

The Alpine Club of Canada

# Gazette

Climbing Chilean  
granite to the  
dark side and back

Campfires  
+ Condors



Vol. 35, No.2 Summer | été 2020



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Cover Photo: Drew Marshall styles pitch 5 of Arrayan. Story page 28.  
Photo by Jaron Pham. jaronpham.com

Right: Upper Trinidad Valley, Chile: home base to the 2019 John Lauchlan Award winners during their climbing trip. Story page 28.  
Photo by Jaron Pham. jaronpham.com





# Gazette

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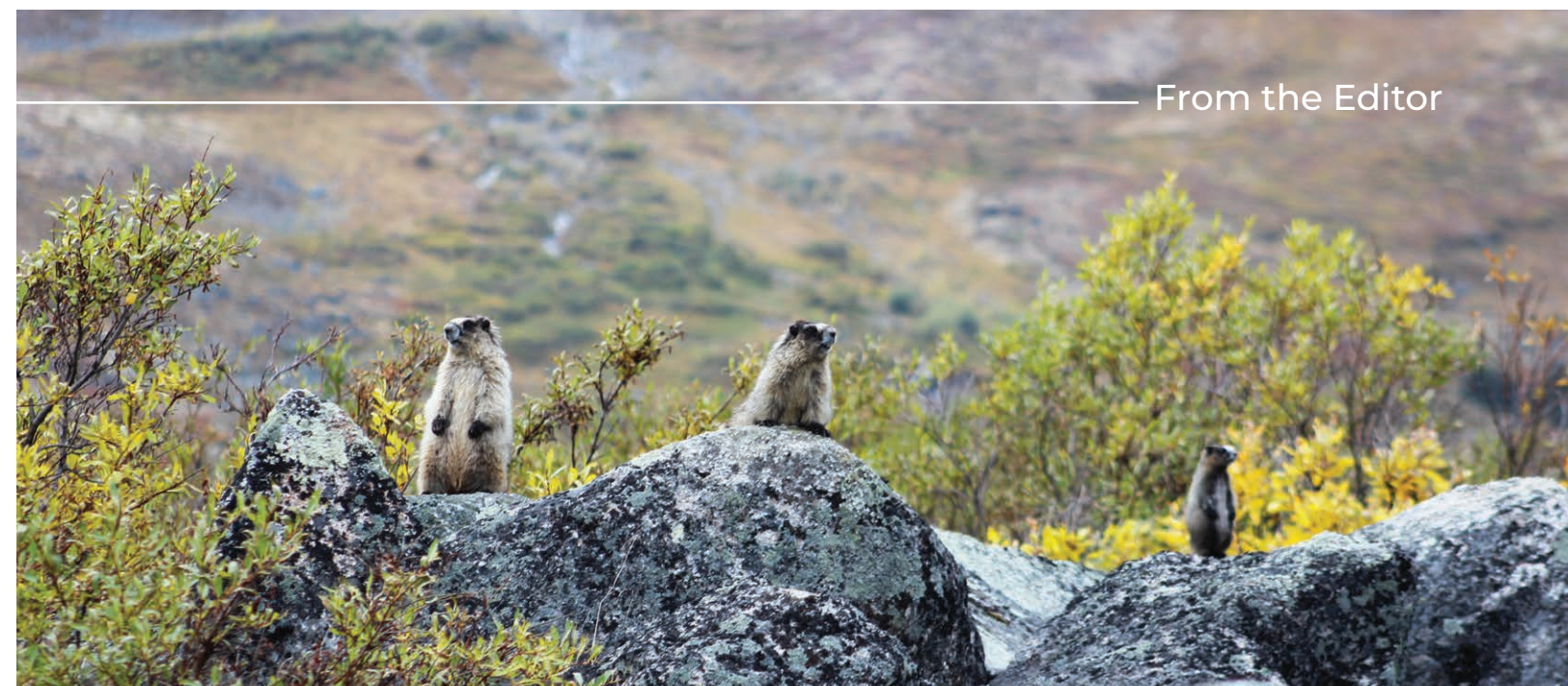
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Marmots living large in Nahanni National Park Reserve.  
Photo by Jonathon Driscoll. Story page 24.

## Wisdom that guides us

This will be a unique *Gazette* editorial for unique times. For starters, I am not the editor of the Gazette, I'm the Executive Director of the ACC and have been for some 13 years now. Please bear with me while I wax nostalgic about the organization I love and the challenges we face that have been brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many of our readers likely know the Roe family: Cam, David, Ric and the rest of their clan. If you've ever been to a General Mountaineering Camp you would have surely crossed paths with one of them. The family started attending the camp a very, very long time ago with their father and combined they have easily attended more camps than the number of times I have been around the sun.

Cam was also the President of the ACC from 2006-2010 and hired me on as ED in 2007. At that time he gave me some words of wisdom, he said "Lawrence- whatever happens to the club, to its huts, to its membership, to its operations, we will always climb and then write about it." That idea struck me as both simple and elegant.

And those words have proved prescient and true in these very challenging times. For a while, the mountain community couldn't even go climbing due to health and safety recommendations. Because of the virus, the ACC's huts were shut down between March and June, the GMC was cancelled for the first time in its 114-year history, and our club operations are now functioning in a reduced capacity. Our ability to explore and enjoy the mountains has been altered for now, so our ability to share stories feels somehow more important than ever.

To do our part, we'll continue to produce the *CAJ* and the *Gazette* in 2020. The *Canadian Alpine Journal* will be published as we have done annually since 1907. And just as we did throughout some of the most difficult years of the 20th century, we will still put pen to paper, ink to page and celebrate our mountain culture.

This issue of the *Gazette* is full of climbing stories, from Jasper and Nahanni to Chile and back, and from

Montreal to our GMC. Our members continue to "climb and then write about it." And through our journal, magazine and online channels, we'll continue to bring the best of those things to you, our members.

Fortunately, recreational activities are opening back up across Canada even if it looks different than it did a few months ago. Our sections are starting to offer a few programs, as is the office in Canmore albeit under very different and more restrictive measures. Our huts have reopened and we're glad to be able to welcome our members back to these special mountain places.

As our community finds a way in this new normal, I will be reflecting on the history of the ACC in parallel with all the incredible events of the past century, and on how our mountain stories have inspired and connected us through it all.

— Lawrence White





## Sam Wall

Sam Wall was born and raised in Jasper National Park. He currently attends UBCO where he is studying Environmental Sciences. He got into climbing in his teens and hasn't stopped since. His passions extend to all reaches of climbing, as well as any activity that gets him into the mountains.



## Tristan Nissen

Tristan Nissen was born 21 years ago in Jasper. He currently works and lives in his hometown. He spends most of his free time hiking and climbing in Jasper's backcountry. He grew up with an amazing group of friends, who still share the same excitement for the hills.



## Geneviève Favreau

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 an elected board member of the Yukon Section.



## Nat Bailey

Nat Bailey, 20, is way, way down the climbing rabbit hole and loving every minute of it. He recently landed his first skateboard kickflip.



## Chuck Young

Chuck's first career was 42 years in the trade show business, which paved the way for endless summers off and great mountain adventures. Chuck (on the left, with Don Vockeroth) considers mountaineering his second career, which includes a 30-straight year run as a volunteer amateur leader at the ACC's annual General Mountaineering Camp. On this issue's Back Page, Chuck reflects on the changes to the GMC through the years.



## Paul Robitaille and Will Hotopf

Paul (centre) participates in ice climbing and rock climbing and has run the ACC Montreal section alpine program for the last three years. He has been a member of the ACC since 2015 and President of the Montreal section since 2019. Will (right) is the Montreal section's membership coordinator. Originally from the UK, Will always dreamed of ice climbing and was tipped off by a mountain guide in Chamonix that Quebec is an ice mecca. Now he tries to get out as much as possible every Winter. He also enjoys hiking and climbing in the Adirondacks and getting out west as much as possible.

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## 2020 AGM and Board Election

The 2020 Annual General Meeting, scheduled for May 22 in Canmore, has been rescheduled to October 31 via teleconference. All members who would like to participate should watch ACC channels for details to join this call.

