugaboos
- Bow Hut Glacier Discovery
- Crevasse Rescue
- Womens Climbing Camp – Icefields Parkway

Trail Running: Enjoy the mountain trails without the overnight packs.

- Weekend Intro to Trail Running
- Women's Weekend Trail Running

Rock Climbing: Build your skill set and confidence to climb famous routes all over the Rockies.

- Intro to Sport Climbing
- Intro to Multi-pitch Climbing
- Intro to Trad Climbing
- Rock Rescue

55+: Come enjoy the mountains away from the crowds with similar aged people.

- Campbell Icefields Adventure Hiking

Backpacking:

- Backpacking trips to be announced in the spring

Pod-style Camps: Grab your pod and experience new adventures together.

- Castle Hut Discovery
- Rogers Pass Intro to Mountaineering
- Saphire Col Hut Discovery- Glacier Circle Hut Discovery
- Asulkan Adventure Hiking

For more information about these and other camps visit adventures.alpineclubofcanada.ca

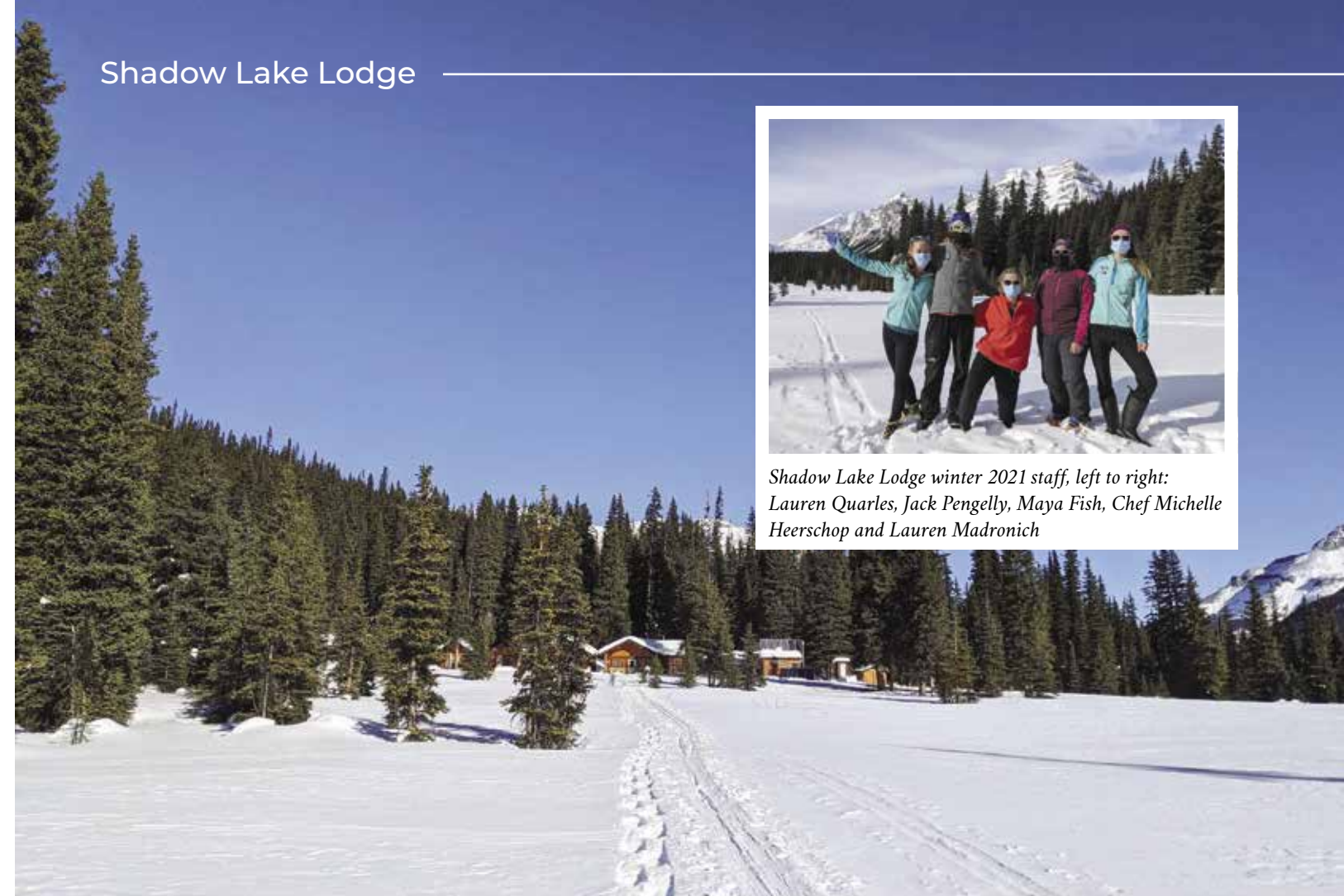


Pod-style Camps



Mountaineering

Shadow Lake Lodge



Shadow Lake Lodge winter 2021 staff, left to right: Lauren Quarles, Jack Pengelly, Maya Fish, Chef Michelle Heerschop and Lauren Madronich

Inaugural winter season a success

On March 21, 2021, the ACC closed-up the historic Shadow Lake Lodge after a successful initial winter season. The ACC started making plans to open the historic lodge for a limited winter term following its acquisition from the Brewster family in late 2019. The winter opening announcement was

enthusiastically received and space sold out quickly.

The lodge staff welcomed 145 guests over the 9-week winter season with fully catered, socially distanced service. Lodgers enjoyed excellent winter conditions in the Shadow Lake area for skiing and snowshoeing, with many

already planning to return in 2022.

The lodge will remain closed until the start of the 2021 summer season, running from June 21 through September 29. For summer 2021 bookings please visit www.shadowlakelodge.com. Watch for winter 2022 booking information in the fall.



Adventure the Kootenays & Beyond

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Pestadvisor

Wheeler Hut – A nice place to visit but I wouldn't want to stay there*

*A Pestadvisor review by
Marty Pinemarten*

Pestadvisor rating

