

The Alpine Club of Canada

# Gazette

le club alpin du Canada

## Spotlight on Squamish

Building a sustainable  
volunteer program

Le Refuge de  
Keene Farm



Vol. 38, No. 2 Summer | été 2022



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

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### Paul Robitaille

An avid skier and hiker, Paul joined the ranks of climbers only after his 50th birthday upon receipt of some ice climbing boots. He joined the Montreal Section upon the recommendation of a friend and has been involved with the section since joining. He is a volunteer leader for hiking, ice climbing and rock climbing, and has been the section president and national representative for the last three years.



### Louise André

Louise a rejoint le CAC en 2018. Elle est rapidement devenue un leader pour la section de Montréal et est maintenant bénévole pour son conseil exécutif. Elle aime organiser des randonnées avec le club - que ce soit dans les parcs nationaux du Québec ou dans les Adirondacks. Quand elle ne fait pas de randonnée, elle aime faire du camping, du kayak ou du ski de fond.



### Peter Hoang

Hailing originally from Ontario, Pete now makes Canmore, AB his home base, where he works as a communications specialist with the ACC's marketing team. His most recent mountain adventure was a new route in the St. Elias Mountains, supported by the John Lauchlan Memorial Award. Though Pete mountain bikes more than he climbs these days, a large part of him will always love what climbing has brought to his photography.



### Doug Latimer

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



### Kathleen Lane

Kathleen fell in love with the mountains after moving to BC, and joined the ACC in 2017. For Kathleen, climbing, skiing, and exploring the mountains have become a journey of self-discovery. Learning to manage fear, push past perceived limits, and find calm in the midst of a busy world helped her embrace the challenge of growing a new section during a global pandemic.



### Alex Perel

Alex is a long-time volunteer with the Toronto Section, and served as the section's board chair between 2015 and 2018. In addition to running trips on rock, snow and ice, Alex played a big role in the reconstruction of the Bon Echo Hut, advocates for climbing access in Ontario, and runs the Toronto screenings of the Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour. He is a graduate of the Summer Leadership Development Course and recipient of the Don Forest Service Award. His happy place is with crampons on his feet and ice tools in his hands.

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*Cover photo: Ava Gartner on the upper section of Gravity Bong 13a. Ill. en couverture : Ava Gartner sur la section supérieure de Gravity Bong 13a.*

*Photo Peter Hoang*



*Emilie Pellerin on The Opal, Squamish's famous 12d. Photo Peter Hoang*





*Ava Gartner and Emilie Pellerin enjoy the view after a long day on the wall (front). A view of Stawamus Chief and the Grand Wall area (behind). Photos Peter Hoang*



## Raising a glass to our volunteers

Each winter, the ACC recognizes the efforts of club volunteers from across the country, volunteers that have given their time to lead trips, provide leadership, run projects and generally make our 24 sections across Canada operate. You can see the list of volunteer award recipients for 2022 on page 17.

It's worth noting that the committee that reviews these applications is itself comprised of club volunteers. And the members who've submitted the applications for their peers to be recognized are typically volunteers themselves too. The ACC runs on volunteers at every level.

Scroll down the list and see if there's anyone from your section, anyone that you know, anyone who deserves a pat on the back and our thanks – these annual volunteer awards are a big deal.

We also have a story on Helmut Microys, who has given so much to the club over the years, more than a single magazine page can detail. We'll continue to highlight one amazing ACC volunteer each issue and bring you a bit of their story.

The profile on the Squamish Section in this issue also happens to be about volunteers, specifically how the section builds a cohort program with an eye toward sustainability of their volunteer base.

This issue's Camp Journal is written by the Toronto Section's Alex Perel, and covers the GMC tune-up course held in Canmore in June. Alex and the rest of the amateur leaders are essential to our annual camp, leading rope teams and providing general support to the mountain guides.

The Keene Farm property in the Adirondack Mountains of New York State has been a jewel in the crown of the Montreal Section for more than 50 years. Our feature on Keene tells the interesting history, including a devastating fire, a rebuild and a modernization over the years.

GMC amateur leaders and Montreal Section members taking care of the Keene Farm property are just two more examples of volunteers making our club run in all parts of our country.

We hope all of our members have an awesome and adventurous summer, wherever they are. We hope you enjoy this issue of the ACC Gazette, and that you get a chance to thank an ACC volunteer near you.

*~Keith Haberl*



## Lever un verre à nos bénévoles

Chaque hiver, le CAC exprime sa reconnaissance pour les bénévoles du club qui, de partout au pays, ont consacré de leur temps pour mener des expéditions, fournir leur leadership, mener des projets et faire fonctionner en général nos 24 sections à travers le pays. Vous pourrez voir la liste des 24 lauréats de notre prix pour le bénévolat de 2022 à la page 17.

Il faut remarquer que le comité qui évalue ces candidatures se compose aussi de bénévoles du club. Et que les membres qui proposent des candidatures pour faire reconnaître leurs pairs sont généralement eux-mêmes des bénévoles. Le CAC fonctionne dans tous les domaines grâce ses bénévoles.

Examinez la liste pour voir si une personne de votre section, quelqu'un que vous connaissez, qui se mérite une tape dans le dos et nos remerciements — ces prix annuels qui récompensent nos bénévoles sont quelque chose d'important.

Nous avons aussi un récit sur Helmut Microys, qu'une seule page de revue ne pourrait résumer tout ce qu'il a donné au club au cours des ans. À chaque édition, nous continuerons de mettre en valeur un bénévole d'exception du CAC et vous apporter un peu de son histoire.

Le portrait de la section de Squamish dans ce numéro s'avère aussi porter sur les bénévoles, plus précisément sur le programme de cohorte qu'élabore la section en visant la durabilité de sa base de bénévoles.

Le Journal de camp de cette édition, dû à Alex Perel de la section de Toronto, couvre le cours de mise au point du Camp général d'alpinisme, tenu à Canmore en juin. Alex et les autres leaders amateurs sont indispensables à notre camp annuel, dirigeant des équipes de cordée, et fournissant un soutien général aux guides de montagne.

La propriété de Keene Farm dans les monts Adirondack de l'état de New York est un joyau de la couronne de la section Montréal depuis plus de 50 ans. Notre article sur Keene couvre son intéressante histoire, qui a connu au fil des ans un incendie ravageur, une reconstruction et sa modernisation.

Les leaders amateurs du Camp général, et l'entretien de la propriété de Keene Farm par les membres de la section de Montréal ne sont que deux exemples qui montrent comment nos bénévoles font fonctionner notre club dans toutes les régions de notre pays.

Nous espérons à tous nos membres de passer un été magnifique et aventureux, où qu'ils soient. Et nous espérons aussi que vous apprécierez ce numéro de la Gazette du CAC, et que vous aurez la chance de dire « merci » à un bénévole du CAC près de vous.

~Keith Haberl

## 2022 General Mountaineering Camps

The GMC has been running since 1906, touring different regions of Western Canada's mountains.

After many years, we are excited to return to International Basin for the 2022 GMC! The Northern Purcells offer a variety of different objectives to satisfy your thirst for adventure. A few spots remain in this year's camps. Check out our website for more information and availability.

Learn more and sign up at: [bit.ly/ACC-GMC-2022](https://bit.ly/ACC-GMC-2022)

Subscribe to our new GMC Outpost newsletter to stay up to date on announcements, stories, and all other GMC-related happenings.

Go to: [bit.ly/GMCOutpost](https://bit.ly/GMCOutpost)

## 2022 Board Election

Dear ACC Members,

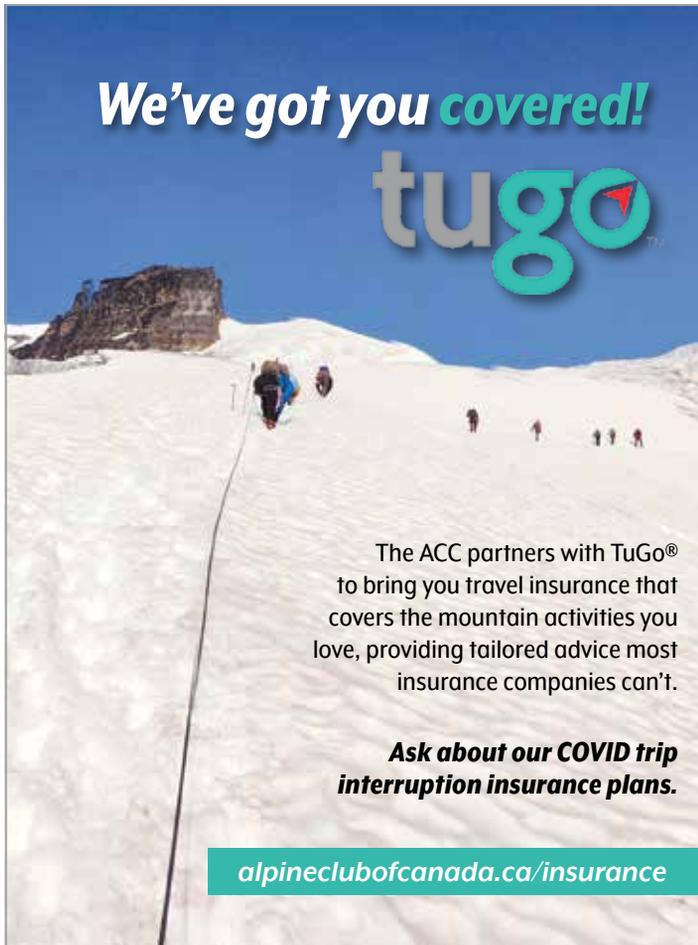
I am pleased to tell you that Isabelle Daigneault was elected as ACC President and Richard Campbell was elected as ACC Secretary at the 2022 AGM, each for a term of three years. Vice-president for Activities, Frank Spears, was also acclaimed for another three year term.