Each year, the ACC holds elections for three of nine positions on the ACC Board of Directors, with the new positions beginning immediately following the AGM. In accordance with ACC bylaws, we are happy to report the results of the 2020 elections:

- Keith Sanford – Treasurer (acclaimed)
- Lael Parrot – VP Environment & Access (acclaimed)
- Jim Gudjonson – VP Facilities (acclaimed)

The terms of these board members began May 23, 2020 (the day following the originally scheduled AGM). Keith, Lael and Jim will each serve a three-year term expiring in 2023.

## 2021 Board Election – Call for Applications

The ACC Nomination Committee is presently identifying qualified individuals for the following Board of Directors positions:

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

Interested candidates have until October 31 to apply and can learn more about the 2021 election and open positions at [alpineclubofcanada.ca/elections](http://alpineclubofcanada.ca/elections).

## ACC announces pro deals for members at The North Face

*The Alpine Club of Canada is very pleased to announce a new gear discount benefit for all ACC members.*

Beginning in September, ACC members can receive two discount codes (one for 50% off apparel and one for 40% off equipment) which are valid for shopping at The North Face Canada online. Yup, you read that right - nearly half off TNF goods for being an ACC member!

It works like this: ACC members fill in an application on the TNF pro site and TNF will reply with the two discount codes. Each code is valid for one shopping session (up to \$1,000 CDN) and reduces the final cost of your purchase by that amount. Active ACC members can re-apply for new codes each year.

Treat yourself! Now's your chance to pick up some gear for the fall: some fresh running shoes. Or a new puffy. Or a sleeping bag and tent - it's up to you.

Thank you for supporting the ACC with your membership.

You'll need your ACC membership number to apply, and you can find that by logging into your ACC account. Also note that you'll need to apply using the same name and email address on file on your ACC membership.

You'll need your ACC membership number to apply for the TNF pro deal. You can find it by logging into your [ACC account here](#). If you need a refresher on how to find your ACC member number, we'll walk you [through it here](#).



## Pro Program

To redeem your code, please visit:

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

1. Click APPLY NOW
2. Fill out the form & include your ACC member number under employee number.
3. You will receive a communication from The North Face within 24-48 hours with your redemption code to use on [www.thenorthface.ca](http://www.thenorthface.ca).
4. Enter your code in the shopping cart and hit apply.

For any questions, please reach out to:

[tnfcanadapro@ipa-connect.com](mailto:tnfcanadapro@ipa-connect.com)



# Get your winter on!

## ACC Winter Huts

Leave the crowds behind this winter with exclusive bookings at ACC huts.

Bookings open October 1. Exclusive bookings only – just you and your group.

More details at: [alpineclubofcanada.ca/huts](http://alpineclubofcanada.ca/huts)

## Shadow Lake Lodge

Taking winter 2021 bookings starting in October, 2020.

Private cabins and gourmet catered meals.

Watch [shadowlakelodge.com](http://shadowlakelodge.com) for more details.





# National Volunteer Awards

We extend our congratulations to the following devoted volunteers who were recognized for their outstanding contributions to the national and/or section levels of the club in 2019.

## Honorary Membership

Honorary Membership is the highest recognition The Alpine Club of Canada bestows. It is presented to individuals for a strong and sustained commitment to the Canadian mountain environment and Canadian mountaineering.

- John Balwin, Vancouver Section
- Robert Brusse, Vancouver Section

## Distinguished Service Award

Presented to members who have contributed service to the club or a section over more than five years.

- Diana MacGibbon, Rocky Mountain Section

## Eric Brooks Leader Award

Awarded to members who have demonstrated a strong commitment to learning and applying technical and leader skills

- Tyler Hallman, Calgary Section
- Paul O'Brien - Kelly, Calgary Section
- Elisabeth Dupuis, Calgary Section
- Mike Bowler, Ottawa Section

## Don Forest Service Award

For significant service to the club.

- Paul Mower, Rocky Mountain Section
- Barbara MacDonald, Rocky Mountain Section
- Charles Roy, Saint Boniface / Manitoba Sections
- Tim Hankinson, Edmonton Section
- Jonathan Wolf, Edmonton Section
- Glen Phillips, Saskatchewan Section
- Barbara Baker, Vancouver Island Section
- Alex Wilson, Vancouver, Section
- Ian MacNab Vancouver Section
- Florian Geier, Vancouver Section
- Rob Szpak, Vancouver Section
- Karen Jensen, Vancouver Section
- Jes Scott, Vancouver Island Section
- Daniel Geddes, Vancouver Section
- Michael Kennedy, Vancouver Section

Many thanks to the members of the Awards Committee: Isabelle Daigneault (Chair, Rocky Mountain Section), Paul Geddes (Vancouver and Toronto Sections), Steve Traversari (Montreal Section), Dave McCormick (Saskatchewan Section), David Foster and Bill Scott (Ottawa Section).

# ACC Grants Awarded in 2020

The ACC maintains permanent funds from which grants are awarded annually for mountain-related projects and initiatives. For 2020 the ACC is pleased to announce the following winners of the awards.

Notice: the COVID-19 pandemic has messed with travel and adventure plans. Since these awards were announced this spring, we have heard that some trips and projects will be postponed. We'll publish updates and trip reports on [Aspects](#) when we can.

## The Jen Higgins Grant for Young Women

A combined \$8,000 was awarded to assist:

- Rebecca Frei, Judith Westwood and Becky Fuller who will explore Nahanni National Park Reserve in the Yukon by bike, foot and raft to understand, protect and preserve water resources.
- Bree Kullman, Katie Moen, Maria Lynn, Melanie Pachowski and Carina Schmitz who will explore and mountaineer in Alberta's Bighorn Backcountry for the purpose of continuing the dialogue about the area's future.

## The ACC Environment Grant

A combined \$7,000 was awarded to:

- The University of Calgary to study the Tweedsmuir Glacier and Alsek River and the future of sockeye salmon in the area.
- The University of Alberta to support the Mount Logan Ice climate scientific expedition to Canada's highest peak.
- Y2Y (Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative) for the creation of workshops and materials based on the Columbia Mountains.

## The Jim Colpitts Memorial Scholarship

This year's grant will support:

- Kelly Hurley for glacier travel and crevasse rescue courses to obtain skills necessary to working as a field glaciologist.


## The Karl Nagy Memorial Scholarship

This year's grant will support:

- Meaghan Buisson will attend a week at the 2021 GMC to help her in developing her professional skills in guiding as she pursues her ACMG Hiking Guide certification.

To learn more about ACC grants, visit [www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/grants](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/grants)

# 2021 GMC Mummery Glacier




Since 1907 the Alpine Club has been putting on the General Mountaineering Camp each summer. Next year we are excited to be exploring the Northern Selkirks on the Mummery Glacier. Come join us next summer for some modern day mountain exploration.

[alpineclubofcanada.ca/gmc2021](http://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.

### SummitClimb Canada's Choice



• **Sept-Oct '20** - Manaslu, Cho Oyu, Shishapangma.

• **Oct-Nov '20** - 7000m Peaks! Ama Dablam, Baruntse. Trekking Peaks: Mera Peak, Island Peak, Lobuche Peak - Everest Glacier School, Everest Base Camp Trek.

• **Dec-Jan-Feb '20 - '21** - Christmas Everest Trek with Optional Island Peak, Aconcagua - World Famous 7 Summit.

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

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

Also Charity Medical - Educational Treks, Volunteer Projects, Free Canada Friendship Glacier School

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Now live:

# The State of the Mountains Report 2020

Joffre Peak landslide, May 2019. Photo Wilfried Braun.

Since 2011, the State of the Mountains Report has been a tangible commitment by The Alpine Club of Canada to provide accessible, current, and accurate information about the forces that affect Canadian mountain environments. The tradition continues with the 2020 State of the Mountains Report, launched this year on Canada Day.

Developed in collaboration with researchers, community members, and partner organizations across the country, this annual mountain report tackles environmental and social subjects ranging from wildfires to wildflowers and everything in between. The State of the Mountains Report gives Canadians, and all readers alike, the opportunity to hear the voices of people who have spent countless hours researching the alpine environment. The contributors to the

report have, in one way or another, dedicated their lives to the alpine and have offered their first-hand experiences, expertise and photographs to tell the stories of how change in Canadian mountain environments is affecting people and ecosystems.

The following page features three articles from the 2020 State of the Mountains Report. Read these and many more by downloading the publication or reading online at [stateofthemountains.ca](https://stateofthemountains.ca).

