

Gazette

The Alpine Club of Canada

Huts
Brochure
Inside!

le club alpin du Canada

FEATURE

Exploring the volcanoes of Ecuador



Vol. 39, No. 1 Spring | printemps 2023



**Hikers wanted.
Climbers,
mountaineers,
skiers too.**

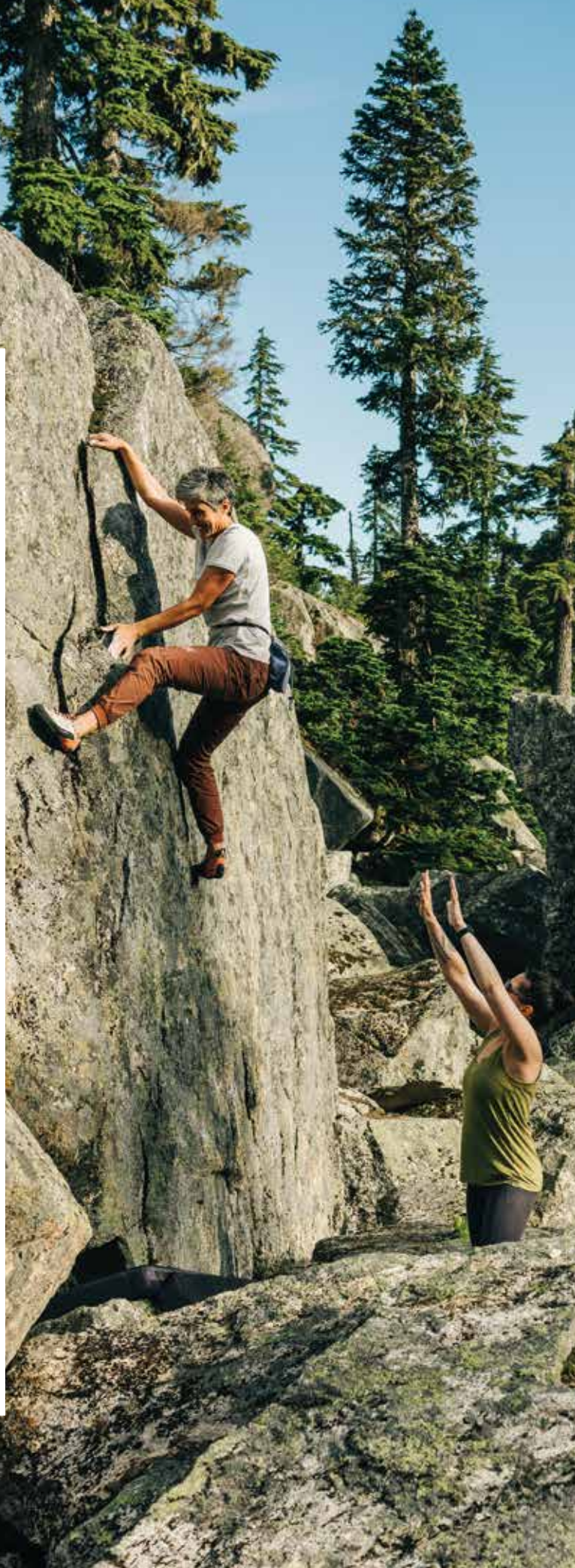
mec.ca/careers

Love the outdoors? We're hiring.

- Share your passion for gear and activities
- Nice outdoorsy perks and discounts
- Welcoming, inclusive culture



MEC is a proud partner of
Alpine Club of Canada



**Adventure,
meet
comfort.**

go far. feel good.

Smartwool® 

Smartwool, the Little Guy logo, and the Brand Flag are trademarks of TBL Licensing LLC. © 2022 TBL Licensing LLC. All rights reserved. Photo: The Public Works.



Publications Mail
Agreement No. 40009034
Return undeliverable Canadian
addresses to:

The Alpine Club of Canada
Box 8040, Canmore, AB
Canada T1W 2T8

Phone: (403) 678-3200

info@alpineclubofcanada.ca
www.alpineclubofcanada.ca

Board of Directors

Isabelle Daigneault – President
Richard Campbell – Secretary
Keith Sanford – Treasurer
Lael Parrott – VP Access/Environment
Frank Spears – VP Activities
Jim Gudjonson – VP Facilities
Zac Robinson – VP Mountain Culture
Steve Traversari – VP Sections
Toby Harper-Merrett – VP Services/Athletics
Carine Salvy – Executive Director

Gazette Editorial Team

Keith Haberl, Kristy Davison, Peter Hoang

Design & Production

Kristy Davison, Zac Bolan, Peter Hoang

Submissions

Submissions to the Gazette are welcome!
For submission guidelines email your
idea to the Gazette Editor at
gazette@alpineclubofcanada.ca

Advertising

Advertising rate sheet available on the
website or by request. Please direct
advertising inquiries to Zac Bolan,
Publications Manager by e-mail:
zbolan@alpineclubofcanada.ca



facebook.com/alpineclubcan

twitter.com/alpineclubcan

instagram.com/alpineclubcan

Corporate Partners

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



Corporate Friends

Alpinist Magazine
Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity
Canadian Avalanche Association
CPAWS
Explore Magazine
Gripped
Mountain Culture Group
Mountain Life – Rocky Mountains
Rocky Mountain Books
Zaui Software



Randall Thomas

Randall spends some of his free time in the Rockies getting scrambled legs. He's a Week-3 regular at the GMC, and back in the 80s he did a stint as editor of the Chinook. Words are a constant source of work or play: writing and reading poetry/fiction; Scrabble; crosswords; building graphics for TV sports. Any day he can make someone laugh is a good day.



Tami Knight

Tami Knight lives and works in Vancouver with her husband Phil and their very large and overly affectionate cat, Sweetheart. Knight sincerely wishes the world was a lot less crazy than it is.



Karson Sudlow

Karson is an M.Sc. student at the University of Alberta where he studies how melting glaciers impact alpine stream ecosystems in the Canadian Rockies. When not sticking his hands into glacial streams or in the lab under his microscope, you can find him out exploring on bike and splitboard (sorry skiers)!



JP Gravel, translator for the Gazette

Jean-Philippe Gravel has no phone to navigate the world, just a nose and sometimes thick books. In college he studied cinema, and owns a Master in Literature. His thesis was an essay and collection of stories inspired by the fun american postmodern writers (Donald Barthelme, John Barth, John Hawkes, William Gaddis, William Gass). He mostly translates essays about environmental issues and write film reviews. He's been teaching french for 12 years. His next film essay is about « A Clockwork Orange ».

Jean-Philippe Gravel n'a pas de téléphone pour naviguer dans le monde, juste un nez et des livres parfois épais. Il a étudié le cinéma au cégep et a obtenu une maîtrise en littérature. Son mémoire était un essai et un recueil d'histoires inspirés par les écrivains postmodernes américains amusants (Donald Barthelme, John Barth, John Hawkes, William Gaddis, William Gass). Il traduit principalement des essais sur les questions environnementales, et écrit des critiques de films. Il enseigne le français depuis 12 ans. Son prochain essai cinématographique portera sur "A Clockwork Orange".



Adventure the Kootenays & Beyond

Guided Ascents
Rock Climbing Skills
Mountaineering Courses
Waddington - Bugaboos - Valhallas



cell 250-354-9028
office 250-354-7552
summitmountainguides.com

SUMMIT
MOUNTAIN GUIDES

Table of Contents

From the Editor

- 8 From the Editor
- 9 Du rédacteur en chef

Club Hub

- 10 Announcements
- 12 Executive Director's Message
- 13 Message de la Directrice générale
- 15 Volunteer Profile

Trip Report

- 16 Along the Avenue of the Volcanoes
- 23 Le Long de L'Avenue des Volcans

Grant Report

- 30 Watching Your Step in Glacial Streams

Section Profile

- 32 Edmonton Section

Heritage

- 34 The Story of the ACC's Clubhouse

Mountain Art

- 38 Glen Boles: Mountain Masterpiece

Back Page

- 42 Believing Betty

On the cover: Pedro, Ken & Randall approaching Cayambe summit dome on the 2023 Ecuador international trip.

En couverture : Pedro, Ken et Randall s'approchent du dôme sommital du Cayambe durant le voyage international de 2023 en Équateur.

Here/ici: "Hungabee Lake on Opabin Plateau," by/par Glen Boles.





When the ACC began in 1906, the goals of the club were laid out by the founders and put down in our constitution. It shouldn't surprise anyone that these goals ("Objects" they called them), prominently featured mountain science, exploration, art, heritage, craft, and environmental preservation.

And when we think of what the ACC is today, and where it's going, we lean heavily on those words. Now, there are obvious problems with charting a course in a modern world based on anything conceived more than a century ago, but in the case of the ACC's goals, which amount to "let's explore, record and take care of the mountains," well, we think they stand up pretty nicely.

But we're also aware that we should continue to check in with our members, to question our direction and, when necessary, to recalibrate for our times. To this end, we've recently sent ACC members an online survey requesting their opinions about the club and where we should be going. Thanks to everyone who has already responded.

There's no question that exploration today looks different than it did in the early 20th century: this issue's cover story ("Along

the Avenue of the Volcanoes", page 16) recounts this year's ACC trip to Ecuador, and the discovery, in both the hills and in the mind, that comes with great adventures.

Mountain art has also changed through the years, and the club is proud to be associated with visual works that range from the stunning, life-like drawings of Glen Boles ("Mountain Masterpiece", page 38) to the provocative illustrated irreverence of Tami Knight ("Believing Betty", page 42).

And of course mountain science and preservation has a completely new, more urgent resonance today. This issue's Grant Report ("Watching your step in Glacial Streams", page 30) illuminates some of the work being done to understand even the smallest members of our local wildlife community. The ACC Environment Fund is proud to support scientific studies such as this each year.

In the Gazette, our members' magazine, we'll continue to honour our founders' vision, and to reflect our members' values as we share the ACC stories of our times.

— Keith Haberl

Quand le CAC a débuté en 1906, les objectifs du club ont été mis en place par ses fondateurs et inclus dans notre constitution. Personne ne devrait s'étonner que ces objectifs donnent la priorité à la science des montagnes, l'exploration, l'art, l'artisanat et la conservation environnementaux.

Quand nous pensons à ce qu'est le CAC aujourd'hui et à ses orientations futures, nous nous fions beaucoup à ces mots. Aujourd'hui, il est évidemment difficile de tracer une voie dans un monde moderne en se basant sur ce qui a été conçu il y a plus d'un siècle, mais pour ce qui concerne les objectifs du CAC, où il s'agit d'explorer, d'enregistrer et de prendre soin des montagnes, nous croyons, tout compte fait, qu'ils tiennent fort bien la route.

Mais nous savons que nous devons continuer de consulter nos membres pour interroger nos orientations et, lorsque nécessaire, de nous adapter à notre époque. Dans ce but, nous avons récemment envoyé aux membres du CAC un sondage en ligne sur ce qu'ils pensent du club et ses objectifs futurs. Nous remercions toutes les personnes qui ont déjà répondu.