On behalf to the ACC Nomination Committee, I congratulate Isabelle and Richard and thank Frank for his continued commitment to the board.

I also thank presidential candidate Eric Hoogstraten and secretary candidate Emilie Grenier for offering their time and talents to the ACC. All candidates are a credit to the ACC.

A note of historical significance, long overdue; Isabelle will become the first female president of the ACC.

*Peter Muir, Nomination Committee Chair*



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**5% discount for ACC members**

**WELCOME TO SUMMITCLIMB**

- September '22:** World's eighth highest and most accessible 8,000m peak in Nepal. Western leader, Sherpas, inexpensive.
- October '22:** At 7,129 metres, Baruntse lies in the heart of the Himalayan giants of Nepal. Three Peaks for the price of one!
- November '22:** Ama Dablam + Lobuche - "Matterhorn of the Himalaya" - with a nice sunny warm-up. Inexpensive, uncrowded.
- December '22, January, February '23:** Christmas Trek, Island Peak, Aconcagua and Ojos Del Salado or Kilimanjaro.
- April-May '23:** Everest Summit Climbs: Nepal or Tibet, Everest Camp 3 Training Climbs, Mount Lhotse - Everest's Sister. Also, Everest Glacier School and EBC Trek. Leader Dan Mazur with 13 successful Everest expeditions.
- 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!

**Free Canada Friendship Glacier School**

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Alpine Club of Canada

# Adventures

Our camps and courses offer an amazing space to reconnect with each other and refresh your skills. With our full program roster, you'll find options for all activities and experience levels to help you get out into the alpine this year. We're excited to be nearly back to business-as-usual in the mountains with our summer 2022 season underway!

## SUMMER 22

*We still have space on some great trips this summer:*

### Courses

- Intro to Mountaineering (3 locations!)
- Bow Hut Glacier Discovery
- Intermediate Mountaineering

### Camps

- Dogtooth Traverse
- Lake Louise Classic Trail Run
- 55+ Little Yoho Valley
- 55+ Campbell Icefields Chalet

## WINTER 22/23

### Courses

- Winter Crevasse Rescue Skills
- Advanced Winter Crevasse Rescue Skills
- AST 1 and AST 2 Courses
- Avalanche Basics Course\*

*\*This new course takes the AST 1 and adds on the opportunity to head into avalanche terrain for an introductory day of backcountry skiing/splitboarding*

- Intro to Backcountry Skiing
- Intro to Ice Climbing
- Intro to Mixed Climbing

### Camps

- Early Season Ice
- Rogers Pass Powder (Wheeler and Asulkan offerings)
- Wapta Traverse
- Bow Yoho Traverse
- Columbia Icefield Ski Mountaineering
- Fairy Meadow
- Women and Non-Binary Ski Camp

Check out [adventures.alpineclubofcanada.ca](https://adventures.alpineclubofcanada.ca) for more information on courses including dates and prices, cancellation policies and insurance.





**A** new era has begun at The Alpine Club of Canada. It took the pandemic to test our resiliency and push us further along a path we were destined to travel, and I am honoured and humbled to serve as the first female president at this pivotal moment in the ACC's history.

### Belonging to a community

When deciding to run for the position of the ACC's next president, I knew becoming the first would require courage, confidence, and drive. I was nervous at the thought, but I heard the call of this challenge and listened to my heart. Thank you for electing me to the role!

I've been a member of the club for 25 years and I'm grateful for incredible experiences, from the connection to like-minded people through self-propelled and mentored mountain adventure and exploration to social nights of storytelling, and to leadership skills gained through volunteering initiatives. These experiences developed a deep sense of belonging and the belief that a collective of diverse, values-driven people sharing a common vision is capable of great things.

### Valuing our heritage and our legacy

Elizabeth Parker, who was a trailblazer for Canadian mountain culture, was the club's founding Secretary in 1906. She believed that our mountains provided a reprieve from the industrialized utilitarian world and defined the club's principles of environmental preservation through the appreciation of beauty and the support of related science. Outdoor industry trends, including demand and capacity, have evolved considerably over the past few years. These present both a challenge and an opportunity. Still, the foundational themes of Elizabeth Parker's 1906 principles still resonate deeply with the club today.

### Purpose and vision for the future

Last March the club embarked on an extensive consultative process involving board, staff and section leaders to renew a

vision for the ACC, to better define our "why." It was clear from the consultations that the core purpose of the ACC should be to foster, support and strengthen our unique community through serving its members. The key themes that were deemed important:

- We are a community, first and foremost.
- Our federated structure presents challenges.
- Improved and broadened communications are essential to maintain our connections.
- Our commitment to the environment matters.
- The membership model should reflect value and relevance.
- The ACC should look more like Canada, both in terms of diversity and meaningful connection to First Nations.

### Change and new beginnings

In May we welcomed Carine Salvy as the club's new Executive Director. A mom and mountain enthusiast from Chamonix with strong leadership skills, she also brings 25 years of professional experience to lead the operations of the club into a new era.

It's time for our organization to strengthen its foundation so we can be more resilient and adapt to our rapidly changing world. I am keen to provide oversight of this important change through the work of the board and the operations of the club.

Organizations who aspire to achieve great things need talented, diverse teams. We are committed to building a more diverse, balanced board, staff and membership who will make us a better club, and a stronger, even more dynamic community.

I'm excited about the club's future and I know that our incredibly competent board and staff, as well as the sections and their members who supported the work needed to renew our sense of purpose, will be the collective force that will bring the change the club needs to adapt our ever-changing world. Onwards and upwards, to the stars, my friends.

*Isabelle Daigneault*  
*President of The Alpine Club of Canada*

# HERITAGE AWARDS

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

Since 2021, 24 members reached the 25-year milestone, 28 members reached the 35-year mark, and 18 became members of the 50-year Heritage Club!

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

---

### 25 years

**Albert Edmonds**, Whistler  
**Bertrand Braschi**, Montreal  
**Bill Milsom**, Vancouver  
**Bill Scott**, Ottawa  
**Bridget Milsom**, Vancouver  
**Claire Levesque**, Jasper / Hinton  
**David Malm**, Unaffiliated  
**Deanna Miller**, Saskatchewan  
**Elizabeth M Lopez**, Toronto  
**Gerry Kent**, Unaffiliated  
**Gian-Duri Giger**, Rocky Mountain  
**Jonn Calvert**, Calgary  
**Katharine Mayo**, Toronto  
**Keith Horner**, Rocky Mountain  
**Lorraine Farkas**, Ottawa  
**Maggie Fillmore**, Unaffiliated  
**Matt Reynolds**, Jasper / Hinton  
**Olivia Sofer**, Rocky Mountain  
**Robert Withey**, Whistler  
**Russ McDuff**, Whistler  
**Shaun Fluker**, Calgary  
**Simon Statkewich**, Manitoba  
**Tobae McDuff**, Whistler  
**Toby Harper-Merrett**, Montreal

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### 35 years

**Arnold Voth**, Edmonton  
**Bernie MacDonald**, Edmonton  
**Bill Kerr**, Calgary  
**Brad Wright**, Edmonton  
**Dale Lamont**, Calgary  
**Doug Miller**, Calgary  
**Fred Mondin**, Unaffiliated  
**George Harman**, Edmonton  
**Howard Dawson**, Unaffiliated  
**James Prichard**, Unaffiliated  
**Jim Woolsey**, Unaffiliated  
**Joan Knowles**, Unaffiliated  
**Liz Scremin**, Vancouver  
**Lorne Perry**, Calgary  
**Lorran Wild**, Great Plains  
**Manrico Scremin**, Vancouver  
**Margaret Duthie**, Montreal  
**Marina Martin**, Edmonton  
**Masten Brolsma**, Calgary  
**Mike Mertens**, Calgary  
**Mike Wild**, Great Plains  
**Mike Wilhelm**, Calgary  
**Peter Muir**, Manitoba  
**Rick Smith**, Squamish  
**Robert Wilson**, Vancouver  
**Thompson Davis**, Unaffiliated  
**Tom Haslam-Jones**, Montreal  
**Wendy Edge**, Rocky Mountain

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### 50 years

**Bill Godolphin**, Vancouver  
**Christine O'Connell**, Ottawa  
**Don McRae**, Unaffiliated  
**Doug Gillett**, Rocky Mountain  
**Fred Thiessen**, Vancouver  
**Gary Williams**, Okanagan  
**Hamish Mutch**, Okanagan  
**Heather Taxbock**, Calgary  
**Jim Adare**, Unaffiliated  
**Joan Linn Bernard**, Unaffiliated  
**John M. Christie**, Unaffiliated  
**L. P. Michaud**, Unaffiliated  
**Lawrence R. Blood**, Rocky Mountain  
**Linda Rosen**, Toronto  
**Marilynn Hunter**, Vancouver  
**R.J. Campbell**, Unaffiliated  
**Sigi White**, Unaffiliated  
**Ted Rosen**, Toronto

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# 2022 ACC GRANT RECIPIENTS

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**With contributions from many generous donors,** The Alpine Club of Canada has established funds to support mountaineering-related projects and initiatives. Support is provided in the form of annual cash grants and scholarships to individuals and groups who are judged as best meeting the selection criteria. Each year the ACC grants over \$10,000 through the grants listed below.