## People

### The Canadian Rockies Youth Summit: A New Voice in Mountain Conservation

by Ben Green, Lucas Braun, Alex Stratmoen and Destinee Doherty

In November 2019, 45 high school students representing 10 communities in and around the Canadian Rockies gathered for the first “Canadian Rockies Youth Summit” in Jasper National Park. The summit was designed, managed, and hosted by the students themselves. By connecting with experts, stakeholder groups and conservation organizations, they were able to identify and articulate a number of ways that the youth of Alberta and B.C. would like to be involved in the management and planning of our collective mountain places.

Read their report outlining a commitment to sustainable development in the moun-



## Life

### Mining the Mountains

by Erin K. Sexton, Christopher J. Sergeant, and Jonathan W. Moore

Scattered throughout the mountains of western Canada, often hidden behind locked gates at the end of gravel roads, are mines. While providing important jobs and resources, mines and their related infrastructure can also pose substantial environmental risks, especially when they’re located in rugged mountain landscapes and in proximity to our headwaters. To address such challenges, mining in mountains relies upon marvels of engineering that push the limits of technology and infrastructure, and often raise difficult questions when it comes to our values as a society.

Learn more about the dilemmas of mining in sensitive landscapes in the 2020 State of the Mountains Report.



## Physical

### Dark Frontiers: Exploring Western Canada’s Underground

by John Pollack, Christian Stenner, and Dr. Chas Yonge

Modern mountaineers can view mountains and routes in broad daylight, but cave exploration remains a journey into unknown territory. While caving for sport remains a popular pastime in the roughly 1,800 catalogued western caves, Canada has a small and dedicated cadre of “project cavers” dedicated to exploration. The pace of discovery has picked up in the last decade and some highlights include Bisaro Anima, currently the deepest cave in Canada at 674 metres, with a depth potential of 900 metres.

Learn about the latest in Canadian cave exploration in the 2020 State of the Mountains Report.



Read the full State of the Mountains Report at [stateofthemountains.ca](https://stateofthemountains.ca)



# LASTING IMPRESSIONS IN THE TONQUIN VALLEY

After crossing paths with a soon-to-be-missing climber, two friends stumble upon a way to ensure his love for the mountains remains alive.

Story and photos by Sam Wall

*Looking towards Parapet from Drawbridge Pass.*

## Summer 2013: A chance meeting

I had just spent yet another weekend goofing around, laughing far too much, and exploring the Tonquin Valley with my best friend, Tristan Nissen. My father has owned a backcountry lodge in the Tonquin for 15 years that had been our summer basecamp. For most people, a weekend in the backcountry is a highlight of their summer, but at 14 and 15 years old, we were lucky to call this normal. After a great weekend, Sunday would come along and we would hike the 18 km back to Jasper and back to our jobs at the local bike shop.

We were hiking out along the Astoria River trail in August when we passed a lone hiker heading into the valley. I noticed the unmistakable tip of an ice axe poking out from his pack and after a moment passed, my curiosity kicked in and I yelled after him to ask what he was planning on climbing. He responded that he was headed for Mt. Redoubt, the northernmost of the three major peaks that make up the Ramparts — the backdrop to my dad's camp. We spoke for a bit, most of which I don't recall, but I remember being impressed; after growing up staring at the grand mountains of the Ramparts, I had now met someone who was going to climb one of the peaks.

A couple of days later, when my dad informed me that there was a missing climber in the valley, I was reminded that days in the mountains are unpredictable and often have severe consequences. The search and rescue team at Jasper Park Mountain Safety were aware that the missing person had been climbing on the Ramparts, but further details were unknown. I spoke with the team and told them of the conversation on the trail. A few days later on August 16, 2013, the body of Richard Gebert was found 500 metres below the summit of Mt. Redoubt, presumably the result of a rappel failure.

>>>





Tristan rowing across Amethyst Lake at first light.

## Summer 2019 – Connecting the dots

Six years later, Tristan and I were still close friends and our interest in the mountains and the Jasper backcountry had not waned. We had done our fair share of climbing in and around the Park, but we had yet to size up any of the classic Tonquin Valley routes. In August of 2019 we booked a week off work in hopes of climbing the East Ridge of Mt. Oublette, the proudest line on the Ramparts. Our morale was high, but Jasper seemed to be in a raincloud for the entirety of the summer and our trip turned into more of a crib tournament than a climbing escape. Our best day of weather gave us the chance to get about halfway up the route, before black clouds and angry raindrops emerged from behind the Ramparts. We scurried back down to the boat and back across Amethyst Lake as the weather deteriorated.

A few days later, with the fate of our friendship dependant on the next game of crib, a call to town via sat phone told us that we should have one OK day of weather. Still keen on any objective that would get us up high, we chose the North-West Ridge of Redoubt, as it fit the bill in terms of the weather and commitment. Prior to our departure, my dad reminded us that the SAR team had recovered the body of Richard Gebert, but were unsure of the whereabouts of his bivy. This information further added to the grizzled

reputation of the mountain — the first ascent in 1927 by F. H. Slark and F. Rutishauser was met with tragedy when they perished somewhere on the descent. Despite these conversations, we trusted our instincts and our well-established partnership, hopped into the rowboat and set off. The familiar freedom of moving through the hills soon followed and despite some slippery quartzite we made good progress. Once established below the summit ridge, we split up to avoid a snow patch and some inherent rockfall. As Tristan diverged east, his shout carried over the wind and froze me in my tracks, “Holy shit, I found the bivy!”

Nearly six years to the day after he had gone missing, Richard’s bivy looked like he had just left for his ascent with sandwich still intact in Tupperware, MP3 and headphones, crampons, bivy sac still laid out, and his ice axe. It was the same axe that I had seen poking above his pack on the trail six years earlier and that had made me call after him about his plans. We quietly processed this for a moment, but with threatening clouds we did not have long to make sense of the situation. We fashioned a memorial of sorts using his beautiful purple Italian-made crampons, positioning them into a cross, and then laid out his axe that we intended to retrieve on the way down. We continued on, and after a few rope lengths we arrived at the summit.

The summit log was surprisingly short and we were only the fifth party logged, including Fred Becky in 1965, and with the last being Richard Gebert. It was emotional to see that Richard had made it to the summit and he too had shared our stoke to be on top. We were further impressed to read that Mt. Redoubt was the last of the Ramparts for Richard to check off his list and that he had climbed all of them solo. This was an inspiring feat that spoke to his ability in the mountains. With dark clouds and drops of rain appearing, we quickly began our descent off the mountain, likely following Richard’s rappels, until they disappeared. We picked up his axe at his bivy site and continued back down to camp.

## Closure for the family

Once we relayed the story to the guests at camp, the full-circle aspect of the story began to settle in, as Tristan and I were the last people to talk to Richard. When we got back to town, I managed to get in touch with Richard’s widow, Mary, through social media. She was a pleasure to talk to and Tristan and I could not have been happier to provide the Gebert family with some closure. They too were over the moon to hear that he had summited and we were also able to provide a view into the grandeur of the mountains and the area that Richard clearly cherished up until his passing. Mary told me that the night before the accident, Richard called her on his satellite phone and said he had met two young men on the trail who left an impression on him. As a token of her thanks, she gifted us his ice axe. ~ACC

*Richard Gebert was a proud member of The Alpine Club of Canada and published an account of his ascent of the East Face of Dungeon Peak on the Ramparts in the 2010 Canadian Alpine Journal.*

>>> See more photos from this story at [blog.alpineclubofcanada.ca/ramparts](http://blog.alpineclubofcanada.ca/ramparts)



Richard Gebert's memorial.



Snow gully that leads up Drawbridge Pass.





# WHEELER HUT

in the summertime

## History

There's a reason why Rogers Pass in British Columbia was the birthplace of alpinism in North America and then for the first quarter of the twentieth century, its very centre. The Canadian Pacific Railway in 1886 and Glacier House hotel in 1887 opened access to some of the most spectacular mountains on the continent and the high peaks, great glaciers and stunning valleys and rivers became a must-see destination.

## The Wheeler Hut

In 1925, Glacier House hotel was closed and in 1938 an ACC hut was proposed. Construction began after the war in 1945 and was completed the following year. It was named for Arthur Oliver Wheeler, surveyor of western Canadian mountains, co-founder and first president of the ACC and author of the first climbing guide to the area.