Il ne fait pas de doute que l'exploration aujourd'hui est différente de ce qu'elle était au début du siècle dernier : le récit en couverture de ce numéro (Le long

de l'avenue des Volcans) relate le voyage du CAC en Équateur cette année, et les découvertes, dans les montagnes comme dans l'esprit, qu'apportent les grandes aventures.

L'art de montagne a aussi changé au fil des ans, et le club est fier d'être associé à des œuvres visuelles qui vont du réalisme étonnant des dessins de Glen Boles ("Mountain Masterpiece", page 38) à l'irrévérence provocante des illustrations de Tami Knight ("Believing Betty", page 42).

Et bien sûr, la science et la conservation des montagnes sont aujourd'hui plus urgentes et résonnantes que jamais. Le rapport de recherche de ce numéro ("Watching your step in Glacial Streams", page 30) éclaire certains travaux effectués pour comprendre même les plus petits membres de notre communauté faunique locale. Le Fonds environnemental du CAC est fier de soutenir des recherches scientifiques comme celles-ci chaque année.

Dans la Gazette, le magazine de nos membres, nous continuerons d'honorer la vision de nos fondateurs et de refléter les valeurs de nos membres en partageant des histoires du CAC de notre époque.

— Keith Haberl

Mt. Robson. Illustration by Glen Boles.

Opportunity to volunteer

Looking for ways to contribute to your club? Join the Gazette's new volunteer editorial committee!

Are you a member with background or interest in storytelling? We are looking for members who are keen to help our editorial team craft and source, translate and copy edit the stories we will tell in each edition of the Gazette, ensuring our member magazine is "by members and for members."

Our goal is to have representation from all corners of the country. The Gazette publishes three times per year and the commitment would include a few annual editorial meetings, followed by delegation of writing or sourcing stories in your local section's region, as needed.

Interested? Please send a message with the subject line "Gazette Editorial Committee" to Gazette@alpineclubofcanada.ca

We've got you covered!





The ACC partners with TuGo® to bring you travel insurance that covers the mountain activities you love, providing tailored advice most insurance companies can't.

Ask about our COVID trip interruption insurance plans.

alpineclubofcanada.ca/insurance

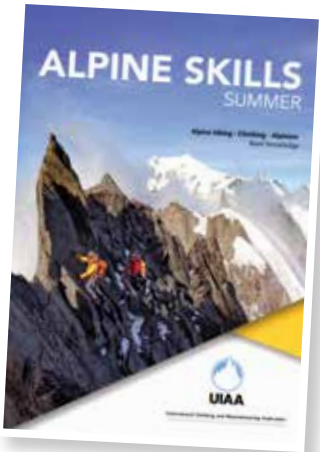
30% off in the shop

The 3rd edition of the Alpine Skills Summer handbook is out and we're celebrating spring with a 30% discount for April and May.

This is the North American edition of the handbook that has been produced by the experts at the Petzl Foundation and the UIAA. It is simply the finest climbing instructional and reference handbook anywhere.

Read more on Aspects, the ACC blog.

Go to: bit.ly/AlpineSkillsBook



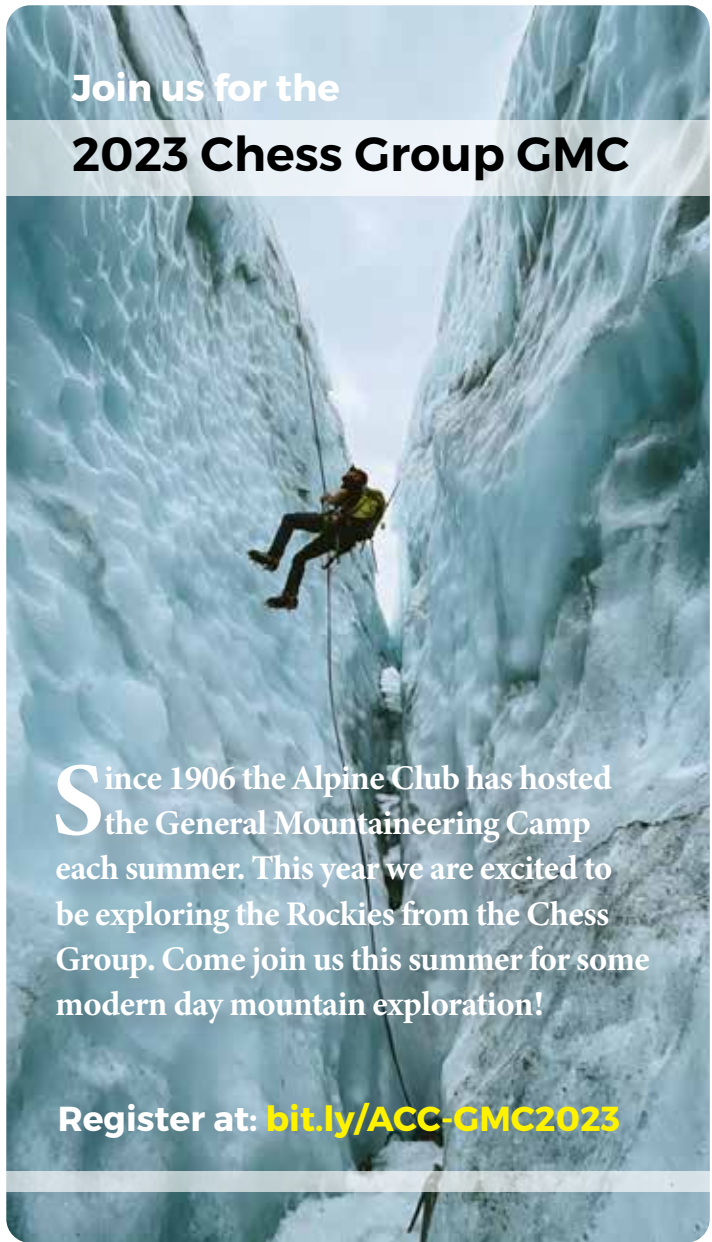
Update your member profile

The ACC office will be making some major upgrades to our club IT and membership management system in the coming weeks.

We encourage all of our members to login to their existing membership profile and update personal details, particularly any contact information that might be missing or have changed.

Thanks, we appreciate it.

Join us for the 2023 Chess Group GMC



Since 1906 the Alpine Club has hosted the General Mountaineering Camp each summer. This year we are excited to be exploring the Rockies from the Chess Group. Come join us this summer for some modern day mountain exploration!

Register at: bit.ly/ACC-GMC2023

5% discount for ACC members



WELCOME TO SUMMITCLIMB

June-July-Aug '23: Gasherbrum 1 and 2, K2 Summit, 8,000m Training, Broad Peak, K2 Base Camp Trek, Pastore Trekking Peak (near K2). Three-time K2 Leader Dan Mazur and Sherpas!

September '23: Manaslu

October-November '23: Baruntse - Mera Peak, Ama Dablam, Lobuche, Island Peak, Everest Base Camp and Remote Service Trek

December '23, January-February '24: Christmas Trek, Island Peak, Aconcagua & Ojos Del Salado or Kilimanjaro Himalayan Giants of Nepal. Three Peaks for the price of one!

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



Free Canada Friendship Glacier School

Phone/SMS/WhatsApp: 1-360-250-3407 www.SummitClimb.com
DanielMazur@SummitClimb.com Facebook.com/DanielLeeMazur



New stickers in the ACC store!

Asulkan Cabin and Conrad Kain Hut now available in vinyl

Carry the good times and good climbs with you by putting these beautiful new 3x3" illustrated vinyl sticker from Petra Hekkenberg on your favourite bottle, notebook or laptop.

- Stickers are
- removable without residue
 - waterproof
 - microwave safe
 - dishwasher safe

Go to bit.ly/40eXwjl or scan the code below.



The spring issue of the Gazette marks my first year with the ACC and it's a good opportunity to update you on the projects and initiatives that are underway.



The momentum created by the visioning process undertaken at the start of 2022 led the board to approve a three-year strategic plan focused on better serving our members and sections, catering to their diverse needs and expectations, with clear and relevant communications, safety, diversity and inclusion at the forefront of everything we do, and the development of an environmental strategy and diversified long-term funding. This plan has been driving various initiatives aimed at reconnecting with our members and modernizing our operations.

Our Member Services group has had lengthy interviews with all our sections, enabling us to have a much finer understanding of the issues and challenges that they face. We have started to address some of these through monthly webinars covering topics as diverse as training and retaining volunteer members, insurance, and member engagement. Our upcoming three-day Section Forum in May will be an opportunity to meet face-to-face once again and continue working together to better support and develop our sections.

The office has been busy making progress on our digital transition. A new member management system and facilities booking system, and a new website are all under development. We hope these tools will improve our levels of service and quality, and better suit our operating requirements. We are well aware of the frustrations encountered by our members as they seek to renew their membership or book a hut, and we are grateful for their patience and understanding. While managing the demand for our huts and some of our programs will remain a challenge, we hope to improve the user experience of our members. Although it will take some time, we plan for our new website to be bilingual in due course. We have started the translation process and look forward to the day when we can address our members in both English and French.

We have also been working on developing our system of backcountry huts. Renovations at the Bow Hut and Peyto Hut are scheduled over the summer, while some exciting capital projects are also under way. We hope to replace the Castle Mountain Hut with a slightly larger, modern facility this summer. Work on a new hut in Mount Robson Provincial Park has been restarted after severe flooding in the summer of 2021 destroyed the access trail to Berg Lake. And we are working on a proposal to replace the historic Abbot Pass Hut with a new facility in the vicinity of where the former hut stood.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our AGM on May 13th in Canmore. Until then, feel free to reach to me or any member of my team in Canmore—we are here to help.

Carine Salvy
Executive Director of The Alpine Club of Canada

L'édiction de printemps de la Gazette marquera ma première année à la tête du CAC et c'est l'occasion d'informer nos membres des projets et initiatives en cours.

L'élan créé par le processus de vision entrepris au début de l'année 2022 a conduit le conseil d'administration à approuver un plan stratégique triennal visant à mieux servir nos membres et nos sections, en répondant à leurs besoins et attentes, avec des communications claires et pertinentes, la sécurité, la diversité et l'inclusion au premier plan de tout ce que nous faisons, ainsi que l'élaboration d'une stratégie environnementale et des sources de financement diversifiées à long terme. Ce plan a donné lieu à diverses initiatives visant à renouer avec nos membres et à moderniser nos opérations.

Notre équipe de services aux membres a eu des entretiens détaillés avec toutes nos sections, ce qui nous a permis d'avoir une compréhension beaucoup plus fine des problèmes et des défis auxquels elles sont confrontées. Nous avons commencé à aborder certains d'entre eux par le biais de webinaires mensuels couvrant des sujets aussi divers que la formation et la fidélisation des membres bénévoles, les assurances et l'engagement des membres. Notre prochain Forum des sections, qui se déroulera sur trois jours en mai, sera l'occasion de nous retrouver en personne et de continuer à travailler ensemble pour mieux soutenir et développer nos sections.