**Congratulations and thanks to our 2022 grant recipients.**  
**The application deadline for 2023 grants will be Jan 31, 2023.**

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## JEN HIGGINS GRANT FOR YOUNG WOMEN

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

**Jennifer Tu, Kirsti Oja, Chelsea Darrach, Taylor Adolphe and Cassie Ayoungman**

**Mount Wotzke First Ascent — \$2,000**

*Recognizing there are not many first ascents left, this would be an amazing opportunity to bring an all-female team to the top to further inclusion and diversity. Not only will they be representing women but Indigenous peoples and minorities alike.*

**Megan O'Brien, Julie Van de Valk, Camilla Loughlin and Caroline Jung**

**Monarch-Ha'Iltzuk Traverse — \$3,000**

*The objective of the project is to bring the strengths of a group of four women together to complete a ski traverse from Bella Coola to Knight Inlet through the Monarch and Ha-Iltzuk Icefields, mountaineering along the way.*

**Gabriella Clark, Katie Reeder, TBD**

**Revisiting the Classic Ascents of the Columbia Icefield: 13 peaks, 21 days — \$3,000**

*In the spring of 2022, the group will revisit this legacy of the Icefields as a testing ground by climbing the 13 peaks surrounding the Columbia Icefield in a single trip.*

## ACC ENVIRONMENT GRANT

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

**Karson Sudlow**

***The Effects of Glacier Loss on Alpine Stream Ecosystems in the Canadian Rockies — \$2,000***

*The project focuses on studying the effects of glacial loss on the ecological communities found in glacial streams; specifically, how rapid glacier loss in the Canadian Rockies will impact the diversity and function of algal communities in alpine streams as glaciers rapidly recede across this region.*

**Gregory Gransden**

***Chaos Glacier Country Film — \$5,000***

*The project is a documentary film entitled "Chaos Glacier Country." It's aimed at bringing awareness to the campaign to create a new provincial park out of one of British Columbia's most pristine mountain wilderness areas: Mt Waddington, the Whitemantle Range and the Homathko Icefield.*

**Lauren Bosch**

***Play Clean Go: Outreach and Signage — \$4,721.13***

*This project will be an extension of ISCBC's established Play Clean Go program. The project establishes boot brush stations and signage and will benefit the community of Revelstoke, local interest groups, those who recreate in the park, and the local flora and fauna through increased protection of sensitive ecosystems.*

## JIM COLPITTS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

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

### Tanner Lesh

**Adventure Medic 40 hour course — \$515**

*Tanner plans to continue leading trips and going into the wilderness more prepared for potential emergencies. This will make him more competent as a partner and allow newer climbers to be comfortable going on trips with him. He is planning to pursue an ACMG Alpine Guide certification in the future.*

### Sophie Lalonde-Bester

**AST2 Course — \$500- \$659**

*Sophie's goal is that AST2 will give her the confidence to break trail and lead the pack, decide on objectives based on conditions/snowpack/weather/terrain/etc, and plan trips and grow her personal leadership, critical analysis and group management.*

## KARL NAGY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

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

### William Hotopf

**GMC Spot — \$2,625**

*Will wants to improve his skillsets both in leadership skills and abilities to help the ACC Montreal Section run bigger and better outings as a leader and organiser.*

## PHILIPPE DELESALLE MEMORIAL GRANT

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

*In 2022, this fund supported a collaborative program between the ACC and Spirit North that welcomed five Indigenous youth into the world of climbing. The introductory program provided a progression from climbing indoors to outdoors, experience selecting gear, and culminated in the ascent of a scrambling route on Mt. Baldy. Without the generosity of Philippe Delesalle and donations of others, we would not have been able to create impactful experiences such as this.*

## JOHN LAUCLAN MEMORIAL AWARD

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

### Jacob Cook, Bronwyn Hodgins, Angela Vanwiemeersch, Zack Goldberg-Poch, Jaron Pham and Kelsey Watts

**Greenland Exploratory Big Wall and Sea Kayak Expedition — \$5,000**

*An exploratory 450 km sea kayaking route with vast untapped potential for big wall and alpine rock climbs. Goal is to be the first to free climb Sanderson's Hope – an 800 m wall rising straight up from the Arctic Ocean. The perfect venue for a futuristic, elite level, big wall free climb.*

### Ripley Boulianne and Mateo Esposito

**Patagonia Expedition — \$5,000**

*This expedition will bring Canadian alpinism and queer representation to the mountains of Patagonia. Depending on weather, efforts will focus on free climbing new routes on the Fitzroy massif, particularly the north face of Aguja Poincenot (3,002 m), which still has very few lines up its many crack systems.*

## How to apply

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

*Support is provided in the form of annual cash grants and scholarships to individuals and groups who are judged as best meeting the selection criteria. Each year the ACC grants over \$10,000 through the grants listed above.*

**Apply at: [bit.ly/ACC-Financial-Grants](https://bit.ly/ACC-Financial-Grants)**

# Helmut Microys

## Recipient of Honorary Membership in The Alpine Club of Canada

By Paul Geddes

In order to be considered for this high level of recognition by the ACC, one has made an exceptional contribution to Canadian mountaineering. Helmut brought his climbing skills to Canada in 1955 from his home country of Austria. For several decades as a "hardman" in Ontario he established over 120 new routes along the limestone cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment and at Bon Echo, greatly influencing the next generation of local climbers. In his lifetime he climbed more than 700 mountain summits in Canada and Europe. In 1990 Helmut received the ACC Distinguished Service Award.

His route-finding skills are legendary. For Helmut, going to the mountains routinely meant establishing long traverses over multiple summits, travelling light and fast. In 1966 he completed the first recorded solo traverse of the Sir Donald group with a bivi in the Uto/Sir Donald col. In 1972 with long-time climbing partner Michael Rosenberger, the pair carried out two major traverses: Tusk, Irvine, Chettan and Shipton; and Pic Tordu, Cowl and Mount Shackleton. In recent years Helmut enjoyed trips to the Alps where adventurous via ferrata climbs provided a challenge for him.

He left his mark in the St. Elias Mountains during Canada's 1967 Centennial celebrations. The ACC organized the Yukon Alpine Centennial Expedition. A primary goal was to summit unclimbed mountains named for each province and territory. Microys led his team to the summit of Mount Ontario (3,720 m).

And while in the area he embarked on his Mount Steele adventure...

Within hours of being dropped off at 3,000 metres on the remote Dennis Glacier, one of Helmut's five teammates, Roly Reader, badly broke both legs in a crevasse fall while descending back to basecamp. In 1967 there was no means of outside communication. Helmut formed a rescue party to seek help — they needed to ski over the summit of Mount Steele (5,073 m), thereby making the fifth ascent of Canada's fifth highest mountain.

The ACC General Mountaineering Camp which was also taking place in the area had established a helicopter-supplied high camp on the other side of Mount Steele at just under 4,000 metres elevation. At the ACC high camp they found their cache plus enough supplies to wait out a three-day storm. When the weather cleared a helicopter arrived to dig out the camp — thus initiating the rescue of Roly. Not wanting to cut a good adventure short, after the rescue Helmut and teammates skied out to Mile-1,064 on the Alaska Highway over the next eight days.

Ron Factor, a climbing partner of Helmut recalls: "I've had the pleasure of climbing with Helmut over several decades. The pleasure was derived from more than his superb route finding, climbing expertise, and mentoring. Most importantly, Helmut made sure that everyone on a climb was safe. He understood our individual limitations, roped us up when needed and otherwise coached us when not. He is a man of great culture, education and learning and has an encyclopedic knowledge of fine wines. He has made a significant contribution to climbing in North America and to the lives of those who are privileged to know him."



*Helmut Microys belaying on traverse of the Archduke Trio at the 1982 GMC Vowell Glacier Camp. Photo Robert Hall*

Over the years Helmut avoided attention but always had time to give advice to those who asked. A casual comment on one of his bold 1977 first ascents named Harmful Armful at Bon Echo: "This was an all-nut ascent: one nut leading, and one nut following and no pitons in between!"

In meeting rooms internationally, Helmut influenced decisions on climbing safety standards over a period of thirty years (1974 to 2004). His work on the UIAA Safety Commission led to many published articles. A major research project entitled "Climbing Ropes" was published in the 1977 issue of the American Alpine Journal. ~ACC

# VOLUNTEER AWARDS

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

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

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## Recipients of the 2021 Alpine Club of Canada Volunteer Awards

### DON FOREST SERVICE AWARD

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

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

**Shea Goyette**, Rocky Mountain

**Frank Liszczak**, Rocky Mountain

**David Bennison**, Rocky Mountain

**André-Jean Desormeaux**, Montreal

**Mathieu Vallée**, Montreal

**Charlotte Kruszewski**, Edmonton

**Deanna Miller**, Saskatchewan

**Kathy Hitchings**, Saskatchewan

**Zac Robinson**, Unaffiliated

### ERIC BROOKS LEADER AWARD

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

**Grant Blanchard**, Ottawa

### DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

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

- Furthering aims of club or a section
- Providing leadership for a large undertaking for the club or a section
- Contributing towards activities of club or a section

**Paul Veneziano**, Montreal

**Catrin Brown**, Vancouver Island

**Myrene Mollison**, Saskatchewan

### SILVER ROPE FOR LEADERSHIP

This award is presented to members in good standing with the ACC who have demonstrated technical skills and leadership abilities of a high calibre



# Le Refuge de Keene Farm

Photo Caroline Pepin

Récit par Paul Robitaille

Président de la section Montréal du Club Alpin

Traduit par Louise André

**L**a section de Montréal du Club alpin du Canada dispose d'un atout unique pour ses membres : le refuge accessible et historique de Keene Farm. Acheté grâce aux fonds recueillis par la section dans les années 1960, son caractère unique ne tient pas seulement à l'histoire du refuge lui-même, mais aussi à son emplacement sur une propriété boisée de 105 acres au cœur des Adirondacks dans l'État de New York.