Honestly, based on first impressions I expected a lot more. I mean—the location—how can a wonderful hut like this in such a stunning mountain setting disappoint so thoroughly? I was soon to answer my own rhetorical question.

As I entered Wheeler Hut the first disheartening thing I noticed was a complete and utter lack of garbage! Honestly, what's a pine marten to eat if not rubbish? Oh well, I thought, someone will have left an unopened package of rye crackers "for the next guy"... but NO, the food shelf was bare. Skunked again (with apologies to my skunk friends).

As the disappointments mounted I explored the kitchen area hoping to find a dirty dish or two, but again struck out. Not only were the dishes washed and put away well out of reach, but I swore I could smell some disinfectant—sub-par at best! Surely there would be some food particles left in the drain trap, I mused, but much to my chagrin there was nothing! Unbelievably, the last guest must have packed the residue out along with the rest of the garbage. What's with people these days?

I speculated I might find some chicken bones in the wood stove, but again, the hearth was barren! It appears that all the ashes were removed from the fireplace along with anything else worth my time that might have been in there. I supposed the fully restocked firewood should have tipped me off. Even the outhouse was clean!

When looking for a Pinemarten family getaway in the Rockies I'd had really high hopes for Wheeler Hut. After all, the location can't be beat and in my experience, similar rustic log abodes have often provided a meal or two. However, despite the locale, I cannot in good conscience recommend the Wheeler Hut to any of my chums. I guess I'll just have to find another holiday spot for Mrs Pinemarten and the pups! ~ACC

**In late 2020 ACC Wheeler Hut visitor John Ouellette snapped this photo of "Marty the Pine Marten" peering out the window. Marty was humanely evicted and his portal securely sealed, adding fuel for this scathing review.*



A playful exploratory mission that turned into a multipitch endeavour and rappelling into the dark. Jasmin Caton framing her love for the Kootenays on a formation she calls the Jumbo Arch. **Steve Ogle** © 2020 Patagonia, Inc.

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