Nous travaillons depuis plusieurs mois sur notre transition numérique. Un nouveau système de gestion des membres, un système de réservation des refuges et un nouveau site web sont en cours de développement. Nous espérons que ces outils amélioreront nos niveaux de service et de qualité, et qu'ils répondront mieux à nos besoins opérationnels. Nous sommes bien conscients des frustrations

rencontrées par nos membres lorsqu'ils cherchent à renouveler leur adhésion ou à réserver un refuge, et nous leur sommes reconnaissants de leur patience et de leur compréhension. Même si la gestion de la demande pour nos refuges et certains de nos programmes restera un défi, nous espérons améliorer l'expérience utilisateur de nos membres. Bien que cela prendra du temps, nous prévoyons que notre nouveau site web soit bilingue à terme. Nous avons commencé le processus de traduction et nous attendons avec impatience le jour où nous pourrions nous adresser à nos membres en anglais et en français.

Nous avons également travaillé au développement de notre système de refuges de montagne. Nous prévoyons des rénovations au refuge Bow et au refuge Peyto cet été, ainsi que des investissements dans de nouveaux sites. Nous espérons remplacer le refuge de Castle Mountain par une installation moderne et légèrement plus grande cet été. Les travaux de construction d'un nouveau refuge dans le parc provincial du Mont Robson ont repris après les graves inondations de l'été 2021 qui ont détruit le sentier d'accès au lac Berg. Nous travaillons également sur une proposition visant à remplacer le refuge historique de Abbot Pass par une nouvelle installation à proximité de l'ancien site.

Nous nous réjouissons de vous voir aussi nombreux que possible à notre AGA du 13 mai à Canmore. D'ici là, n'hésitez pas à me contacter ou à contacter un membre de mon équipe à Canmore— nous sommes là pour vous aider.

Carine Salvy
Directrice générale du Club alpin du Canada

ACC Spring/ Summer Adventures

Courses

- Learn to Climb Series (Sport, Trad, Multipitch, Rock Rescue) 4 course
- Intro to Mountaineering
 - Bow
 - Kain
 - Asulkan
- Summer Crevasse Rescue

Camps

- Chess Group GMC
- Eisenhower Tower Climb
- Woman and Non-Binary Bugaboos Climbing
- Bow-Peyto Traverse, Wapta Discovery
 - 1 BIPOC edition
- Rogers Pass Mountaineering from Wheeler Hut
- 55+ Peaks of Lake O'Hara
- 55+ Kokanee Cabin Hiking
- Dogtooth Traverse
- Elizabeth Parker Fall Hiking
- Iceline Trekking
- Family Hiking at Elk Lakes Cabin

Shadow Lake Lodge

- Larch Hiking at Shadow Lake Lodge



Sign up today at:
adventures.alpineclubofcanada.ca

Volunteer Profile

Featuring Three Recent Winners of the Silver Rope for Leadership Award



Lida Frydrychova

Through the ACC Calgary Lida discovered many remote locations in the Canadian Rockies. For years Lida has been an active contributor to the Calgary Section leading multiple trips each season. Her skill set allows her to lead rock climbing trips and both summer alpine climbs and winter ski-mountaineering trips. Each year Lida includes a trip to one of the ACC huts.

On several occasions she has led international trips for her section to Europe, South America and Mexico. A couple of Lida's personal high points are summiting Denali and Mount Alberta.

When she was the section's Alpine Chair she developed the Alpine Mentorship Program to train new leaders and introduce new climbers to safe climbing.

Lida continues to give back to the mountain community and has now taken on the role of Section Vice-Chair.

Lida works hard and plays hard!



Martin Siegert

Although Martin has been involved in the ACC's Vancouver Section for over two decades, his personal experiences with mountaineering and ski touring started even earlier, in Europe, where he grew up. Over the years, Martin has developed and instructed programs for hundreds of Section members, and has either led, coordinated or participated in hundreds of events, including weekly gym climbing practice sessions.

Martin actively instructs a full range of programs including Rock Climbing, Top-Rope Anchors as well as Introductions to Trad Climbing and Back-Country Skiing.

Martin has also served on the Section's Executive, most notably as Director for Skills and Courses, but also active involvement in some of the more mundane but important aspects of Section management.

In 2009, Martin was awarded both the Eric Brooks Leader Award and the Don Forest Service Award.



Nathalie Drotar

Nathalie has been consistent in her pursuit of mountaineering excellence. She has been one of the Calgary Sections top trip leaders bringing members to the mountains. Many of her trips have a strong focus on mentoring women to be leaders in the mountains. Serious mountaineering objectives have been climbed on Nathalie's trips Mount Joffre, Mount Victoria and the peaks from the Neil Colgan Hut to name a few. Ski mountaineering to Rogers Pass and the Wapta Icefield have been successful winter destinations.

She has also volunteered on the Training and Leadership Committee and the Alpine Mentorship Program. When Communication Chair she helped out with many social activities.

Recently Nathalie earned her ACMG Hiking Guide certification allowing her further opportunities lead others.

Nathalie received the ACC Eric Brooks Leader Award in 2016.

Nominate a volunteer!

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

<https://bit.ly/acc-nominate-a-volunteer>

ALONG THE AVENUE OF THE VOLCANOES



ACC International Trip: Ecuador

January 15-27, 2023

ACC Leaders: Helen Sovdat (guide), Zac Robinson (assistant guide, logistics, photography)

Participants: Bibiana Cujec, Sonja Gallagher, Julie Muller, Carl Glaser, Ken Little & Randall Thomas

Locals: Benno Schlauri (lead guide), Mauricio (guide), Pedro (aspirant), Nelson (driver)

by Randall Thomas

photos by Zac Robinson

What brings a group together? There are at least as many answers as there are people in the group, but for the ACC Adventure in Ecuador, one reason we had in common was a starved wanderlust—the pandemic had demanded sacrifices of us all. Now here was a chance to rejoin old friends, meet new ones, experience a different culture, face some physical challenges and maybe tie up some loose ends. You could also add historical curiosity, a geographic anomaly and simply an escape from winter to the list.

Whatever the reasons, what sealed the deal was the leadership of Helen Sovdat, whose adventures far and wide have brought new cultural and geographic perspectives to us all.

• • •

The migration began on January 14th as we all followed the centripetal pull from approximately 50 degrees north to 13.5 minutes south; we inserted ourselves into the clockwork tour via Vancouver, Toronto, Miami, Houston, Bogota and/or San Jose.

January 15 – Arrive in Quito (2,850m)

For those already in place, a day of meandering through the city was planned to take in various points of interest and add some vertical to start the acclimatization process. This included a stair-climb up to the Virgin of el Panecillo. The last of us arrived at the hotel just after midnight.

January 16 – Condor Machay waterfalls hike (approx: 3,100m)

At breakfast, our local guide, Benno Schlauri, thought it best to get us right into some higher walking. “Now we begin the acclimatization. All your fitness training is over; it's too late for that now.” Fair warning. We all climbed into the 11-passenger Mercedes Sprinter van, and Nelson, our indomitable driver, took us out of the Quito rush-hour. There really weren't any horrible seats in the van, but one couldn't escape the myriad speed bumps and cobblestone roads. We burst out of the vehicle like homing pigeons any time it stopped.

There were two options at the trailhead, so we first hiked slowly uphill to the main attraction, an 80-metre waterfall that spilled over basalt cliffs and into the Pita River after winding its way down from the slopes of Cotopaxi (currently closed to tourists due to a constant plume of ash from the caldera). Along the way, crossing about ten bridges, we witnessed an astonishing variety of plants: epiphytes/bromeliads; puya aequatorialis; fungi; orchids; mosses; eucalyptus trees. Fauna in the area included a brown frog, three black-headed vultures, caracaras and some white-capped dippers.

We returned to the van to regroup, then set off downhill on what amounted to an obstacle course of ladders and swaying bridges. At the end of it was a spectacular viewpoint looking down the gorge and up at more overhanging basalt cliffs. Gazing at the smooth, sharp cut-glass forms, it wouldn't be a stretch to suggest that Gris, Braques or Picasso developed cubism upon seeing such a landscape. Soon enough, we retraced our route, which proved to be a bit of a workout considering we were moving uphill above 3,000 metres.

January 17 – Cable Car (3,117m - 3,945m in 20 minutes) and Pichincha walk (4,270m)

We were up over 4,000 metres by 10:00 a.m. and off towards Pichincha for as long as the weather held. While inhaling clouds, we enjoyed a refresher on mindful walking—essentially getting the most out of one's skeletal structure to conserve energy—and Benno introduced us to the chuquiragua, the Ecuadorian mountaineers' "edelweiss" (unlike its Alpen counterpart though, an abundant, green and orange shrub). We lunched while the sun poked in and out of the rising clouds (I ate my first grenadilla) and beat a retreat to the teleferico to return to the hotel to pack.

January 18 – Paschocha (4,200m) and Chuquiragua Lodge

Out on the road, we retraced the route to the waterfalls then continued further to the trailhead for Paschocha. We hiked in the mist along a greasy road where patches of African palm-nut shells were scattered for traction on the rich black dirt. The landscape surrounding us was carpeted by paramo. This is a wild grass that grows in tall, spiky clusters which can provide good handholds when traversing slippery slopes (imagine what it might be like to walk among thousands of angry porcupines).

While the weather cycled through its usual afternoon deterioration, we galumphed our way up onto the summit ridge, took some time to rehydrate and then returned to the trailhead, but not without a few mucky incidents. Micro-spikes would have been useful in some spots.

We arrived at the Chuquiragua Lodge with plenty of time to unpack, shower and put on dry clothes for dinner. The buildings were decorated with all manner of antiquities: rusty typewriter, wall-phone, washbasin and mirror, collections of woodworking tools, riding tack etc. Other tour groups were also about, and we soon learned a sizable number of adventurers were more or less on the same regimen of acclimatization as us, with Chimborazo as the goal. Outside, the rain hammered the lodge, and snow began to blanket the surrounding slopes.

January 19 – Corazon (4,790m)

An ill-favoured wind brought more damp weather for our day up Corazon, and while we all beseeched Ken (our own private meteorologist) to do something about it, he seemed quite content just to elaborate on the various forms of precipitation we encountered as we crossed the paramo and tramped up onto the barren ridge: virga, mist, light rain, ice pellets, graupel, snow...

Four of us were working our way up a gulley to gain access to the final summit ridge when a flash behind/above/below made me wonder why anyone would be taking a—CraaAAAACK!

Benno ahead of us. Helen behind.

"Everyone, back down! NOW!"

We scurried down. We huddled. The storm's thunder moved slowly away; we high-tailed it back down through the paramo and eventually reached the van.

Another night at lodge, safe from the rain with bottomless mugs of tea and a hearty meal. Tomorrow we would pull up stakes again.

January 20 – El Chaupi campsite (4,000m)

Day five of huevos for breakfast, plus fruit and coffee and bacon. A rest day of sorts, where we all packed up and piled into "VanNelson." (It needs to be emphasized here that, while our nightspots were out of town, Nelson actually returned to his home on the eastern side of Quito each night and met us each morning with full tanks of petrol and water—surely the hardest working member of the team.) We had a leisurely 10:00 a.m. departure, a short drive, then a two-hour walk to the campsite by the Illiniza trailhead. Our duffels had been ferried up to the site by Parks vehicles, and when we got there, a line of bright yellow North Face tents greeted us along with large cooking & dining tents.