Contrairement à d'autres refuges du CAC situés en haute montagne, ce refuge se situe à seulement cinq minutes du stationnement, ce qui le rend facilement accessible. Reconstituée dans les années 1970, la «nouvelle» bâtisse en bois rond peut accueillir jusqu'à 30 personnes dans le dortoir. Il s'agit d'une magnifique propriété dotée d'un terrain de camping, de petites parois de grimpe et d'un réseau de sentiers — un véritable bijou de la section de Montréal qui est également apprécié par les membres des sections d'Ottawa et de l'Outaouais.

## Keene Farm et la section de Montréal

Pour de nombreux membres, Keene Farm se trouve au cœur de la section de Montréal. La fermeture des frontières lors de la pandémie mondiale en 2020 a rendu le refuge inaccessible, faisant perdre beaucoup de membres à la section. Le dernier grand

événement de la section remonte au Fest'Hiver de 2020, où nous avons organisé des sorties de ski et d'escalade de glace, un atelier de camping d'hiver par moins 27, ainsi qu'une belle soirée autour d'un curry préparé par les bénévoles.

Toutefois, la bonne nouvelle, c'est qu'avec la suppression des restrictions et des tests à la frontière, les membres font à nouveau le voyage de deux heures vers le sud depuis Montréal jusqu'aux Adirondacks. Keene Farm se tient une fois de plus au cœur des activités de la section.

En vue de la réouverture du refuge, les webmestres des sections de Montréal et de l'Outaouais ont collaboré pour lancer un nouveau portail de réservation pour les membres. Comme les membres d'Ottawa et de l'Outaouais utilisent régulièrement le refuge, un nouveau système a été conçu pour permettre également à leurs membres de réserver le refuge Keene Farm.

En échange, Ottawa et Outaouais se sont engagés à soutenir nos week-ends de corvées bénévoles, qui ont lieu chaque année au printemps et à l'automne. Lors de la Corvée du printemps de cette année, les membres de l'Outaouais ont fait un travail remarquable,

en fournissant la nourriture et en travaillant de concert avec les membres de Montréal. La barre a été placée pour la section d'Ottawa, et il ne fait aucun doute qu'elle se montrera à la hauteur !

## Comment Keene Farm a rejoint le réseau des refuges du CAC

Depuis sa création, les membres de la section de Montréal du CAC font de l'escalade dans les Adirondacks. Dès les années 1940, John et Elizabeth Brett, originaires de Suisse et fondateurs de la section, ont passé du temps dans la vallée de Keene.

La construction de la Northway Interstate au milieu des années 1960 a entraîné un afflux de randonneurs et de skieurs du nord vers la région des High Peaks des Adirondacks. Cette popularité croissante a fait naître le besoin pour les membres de la section de trouver un endroit où passer la nuit ou d'un camp de base pour leurs excursions dans les Adirondacks. L'exécutif de la section a donc décidé d'acheter un terrain dans la région, en fonction de son budget restreint.

M. Hickey, un agent immobilier local, a alors mentionné qu'un fermier, Daniel Howe, venait de décéder et que sa veuve, Mary Howe, pensait vendre la vieille ferme familiale – une propriété de 90 acres au sommet de la colline à Styles Brook.

Les membres de l'exécutif du Club sont allés y jeter un coup d'œil. L'équipe de voirie venait juste de finir de paver la route escarpée qui mène à la ferme. M. Hickey n'a pas quitté la voiture, mais a pointé du doigt une vieille ferme et une grange effondrée au bord de la route en précisant que la propriété



Photo Kristine O'Rielly

La propriété de Keene Farm est devenue mon lieu de séjour privilégié lorsque je me rends dans les Adirondacks. En été, j'y ai vécu de nombreuses expériences de camping formidables, notamment l'événement annuel Hike-a-palooza de la section d'Ottawa. Le refuge fournit un abri, de la chaleur et une atmosphère merveilleuse pour que les amis se réunissent, et j'ai amené de nombreux amis, membres de la famille et étudiants à la ferme pour leur première rencontre avec les Adirondacks. Que nous fassions de l'escalade ou de la randonnée, nous savons toujours que nous avons un endroit accueillant où nous retrouver lorsque notre journée est terminée.

*-Bill Barrett, Président de la section d'Ottawa*

comptait 90 acres de plus en haut de la colline, adossée sur deux côtés par la réserve forestière des Adirondacks (non coupée depuis le siècle dernier) et par Styles Brook et la ligne électrique sur les autres versants. Ils ont parcouru les limites de la propriété, ont inspecté les pâturages et la ferme, sans arriver à croire qu'ils pouvaient réellement acheter cet endroit pour la modique somme de 4 000 \$ US.

Afin d'acquérir la propriété, un certain nombre de familles ont fait des dons importants pour une mise de fonds. Le président du conseil d'administration de la section a assisté à l'assemblée annuelle du CAC qui s'est tenue au camp d'été de 1968 au mont Assiniboine, dans les Rocheuses, où il a été suggéré que le CAC achète le terrain au nom du Club alpin du Canada. Cependant, le conseil d'administration de l'époque a refusé et s'est même montré quelque peu offensé que cette propriété soit située aux États-Unis et non au Canada.

Heureusement, cette décision n'a pas dissuadé les donateurs qui ont ensuite acheté la propriété à titre privé, pour finalement la vendre officiellement à la section de Montréal en 2007.

## Notre nouvelle bâtisse

La section a été très occupée les trois années suivantes par des week-ends de travail. Le toit a été réparé, et la maison a été remise en état, à l'intérieur comme à l'extérieur. Même par moins 25, les deux poêles à bois gardaient la maison au chaud et il y avait beaucoup d'eau fraîche provenant du ruisseau gelé qui traverse la route au coin de la propriété.

Des sentiers ont été balisés sur les crêtes rocheuses jusqu'à l'étang Clements, des pistes de ski de fond tracées à travers le ruisseau Styles et les arbres qui surplombaient la prairie, dégagés au besoin. Finalement, un tracteur et une tondeuse ont été achetés. Le vieux puits du champ a été creusé et la vanne d'eau a permis d'alimenter en eau la maison en dessous.

Malheureusement, la vieille ferme a brûlé par une nuit très froide dans les années 1970, lorsque des citadins de Manhattan, qui ne connaissaient pas les poêles à bois, se sont endormis avec les poêles chargés et les clapets grands ouverts. Les tuyaux ont surchauffé pendant la nuit. Il était trop tard lorsque les pompiers de Keene sont arrivés. Heureusement, la section s'était réunie la semaine précédente

et avait justement doublé l'assurance incendie. La compagnie d'assurance a honoré l'engagement verbal, et la section a collecté les fonds pour permettre la construction de la nouvelle bâtisse telle qu'elle se présente aujourd'hui.

## Écologie de la zone

Sur le plan écologique, Keene Farm est très intéressante. La gamme d'élévations couvre la transition entre les feuillus (érable, hêtre, chêne, tilleul) et les pins rouges et blancs pour quasiment atteindre la zone des épinettes rouges. L'orientation sud de la pente et de la prairie rend le climat chaud et ensoleillé. Les falaises et les crêtes couvertes par les pins de la ferme offrent de belles vues et de belles promenades. Et parce que la propriété est quelque peu éloignée et qu'elle est située au bord de l'ancienne forêt « à jamais sauvage » du parc des Adirondacks, l'isolement, la beauté et le caractère sauvage de la ferme ne seront pas et ne peuvent pas être perturbés.

L'eau coule tout l'hiver depuis la forêt d'État par le ponceau situé de l'autre côté de la route. Les castors sont revenus dans le ruisseau Clements Pond et les cerfs et les ours noirs sont fréquents. Le ruisseau Styles Brook reste clair et propre, et froid par une journée chaude !



*Ferme d'origine. Original farmhouse. Photo publiée avec l'aimable autorisation d'Anne Howson*

## L'avenir de Keene Farm

L'entretien d'une propriété située à l'étranger pose clairement un défi, surtout pour un groupe de bénévoles. Il y a de plus en plus de difficultés en termes de stationnement dans les Adirondacks, de surpopulation à de nombreux endroits et d'hébergement limité dans le parc. Mais nos membres adorent le site. Nous continuons à y organiser la plupart des événements majeurs, notamment un week-end pour les nouveaux membres en juin, un week-end d'escalade en août et notre barbecue annuel pour les membres en septembre. Nous espérons que vous viendrez nous rejoindre pour l'un de ces rassemblements !

La section de Montréal a à cœur d'assurer la durabilité de la propriété et nous réfléchissons à mettre en place un programme de gestion forestière durable pour encourager la biodiversité et améliorer l'habitat de la faune locale. ~CAC

# Keene Farm Hut



Photo Joëlle Dupont

by Paul Robitaille

Membership coordinator of the Montreal Section

**T**he Montreal Section of The Alpine Club of Canada has a unique asset as part of our offering to members—the accessible and historic Keene Farm Hut. Purchased with money raised by the section in the 1960s, its uniqueness is not only the history of the hut itself, but its location on a wooded 105-acre property in the heart of the Adirondacks in New York State.

Unlike other ACC huts located high up in the mountains, the hut is just five minutes from the parking lot, making it easily accessible. Rebuilt in the 1970s, the “new” log cabin can sleep up to 30 people in the loft. It’s a beautiful property with a campground, a small crag, and a trail network—a true jewel of the Montreal Section which is often enjoyed by members of the Ottawa and Outaouais Sections as well.