## Wheeler in Summer

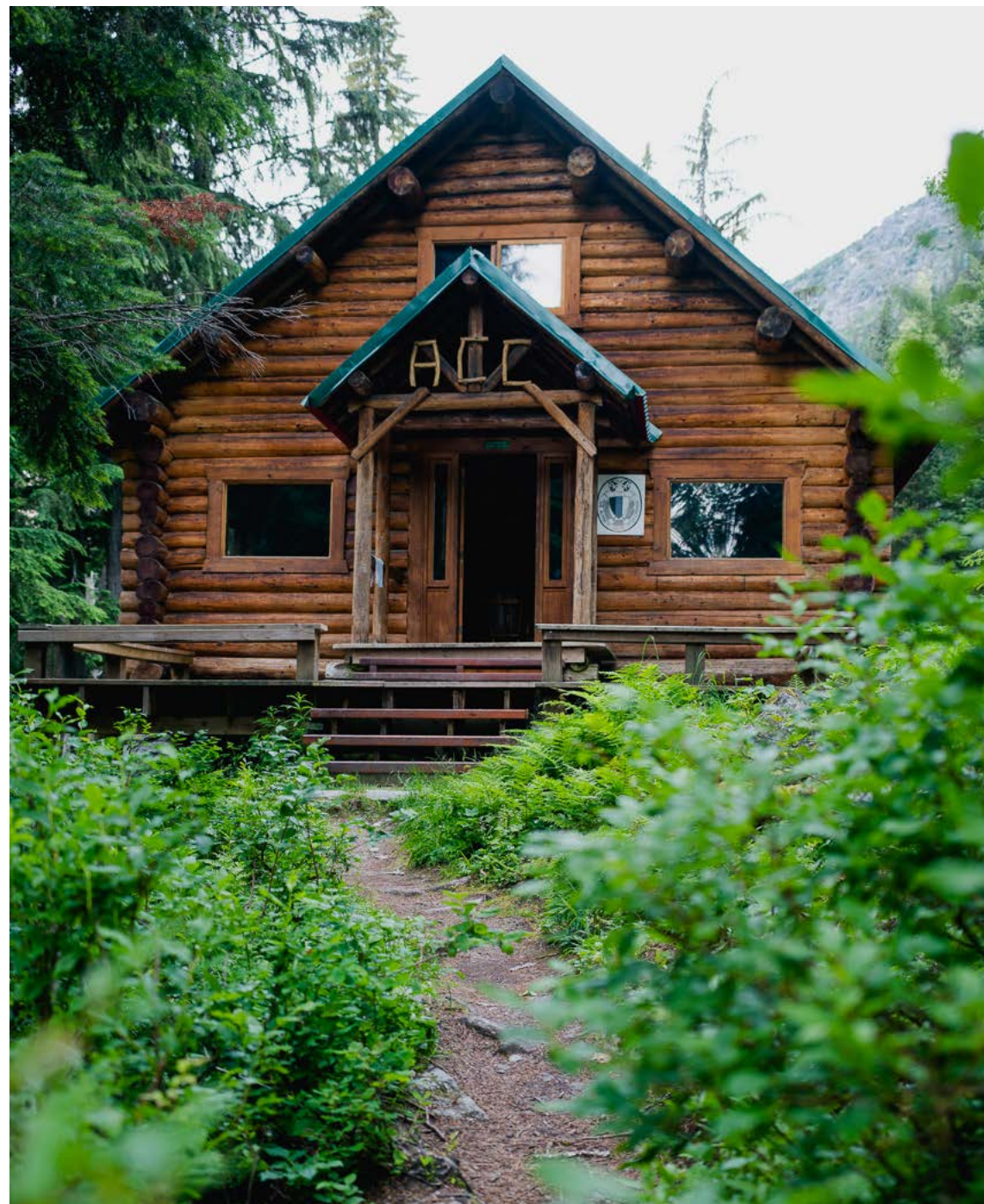
The alpine environment of Rogers Pass is a playground in the summer for hikers and climbers and the Wheeler Hut sets you up for trips that are close by (literally out the back door) or up and down the highway. The Asulkan Cabin and Sapphire Col Hut are within a day's hike and it would take a lifetime to explore the trails, ridges, faces and summits.

## Accommodations

For summer 2020, the hut, with three separate sleeping lofts and three main floor rooms is limited to single booking groups and a maximum of 15 people in the hut.

For hut availability, check our website:  
<http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/HutAvail>

Check out all 33 of our backcountry huts at:  
[alpineclubofcanada.ca/huts](http://alpineclubofcanada.ca/huts)





# Exploring Nahanni National Park

ACC Yukon Section members head for the hills  
in search of new objectives

By Geneviève Favreau

In the spring of 2019, the board of the ACC's Yukon Section announced that it had received funding from Parks Canada to carry out an exploratory trip to Nahanni National Park and was seeking section membership participation in the organization of the trip. Eliel Bureau-Lafontaine and I jumped at the opportunity to work together to organize this trip. He gets all the credit for hours spent poring over Google Earth and topo maps, picking our basecamp location and hiring a plane to get us there.

The Nahanni National Park Reserve is located in the Northwest Territories but it closely borders the Yukon along its westernmost limit. Here, the Tungsten Mine Road provides access to Flat Lakes where a floatplane can take off fully loaded. For most people, Nahanni National Park rhymes with "river trip", but our mandate was to promote the park by exploring areas that see little to no travel and to showcase its mountaineering potential.

Our party of nine had six women, three men (and two dogs); the seven participants aside from Eliel and I had all applied to join the trip individually and together we formed a very interesting group of various backgrounds and skill sets. A few of us were climbers and mountaineers, so we were hoping to find some nice faces to climb; others had more of a hiking trip in mind.

We had very little idea what it would really be like when we arrived. Would we find good quality rock to do some alpine climbs? Would the glaciers be benign enough to allow safe travel? Would we find some cool objectives? This was an exploratory mission and I hoped that it might be the beginning of something bigger for the Yukon Section.

## The Beginning of the Adventure

On August 23, 2019, half our group (Jonno, Eliel, Kiah, Rob and myself) convoyed from Whitehorse to Flat Lakes, Northwest Territories. I rode with my soon-to-be good friend, Rob Cohen; an Australian dude with the most magnificent curls, who always wore his Buff on his head like a hat with the end of the Buff flopping to one side. When I first met Rob, he lived in one of his Subaru Foresters (like 90's-style Forester), so he could spend most of his time doing what he loved most: climbing. We all camped at Flat Lakes for a night and waited for the rest of the group to arrive by floatplane.

Opposite: Fall colours covering  
the Zenchuk Creek Valley.  
Photo by Rob Cohen.

This page from top to bottom:

Warren, our pilot, leaving us behind at  
Zenchuk Lake for a week.

Shelf Lake and its beautiful ridges  
waiting to be climbed.

Kiah Davidson returning from our grey water,  
part of our Leave No Trace approach.

Geneviève Favreau and Jonathon Driscoll  
on top of Marmot Knoll on the first  
exploratory hike of the trip.

Photos by Breanne Johnson.







This page: Jonathon Driscoll posing in the ice cave. Photo by Breanne Johnson  
Right: Rainbow over “Three Moon Lake.” Photo by Rob Cohen



Our pilot, Warren, landed on the lake around 11 a.m. the next day with the rest of the group on board. The four girls (Breanne, Amy, Ingrid and Myriam) already had some epic stories from their road trip journey so far. From all of their stories, I remember that they stocked up on cookies in Faro and got a Harlequin romance novel from the Ross River free store. Selective memory. I had roped Breanne into this trip after another participant had cancelled last minute. Breanne had spent her summer as a park ranger in the Tombstone Territorial Park and jumped at the opportunity when she found out her days off would line up perfectly. Amy, on the other hand, was at the beginning of an eight-month long adventure of travels; she had just arrived home from a canoe trip a few days before we all met up to depart from Whitehorse.

After catching up for a few minutes, the next stage of our flight shuttles began, headed for Zenchuk Lake, 15 km to the east. The flight was short, but Myriam had time to spot an alpine lake we would later hike to (and name after her).

I was on the last shuttle flight with my friend Jonno, a character in the most interesting ways; I recently found out he used to forge iron as a hobby, and more recently got himself

busy repairing an antique sewing machine when we had to start self-isolation. Jonno’s goal for the trip was to find an ice cave. (He would later check that box when we came to our first glacier of the trip: Brintnell Glacier.)