I'd hoped to get in some star-gazing but the unsettled weather had obscured the sky. I turned in, facing a 3:00 a.m. wakeup—we were shifting to alpine starts, which underscored a slightly more serious tone to the trips ahead. It's worthy of note that the acclimatization process, while adhering to the "climb high, sleep low" maxim, also had a regular pattern to it: we were getting higher by about 500 metres each time.

January 21 – Illiniza Norte (5,248m)

Up and on the trail by 4:00 a.m., we were able to get some early morning stargazing in, after all. When we stopped for a break in the thinning paramo, the Milky Way blazed overhead. At the next stop, as Mercury preceded the dawn, our first view of a smoking Cotopaxi reminded us we were on the Avenue of the Volcanoes.

We reached the refugio (4,700m) with clear skies above and a sea of clouds in the surrounding valleys. The north summit ridge rises from the col in broken rock which is nothing more than occasional scrambling; any difficulties were skirted to the left. To our right, Cotopaxi reminded us how tenuous the landscape could be. Following a steep traverse in snow, we donned crampons for the final gulley and grated and scraped our way over the last few metres of rock to the top. Clouds were rising up quickly around us, so after some pics and eats, we headed back down.

We made the return route in good time, not retracing our steps but continuing down west until we hit scree, sand and pumice (a texture not unlike the vermiculite my dad used to put in the bottom of his barbecue). Soon we hooked up with the main trail and were down to camp at 2:00 p.m. for soup, yuca tortillas and tea. By 3:00 p.m. we'd packed up, loaded our bags and ourselves into three Parks vehicles and rode down to the trailhead to meet "VanNelson." A quick transfer and on the road again, this time north to Guaytara Lodge less than half a degree south of the equator. Nestled in a labyrinth of hills, the lodge sits behind a ridge



Previous spread

Chimborazo from the hike up to the High Camp.

Inset: Cayambe Summit: Zac, Helen, Ken, Pedro and Randall.

This page

1. A variety of cushion arenaria doting the sandy soil above the paramo.

2. Dense paramo at the trailhead for Corazon.

3. Chimborazo High Camp. Ascent route leads off-camera to the right, eventually reaching the dome in the distance (not the summit).

4. Tea-time after settling in at the Cayambe Refuge (Left to right: - Bibi, Sonja, Julie, Ken, Randall, Carl & Helen).

5. Cayambe Refuge.

where the largest aerie of condors in the world can be found; an estimated 15 of them live and soar there, and with the possibility of seeing them in the morning, we went inside for dinner and a good night's sleep.

January 22 – Refugio Cayambe (4,600m)

Up before breakfast, I grabbed a coffee and joined Zac and Carl on the front paving stones to scan the skies. In the space of about 15 minutes, condors alone, in pairs, and as many as five at a time all circled in the updrafts.



Fed, packed and away by 8:00 a.m., we were now bound for Cayambe north of the equator. Recent reports of the roads in the area indicated we would have to walk up certain sections under construction. In actuality, we walked about 30 minutes, got picked up by a posse of 4x4s and deposited at a rough stretch of road that was maybe another ten minutes of walking. Then more vehicles gathered us up and took us to the lodge.

We were all together in the dining area by 4:00 p.m. The tempo of activity accelerated:

dinner and dessert; Benno outlined the timing and route description; packing for an alpine start; one last look at the stars, and off to bed.

At 11:00 p.m., Benno's wakeup call pushed everyone into action, dressing, repacking, breakfasting...

January 23 – Cayambe (5,790m)

Gathered outside the refugio, we were eager to squeeze the most out of the day. We set off at midnight. There's something surreal about walking single-file with headlamps on: the field of view is so narrow, your mind starts to form shapes in the stygian periphery. The rhythms of the lamps behind you become searchlights and everyone's shadows writhe and twist on the rocks and snow around you. You're living in Plato's cave and all you want to do is step...step...step to keep in time with the person in front of you.

After winding up through the headwall and down onto a flat space, we stopped to don crampons. Now the march had a steel-section accompaniment to the psychedelic light show of Plato's Cave: Shhhuk!...Chik!...Chik!...Shhhuk!...Chik!...Chik!... It would have been easy to succumb to this siren song, but as we edged higher up onto the glacier, a savage headwind slapped some sense into us and any hallucinations were soon replaced by the reality of a gray-dawn remoteness. Blasts of ice particles bit at our faces and began to coat us with rime.

The upper section loomed in the gathering light, with steep sections to a sort of bergschrund, a narrow walk along a crevasse (thankfully sheltered), then a final staircase to the domed summit. Pedro, Ken and I leaned into the buffeting winds. I saw what Ken later informed me was a Brocken spectre (my shadow cast on the clouds beyond us), complete with a halo. Fighting the gale, Helen clutched a small Canadian flag for us to pose with. Then, before insanity took hold, we started down. Unable to actually see the route on the way up, the descent was interminable. Thanks to Pedro's stewarding, Ken and I picked our way back to the refuge by 10:30 a.m.

Meanwhile, Benno, Julie and Carl had summited first, about an hour ahead of us; Helen and Zac preceded us to the refugio by a half hour. Bibi and Sonja had turned back at 5,566 metres—Bibi was feeling nauseous and short of breath, exhausted from fighting the wind.

Together again in the refuge's relative warmth, we ate and drank, packed up and returned to Casa Q for a well-deserved sleep.

January 24 – Rest day in Quito (2,850m)

After breakfast we wandered out on errands that took us first to a mall, then to an artisan market, then to lunch, and back to our rooms to unpack, repack, and prep for Chimborazo.

January 25 – Chimborazo High Camp (5,300m)

Back on the road, with a five-hour drive south to the Chimborazo environs. Benno decided to make the trip a circumnavigation of the volcano, so we circled the east side and entered the park. The stone buildings at the entrance were a marvel of craftsmanship. Hummingbirds flitted about the rabbit-ear plants and poked around the niches of the walls. After filing the necessary paperwork, we set off toward the refuge. Vicunas grazed on the desolate slopes, and while we rumbled along the switchbacks, the mountain didn't seem to get any closer. I must have drifted off, because suddenly we were at the refugio, and people were getting out of the vehicle. An Andean fox eyed us opportunistically.

Julie, Bibi, Sonja and Ken had decided not to make the attempt on Chimborazo. They stowed their overnight gear in the refugio, then joined Benno, Pedro, Mauricio, Helen, Zac, Carl and I on the hike up to the High Camp. After about 45 minutes, we hit hard snow and donned crampons.

The High Camp is amazing: Four white geodesic half-domes sit on a bench that overlooks the refuge and the park entrance, but it's virtually invisible from below. Our sleeping tent floor was strewn with dense 3' x 7' gymnastic pads, so comfort wouldn't be an issue. The combined kitchen and dining tent had a table for about 12, and we all sipped tea, nibbled cookies, then parted ways as other groups checked in.

The plan for those of us staying up was an early supper, up at 11:00 p.m. and away by midnight. Those staying below would hike to the Whympner Needles with Mauricio the next day.



Facing page

Carunculated caracara alighting.

This page

- 1. Helen and Benne at Illiniza col (Illiniza Sur in background)
- 2. Approach trail to Pasocha (summit is double-hump straight up from orange pack via left skylne).
- 3. Tea and snacks at Chimbo High Camp (about half the interior space shown).
- 4. Chimborazo from the east on our drive in
- 5. Nelson's van at Pita River, Jan. 16.

Left: Helen leading the march up to Chimbo High Camp from the refuge.

Right: LtoR front - Ken, Bibi, Sonja. LtoR rear - Pedro, Carl, Zac, Mauricio, Helen, Randall, Julie, Benne, Nelson.

As Benno briefed us at dinner, the reports of the upper part of the route were not favourable: lots of snow, and no broken trail above 5,800 metres. But, we'd go have a look. I crawled into bed and tried to sleep.

January 26 – Chimborazo (6,263m)

With my double boots on, I felt like Herman Munster traipsing along on the first part of the route. The sky was clear and we were making a long traverse toward the right again, in a headlamp shuffle. Benno had Carl in tow, and Pedro and Helen had me in between on a short line. Zac had awoken to a splitting headache and withdrawn from the climb.

Once the traverse turned uphill, I could feel my energy waning. I persevered for another hour, but by the time we'd reached the rocky section that required a bit of scrambling, I had to stop and assess. Given how bagged I'd been on the descent of Cayambe, I knew if I pushed on I'd run out of gas, and it's not like a football field where you can give 100% every play and let the trainers carry you off. Maybe knowing what lay above had settled the matter in my mind as well: avalanche potential.

Helen pushed on with Benno and Carl; I decided to turn back. Under Pedro's watchful eye, I descended to High Camp by 3:00 a.m. Neither cold, nor disappointed, I sat outside the tent and stared up at the sky for half an hour, picked out the constellations,

watched distant storm cells light up their cotton canopies, and savoured the view before turning in.

I heard Helen and Carl come in around 5:00 a.m.

"What happened?"

"Unstable slopes. Everyone's turned back."

Dawn came, then breakfast. We descended to the refugio. Hugs all around once the group was reunited, then we packed up under a brilliant sky and headed back to Quito.

Back in Casa Q, a last supper at Sinner's gastropub down the street, then everyone packed for the journey home. The amount of stimulus in that 12 days was overwhelming, more than enough to feed a wanderlust deprived for several years.

January 27 – Transfer to airport, fly home (1,090m)

Funny how the dry -15° air in Calgary is less tolerable than the -10° at High Camp. Was it a change in latitude, or a change in attitude?

...

As I write, it's been three weeks since I got home. The scope of the trip—the shared challenges and moments with friends—comforts me like a duvet, deflects everyday stress like armour, and gives me reason to smile behind a cup of coffee. The anticipation and expectation is gone now. What remains is a satisfaction in knowing I can and will do it again.

And that's the seed for the next adventure. — ACC

Avant la levée du jour à Illiniza, le Cotopaxi fumant à distance.

LE LONG DE L'AVENUE DES VOLCANS

par Randall Thomas
photos Zac Robinson

Qu'est-ce qui réunit un groupe? Il y a au moins autant de réponses qu'il y a de personnes dans le groupe, mais pour l'aventure du CAC en Équateur, une raison partagée par tous était la passion affamée des voyages — la pandémie avait exigé des sacrifices de nous tous. La chance se présentait maintenant de rejoindre d'anciens amis et s'en faire de nouveaux, de découvrir une autre culture, d'affronter des épreuves physiques et peut-être de recoller quelques morceaux. Vous pourriez ajouter à ceci la curiosité historique, une anomalie géographique et simplement l'envie de tromper l'hiver.

Qu'importent les raisons, ce qui a conclu le marché est la direction d'Helen Sovdat, dont les aventures à l'étranger nous ont tous apporté de nouveaux points de vue culturels et historiques.

...

La migration a commencé le 14 janvier quand nous avons tous suivi l'attraction centripète d'environ 50 degrés nord à 13,5 minutes sud; nous nous sommes fauflés dans le sens horaire de ce tour à partir de Vancouver, Toronto, Miami, Houston, Bogota ou San Jose.