## Keene Farm and the Montreal Section

For many members, Keene Farm is the heart of the Montreal Section. With the closure of the borders due to the global pandemic in 2020, the hut became inaccessible, and in response the section lost many of its members. The section’s last major event was our 2020 Winterfest where we held skiing and ice climbing outings, a winter camping workshop in minus 27-degree weather and had a great evening over a communal dinner of curries prepared by the volunteers.

However, the great news is that with the removal of restrictions and testing at the border, members are again taking the two-hour journey from Montreal south to the Adirondacks. Keene Farm is back at the heart of the section’s activities.

With the re-opening of the hut, the webmasters at the Montreal and Outaouais Sections collaborated to launch a new member booking portal. As Ottawa and Outaouais members use the hut regularly, the new system was designed to allow their members to book Keene Farm Hut as well.

In exchange, Ottawa and Outaouais have committed to support our volunteer cleanup weekends, held annually in the spring and fall. At this year’s spring Corvée (clean up), Outaouais members did an amazing job, providing the food and doing a yeoman’s job working with the Montreal members. The bar has been set for the Ottawa Section, and they will no doubt rise to the occasion!



## How Keene Farm became part of the ACC's hut network

Members of the ACC Montreal Section have climbed in the Adirondacks since its inception. John and Elizabeth Brett from Switzerland, founders of the section, had spent time in the Keene Valley since the 1940s.

The construction of the Northway Interstate in the mid-1960s resulted in an influx of more hikers and skiers from the north into the High Peaks Region of the Adirondacks. As popularity grew, members of the section recognized a need for an overnight location or base camp for their excursions in the Adirondacks. The section executive investigated purchasing land in the area, something that would fit their small budget.

Mr Hickey, a local real estate agent mentioned that a farmer, Daniel Howe, had died and that his widow, Mary Howe, was looking at options to sell the old family farm — a 90-acre property on top of the hill at Styles Brook.

Members of the club executive went to take a look at it. The road crew was just finishing paving the steep road up to the farm. Mr. Hickey did not leave the car but pointed toward an old farmhouse and collapsed barn by the roadside and said the property included another 90 acres up the hill, backed on two sides by the Adirondack Forest Reserve land (uncut since the last century) and by Styles Brook and the powerline on the other sides. They walked the yellow state property line, looked at the meadow and the farm and couldn't believe they might actually be able to purchase this place at the low price of \$4,000 US.

In order to purchase the property, a number of families made significant donations to the cause and a deposit was secured. The Section Chairman to the ACC Board attended the ACC Annual Meeting held at the 1968 summer camp at Mt. Assiniboine in the

Rockies, and there it was suggested that the ACC buy the land in the name of The Alpine Club of Canada. However, the board at the time refused and were even somewhat offended at the idea that the property was in the US and not in Canada.

Thankfully, this decision did not deter the donors who then moved to purchase the property privately, eventually selling it to the Montreal Section officially in 2007.

### Our new place

The section was kept very busy with work weekends for the next three years. The roof was repaired, and the house was fixed up, inside and out. Even at minus 25-degrees the two wood stoves kept the place warm and there was plenty of fresh water from the ice in the stream that crosses the road at the corner of the property.

Trails were marked on the rocky ridges up to Clements Pond, cross-country ski trails were picked out across Styles Brook and the trees overgrowing the meadow were cleared as needed. Eventually, a tractor and mower were purchased. The old field well was dug out and the water valve was discovered so that water could be fed into the house below.

Sadly, the old farmhouse burned down one very cold night in the 1970s when some urban Manhattanites, unfamiliar with wood stoves, went to bed with the stoves loaded and the dampers wide open. The pipes overheated in the night. It was too late by the time the Keene fire department arrived. Fortunately, the section had met just the previous week and had doubled the fire insurance. The insurance company honored the verbal commitment, and the company collected the funds to allow for the construction of the new hut as it stands today.



*Photo Caroline Pepin*

I have been a member of the ACC Montreal Section since 1965, at age zero! It is a place of complete serenity and peace that I think about when I relax. What is incredible about Keene Farm is that it has changed so little over the past 50 years. ACC Montreal has managed to keep the spirit of the farm alive and unchanged for half a century. When I visit today, I am brought back to my childhood and flooded with serenity and peace. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to have grown up on the fields of Keene Farm, meeting up with our childhood friends each weekend, exploring Styles Brook, and roaming the property. Especially memorable as a kid was "helping" to build the new cabin, doing all the "important" jobs, driving on the back of tractor mowing the grass, playing in the chicken coop and in the old original farmhouse with its big wood stove in the kitchen. What is amazing is that my now-grown kids have the same emotional connection with Keene Farm from their childhood years growing up camping at Keene. Thank you ACC Montreal!

*-David Dannenbaum*

*David's family was involved in the original purchase and the transfer to the club, and his father is named on a plaque in the hut.*



*Photo Paul Robitaille*

## Ecology of the area

Ecologically, Keene Farm is very interesting. The elevation range spans the transition from hardwoods (maple, beech, oak, basswood) up to red pine/white pine and almost reaches the red spruce zone. The south aspect of the slope and meadow make it warm and sunny. The pine covered cliffs and ridges on the farm give fine views and nice walks. And because the property is somewhat remote and is situated against the "forever wild" old growth forest of Adirondack Park, the farm's seclusion, beauty and wilderness will not and cannot be disturbed.

Water flows all winter from the State Forest through the culvert across the road. The beavers have returned to Clements Pond Brook and deer and black bear are common. Styles Brook is clear and clean, and cold on a hot day!

## Keene Farm's future

It is clearly a challenge to maintain a property in a foreign state, especially for a group of volunteers. There are more and more challenges in terms of parking in the Adirondacks, overcrowding in many locations and limited accommodation in the park. But our members love the site. We continue to hold most major events there including a new-members weekend in June, a climbing weekend in August and our annual members BBQ in September. We hope you'll come and join us for an event!

The Montreal Section is passionate about ensuring the sustainability of the property and we are exploring the creation of a sustainable forestry management program to encourage biodiversity and improve habitat for local fauna. ~ACC



# Time for a tune-up

On a springtime weekend in late May, a group of volunteer leaders slated for the ACC's upcoming General Mountaineering Camp descended on Canmore to tune up their skills and generally better-equip themselves for the noble cause of Avoiding Tragic Mishaps at the GMC.

by Alex Perel

*Volunteer leader, Montreal Section*

**T**he General Mountaineering Camp is the ACC's annual jamboree in the Western Canadian mountain wilderness. For week after week, climbers of all stripes come to this "adult summer camp" to experience the alpine environment and summit some peaks. The GMC's roots date back a century, to a time when the ACC's mountaineering camps were the annual main event. These days, the camp runs for nearly two months, hosting roughly thirty participants each week and is supported by a dozen staff comprising of guides, volunteer leaders, camp managers and (most importantly!) cooks.

Today, a crew of guides oversees climbing at GMC, with volunteer leaders in support. This arrangement is a nod to the history of the club: a mix of professionals and skilled recreationalists guiding guests up to the alpine objectives. Volunteer leaders are the bridge between the professionals and the guests.

Volunteer leaders are vetted based on previous experience, personal alpine accomplishments, certifications (some are guides in other disciplines, for example backcountry skiing), education (such as the Adventure Guide Certificate from Thompson Rivers University) and first aid training. Many are trip leaders in local sections. In many cases, these individuals are former GMC participants who fell in love with the sport, honed their skills, and have been invited to help support other participants while in the presence of a bona-fide guide.

And this, at least for me, is the rub. I am an Eastern Canadian recreationalist with a love for the mountains, a weekend warrior at best. I am now dipping my toe — for the first time at GMC! — helping look after a group of (mostly) strangers. Despite many years spent on the hobby, including leading trips with the Toronto Section, the apprehension can be heavy when the standard is raised

*Left: Adam Burrell leading a review of spotting techniques in variable terrain. Photo Peter Hoang*

*Top right: Cyril Shokoples demonstrating anchor building and clip-in points. Photo Peter Hoang*

*Bottom right: Isobel Phoebus taking notes on short-roping techniques. Photo Peter Hoang*



higher than “weekend with buddies.” Now I will have strangers relying on me? Really? Perhaps a skills tune-up is in order.

And this is where the ACC’s volunteer leader training weekend comes to the fore. Perennial rescue training nerd Cyril “Squirrel” Shokoples and fellow guide (and former GMC volunteer leader) Adam “Needs a Better Nickname” Burrell took this group of 15 volunteers through the core skills that are the bread and butter of the General Mountaineering Camp. The disciples hailed from all parts of Canada, represented all age groups, and all levels of experience with GMC. Not to be forgotten, GMC committee chair and volunteer organizer David Dornian not only helped organize the event, but also took in knowledge with the rest of us.

The training syllabus assumed all coming were already skilled. No need to review how to tie a rope. However, everyone needs a review of the essential techniques that are a part of all GMCs: short-roping, rescue fundamentals, lowering systems and the general art of being efficient in the mountains. The crammed agenda taught and reinforced the most essential tools for volunteer leaders, reminding all of us of some of the things we may have forgotten, while teaching the occasional new trick.





*Top left: Practicing lowering skills and techniques.*

*Bottom left: Preparing to short-rope through the surrounding terrain.*

*Top right: Adam Burrell demonstrating how to get proper coil lengths to make a more comfortable short-roping experience.*

*Bottom right: Cyril Shokoples keeping the floor open for questions.*

*All photos by Peter Hoang*



As the sport evolves, best practices evolve with them. It is easy to take the lazy road of complacency, lean back and fall into the rut of bad habits. Our instructors think the opposite; learning is a lifelong process. To advance, one must remember the mishaps and near-misses. Cyril and Adam repeatedly drove the point home: getting away with how things used to be done is no reason not to learn a better way. We should know the old school way, but we should also know how the new school kids are doing things.

