



# OUTCROPS

The Alpine Club of Canada - Thunder Bay Section

Fall 2008



## TB Section Rockies Mountaineering Camp

-Nick Buda-

This past summer saw a very significant first for our section, as we were able to offer our first summer mountaineering camp in the Canadian Rockies. Events like this have been an ACC tradition (in the form of the National Club's General Mountaineering Camp) for well over 100 years, and most of the western, and larger eastern, sections offer at least one of their own events like this most summers. This is an activity that we have long wanted to offer our section membership but it has taken quite some time to build up both the leadership and organizational capacity.

As this was our first-ever camp, we chose to organize it jointly with our friends in the Manitoba section. This allowed us to put together a large enough group to get exclusive use of the Elizabeth Parker Hut at Lake O'Hara, centrally located in the middle of some of the best hiking and moderate mountaineering opportunities in the Rockies, with plenty of good introductory routes and easy access to the historic Abbot Pass Hut. The icing on the cake was definitely the kitchen talents of our cook, Kelly Mager (Backcountry Bistro). In addition to filling our greedy bellies with some of the best cooking any of us had ever experienced, Kelly was also great company and essential to the success and fun we had that week. We definitely hope to hire her again in the future! And then there was the chance to renew old friendships with the MB section.

So, what about the actual climbing? Well, first off, the weather cooperated, with every day offering perfect splitter blue skies and climbing. It's the first trip in a while I can remember where I actually started wishing for a weather day for a rest! After moving into the hut and picking cuddling partners for the week, we had a fine introduction to the area by MB climbing legend Peter Aitchison (who was also the man who took care of our reservations for us - thanks Peter). Peter has done pretty much every route in the area and it was great having him introduce us to the area. Adrienne and Kirsten even got their introduction to mountaineering with Peter - talk about a great mentor. Most folks spent their first afternoon getting familiar with the area by hiking a bit or packing gear and resting for their first full day. And lets not forget the festivities the first evening as everyone got to know each other over copious amounts of Jagermeister and other treats (I blame Peter and Frank for that).

Three TB Section members had their very first introductions to mountaineering and successfully summited their first peaks (congratulations Kirsten, Adrienne and Holly). Throughout the week, our group made several ascents of classic routes in the area like Mt. Schaffer, Odaray Mountain and Point Feuz, Yuckness, the Wiwaxy towers and summited 3 of the 11,000ers in the area - Mounts Huber, Victoria and Lefroy. Conditions on Mount Lefroy in particular were excellent this summer, and the route saw at least 10 ascents by our group, with 7 of 9 TB section

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*In front of Abbot Hut after successful climbs (Bryce and Nick - Huber and Victoria, Jack and Reid - Lefroy)*



*Adrienne and Frank beginning the ascent of Mt. Lefroy.*

Photos: Nick Buda

**"Experience Through Knowledge and Opportunity"**

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## Outcrops Fall 2008

### Note from the Section Chair



What happened to summer this year? It boggles my mind that we're already putting the fall events schedule together as I write this, feels like it went by way too quick this year! I suppose all of our spring/summer events had a lot to do with it – it certainly was a packed season as far as all that goes.

The definite highlight for me was our Section's first-ever mountaineering camp in the Rockies, which we held at Lake O'Hara in August in conjunction with our friends at the Manitoba Section. Things could not have been better – seven straight days of perfect weather and twenty very happy participants, and several who got their very first summits and introductions to mountaineering. Even the advanced participants were fairly tired by the end of the week! We all owe a few individuals a big thank-you for their efforts in making the week a big success, in particular Peter Aitchison, Frank Pianka and all of the volunteer leaders (from both Sections) who took participants under their wings and ensured they have a safe and fun introduction to the mountains. And nobody will ever forget the incredible cooking of Kelly Mager – I think I actually gained weight that week despite all the big days. We've already gotten some valuable feedback and we're already into the initial planning stages for the next one – expect to see some details in the winter edition of Outcrops and keep an eye on the website for further details later this fall.

Attending The North Face –

Alpine Club of Canada Summer Leadership Course in the Vowells the week prior was also a highlight for me (see my report later in the pages following). In particular I'd like to thank the Section for its support in my application, and Frank, Jack and Bryce in particular.