Voyage du CAC en Équateur

15-27 janvier 2023

Dirigeants CAC : Helen Sovdat (guide), Zac Robinson (guide assistant, logistique, photographies)

Participants : Bibiana Cujec, Sonja Gallagher, Julie Muller, Carl Glaser, Ken Little & Randall Thomas

Locaux : Benno Schlauri (guide principal), Mauricio (guide), Pedro (aspirant), Nelson (conducteur)



15 janvier — arrivée à Quito (2 850 m)

Pour ceux qui étaient déjà sur place, un jour d'errance à travers la ville était prévu pour connaître différents points d'intérêt et augmenter l'altitude pour commencer à s'acclimater, ce qui comprenait une montée d'escaliers jusqu'au monument de la Vierge d'El Panecillo. Les derniers d'entre nous arrivèrent à l'hôtel peu après minuit.

16 janvier – randonnée à la cascade Condor Machay (~3 100 m)

Au petit-déjeuner, notre guide local, Benno Schlauri, a jugé préférable de nous emmener dans une marche plus élevée. « L'acclimatation commence maintenant. Fini l'entraînement physique; il est trop tard pour ça désormais »

Avertissement raisonnable. Nous sommes tous montés dans le fourgon Mercedes Sprinter à 11 places et Nelson, notre indomptable pilote, nous a sortis de l'heure de pointe de Quito. Les sièges du fourgon n'étaient pas vraiment en cause, mais il était difficile d'échapper à la myriade de dos-d'âne et de chemins pavés — et nous nous échappions du véhicule comme des pigeons voyageurs chaque fois qu'il s'arrêtait.



Une promenade d'acclimatation parmi les rues pavées de Quito, en direction de la statue à l'horizon.

Deux choix s'offraient en tête de sentier, alors nous avons lentement randonné en amont jusqu'à l'attraction principale, une cascade de 80 mètres qui se déversait sur des falaises de basalte et dans la rivière Pita après avoir serpenté depuis les pentes du volcan Cotopaxi (à présent fermé au tourisme en raison du constant panache de cendres provenant de la caldera). Traversant une dizaine de ponts en chemin, nous avons observé une variété impressionnante de plantes : épiphytes et bromélias; puya aequatorialis; champignons; orchidées; mousses; eucalyptus. La faune de l'endroit comprenait une grenouille rousse, trois vautours noirs, des caracaras et quelques cincles à tête blanche.

Nous nous sommes regroupés autour du fourgon, puis nous sommes lancés dans une descente qui s'est révélée un parcours à obstacles fait d'échelles et de ponts oscillants. À son terme se trouvait une vue spectaculaire surplombant la gorge de la rivière et s'élevant sur d'autres falaises de basalte en surplomb. À voir ces formes de verre taillé lisses et tranchantes, on aurait pu facilement croire que ce paysage aurait inspiré à Gris, Braque ou Picasso l'invention du cubisme. Assez vite, nous avons refait notre parcours, non sans quelque difficulté puisque nous montions à plus de 3 000 mètres.

17 janvier – téléphérique (3 117 m - 3 945 m en 20 minutes) et marche au Pichincha (4 270 m)

Nous nous trouvions à 4 000 mètres dès 10 h, à nous diriger vers le Pichincha pour aussi longtemps que la météo le permettrait. Tout en inhalant les nuages, nous avons profité d'une remise à niveau en marche consciente — ou comment tirer le maximum de sa structure osseuse pour conserver son énergie — et Benno nous a présenté la chuquiragua, l'« edelweiss » des alpinistes équatoriens (qui contrairement à son homologue des Alpes, est un arbuste abondant vert et orange). Nous avons collationné pendant que le soleil jouait à cache-cache dans les nuages qui s'élevaient (j'ai mangé ma première grenadille), avant de battre en retraite au téléphérique pour retourner à l'hôtel y faire nos bagages.

18 janvier – au Pasochoa (4 200 m) et à l'auberge Chuquiragua

Sur la route, nous avons refait le trajet vers la chute pour continuer vers la tête du sentier en direction du Pasochoa. Nous avons randonné dans la brume le long d'un chemin graisseux où des plaques de coquilles de noix de palme africaines s'épalaient pour plus de traction sur la terre riche et noire. Le paysage autour de nous se tapissait de paramo, une herbe sauvage qui pousse en amoncellements élevés et piquants auxquels on peut s'accrocher en traversant des pentes glissantes (imaginez à quoi marcher parmi des milliers de porcs-épics en colère ressemblerait).

Alors que le climat changeait pour son habituelle détérioration de l'après-midi, nous avons galopé notre montée vers la crête du sommet, puis nous nous sommes réhydratés un moment avant de retourner au début du sentier, mais non sans quelques incidents boueux à certains endroits où des crampons d'appoint auraient été utiles.



Une pause-repos le long de la piste d'Illiniza pour s'étirer, réfléchir, s'hydrater, se détendre ou tout cela à la fois.

Nous sommes arrivés à l'auberge Chuquiragua avec du temps en abondance pour défaire nos bagages, nous doucher et enfiler des vêtements secs pour le dîner. Toutes sortes d'antiquités décoraient les installations : machine à écrire rouillée, téléphone mural, lavabo avec miroir, collections d'outils à bois, harnais d'équitation, etc. D'autres groupes de voyage étaient là, et nous avons vite appris qu'un solide nombre d'aventuriers se trouvaient plus ou moins sur le même régime d'acclimatation que nous, avec le Chimborazo pour objectif. Dehors la pluie martelait sur l'auberge, et de la neige commençait de couvrir les pentes environnantes.

19 janvier – le Corazon (4 790 m)

Un vent défavorable nous apportait plus de temps humide pour notre journée vers le Corazon, et pendant qu'on implorait tous Ken (notre météorologiste à nous) de ne pas laisser faire ça, il paraissait assez satisfait de se contenter de commenter les divers types de précipitations qu'on rencontrait alors qu'on traversait le paramo et qu'on montait sur la crête aride : virga, bruine, pluie légère, grésil, neige, neige roulée...

Nous étions quatre à nous frayer un chemin dans un ravin pour accéder à la crête du sommet final quand un éclair, derrière et de bas en haut me fit me demander pourquoi quiconque ici irait faire caCraaAAAACK!

Benno devant nous. Helen derrière.

« Tout le monde descend! NOW! »

On s'est précipités vers le bas. On s'est blottis. Le tonnerre de l'orage s'est éloigné lentement; nous sommes descendus en file indienne à travers le paramo pour regagner le fourgon.

Une autre nuit à l'auberge, à l'abri de la pluie avec un repas consistant et des tasses de thé sans fond. Demain, on ferait encore monter les enchères.

20 janvier – camping d'El Chaupi (4 000 m)

Jour 5 d'huevos au petit-déjeuner avec fruits, café et bacon. Une sorte de journée de repos, où nous avons fait nos bagages et nous sommes entassés dans le « VanNelson. » (Il doit être souligné ici qu'alors que nos lieux de couchage étaient hors de la ville, Nelson retournait chez lui dans l'est de Quito tous les soirs et nous retrouvait tous les matins avec des bidons remplis de pétrole et d'eau — assurément le membre le plus travaillant du groupe.) Nous avons eu un départ tranquille à 10 h, un court trajet en voiture, puis deux heures de marche vers le camping par le début du sentier d'Illiniza. Nos sacs avaient été transbordés jusqu'au site par des véhicules des parcs, et quand nous sommes arrivés, une rangée jaune clair de tentes North Face nous a reçus en plus de larges tentes où cuisiner et manger.

J'aurais espéré observer les étoiles, mais la météo instable obscurcissait le ciel. Je suis rentré, devant me lever à 3 h — nous passions à l'horaire des départs alpins, ce qui donnait un ton subrepticement plus sérieux aux voyages à venir. Il vaut la peine de remarquer que le processus d'acclimatation, tout en suivant la maxime de « monter en haut et dormir en bas », suivait un modèle régulier : nous nous élevions d'environ 500 mètres chaque fois.

21 janvier – l'Illiniza Norte (5 248m)

En piste dès 4 h, nous avons pu observer les étoiles tôt le matin, après tout. Durant une pause sur le paramo qui mincissait, la Voie lactée étincelait au-dessus de nous. À l'arrêt suivant, tandis que



1. Inspection d'équipement au campement d'Illiniza.

2. Le campement d'Illiniza avec ses tentes individuelles ou pour deux. Les tentes pour cuisiner et manger sont au fond.

3. Traversée d'Illiniza Norte vers le ravin du sommet.

4. Le paramo du sentier d'approche vers le Pasochoa.

5. Pointes en floraison de la chuguiragua, fleur nationale de l'Équateur.

Mercurc devançait l'aube, notre première vision d'un Cotopaxi fumant nous rappela que nous étions sur l'avenue des Volcans.

Nous avons atteint le refugio (4 700 m), un ciel dégagé au-dessus de nous et une mer de nuages dans les vallées alentour. La crête nord du sommet s'élève du col en roc brisé qui n'exige rien de plus qu'un scrambling occasionnel; toute difficulté était contournée par la gauche. À notre droite, le Cotopaxi nous rappelait combien le paysage pouvait être fragile. Suivant une traversée abrupte dans la neige, nous avons enfilé des crampons pour le ravin final et râpé et raclé notre chemin sur les derniers mètres de roc vers le sommet. Les nuages s'élevaient rapidement autour de nous, aussi après un peu de nourriture et de photos, nous entreprîmes de redescendre.

Nous avons fait le trajet du retour en peu de temps, sans revenir sur nos pas, mais en continuant de descendre à l'ouest jusqu'à ce que nous tombions sur des éboulis, du sable et de la pierre ponce (une texture rappelant la vermiculite avec laquelle mon père recouvrait le fond de son barbecue). Nous avons rejoint le sentier principal peu après pour nous retrouver au camp à 14 h pour de la soupe, des tortillas de Yuca et du thé. À 15 h, nous embarquions nos bagages et nous-mêmes dans trois véhicules des parcs et descendions le l'entrée du sentier rejoindre « VanNelson ». Après un transfert rapide nous revoilà en route, cette fois au nord vers l'auberge Guaytara, à moins d'un demi-degré au sud de l'équateur. Niché dans un dédale de collines, le gîte repose derrière une crête où se trouve la plus grande aire de condors au monde : on estime qu'environ 15 d'entre eux vivent et planent là-bas, et en espérant les voir au matin, nous sommes rentrés pour le repas et une bonne nuit de sommeil.

22 janvier – le Refugio Cayambe (4 600 m)

Levé avant l'heure du petit-déjeuner, j'ai pris un café et rejoint Zac et Carl sur les pavés de la façade pour étudier le ciel. En l'espace de quelque 15 minutes, des condors solitaires, en paires ou jusqu'à cinq en même temps traçaient des cercles dans les vents ascendants.

Nourris, emballés et en route dès 8 h, nous nous dirigeons à présent vers le Cayambe, au nord de l'équateur. Des bulletins routiers récents de la région indiquaient que nous devrions couvrir à pied certaines sections en chantier. En vérité, nous avons marché environ 30 minutes avant d'être ramassés par un groupe de 4x4 et déposés sur une section de route ardue pour y marcher encore une dizaine de minutes. Puis d'autres véhicules nous ont reçus et emmenés jusqu'à l'auberge.

Nous étions tous réunis dans l'espace repas vers 16 h. Le rythme des activités s'accélérait : dîner et dessert; Benno résumant l'horaire et la description de l'itinéraire, faire ses bagages pour un départ alpin, dernier regard vers les étoiles, et puis au lit.