I am immensely grateful that rope nerds like our instructors continue to advance their knowledge, and then turn around and pass it on to those who are not as advanced in their climbing careers. Similarly, it is gratifying to be taking in knowledge in the company of a group of talented climbers who are clearly there to better themselves — with an eye to applying their newly sharpened skills on a GMC rope. An environment of learning raises the bar for everyone.

Without a doubt, a weekend of learning took the bite out of the apprehension of an easterner travelling to volunteer for the first time at a GMC. The tinge of self-doubt was replaced with excitement to be surrounded by a group of talented volunteers, all united in a commitment to show others what it is that we love about climbing above treeline.

Many thanks to The Alpine Club of Canada for continuing to invest in the skills of its community of volunteers, to David Dornian for putting the effort into vetting the volunteer community, and to Cyril and Adam for making us all better.

I look forward to seeing you at GMC! ~ACC

## Tricks and Tidbits from Volunteer Training 2022

Herr Munter, as it turns out, did not invent the Munter Hitch. In respect of the true history, many are now calling the formerly eponymous friction hitch the Italian Hitch instead. Its bigger cousin is now the Monster Hitch.

Raising a fallen climber is hard, even if they're wee and you are mighty. Why not get them to help with a clever trick? Like sport climbing in reverse.

LSD, or the Load Strand Direct, isn't illegal in this country. In fact, a skilled leader can turn a top belay into a lower with minimal fuss - with the application of a little bit of LSD.

Some people learn to trust by falling backwards into their partner's arms. Others learn trust by asking their partner to lower them from a standing hip belay. One of these is scarier than the other; you decide which.

# Spotlight on Squamish

## Building a sustainable volunteer program with a "cohort system"

by Kathleen Lane

*Leadership development coordinator with the Squamish Section*

Like every other Alpine Club of Canada section, the Squamish Section depends heavily on its volunteers. We're a relatively new ACC section and as we've developed we've tried to think about not only how we can attract volunteers, but also how to keep them and reward them. We've built a system around what our members have to offer and, just as importantly, what they want to get out of the deal themselves. It's taken a bit of trial and error and refining our ideas, but we think we're heading in a good direction. We're also hopeful that these ideas, perhaps with the help of the staff and the resources at the ACC national office, could be put to use in other sections across the country.

The ACC Squamish Section was formed in 2019, a little bit before the COVID pandemic began, so it's still less than three years old. Before the Squamish Section was born, I was (and still am) a member of the Vancouver and Whistler Sections so I had experience with the club, with volunteers and outings, and with the goal of building a solid and stable community that works for everyone.

People join the club for different reasons, but going on trips and learning new skills are two of the big ones. Going on trips can be great, but I typically lean towards events where I can learn and develop my skills. I find it easier to build connections with others when we are learning together, and find I click better with people who are equally keen on honing their skills. Through the courses I've taken, I came to realize that many of the members who are keen on learning also have a lot to give back – perhaps on a different subject. We had members looking to gain backcountry skiing skills, and who could teach rock climbing. Or someone might organize an avalanche skills practice in exchange for

1. Section climbing trip.
2. Trailhead for Skypilot.
3. Walking through the clouds on the way to Skypilot.
4. Looking back on Matier Glacier and the northwest face of Matier from Slalok ridge.
5. Group shot on top of Skypilot.

learning about navigation. It was becoming clear that a mutual sharing of skills would help everyone achieve their goals.

The idea for what the Squamish Section now calls our "cohort system" emerged from the idea that an exchange of learning in different areas benefits everyone. As a new section, we wanted to grow our pool of volunteers so that we could offer more events to our members. But we also wanted to make sure that volunteering was rewarding, so we asked what was in it for them?

Instead of having some people (volunteers) giving their time and other people receiving something, we hypothesized that bringing together a group of people who wanted to share their skills and learn together would create a tighter community and a more rewarding experience for everyone. Plus, by developing the skills of our members and growing our pool of volunteers, it would make the section more sustainable in the long term.

### The cohort history

In the fall of 2020, Squamish Section started our first winter cohort. We weren't sure how it would turn out as it was our first attempt at running it and we were in the midst of a global pandemic, but we knew that if we could connect people with shared interests and complementary skills that it would benefit both the cohort participants and the section.

We started with a group of six people, all experienced backcountry skiers, keen on building the skills to travel higher and further





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*“People join the club for different reasons, but going on trips and learning new skills are two of the big ones.”*



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*Above: Walking through the misty coastal rainforest on the way to Third Peak of The Chief. Photo Scott MacPherson.*

*Below: The section hosts a showing of the film "Pretty Strong" at Valhalla Pure Outfitters in Squamish.*

into the mountains. Although ongoing restrictions prevented us from hosting in-person events, the small group bonded as we experimented (quite successfully) with online learning events. As it turns out, it's actually easier to teach skills such as using digital navigation tools virtually!

For the next cohort we took what we learned in the winter and translated it into summer skills. We quickly realized that summer skills are more diverse than winter skills. In Squamish, summers are filled with hiking, mountaineering, scrambling and rock climbing, while winter activities are all about backcountry skiing.

Our first summer cohort ran skill development sessions every week, open to all our members. We had sessions on rock rescue, rappelling, building rock and snow anchors, and using a fixed point lead belay. Regular cragging sessions and hikes rounded out the calendar. While the majority of these events were hosted by the summer cohort, many of our winter cohort members continued to organize events.

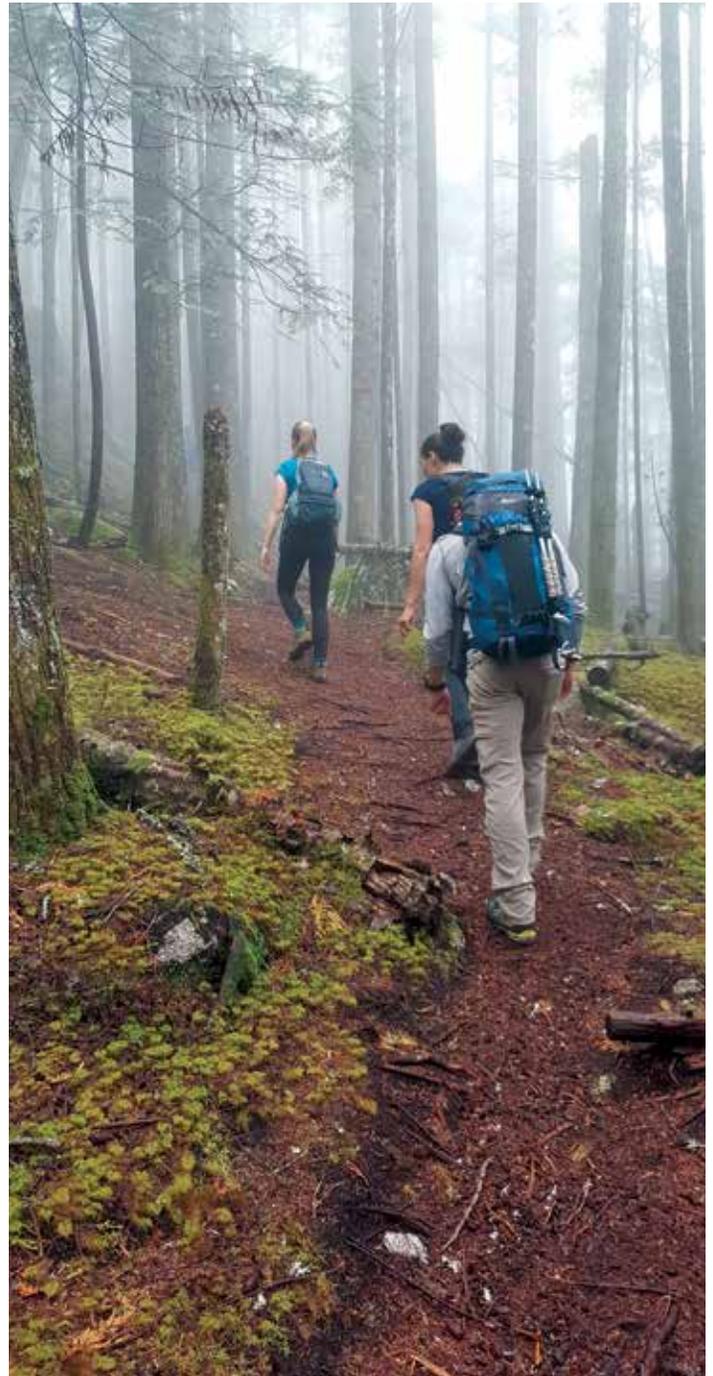
As we moved into fall of 2021 there was lots of excitement as the word got out about the cohort program. Almost everyone from the previous winter returned for another season, and we attracted a few new members to the cohort. In addition to co-organizing events for our members, we were excited to get together as a cohort to practice our skills in the field (along with a few ski waxing parties in my garage).

By spring 2022, the cohort program had exploded with a handful of returning people and another 20 or so who were interested in getting involved. The question was no longer if the idea was viable, but rather how do we build training programs that will accommodate all the people with different skills, and foster community in the same way the smaller cohorts did.

## Expanding the program

We've been asked if we think the Squamish Section's cohort program might work at other ACC sections. The answer is there isn't any reason why not. The concept is built around things that are fundamental and common to club members in all parts of the country, including personal development, contributing to community, helping each other and building skills in the great outdoors.