Our base camp was set just outside of the national park boundary near a smaller lake we nicknamed Three Moon Lake for three friends on the ridge who had “temporarily lost their belts.” That night, we had what would turn out to be the only rain we would get over the entire week. Colder temperatures brought blue skies with slight overcast and a bit of morning frost. Night temperatures were below zero and Ingrid kept warm at night sleeping on one of the ropes.

## Adventures abound

The area offered a wide range of possibilities. Rob and I got to climb a face that we would baptise Pictograph Machine; a nice four-pitch climb that ends with a scramble and offers the option of hiking out. Breanne, Kiah, Jonno and Eliel did a loop via “Myriam’s lake” that climbed over a ridge and onto the glacier. That loop had some technical rock and snow travels

that gave a taste of mountaineering to some greener participants and an opportunity to lead for the more experienced ones. Brintnell Glacier offers a few more opportunities of multi-day trips that we unfortunately did not have the time to accomplish, but are bookmarked in my mind. Marmot Knoll close to camp offered a great view of the Rabbitkettle River and the mountains just outside of the national park boundary. I did find myself daydreaming of ski touring as we admired the glaciers and snow fields of the mountains in our backyard.

Every night, we would gather around a campfire. The Harlequin romance book made a comeback one night as we all read random pieces of the book trying to put the story together and using the read pages as combustible. Jonno took the game to the next level when he started to light the page on fire first and tried to read it second. But what still sticks to me to this day are Myriam’s campfire stories of living in Hay River, Northwest Territories. She got the whole group hanging at her every word telling people the many creative ways her and her friends kept busy during her time living there. Lots of costumes is what I remember. People in the North will surprise you in more than one way.

## Last sweet moments all together

For our return trip, half of our group would be flying back to Flat Lakes from Shelf Lake, which was about six kilometres away from our camp and the rest of us would hike out later. To lighten our load for the hike, we sent most of our gear with the ladies who would leave it for us to pick up at Flat Lakes. As we waited for our pilot, Amy took out her ukulele and song binder and Breanne and I had the best time singing along. We took a few last pictures and enjoyed the last few moments waiting for the plane at Shelf Lake, with nostalgia already setting in.

As we sang “Rock me mama like a wagon wheel, rock me mama any way you feel...” my eyes were locked on a beautiful ridge that was drawn behind my friends: the ridgeline, the glacier hike to get to it, the few peaks along it all captivated me. As we walked back to base camp, I knew that I had to come back here — I had found my objective.

>>>



# Autumn settles in

The days got rainy after our friends left, as though the mountains were telling us they had had enough of our visit. Autumn settled in in what seemed 24 hours. One day the landscape was green, the next it was yellow, orange and red. Rob kept looking at the Marmot Knoll and a new climbing objective he had in mind, but the rock just wouldn't dry out enough for him to attempt it.

When the rain would stop in the afternoon, Eliel got excited about checking off a few quick ascents from his list. We would see him running to the mountains with his tiny backpack and returning a few hours later with his long johns pulled over his boots and held by the hooks as makeshift gaiters. Eliel didn't bother with the details. He ate fresh mango pancakes for breakfast, for as long as the fresh mango lasted, and demanded that we ritually slap the wine bag before we would talk about our day around the campfire.

Rob, Jonno and I departed from camp with heavy bags two days later on what would turn out to be a 21km bushwhack back to Flat Lakes that would take us 14 hours, fueled mainly by M&M's (thanks to Jonno). There were some good game trails, but mostly it was bushwhacking. Mind you, any reader from British Columbia can tell me I know nothing about bushwhacking, and they would probably be right. In the colder and dryer climate of the North, the vegetation doesn't grow dense. Trees here are not climb-able and sub-alpine vegetation is mainly composed of short bushes.

Ironically, some of the best memories that still stick with me to this day are from reaching pure exhaustion with these guys on this hike: just a great bunch of people to spend a long slog with.

## Looking back

Shortly after my return, I heard that Kluane Airways would not take off from Shelf Lake again, should we want to go back. I guess it's a good thing that I don't have vivid memories of suffering on the day out; a hike in will be our only option next time.

I will be back. ~ACC

Top: Kiah down-climbing in a boulder field.  
Photo by Breanne Johnson.

Middle: We spent a lot of time scoping out future objectives and the mountains sitting outside of the park showed some beautiful lines.  
Photo by Jonathon Driscoll.

Bottom: (left to right) Rob Cohen, Amy Law, Breanne Johnson (pink jacket), Ingrid Arboine, Geneviève Favreau, Myriam Lachance, Éliel Bureau-Lafontaine and Moose waiting at Shelf Lake for a floatplane.  
Photo by Rob Cohen.



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Featured partners:







*Elliot Vercoe embraces the wild exposure of a finger crack high on Cerro Laguna.*

# Campfires + Condors

Climbing Chilean granite to the dark side and back.

By Nat Bailey  
Photos by Jaron Pham — [jaronpham.com](http://jaronpham.com)

Puerto Montt, Chile. late January, 2020

Months ago, when I pictured writing this story, I saw myself dirty shoulder to dirty shoulder on a crowded bus with a friend that I had just shared a great adventure with. I pictured jotting notes about runouts and cold nights on big walls; holding my pen with hands sweating from the memory of shivers and uncertainty up high on granite walls.

But as I write on a bumpy bus ride between the southern Chilean towns of Cochamo and Puerto Varas, I'm on my own. My pen isn't full of those stories and I've left my adventure and my friends, three weeks earlier than planned. My jumbled mind is tossed by the rickety bus as I begin my long journey back to Canada. I am so alone.

The story I lived was far from what I had hoped, and I'm trying to find courage, honesty, and grace to tell that story. It is a story full of awkward communication and choppy rhythm, a reflection of a trip that couldn't find flow.

I wonder if this attempt at courage is important. I've made peace with myself, and more importantly with my friends, about the way things unfolded. It is not the story that I wanted to tell, but it is the one that I have, and there is a part of me that knows I should tell it.

>>>



# Miscommunication

I went to Chile with five friends: Jaron Pham, Drew Marshall, Clinton Leung, Joseph Marin and Elliot Vercoe. Leading up to our trip we were all over the place: Jaron, Drew, Clinton and I were all on diverging and converging individual road trips. Joseph was recovering from a biking accident in Vancouver, and was gaining strength and feeling confident. Elliot was at his home in the Blue Mountains of Australia. Our trip, conceived from excited conversations in the Stawamus Chief parking lot, Curry Village cafeteria, Creek Pasture Campground, and six-way video calls, birthed a magical plan: spend the winter chasing sunny granite to Cochamo, Chile.

“

*Never assume.*

*Overcommunicate. I was headstrong, and my friends appeased me. If they voiced interest in other objectives, it fell on my mesmerized and deaf ears. I never questioned if everyone was psyched on El Monstruo, I just thought they were.*

*But when everyone is invested, “just thinking” is not enough.*

In October, three months prior to our planned departure, I was in a Walmart in St. George, Utah buying hair dye with my friends Tyson and Cam. My phone connected to the Walmart Wi-Fi and I got an email from my hero, Jim Elzinga. It brought news that we had received the John Lauchlan Memorial Award (JLA), a financial grant that would go toward

our trip to Cochamo. I couldn’t believe it: applying for the JLA had felt like a moonshot. No longer would I be relying on an already burdened line of credit and Uncle Visa! I FaceTimed the rest of the “BC Bad Boys”, and we dreamt and “Yarrrr”ed like pirates. I now had a head full of dreams of granite walls and, later that evening, a scalp stained with green hair dye.

I had caught wind of a wall in Cochamo and become fixated on it: El Monstruo. The Monster. It was all I could think about. The mention of the name painted a picture of soaring sweeps of granite in my head and my fingertips immediately began to sweat. I felt its pull and I heard nothing else. El Monstruo. It wrapped me into a warm ethereal embrace and consumed my being.

A young man and a mountain that took a grasp on his soul and his being! Stoke was exploding out of my mind, making music that my soul danced to. I yearned to find the source of the calling.

## Red-Faced Campfire Discussions

Cochamo, Chile, January 2020

My face felt red hot, both from my awkward and upset state and from the embers in the fire that my eyes locked onto. I’d gotten to know these embers well over the past few weeks during team discussions. They caught my eye as I ran down from the col after seeing El Monstruo for the first time. I began my sales pitch, dropping the hammer with a mediocre photo of a massive and rather wet piece of granite.