À 23 h, l'appel au réveil de Benno a mis tout le monde en branle : s'habiller, refaire ses bagages, déjeuner...

23 janvier – le Cayambe (5 790 m)

Rassemblés hors du refugio, nous voulions tirer le maximum de notre journée. Nous sommes partis à minuit. Marcher en file

indienne avec des lampes frontales a quelque chose de surréel : le champ de vision est si étroit que l'esprit commence à projeter des formes dans ce décor stygien. Le rythme des lampes derrière soi en fait des projecteurs et l'ombre de chacun se tord et se déforme sur les rochers et la neige alentour. Vous êtes en pleine caverne de Platon et tout ce que vous voulez, c'est avancer un pas après l'autre pour garder le rythme de la personne qui vous précède.

Après avoir remonté le mur d'amont, nous sommes descendus dans un endroit plat pour enfiler des crampons. Maintenant, des percussions métalliques s'ajoutaient au spectacle lumineux de la caverne de Platon : Chhhuk! ... Tchic! ... Tchic! ... Chhhuk! ... Tchic! ... Tchic! ... Et il aurait été facile de succomber à ce chant de sirènes, mais à mesure que nous grimpons la hauteur du glacier, un violent vent contraire nous a ramenés au bon sens, et la réalité de notre éloignement dans l'aube grise a vite remplacé n'importe quelle hallucination. Des souffles de particules de glace nous mordaient le visage et commençaient de nous couvrir de givre.

La partie supérieure se profilait dans la lumière croissante, avec des segments abrupts vers une sorte de bergschrund, une marche étroite le long d'une crevasse (abritée, heureusement), puis un ultime escalier vers le sommet en dôme. Pedro, Ken et moi nous penchions sur les vents agités. Je vis ce que Ken m'indiquerait plus tard comme étant un « spectre du Brocken » : mon ombre projetée et agrandie sur les nuages en dessous de nous, entourée d'un halo. Luttant contre le coup de vent, Helen brandit un petit drapeau canadien pour que nous posions avec. Puis, avant d'être emportés par la folie, nous avons commencé la descente. Incapable de voir le trajet à la montée, la descente fut interminable. Mais grâce à la direction de Pedro, Ken et moi regagnions le refuge vers 10 h 30.

Pendant ce temps, Benno, Julie et Carl avaient touché le sommet les premiers, une heure avant nous; Helen et Zac nous précédaient d'une demi-heure au refuge. Bibi et Sonja avaient rebroussé chemin à 5 566 mètres — Bibi se sentait nauséuse et à bout de souffle, fatiguée de se battre contre le vent.

À nouveau réunis dans la chaleur relative du refuge, nous avons mangé et bu, emballé nos affaires, et sommes retournés à la Casa Q pour un sommeil bien mérité.

24 janvier – repos à Quito (2 850 m)

Suite au petit-déjeuner nous avons déambulé en faisant quelques courses qui nous ont d'abord menés dans un centre commercial, puis dans un marché artisanal, puis à notre repas, et de retour dans nos chambres pour défaire et refaire nos bagages et nous préparer pour le Chimborazo.

25 janvier – camp d'altitude du Chimborazo (5 300 m)

Encore en route, à rouler cinq heures vers le sud des environs du Chimborazo. Benno ayant décidé de faire du trajet une circumnavigation du volcan, nous avons contourné le versant est et sommes entrés au parc. Les bâtiments de pierre à l'entrée étaient des merveilles de savoir-faire. Des colibris voltigeaient autour des plantes en oreilles de lapin et se faufilaient dans les niches

des murs. Après avoir rempli les formulaires requis, nous nous dirigeâmes vers le refuge. Des vigognes broutaient sur les pentes désolées, et pendant que le véhicule vrombissait sur les routes en lacets, la montagne ne semblait pas s’approcher de nous. J’ai dû m’assoupir, car soudain nous nous sommes trouvés au refugio à nous tirer du véhicule, sous le regard intéressé d’un renard des Andes.

Julie, Bibi, Sonja et Ken avaient décidé de ne pas tenter le Chimborazo. Après avoir rangé leur matériel de nuit dans le refugio, ils se sont joints à Benno, Pedro, Mauricio, Helen, Zac, Carl et moi pour la randonnée montant vers le camp d’altitude. Après quelque 45 minutes, nous avons rencontré de la neige dure et enfilé des crampons.

Le camp d’altitude est formidable : quatre demi-dômes géodésiques blancs posés sur une plateforme qui surplombe le refuge et l’entrée du parc, mais qui d’en bas sont virtuellement invisibles. Sur le plancher de notre tente de couchage s’étaient d’épais matelas de gymnastique de 3 x 7 pieds, réglant la question du confort. La tente à cuisiner et à manger avait une table pour douze, et nous avons tous siroté le thé et grignoté des biscuits avant de nous séparer pendant que d’autres groupes arrivaient.

Le plan pour ceux d’entre nous qui n’étaient pas couchés consistait à souper tôt, se lever à 23 h et partir à minuit. Ceux qui étaient restés en bas randonneraient l’Aiguille Whimper avec Mauricio le lendemain.

Tandis que Benno nous exposait ses directives pendant le repas, les rapports sur la part supérieure du trajet étaient défavorables : beaucoup de neige, et aucun sentier brisé au-delà de 5 800 mètres. Nous irions jeter un coup d’œil tout de même, et j’ai rampé dans mon lit et tenté de dormir.

26 janvier – le Chimborazo (6 263 m)

Avec mes chaussures doubles aux pieds, je me sentais comme Herman Munster en train de se promener sur la première partie du trajet. Le ciel était dégagé et nous effectuions une longue traversée, encore vers la droite, dans un mélange de lampes frontales. Benno avait Carl en remorque; Pedro et Helen m’avaient entre eux dans une courte ligne. Zac s’était réveillé avec une migraine à tête fendre et s’était retiré de la montée.

Quand la traversée s’est tournée en amont, j’ai senti mes forces défaillir. J’ai persévéré une heure de plus, mais en arrivant à la section rocheuse qui demandait un peu de scrambling, j’ai dû m’interrompre et évaluer. Compte tenu de la fatigue que j’avais eue pendant la descente du Cayambe, je savais que je n’aurais plus d’énergie si je continuais, et que ce n’était pas comme dans un terrain de football où l’on peut donner son maximum à chaque partie en laissant les entraîneurs vous porter. J’avais peut-être pris ma décision en tenant compte aussi de ce qui nous attendait là-haut : un potentiel d’avalanche.

Helen a persévéré avec Benno et Carl; j’ai rebroussé chemin. Sous l’œil vigilant de Pedro, j’étais descendu au camp d’altitude à 3 h. Ni refroidi ni déçu, je suis resté assis hors de la tente et j’ai contemplé les étoiles, identifié les constellations, regardé les cellules orange lointaines illuminer leurs voiles de coton, et savouré la vue pour une demi-heure avant de rentrer.

J’ai entendu Helen et Carl arriver autour de 5 h.

- Qu’est-ce qu’il y a eu?
- Des pentes instables. Tout le monde a renoncé.

L’aube a paru, et le petit-déjeuner. Nous sommes descendus au refugio. Beaucoup de câlins quand tout le groupe fut réuni, puis l’empaquetage des bagages sous un ciel radieux avant de se diriger vers Quito.

De retour à la Casa Q, un dernier repas au « gastro-pub Sinner » au bout de la rue, avant de plier bagage pour le trajet du retour. Le taux de stimulus de ces 12 jours était ahurissant, de loin plus que suffisant pour sustenter une passion des voyages affamée depuis des ans.

27 janvier – Transfert à l’aéroport, vol de retour (1 090 m)

Étrange comment l’air sec de -15° à Calgary était plus insupportable que les -10° du camp d’altitude. Est-ce la latitude, ou l’attitude, qui avait changé?

• • •

Au moment d’écrire ces lignes, trois semaines ont passé depuis mon retour chez moi. L’ampleur de ce voyage — les défis et les instants partagés entre amis — me reconforte comme une couette, détourne les stress quotidiens comme une armure, et me porte à sourire devant ma tasse de café. L’anticipation et les attentes sont disparues maintenant, mais la satisfaction de savoir que je peux le faire et que je le referai demeure.

Et c’est ainsi que la prochaine aventure germera. — CAC

- 1. Zac et Helen au sommet du Cayambe.
- 2. Le refuge et le sommet du Cayambe. La route gravit la colline derrière le refuge pour rejoindre le glacier.
- 3. Crête vers le bloc du sommet du Corazon.
- 4. Pedro, Ken et Randall approchant le dôme sommital du Cayambe.
- 5. Sonja, Bibi, Carl, Benne, Julie et Helen en promenade au-dessus du camp d’Illiniza.
- 6. Illiniza avant l’aube (le Cotopaxi au loin).



Watching your step in glacial streams

How glacial loss impacts algal communities in alpine streams in the Canadian Rockies

by Karson Sudlow

Recipient of the 2022 ACC Environment Grant

The final crux of the Bow Hut approach is a stream crossing that marks the summit push.

This stream, visible from the hut above, is responsible for many-a-wet foot during early summer, and is teaming with aquatic biodiversity adapted to the extreme conditions of glacial meltwater flowing from the Wapta Icefield.

Though rapid, freezing, and cloudy, a small number of highly specialized species of algae thrive in this and many other alpine streams throughout the Rockies. Growing along the rocky streambeds of these waters, algae form the base of alpine stream food webs and are essential for healthy mountain ecosystems. But, as glaciers disappear, these unique ecosystems have become increasingly threatened due to changing conditions in alpine streams. Progressively warmer, clearer, and slower streams could have negative consequences for biodiversity and growth of algae adapted to harsh glacial environments.

With support from ACC's Environmental Fund, we set out to investigate how glacier loss impacts algal communities in alpine stream in the Canadian Rockies. Armed with an electric toothbrush, and backpacks full of hummus and veggie sandwiches, our team visited 14 alpine streams, including the stream below Bow Hut, across Banff, Jasper, and Yoho National Parks several times in August 2021 and 2022.

Humans have a complicated relationship with algae. They are best known for causing problematic eutrophication and toxic blooms

in a variety of aquatic environments, and significant energy and resources are expended to manage their growth. However, algae are critical for healthy, productive alpine lake and stream ecosystems. In often barren mountain landscapes of rock, snow, and ice, algae are a crucial food source for species higher in the food web. Without this energetic base, alpine insects and fish would lack sufficient nutrients and energy needed to survive and reproduce.

To survive the turbulent summer flows of alpine streams, algae need to strongly attach to streambeds, so they aren't swept away by swift mountain waters. This strong grip presented us a challenge to collect the samples we needed. To get the job done, we relied on electric toothbrushes. The vibrating heads are powerful enough to remove algae from rocks, and their self-timers allow us to easily replicate scrubbing time from sample to sample. You can always count on scientists to find a new role for your household items.

After two successful summers, we scrubbed algae off over 680 rocks for our study. Back in the lab at the University of Alberta, we buried into microscopes to identify species from the samples we collected. The initial results were positive. Glacial specialists were found at most of our sites. However, their abundances were low in streams most impacted by glacier loss. We also found that algal growth, despite improved stream conditions, was lower in those same streams.