The downside is starting a cohort program has been a lot of work for me and for the Squamish Section. The good news is that we've kept great records of what works and what doesn't and we're more than happy to share our experiences and what we've learned with other sections. We're still building and growing and learning (and running) the cohorts, so we're not exactly ready to roll it out to other sections, but we can picture a time when we'd be keen to exchange ideas with other sections and pass on what we've learned. ~ACC





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# Every One of Us is a Disaster in the Making

by Doug Latimer

*ACC Lead Winter Guide*

One of the perks of getting older is that you can occasionally take a poke at conformity and see what you can get away with. Because of my age, people tend to assume that I'm either wise or senile and it doesn't really matter which side they fall on because both buy greater tolerance and latitude.

A classroom story: I was recently teaching a course where I was training avalanche technicians. I went through this same program many decades ago and I remember the respect and near reverence all of the students had for our teachers. It was now my turn to stand before these eager minds and profess my wisdom, so from the front of the class I searched for the fittest, keenest student and did something a bit unusual; I pointed directly at him and called him stupid. Encouragingly, about half the students were women, so in an effort to be inclusive I pointed at a promising looking female student and called her an idiot. I went on, and after verbally assaulting and tearing down about a third of the class I asked them to consider, with all the stupid people in the class, who was the most dangerous person in this room? No one spoke up, but of course the answer was me. My point was that I, by simply being the person in the position of power, made it difficult for others to question or challenge my judgment.

Every one of us is going to make decisions in our lives that are incredibly stupid. This is human nature and at times appears to be hardwired into our DNA. For example, my son is brilliant and there are times when he solves a problem with such speed, clarity and mental dexterity that it leaves me speechless. But my son is also an idiot. He will get into a shouting match with his mother because he wants to ride off into the dark on his black bike, wearing black pants, a black jacket, black helmet and without any reflectors or a light. I love my son, but fully appreciate why some species eat their young.

People are stupid. Remember this because those three words may save your life. I work fairly hard to impress on people that I am intelligent and competent at my craft, but deep down inside, I am terrified of my stupidity. Every one of us should be scared of the idiot that is hiding inside us and waiting for the moment to take

over and turn our world into chaos. To deny that you have an inner idiot is to seal your fate that someday you will suffer by your own hand. One of my guiding mentors gave me a simple piece of advice: remember that your client is trying to kill you. I will expand on this great advice and say that everyone in the backcountry is trying to kill you.

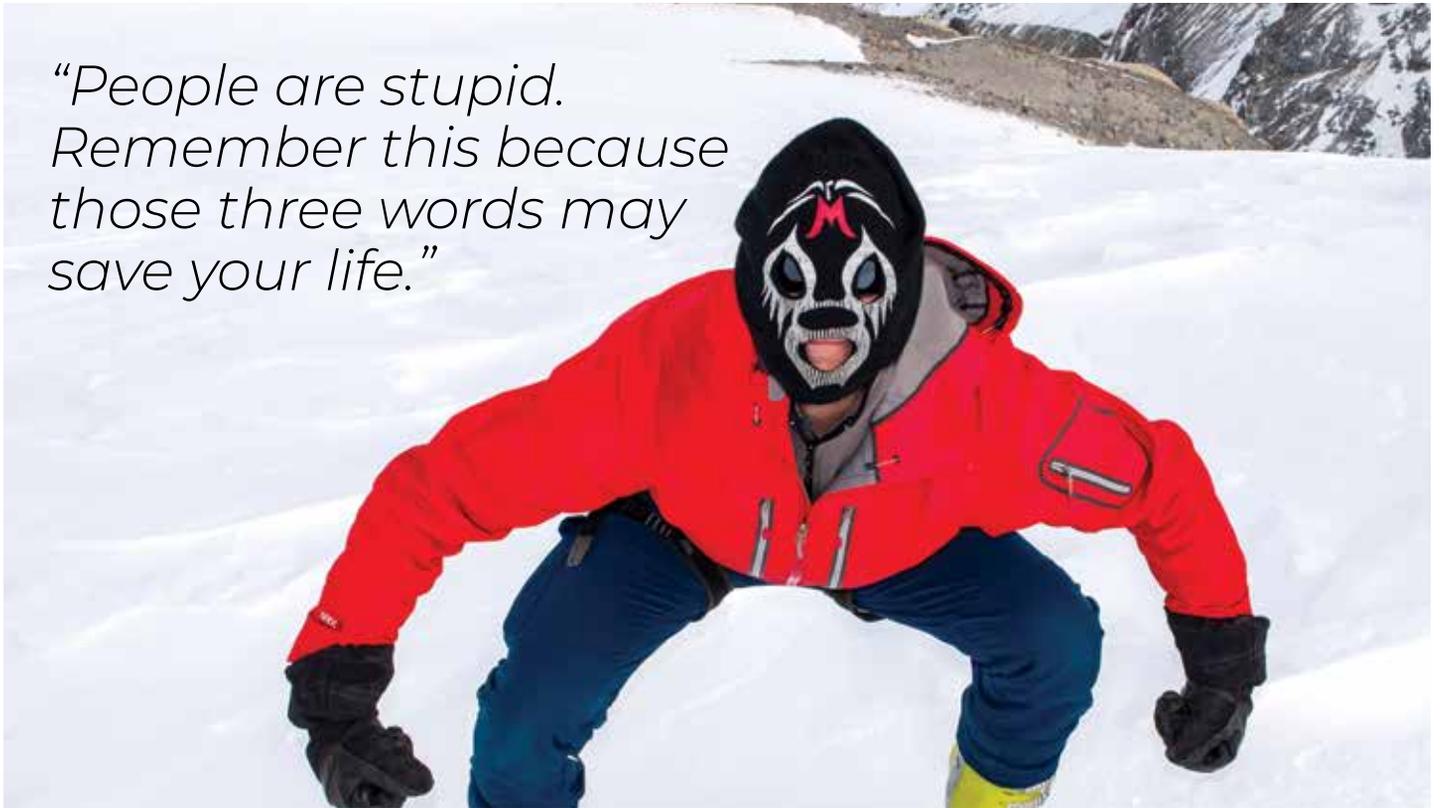
A scary story, very short: while managing a backcountry lodge I was helping clients unload from a helicopter. One client, a tenured mathematics professor (so, a really smart guy) got out of the helicopter and proceeded to walk upslope straight into the main helicopter rotor. I managed to reach him and pull him down to the ground, just one step before he would have been decapitated.

The point is that everyone makes these bad decisions and there is no shortage of stories about guides and leaders making them as well. It is every guide's nightmare that someone could die under their care. It is a relatively rare event in Canada, but fatalities do happen, and in many of these cases, I believe the guide was stupid and unlucky. Unlucky is the critical word here because many guides make stupid decisions, but when they aren't unlucky at the same time, nothing bad happens.

Another scary story, slightly longer: Years ago I was guiding a group from the Japanese Alpine Club. They had travelled a great distance to ski tour in Canada and had specifically asked for me to guide them. The problem was that when they arrived we had a very dangerous snowpack. Nearly a metre of new snow had fallen on a buried surface hoar layer and if you don't have any experience with avalanches just know that this is a recipe for disaster. We were skiing in big, steep terrain and I did not know the area well. Fortunately I had an apprentice guide who did know the area and as a bonus, he had just completed his CAA level two, which basically meant he was qualified to be an avalanche forecaster. The evening before our first day out he told me about new research regarding surface hoar and how the friction coefficient was much higher (stickier) than the industry previously believed. This was welcome news to me as sticky surface hoar makes snow conditions, such as what we were dealing with that winter, safer than we had thought. He also recommended a "safe" route for the group in the morning, one that would avoid the most avalanche-prone terrain.

The next day I was guiding 22 people plus my apprentice up a feature much bigger than I had expected. Using every trick I'd learned, I set a track up a ridge above a large bowl that threatened to avalanche. At times I stopped and dug through pillows of snow on the ridge with a shovel just to avoid stepping a metre off the line. And it was

*“People are stupid.  
Remember this because  
those three words may  
save your life.”*



*Do you really want to trust your life to this guide?*

working: we were gaining ground and staying safe. The ridge we were ascending ended just short of the pass, which gave access to a lot of safe terrain and had spectacular views. But to travel the last 20 metres to the pass the only option was to step out into the bowl and ski up a 35-40 degree convex roll. My risk tolerance finally reached its breaking point and I hesitated. Internally, I was struggling with the pull between the high friction coefficient of the surface hoar on one hand, and on the other the thought of stepping directly on the start zone of a potentially devastating avalanche. While my brain danced with the seriousness of the situation, I noticed my apprentice was strangely silent. And then in a moment of divine intervention, the decision was made for me: the entire bowl released in a massive size III avalanche. In some places, the fracture line was only centimetres below the uptrack that I had set on the ridge.

I see two interpretations of this event. The one that I would like to embrace implies that I am a brilliant guide who maintained a safe route through exceedingly difficult and dangerous conditions. But the truth is that I was lucky. The only reason you have not previously heard this story is because no one was buried and no one died. There are several stories where people have died due to poor decisions and the only difference between their story and mine is luck. They were unlucky.

I would very much like to give this story a happy ending, but that would be stupid. People are stupid. After more than three decades of working in the backcountry, I have seen some of the most

talented, experienced, and capable guides make incredibly stupid decisions. It is impossible for anyone to be focused on task and make the right decision 100% of the time. When we make mistakes and there are no negative consequences, it is a function of luck. What I am calling luck, many people misinterpret as experience.