“It’s pretty wet,” one of the guys said.

My voice was yearning, “Yeah, right now, but...”

Silence. Embers.

I looked longingly to the embers whenever my plans to begin an attempt on El Monstruo fizzled away. Again, and again. Our discussions would rise and fall in tone and then always end in an awkward, one by one march to respective sleeping bags, eye contact moving from the familiar embers to a book.

Weeks went by.



*Vinny Catino enjoys one of the few creature comforts available in the high valleys of Cochamo - a warm fire beneath the bivy boulder.*

Toward the end of January, I say unconvincingly into the embers, “I think I’m going to leave.”

I ask myself: “But what about my vision? What about my obligation and responsibility to the grant? **What about El Monstruo?**”

Silence and embers.

And those questions continue to haunt me as I watch the Chilean rainforest blur by from the window of the bus.

## Condors

This was one of the greatest experiences of my life, even when it wasn’t.

A particular memory comes directly from the crescendo of the tension that riddled the trip. Jaron and I were seven pitches up a peak called Cerro Laguna and we were arguing.

On the ground, Jaron mentioned that he wasn’t up to leading and I had said that I’d be psyched to lead everything. But now I was irritated by his nonchalance and by the idea of having to lead the next pitch. At one point, Jaron sat on the rope and watched the Andean Condors that were soaring above the valley. I was antagonized by any movement that didn’t involve climbing upwards.

The next pitch was hard and exposed and I didn’t trust the strange Eastern European peg-like bolt that protected the moves. I screamed anxiously and angrily into the wind. I made a hard traverse by the skin of my teeth and found, rather than the expected hand crack, a single finger lock in a blank seam. The condors, flying closer now, must have thought it absurd to see a human half way up a wall yelling and cursing into the wind.

In my fear and exhaustion, feeling nothing but melancholy coming from the ledge below me, and with the realization that an attempt on El Monstruo was not in the cards, the reality of my dream trip to Cochamo came crashing down. As I lowered myself and confided in Jaron that I felt totally alone, the tension that had been building for weeks exploded in our faces like napalm.

The condors remained curious. They repeated a routine of flying from a closeby gully, soaring sky high and gliding over the open valley before coming back along the face of the wall we were on to crane their necks and zoom by. On one of these fly-bys, as our argument neared its peak, one condor circled back and came within

metres of our ledge, inspecting us with wings spread and talons out, before resuming its patrol over the valley. We stopped, and experienced this moment together in silence.

## Friends and Joy

Believe it or not, we had great days on the rock! Elliot and I climbed one of the most wonderful finger cracks anywhere. One after the other, we stepped off our portaledge with one hundred metres of air below our feet. We both battled through the crux, and clipped the anchor to the sounds of cheering from our friends on the valley floor, all while Jaron was in his element shooting photos of us from a fixed line. We were even under the illusion that it was a first free ascent before later discovering that the late and great Hansjorg Auer had beat us to by twelve years. I’m grateful for Hansjorg’s style, as his minimalist approach preserved our adventure in the moment. We felt the thrill of a first ascent, only to find out later that one of our heroes had been there, and done that. Classic!

*In a team, a common vision and drive becomes a synchronized rhythm. But without a common vision, individual rhythms diverge from the collective song. Rage Against the Machine’s “Killing In The Name” and Israel Kamakawiwo’ole’s “Somewhere Over The Rainbow” are both great songs. But if you play them over top of each other they’ll sound like shit.*

”



*Brotherhood high on a wall — one of the great gifts climbing can give us.*



Just before I left, Clinton and Drew found their stoke trying to free climb a line that Clinton had established, but not fully freed on a previous trip to Cochamo a few years prior. Each day they would return to camp, red from the sun and huffing and puffing with great tales and big grins. They may have already freed the route as I write this. (I later learned that Clinton and Drew freed their route with multiple pitches clocking in at 5.12+. They had fixed a portaledge on the route and left camp in the morning with a pirate flag, telling the guys, “If we don’t come back tonight, it means we’re sending.” They sent.)

Throughout the trip, we laughed. A lot. During transit from Puerto Montt to Cochamo, when the hostel in Puerto Montt was full, we slept in the owner’s holiday trailer that smelled like cat urine and featured a bathroom filled to the brim with studded leather jackets and masks. Elliot put on a fashion show and Clinton and I spooned, fearful of whatever was emitting the smell of death.

We got matching haircuts. We skinny-dipped at a remote watering hole named the Kewl Pewl. Clinton made back-country risotto. I discovered my love for the caramelly icing

Manjar, and hiked two kilograms of it in tubs up to our basecamp. Our legs rose to the challenge of “Approchamo,” Cochamo’s apt nickname.

And I felt a connection to a mountain, El Monstruo, with a level of intensity that I had never experienced before.

And finally, one of my favourite days was the bittersweet terminus of my time in Cochamo, when Joe and I, much overdue, hiked into the Valley of The Beast, to the base of my obsession: El Monstruo. By this point I knew that an attempt was out of the question and I was coming around to the idea that it was petty to dwell on the “bitter” of the bittersweet. We were so close, but had never been further from an attempt. I focused on active gratitude toward the “sweet” of the bittersweet: the people and the place. I smile as I think about it.

The feeling of remoteness spread over us like a thin blanket on a warm summer night. The tobanoes — bush flies — spread over us like Satan’s minions. Our necks hurt from craning through the binoculars all day. We schemed like I have never schemed before. “Holy shit! This crack, into this feature...” and so it goes.

That day ended in classic Patagonian style: a storm blowing up the valley with stealthy ferocity, and condors circling above. Joe and I shared a smile at the col, before we turned our backs on The Monster for now. It is a day I will forever cherish. A day that keeps me dreaming and scheming.

My story is certainly not the story that I wanted to live. But I must also admit that I’m unsure if my ego could have handled a public objective success like I was picturing. I have a fear that it would’ve derailed my love for climbing and my friends and the mountains. My ego is crushed, and therefore my soul is liberated. I’m happy to be through with searching for courage to tell this story, and ready to move on with love, peace, and hunger. ~ACC