The concurrent decline of alpine algal specialists and their stunted growth highlight that glacier loss does likely negatively impact alpine stream ecosystems. And, as Western Canada is expected to lose hundreds of glaciers over the next century if climate change remains unimpeded, further glacier loss should only exacerbate these trends. Although long-term studies are needed to further explore understand the specific factors driving them, these results provide us with a path to further study and conserve alpine stream ecosystems.

By donating to the Environmental Fund, you helped us complete this study. These funds allowed us to access our sites and buy the field equipment necessary to collect our samples. Thank you for your support and interest in science. We could not have done this without you!

Next time you get your feet wet on the way to Bow Hut, or in another of Canada's alpine streams, watch your step! You never know who you might be stepping on. — ACC



Top left: Scrubbing tightly attached algae off of a rock using an electric toothbrush. Photo Leslie Ogden

Top right: An imprint (grey area) of where algae were removed from a rock in the stream below Bow Hut. Photo Karson Sudlow

Left: Research assistant Simonne Tremblay collecting aquatic insects from Emerald glacier stream, above Emerald Lake, Yoho National Park. Simonne is using a kicknet to collect insect samples. She disturbs the stream bed to detach insects into the awaiting net. Algae are a main food source for aquatic insects in glacial streams. Photo Karson Sudlow

The ACC Edmonton Section and Ice Festival

Now in its third annual iteration, the Edmonton Section is bringing a public spotlight to ice climbing, right in the middle of city

by David Moon

Section Chair, Edmonton Section

The Edmonton Section of the ACC celebrated its centennial in 2009, making our local club 114 years young and counting. With over a century of trips, exploration, and alpine leadership as a legacy in this city, the Edmonton Section is continuing to make an impact in the Alberta outdoor community.

We are very impressed with how our section has developed in recent years by branching out into new areas and forging new ground for the ACC. In 2020 we were graced with one motivated volunteer, Charlotte Kruszewski, and a team of supporters who had the commitment and capacity to further develop a diversity, equity, and inclusion program for our section. The backbone of this program was a significant \$45,000 grant which was successfully awarded to support underserved BIPOC and newcomer community members in Edmonton. We are happy to say we now partner with many local organizations to continue sharing our love for the outdoors with our broader community and we are passionate about building inclusivity within the club.

- 1. The ACC Ice Wall is open until 9:00 pm most days of the week, so you can climb into the night.
- 2. The Snow & Ice Fest brings in a big crowd of participants and vendors.
- 3. Clinic participants watch intently as Alison Criscitiello demonstrates proper ice climbing form.

Photos Peter Hoang

Another recent addition has been the implementation of our local ice wall. Now in its third annual iteration, and with many local and national sponsors, we are bringing a public spotlight to ice climbing and we hope to continue sharing this exciting sport with our community. It has taken a village, as they say, to bring this project together, and we are proud to share that we have introduced thousands of community members to ice climbing and winter sports through the wall and our now annual ice festival held in late January or early February each year. We have high hopes for future ice festivals and plan to continue building this new tradition for years to come.

COVID had an impact on our section, but the number of events available for members to join are now fortunately returning to pre-pandemic levels: section membership has swelled to beyond 2020 levels, now at over 800 active members; we are training new trip leaders; and we are seeing many folks step up to fill the gaps. Our training and development programs are also getting off the ground once more.

Through the challenges of the past few years, we are excited to see our community grow and to witness an excitement for the outdoors and adventure that has not been dampened by the pandemic. Our community is the centerpiece of our club and we wouldn't be where we are without the dedicated members who are the beating heart of our ACC. — ACC



"We have high hopes for future ice festivals and plan to continue building this new tradition for years to come."





*Alpine Clubhouse, Banff, exterior. Byron Harmon Fonds, ref V263 / NA - 17.
Courtesy of the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies.*

Looking back: the story of the ACC's Club House

The Canmore Clubhouse opened its doors in 1973 and it turns 50 years old this spring. On this occasion, we're looking back at a bit of the history of the original; the ACC Club House that was built decades earlier, further west in Banff, overlooking a different valley.

The ACC's Canmore Clubhouse House today sits on a sunny bench east of the bustling mountain resort town of Canmore, AB, overlooking the Bow Valley. It is the only Clubhouse that most of our membership have ever known, and many may be surprised to learn that there was another, original "Club House" that served ACC members in Banff up until the early 1970s.

After the formation of the ACC in 1906, the need for a club headquarters and a place for members to stay, meet up and climb in the mountains became clear. At the 1907 annual meeting—held around a campfire at the summer camp in Paradise Valley—it was resolved that such a place would be built on a piece of land that had been leased in Banff.

Motivation was high, things moved quickly, and by July 1, 1909, the ACC Club House was opened on the slopes of Sulphur Mountain.

The First Club House

The early Banff Club House included a large meeting room with a grand stone fireplace, a kitchen, office and an upstairs smoking room. There was a place to house the club's library, which would grow rapidly in the coming years. Meals were served in a dining tent and accommodations were in tent cabins on the property—structures with wooden floors and canvas walls—a rough version of what we might think of today as "glamping."



Canmore Clubhouse. Photo LCR Photography.

Day-to-day operations of the ACC's first accommodation facility were performed by a managing hostess, one of the first of whom was Clara Wheeler, the wife of A.O. Wheeler, the club's president at the time. Later Club House hostesses would include Nancy Lyall, who held the position for 17 years, and Phyllis Munday in the 1950s. The building was fronted with a large porch that greeted guests and overlooked the Spray River Valley and the western slopes of Mt. Rundle.

The cost of building the Banff Club House was in the neighbourhood of \$8,000, which was raised through a mixture of donations and loans from members, including a \$2,000 loan from President Wheeler himself. Fixtures and furnishings ranging from a grandfather clock to dishes and silverware were donated by ACC members. In later years much of the repair work and modifications were done by club members, particularly by members of the Calgary Section who very early on took responsibility for looking after the facility.

The Club House in use

Very quickly, the Banff Club House became a meeting hub and climbing destination. In 1909, some of first guests were notable British mountaineers of the day; they had come to Canada for a science meeting in Winnipeg and spent time in Banff climbing and taking in the club's summer camp.

The great Austrian mountain guide Conrad Kain, hired by the ACC, arrived in Banff in 1909 and also contributed to the building and operation of the Club House.

The accommodation became an important source of revenue for the club and improvements continued over the years. In 1919 baths were installed (before this, guests had been using the facilities at the nearby Upper Hot Springs) and the 1926 season saw the installation of electric lights. The property boasted trails built by Lawrence Grassi and tent houses that had been built by Conrad Kain.

Sleeping cabins were eventually built to replace the tent houses, ultimately numbering 13 throughout the property, many of which were financed through donations from club members or club sections. For more than 60 years, the Club House in Banff was the hub of climbing in the Canadian Rockies.

The building was open in the summer season only, and by the late 1920s it was seeing up to 500 overnights a summer, many from south of the border. Guests came to climb Mt. Edith, Mt. Louis, Mt. Norquay and other Banff peaks. Many tourists would come up the road from Banff looking for climbing information.

Shortcomings and a big move

But for all its advantages, there were also some serious issues with the Club House. The original building had been put up quickly, and it lacked a solid foundation. There was no central heating or running water—outhouses served as toilets. It wasn't insulated or winterized and could only be occupied in the summer months. It was closer to what we would recognize as a backcountry hut today than anything resembling a hotel or modern accommodation.

In the 1960s, the club, led by architect Philippe Delesalle, proposed a redevelopment of the site, but Parks, citing zoning issues in the area and a desire to tighten the footprint of the town of Banff, declined. So in 1970, the club voted to sell the property to Parks and began building a new clubhouse in Canmore, then a relatively unknown coal mining town 20 minutes to the east.

Time flies, and this spring we are celebrating the 50-year anniversary of the Canmore Clubhouse. With half a century of history now permeating the halls and walls of this building, the club continues to imagine ways that we can carry on the tradition of providing a special place in the Rockies for our members, one that is a welcoming base for mountaineers from all walks of life who wish to join us here and make their own mark on the club's history. — ACC

This heritage story was crafted with the assistance of Chic Scott, who is presently writing a comprehensive history of the ACC. Chic is, coincidentally, celebrating 50 years of membership in the club this year. He will be joining us and giving a presentation at an open house at the Canmore Clubhouse, tentatively scheduled for June 18th. Subscribe to the ACC Dispatch newsletter or follow our social channels for updates.



Fundraising Campaign

The ACC is raising funds to help expedite the process of updating the archive at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies in Banff — a process we're undertaking for writers like Chic Scott who is currently writing the ACC's history book, and for members everywhere.

The national office has kick-started a fund-raising campaign with a \$25,000 donation. But more is needed. You can help by giving today to the ACC's Bev Bendell Library Fund. Any donation, large or small, is appreciated, and will go a long way to making our legacy better known to future generations.

If you're as interested as we are in the buried secrets and untold stories of the ACC that will be unearthed, please consider donating. Thank you.

**To make a donation,
please go to:**
[alpineclubofcanada.ca/
archive](http://alpineclubofcanada.ca/archive)



Glen Boles Mountain Masterpiece

by Lynn Martel

images courtesy of the Glen Boles estate

A year after his passing, we remember Glen Boles: mountain artist, climber and author, and honorary past president of the ACC.