Based on the most recent data available, at least 80% of all avalanche fatalities in Canada are the result of human error. Human error is by far the leading cause of workplace accidents, car accidents, and on and on. If people are stupid (and I think I've made pretty clear that I think this is the case), then our greatest opportunity to reduce accidents is not through new safety devices, but rather by beginning to learn about how we think and how we make decisions.

This moves the discussion away from hard mountain skills and into the realm of behavioural psychology. By the mid to late 20th century researchers began to learn that humans are not the logical calculating machines we like to imagine. The exploration of human decision-making is offering some new insight and tools that we can use to manage our stupidity. It's not a silver bullet, but there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

I'll expand on this in my next article. Until then, if you're interested in this topic, do a quick search for "invisible gorilla" on YouTube.

And in the meantime, if decisions are being made that affect your safety, listen carefully and speak up if something sounds stupid. ~ACC



*The First Ascent of the North Pillar of North Twin, 76" x 114", oil on linen. Artist: Brett Bilon.*

artist

# Brett Bilon



*Brett Bilon at work.*

If you're planning a visit to Canmore this summer, be sure to stop by the Canmore Clubhouse and check out a stunning new piece of artwork by Brett Bilon that is brightening up our space.

The large-scale work entitled "The First Ascent of the North Pillar of North Twin" is a 76" wide by 114" tall oil on linen featuring Barry Blanchard and David Cheesmond's first ascent of the route.

Bilon has been volunteering as chair of the board for the ACC's Calgary Section since 2020 and first joined the club as a member of the Edmonton and Jasper/Hinton Sections in the mid-1990s. Climbing and backcountry snowboarding are what take him to the backcountry the most these days, where he finds his artistic inspiration. After a multi-decade hiatus from painting, COVID brought him back to art for the purpose of maintaining his mental health, and now he's passionately back at the easel with a focus on creating large scale mountain landscapes.

The inspiration for this North Twin piece happened when Bilon was on his way to the Lloyd MacKay (Mt. Alberta) Hut near the Columbia Icefield. As he crested Woolley Shoulder, he caught his first glimpse of North Twin and instantly knew he had to paint it.

In order to do justice to the mountain face, he also knew it would need to be BIG. The idea of including climbers on the face would also help provide a sense of scale on this massive wall, and he eventually landed on the idea of collaborating with and referencing photos from Barry Blanchard and David Cheesmond's 1985 first ascent of their route. (Stories of this ascent and many more can be found in Blanchard's book *The Calling*, available everywhere for those who are interested.)

In the early stages of planning the piece, Bilon asked himself: "What is the smallest I could paint a climber and still have them translate as a climber in the painting?" He did some tests with his tiniest brushes and figured that 3mm was about the smallest. Then he did the math to figure out how big the mountain would need to be in order to be at scale...which ended up being roughly three metres high. This meant his painting would end up being about 1/500th the actual size of North Twin face.

He had the large canvas custom stretched locally and began the painting in March of 2022. Altogether it ended up taking about 100 hours (which equates to many, many steps up and down a ladder) to complete.

"I also let my kids do some of the painting of the base layers of colour, which was a lot of fun, bringing them into the process. They lived with this painting taking up a lot of space in the house, so it was nice that they could also feel like they were part of it."

How did Bilon muster the energy and determination to tackle such a huge task? "Ignorance is bliss," he laughs. "Not knowing what I'm getting myself into with a painting like this is actually a lot like outdoor adventures: when you're on a journey into the unknown you never know what you'll learn about yourself but somehow, you always end up learning something new. So a bit of that, combined with squeezing in early-morning painting sessions from 3:30-6am before the rest of my commitments could take me away from it." -ACC

To see more of Bilon's work, check out [www.brettbilon.com](http://www.brettbilon.com)





*Top left: Bilon working on the painting in his Calgary home.*

*Top right: Early progress.*

*Bottom left: Sneaky close up of Barry Blanchard and David Cheesmond climbing, each at just 3mm in size.*

*Bottom right: The finished painting hanging at the ACC Clubhouse in Canmore. Photo Peter Hoang.*



Photo: 2021 winner, Christopher Candela

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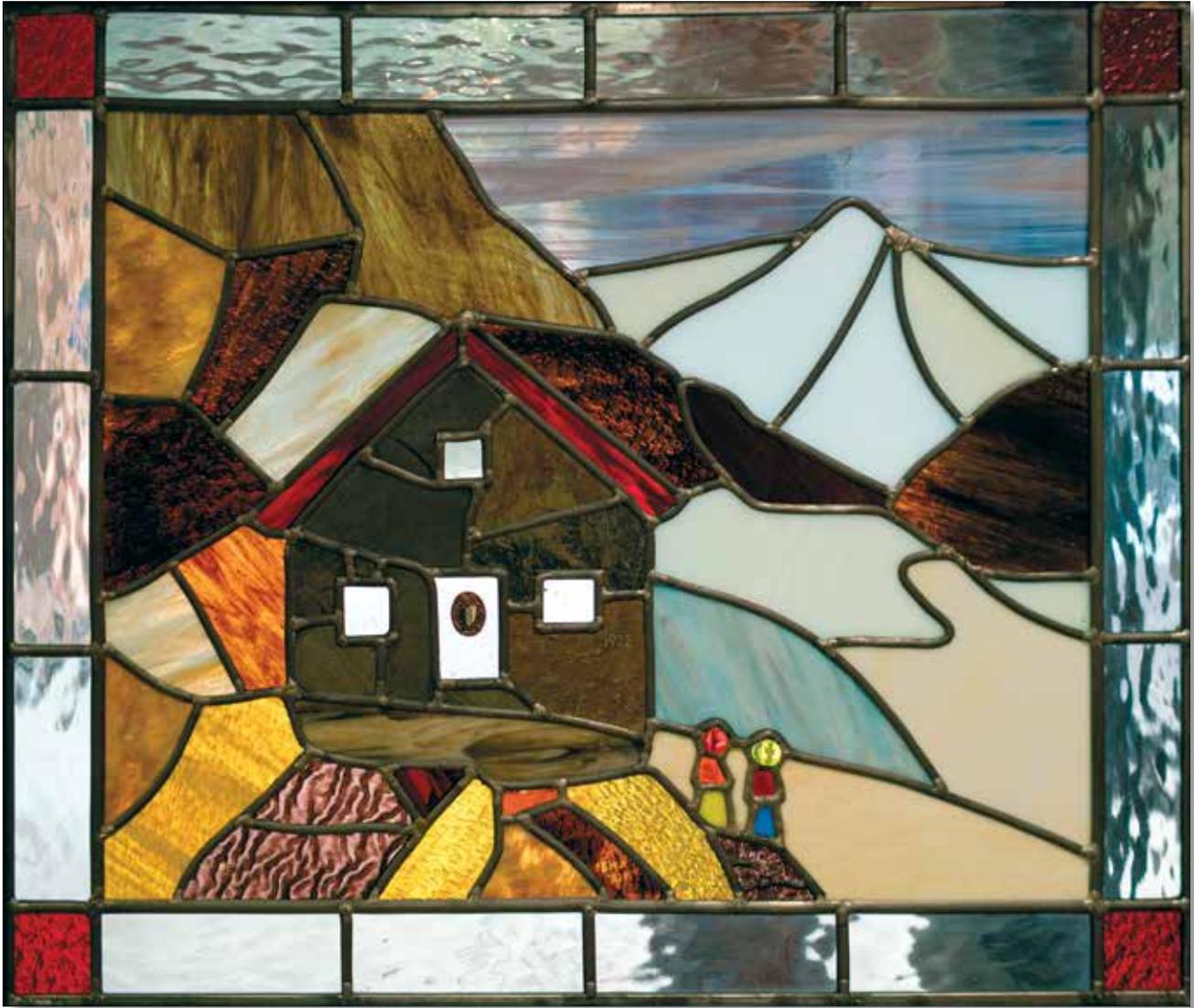
**Second place:** Mountain Hardwear sleeping bag

**Third place:** Mountain Hardwear pack

All GMC participants are eligible to enter:

[bit.ly/GMC-PhotoContest](https://bit.ly/GMC-PhotoContest)





*Abbot Pass Hut: original stained glass artwork by ACC past-president Peter Fuhrmann.*

Thanks to a generous and timely donation, you'll now be able to place your bids on this one-of-a-kind stained glass artwork by Peter Fuhrmann (past president of The Alpine Club of Canada) in this year's ACC Summit Bid auction.

Besides serving as our president and helping the ACC develop its backcountry hut system, the list of things Peter has contributed to the mountain community is expansive: he is a founding member of the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides (ACMG) and was pivotal in helping to realize the vision for a better mountain rescue program using helicopters in the Rockies back in the 1970s with Parks Canada public safety.

"If you have explored and loved the Rocky Mountains, then you have likely been influenced by Peter Fuhrmann's vision and ability," writes Bob Sandford in the Summit Series book written about Peter's life.

Previously purchased at auction some years ago at the Mountain Guides Ball, the owner of this piece was inspired to donate the work back to the ACC this year in light of the news about the end of Abbot Pass Hut. It is a very fitting contribution, celebrating Abbot Pass Hut's 100th anniversary, and Peter's history of mountaineering and creativity.

Look for the piece in person at the Mountain Guides Ball, October 28th at The Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. ~ACC

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*Stay tuned to our channels for more information about how you can bid on this piece and many others through this year's Summit Bid auction, beginning October 24th and culminating at the Mountain Guides Ball on October 28th.*

Tickets available at [www.alpineclubofcanada.ca](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca)



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Photo: Ted Hesser | Fitz Traverse, El Chaltén, Argentina

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