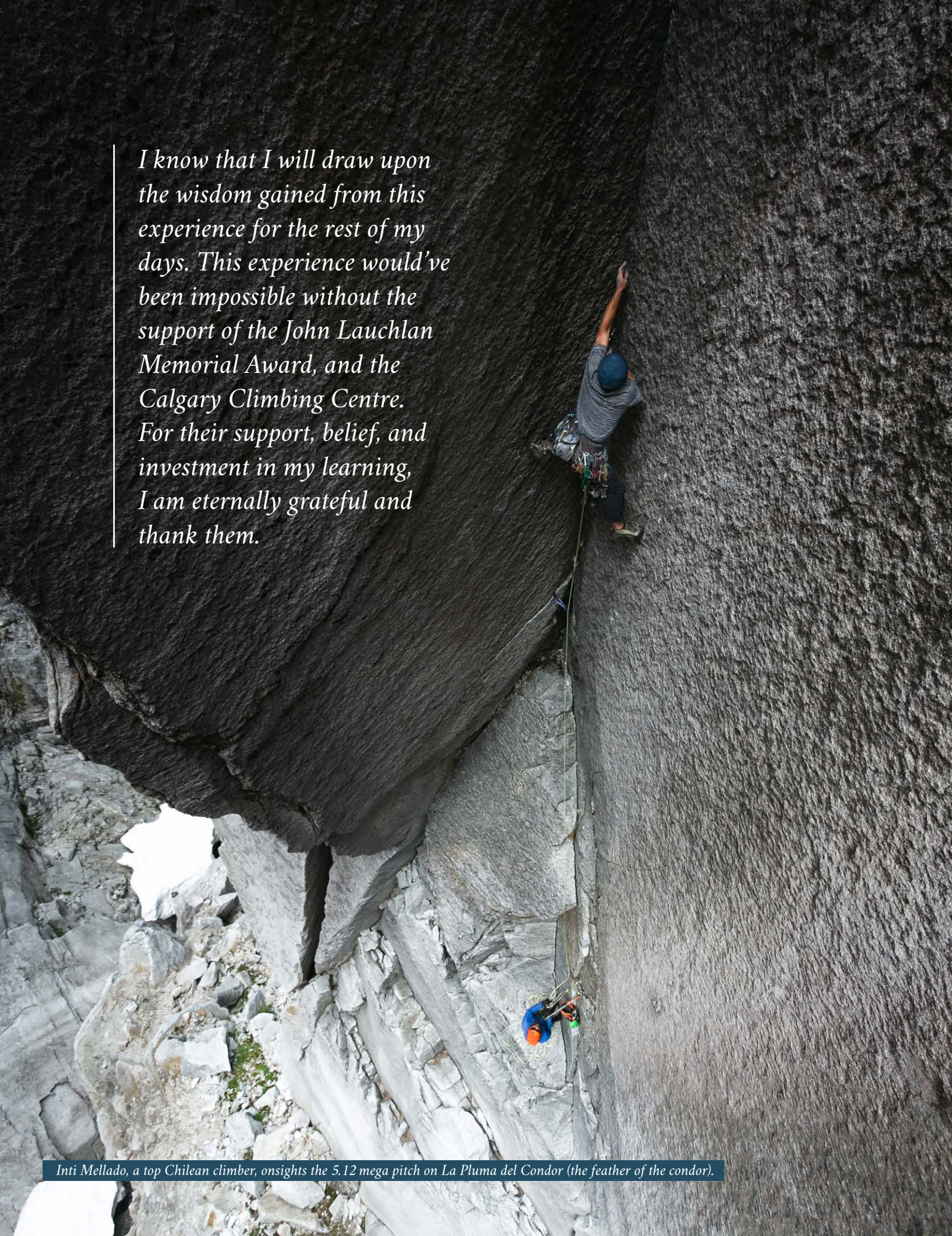
## The John Lauchlan Memorial Award

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Deadline for application is September 30 each year. For more info, see [JohnLauchlanAward.com](http://JohnLauchlanAward.com)

*I know that I will draw upon the wisdom gained from this experience for the rest of my days. This experience would’ve been impossible without the support of the John Lauchlan Memorial Award, and the Calgary Climbing Centre. For their support, belief, and investment in my learning, I am eternally grateful and thank them.*



*Inti Mellado, a top Chilean climber, onsights the 5.12 mega pitch on La Pluma del Condor (the feather of the condor).*



# Roche jusqu'à minuit

## Auteurs

Paul Robitaille (président – CAC Montréal)

Will Hotopf (responsable des adhésions – CAC Montréal)

Traduction par : Mathieu Vallée

*La section Montréal du Club alpin du Canada est basée à Montréal (Québec) et compte environ 1 700 membres. La plupart des sorties ont lieu au Québec et dans le nord-est des États-Unis (Adirondacks), où se trouve le chalet du club.*

L'escalade de rocher et de glace est enracinée dans l'histoire de la section Montréal, mais au fil des ans, nous nous étions peu à peu éloignés de ces racines. Au printemps 2019, nous avons mis sur pied un comité d'escalade dans le but de mobiliser les membres et leaders de la section. Les bénévoles qui composaient le comité ont établi un budget et un programme d'escalade qui a été présenté au comité exécutif de la section et approuvé par celui-ci.

Le comité d'escalade a lancé l'idée des sorties de « Roche jusqu'à minuit », ou « Rockin' 'Til Midnight » en anglais, en s'inspirant d'un programme d'escalade qui était jadis très populaire, afin d'accroître le sentiment d'appartenance des membres. Nous voulions renforcer l'aspect social du club et faire des sorties en semaine, une idée un peu folle comme le sont tous les grimpeurs. La section Calgary organise les sorties « Rock Rave », où les participants sortent de Calgary en pleine semaine pour se rendre à une paroi. Nous nous sommes dit que nous pourrions faire quelque chose de similaire. De cette idée sont nées les sorties de « Roche jusqu'à minuit ». Un membre de notre équipe, Will Hotopf, a contacté la section Calgary pour trouver des idées, et voilà, un nouveau rendez-vous de grimpe voyait le jour grâce à la coopération entre membres.

## Les sorties

Une série de sorties d'escalade ont eu lieu en semaine à Val-David, à une heure au nord de Montréal, où nous avons grimpé du coucher du soleil « jusqu'à minuit ».

Si vous n'avez jamais grimpé dans l'est du pays, Val-David est un village des Laurentides où se trouve un parc régional qui comprend de nombreuses parois pour l'escalade sportive et traditionnelle, avec divers niveaux de difficulté. Ce n'est pas Yosemite, mais certains secteurs offrent de bons défis. La proximité avec Montréal en fait un endroit très fréquenté la fin de semaine, alors nous avons pensé qu'en allant les soirs de semaine, nous aurions davantage de quiétude et un contexte unique pour grimper.

Pour la première sortie, qui a eu lieu juste avant le solstice d'été, six membres ont participé. Nous avons acheté de quoi manger et boire pour le groupe et avons fait le voyage tous ensemble dans une fourgonnette. Nous avons quitté Montréal vers 17h30, avons affronté l'heure de pointe dans une averse de pluie et sommes arrivés à Val-David vers 19h. Sous le leadership de deux membres du comité d'escalade, Vincent Bonnet et Cécile Lechat, nous nous sommes aspergés de chasse-moustiques (nous étions en haute saison, à la pire heure de la journée) et avons rejoint la paroi Staircase du mont King. Nous n'avions pas loin à marcher, mais nous avons pressé le pas pour maintenir les insectes à distance.

À notre arrivée à Staircase, nous avons sorti l'équipement et avons installé des moulinettes dans des voies entre 5.7 et 5.9, chacun jouant le rôle de grimpeur et d'assureur en alternance. Lorsque la nuit est tombée, les moustiques ont disparu, nous avons allumé les frontales et en levant les yeux au ciel, nous avons eu la surprise de voir des centaines de lucioles s'illuminer. Un spectacle magnifique. Nous avons continué de grimper jusqu'à environ 23h, puis avons retrouvé les voitures où nous attendait le goûter et la bière. Après un long retour en voiture, nous sommes arrivés à Montréal vers 2h. Tous les participants ont eu du mal à se lever vendredi matin, mais tous étaient heureux.

Vincent Bonnet et Will Hotopf ont organisé deux autres sorties similaires en août et en septembre, période où il y a moins de moustiques, mais où la nuit tombe plus tôt. Pour arriver avant la noirceur, le groupe a pris la route à 16h, évitant ainsi la circulation dense que nous avions rencontrée la première fois. Les deux sorties comptaient six participants et ont été de francs succès. En septembre, le froid commence déjà à s'installer, mais la température demeure plaisante.

## Une expérience unique

Les sorties de « Roche jusqu'à minuit » ont suscité beaucoup d'intérêt chez les membres. Puisqu'elles avaient lieu les soirs de semaine, elles n'exigeaient pas de rendre disponible une journée entière. Elles ont été peu coûteuses et ont permis aux participants de grimper dans une grande variété de secteurs.

Plusieurs n'avaient jamais grimpé la nuit à la frontale, une expérience amusante et différente : l'escalade nocturne est un excellent moyen de travailler le positionnement des pieds! Nous espérons pouvoir faire grandir le programme cette année (tout dépendant de la situation de la COVID-19) et accueillir des groupes plus grands. Si vous pratiquez l'escalade et cherchez un club amusant qui propose des sorties uniques, abonnez-vous à la page Facebook de la section Montréal du Club alpin.