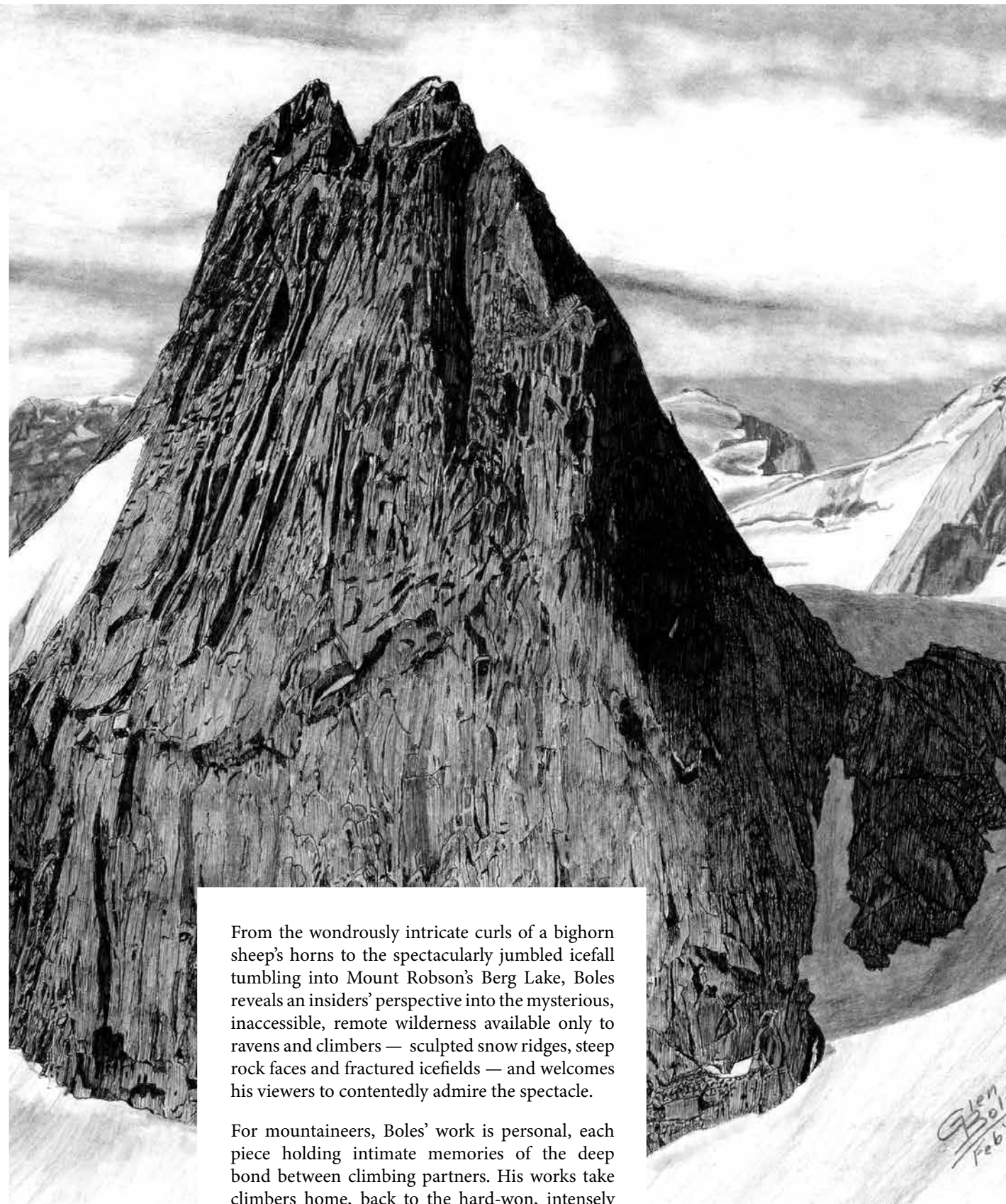
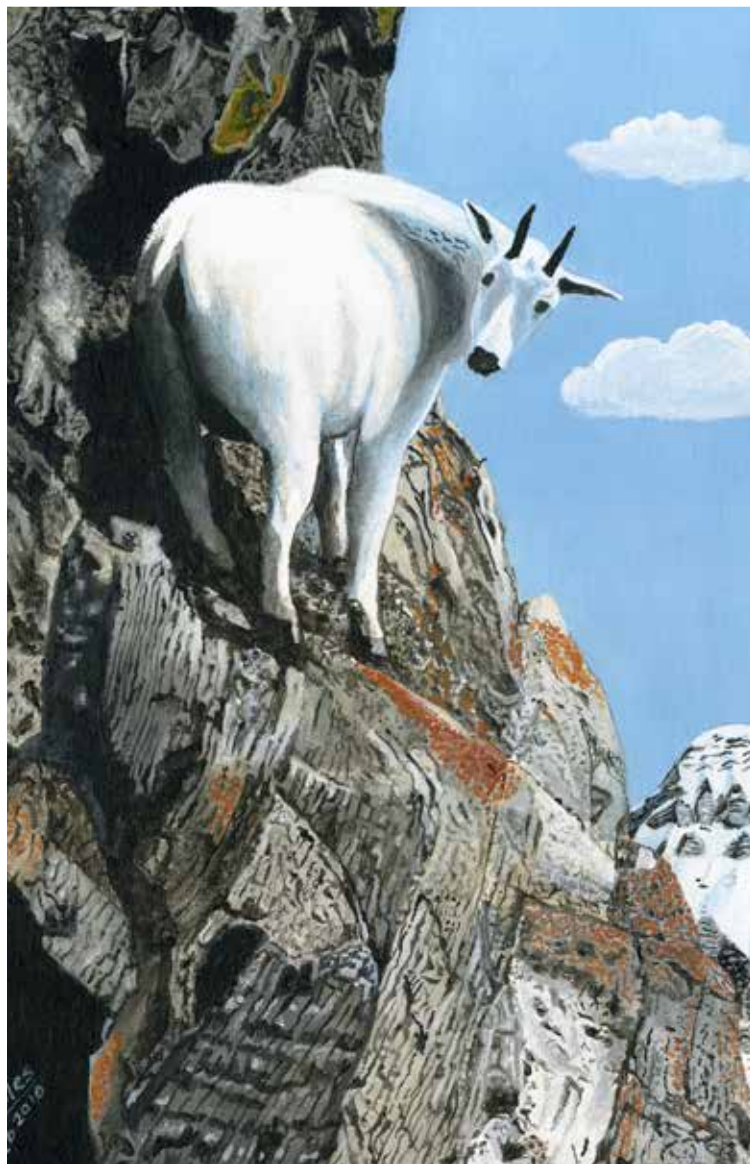
Tiered buttresses, stacked cliff bands, blocky chunks of tottering seracs, chaotic striations imprinted in a glacier's crevasses — the patterns in Glen Boles' artworks are distinct to the hand that guides the pencil. It's easy to imagine Boles' hands had grasped the very rock he so meticulously replicated in his drawings and paintings; and the intimate connection he had with his mountain subjects no doubt imparts a deeper, more personal expression to his creations.

"Unlike many mountain artists who focus on atmosphere and colour but treat geology and topography in a gestural manner, Glen Boles wanted you to feel the cold stone in his drawings," says mountain art aficionado Bob Sandford. "Every line in a Glen Boles painting tells you something about the composition of the rock, the line of ledges, the nature of the route; and each ultimately points the way to the summit."



Widely respected as one of the most prolific climbers to ever explore western Canada's mountains, Boles is credited with numerous firsts among his 600 climbs. Boles dedicated himself to serving as honorary president of the ACC from 2005 to 2009, and was the subject of a 2014 Summit Series book, *Alpine Artistry* (available on the ACC website). But he's equally celebrated as a photographer, author and artist. Alongside the esteemed Summit of Excellence Award and honorary membership in both the Canadian and American Alpine Clubs, he holds a very special place in the hearts and imaginations of the mountain community.





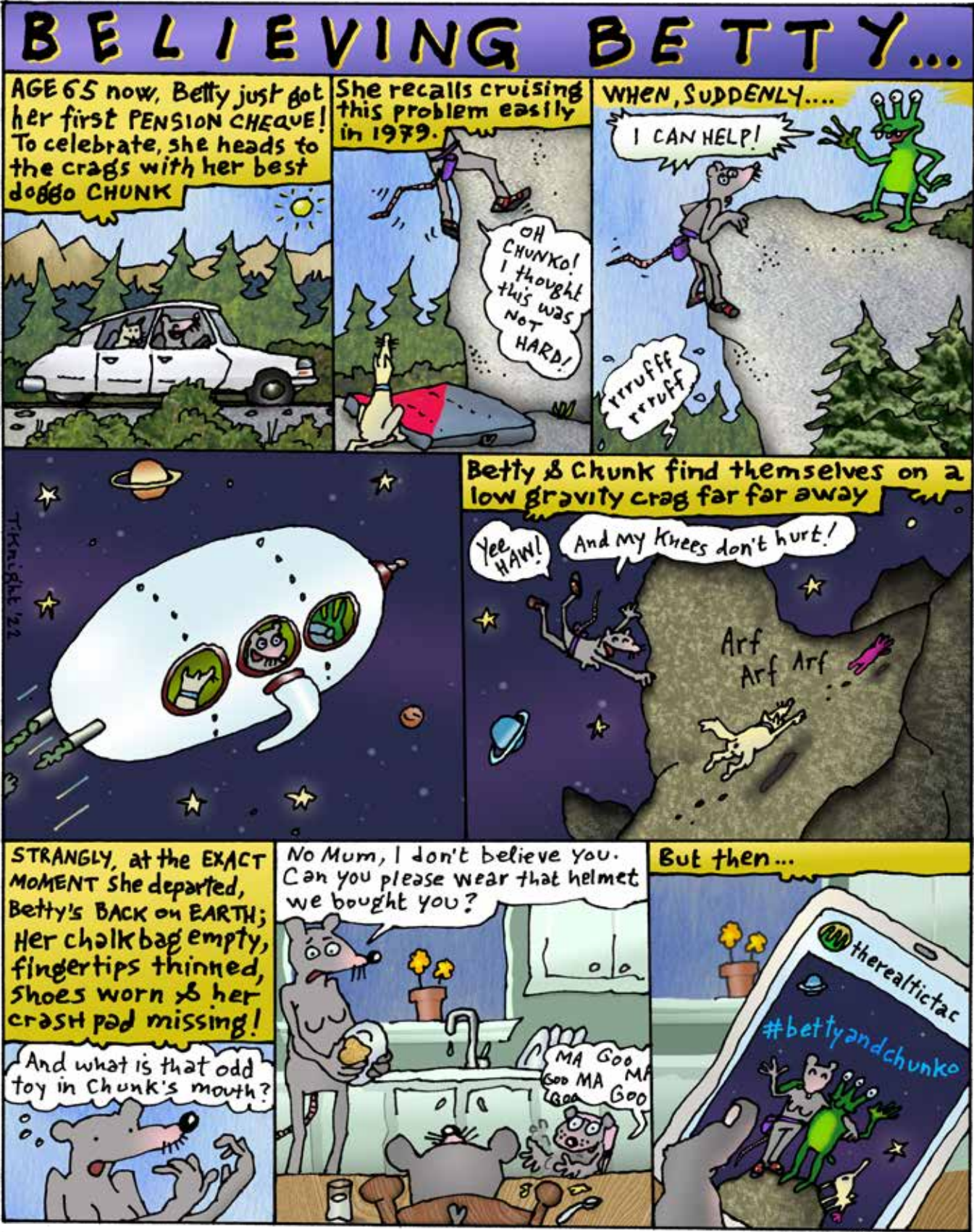
From the wondrously intricate curls of a bighorn sheep's horns to the spectacularly jumbled icefall tumbling into Mount Robson's Berg Lake, Boles reveals an insiders' perspective into the mysterious, inaccessible, remote wilderness available only to ravens and climbers — sculpted snow ridges, steep rock faces and fractured icefields — and welcomes his viewers to contentedly admire the spectacle.

For mountaineers, Boles' work is personal, each piece holding intimate memories of the deep bond between climbing partners. His works take climbers home, back to the hard-won, intensely rewarding landscape of the high alpine. — ACC

To see more of Boles' work, including works for sale, visit www.glenboles.ca

Previous spread: "Mt Assiniboine 2"
 Previous spread, inset: "Bighorn Ram"
 Left: "On the Way Up"
 Centre: "Opabin Trail"
 Right: "Snowpatch Spire 2"

by Tami Knight



Submit your ideas for the Back Page to gazette@alpineclubofcanada.ca

LIVE THE ADVENTURE

explore

Visit our all-new outfitter eStore:
explore-mag.com/shop

BEST DEALS ON

Camping & Hiking Gear

Outdoor Subscription Boxes

Magazines & Books



Free shipping on all orders \$75+
explore-mag.com/shop





Brette Harrington / Baffin Island

SUMMITSERIES
FUTURE

It's finding
your summit.
It's more
than a jacket.