L'activité a aussi démontré à quel point la communication et les discussions entre sections peuvent profiter à l'ensemble du Club. L'équipe de Calgary s'est montrée très généreuse en donnant de son temps et en proposant des idées, et nous avons été ravis de communiquer avec elle. Comme nous sommes dans l'Est et ne parlons pas la même langue, nous pouvons parfois hésiter à faire appel à nos homologues de l'Ouest. Nous espérons que cet exemple de coopération est-ouest inspirera d'autres initiatives, comme la tenue dans l'Est du pays d'un camp de glace du CAC, afin que les gens de l'Ouest puissent voir ce que nous avons à offrir! ~CAC

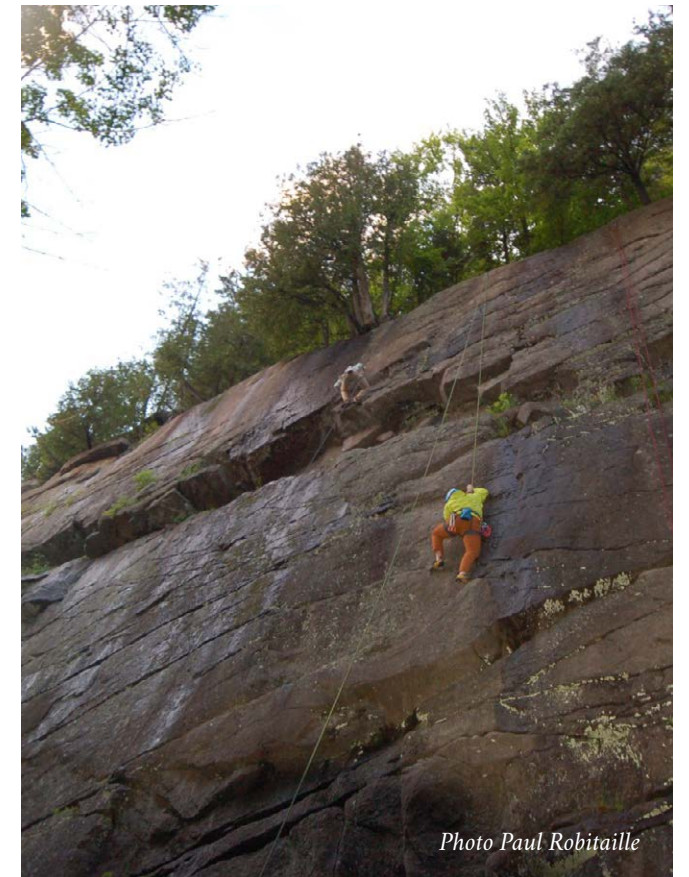


Photo Paul Robitaille



Photo Paul Robitaille



# Rockin' 'Til Midnight

by Paul Robitaille (ACC Montreal President)  
and Will Hotopf (ACC Montreal membership exec)

*The Montreal Section of The Alpine Club of Canada is based in Montreal, Québec and is made up of around 1,700 members. Most outings are held in Quebec and the northeast United States (Adirondacks) where the section's club house is located.*

The Montreal Section has a long history of climbing both rock and ice, but in recent years we had slowly lost our climbing focus. In the spring of 2019, we set up a climbing committee to re-engage our section's members and leaders. The committee was made up of volunteers who established a budget and a climbing program that was presented to the section executive and was approved.

The idea for our "Roche jusqu'à minuit" program, or in English, "Rockin' 'Til Midnight," was initiated by the section's climbing committee in an effort to revive a climbing program that was very popular in the past and to increase climbing member retention. We wanted to improve the social elements of the club and to do something midweek, which would be unique and a bit crazy like all climbers are! The Calgary Section does "Rock Rave," a midweek dash out of Calgary to go cragging, and we thought we could run something similar locally. It was thanks to this idea that the "Roche jusqu'à minuit" was really conceived. One member of our Montreal team, Will Hotopf, contacted the Calgary Section for some inspiration, and "voilà," our new climbing event was born as a result of our cooperation.

## The Outings

"Roche jusqu'à minuit" became a series of weekday climbing outings to Val-David, an hour north of Montreal, where we rock climbed from sunset to midnight.

For those not familiar with climbing in the east, Val-David is a municipal park in the Laurentians, with loads of areas to climb both sport and trad of varying difficulties. It is not Yosemite, but it has challenging areas. Its proximity to Montreal makes it very popular on weekends, so we thought that week nights would offer some quieter crags and a unique situation in which to climb.

The first event was held just before the summer solstice and there were six of us on the trip. We purchased some food and liquid refreshment for the group and we all piled into a van for the trip. We left around 5:30 p.m., battled traffic through a rain storm and arrived at Val-David around 7 p.m.. Led by climbing committee members Vincent Bonnet and Cécile Lechat, we applied loads of bug spray (it was prime mosquito season and time of day) and we headed off to the Staircase section of Mont King. The approach was not long, but we moved fast to stay away from the bugs.

Upon arrival at the Staircase section, we geared up and set up some top ropes. The routes were 5.7 to 5.9 and everyone took turns running laps and belaying. As darkness fell, the mosquitos disappeared, we lit up the headlamps and, much to our surprise, the sky was lit up with hundreds of fireflies. It was quite beautiful. We climbed until around 11 p.m. and then headed back to the car where we chatted as we enjoyed our stash of food and beer. The drive home was long and we arrived at Montreal around two in the morning. Getting up in the morning on Friday was tough for all the participants, but we were all happy!

Vincent Bonnet and Will Hotopf ran two more outings in August and September. Both had the advantage of being less buggy, though darkness came sooner. To counteract this, the group left at 4 p.m., which helped to avoid the traffic we encountered in the first outing. Both outings had six people and were major successes. Already by September the weather had become significantly cooler, but remained pleasant.

## A Unique Experience

The "Roche jusqu'à minuit" program created a lot of excitement among the members. Since the outings were during the week and in the evening, they didn't require blocking off a whole day. It was inexpensive for the members and offered a lot of different places to climb.

For many, it was the first time climbing at night with a headlamp which was a fun and different experience: climbing at night really teaches the importance of good footwork! We hope to increase the program this year (depending on the COVID-19 situation) and expand the group sizes. Keep your eyes on the Montreal Section's Facebook page if you are a climber looking for a fun club and a unique outing.

The event was also a great example of how contacting, sharing and discussing with other sections can add value to the club as a whole. The Calgary crew was extremely generous with their time and their ideas and it was a pleasure to communicate with them. Being in the East, with the barrier of language, we sometimes hesitate to reach out. We hope that this example of east-west collaboration can spur further initiatives such as an Eastern ice ACC section camp and hopefully get some westerners to come and see what we have to offer! ~ACC



Photo by Raphael Desbonnets



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# A Good Run

## The GMC: 114 years running

The ACC held its first Summer Camp in the Yoho Valley in 1906. What started as a summer meet for a newly formed club became 114 years of our annual celebration of climbing, friendship and summer in the mountains. The General Mountaineering Camp has become a club – and a Canadian – institution, and we haven’t missed a year. Until now.

Before the pandemic, everyone from our guides and our staff to our participants and volunteers were psyched to go to Mount Mummy and we’re absolutely gutted to have to cancel it.

Five years ago, Chuck Young penned an article for these pages (What a Great Ride, Vol. 29, No. 3) where he looked back on a quarter century of volunteering at the GMC. In typical Chuck fashion, he spent his 800 words primarily thanking other people for helping him. Below, he shares memories of his 30 year run, along with his view of a modernizing GMC.

Our legacy is a growing and evolving community in the mountains: guides and staff who love the work, participants who come back year after year, and volunteers who consider it their summer vacation.

We’ll be back in 2021 with the Mummy Glacier GMC and hopefully the start of another 100+ year run.

## 1990-2019: 30 Years Straight!

by Chuck Young

Last summer at Westfall Glacier marked 30 years of GMC Amateur Leading under my belt and oh, how the camp has changed over the years!



Camp at GMC 2015. Photo by Zoltan Kenwell.

Back in the early ‘90s, showers were non-existent, bringing booze into camp was frowned upon and up to a third of the participants may have been “old” climbers who made the GMC their personal base camp for their own adventures.

Helicopters had yet to be deployed for transporting gear and participants had to hike in and out. The 1993 camp at Scott-Hooker in Jasper was a 28-km hike each direction. Sleeping arrangements were three to five people in centre-pole canvas tents.

I remember great times with Ron Naylor, Amond Groner, Don Forest, Richard and Louise Guy and Helmut Microys. I have great memories of so many people.

Fast forward to current times, the GMC is a fabulous week where participants are flown in and out of camp, a moderate consumption of booze is accepted and you can arrange to have a private tent. It’s common for members to return year after year for the same week, which builds friendships both local and from all over North America.

The guide to participant ratios are 1:3 on most trips and with helicopter access, the elevation of the camps is higher and closer to the summits. It has been an absolute joy to base myself in these amazing locations that would be very difficult to get to otherwise.

I encourage all ACC members if they can to devote a week to the GMC where you “Eat, Sleep, Climb, Repeat” in remote and glorious areas of western Canada’s mountains.

I want to thank my good friend Chic Scott for pressing me into service as an Amateur Leader back in 1990. Also, Orvel Miskiwi who in 1986 said “If you really want to learn mountaineering go to the GMC!” Great advice, Orvel. And my wife Lesley who joined me every single year while our children Rob, Charley and William watched their parents go off to summer camp.

Thanks for the memories. ~ACC



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