Thanks also to all those folks who made our spring volunteer BBQ the great evening that it was. Bryce and Sunny (and Bryce's Dad!) provided their awesome house on Surprise Lake for a fun evening of watersports and feeding, and also generously provided the feast prepared by Bryce's dad (a great way to put the weight back on post-expedition!). Brian and Mila kindly provided a bunch of different kayaks from Wilderness Supply Co. for everyone to try out – thanks guys! (my first time in a kayak!), and we wrapped up the evening with some awards (congratulations Leo and Randy) and recognition of our trip leaders' efforts last winter, followed by the usual visual entertainment (Patola's Twist, about Derrick's life of adventure, was the highlight for sure!).

A big thanks to all the trip leaders who helped out with all the other spring/summer events, in particular our Tuesday night climbs at the Bluffs. The people that helped out with this and other events on our calendar are numerous and at the risk of forgetting someone I'll just say your efforts are hugely appreciated by the events participants and the Section as a whole. You know who you are, and I'm sure the good karma will pay you back in spades!

So, with this you'll have the fall events schedule in your hands as well – I certainly hope to see you at the crags this fall and I'm really looking forward to meeting new people, seeing

old faces and working with our budding trip leaders to further develop their skills. Remember, your membership is what you make of it – not a service, but an opportunity. If you really want to see something happen, get involved and talk to your executive about how you can help. And be sure to take every chance you get to develop your leadership skills – I think this is perhaps the greatest benefit of membership with the ACC.

Hope everyone has a safe, happy and fulfilling fall season. Hope to see everyone at the general meeting at Con College in September.

- Nick Buda, ACC Section Chair-

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## Outcrops Fall 2008

*Mtng Camp...Cont from page 1* members summiting (congrats all!). As the week wound down, I felt very tired but quite satisfied, but some of the MBers were still hungry and made an ascent of Lefroy on the last day and then undertook a unique adventure by travelling out directly from Abbot Hut to Lake Louise via the Fuhrmann Ledges, which I hear was a great day in itself.

Thanks are definitely in order to a few individuals in particular - Peter Aitchison (MB) for his contributions to the organization and bookings and introducing our less experienced members to the mountains, Gregor Brandt (MB) and Simon Statkewich (MB) for their leadership, Frank Pianka (TB) for handling the registration and coordinating the group, Bryce Brown (MB) for a tremendous amount of work leading participants on Mount Lefroy (as well as being our camp doctor), Reid Carter for providing our communications for the week, Kelly Mager for her positively awesome catering and general fun, and every one of the participants for their fun, friendships, accomplishments and camaraderie during the week. Apologies to anyone I forgot!

We'll be hard at work planning our next camp by the time you read this, and also trying to apply what we learned this year to make our next one (either next summer or 2010) even better!

- NB-



*Clockwise from Top-Left:  
Frank and Adrienne pumped to be on the summit of Mt. Lefroy.  
West face of Lefroy.  
Nick on the summit ridge of Victoria.  
Bryce on Victoria NE ridge.  
Adrienne and Frank on the summit blocks of Lefroy.  
Nick with Kelly Mager (cook) outside the EP Hut.  
MB members Brian and Tom on the West Face of Lefroy.  
Everyone outside the hut with Peter doing the orientation.  
Bryce, Brian and Tom after a successful climb on Lefroy.*

*Photos: Nick Buda & Bryce Brown*

### **The North Face – Alpine Club of Canada 2008 Summer Leadership Course -Nick Buda-**

We're finally approaching the Bugaboo-Crescent Col, and Cyril is on my case again. "Nick! Those steps are getting a bit off again! I can't walk them with my eyes closed anymore! Watch the pace!" What? I thought they were pretty good! Besides, this snow is crap...ahhh...that's better. Five minutes later: "Nick! Those steps are getting wacky again! And watch the rope tension – you'll never catch a slip with that slack!" Geez, I'm never gonna get this right! I'm flunking for sure! And man, I can't wait till the next transition so I can finally stop and ditch a layer, I'm soaked! Anyone that thinks setting the track in steep snow for a group of ten amateur leaders-in-training (and three very competent instructors) is straightforward enough should try it when Cyril is on your case.

I can assure you, after two days of that in a row your steps will be perfect. I guess the upshot is Jenn will never complain about my steps ever again! A few hours later, it was Helen's turn, and Mark Rosin (who had just completed a stellar alpine ice lead) and I were getting our first critiques and help as short-roping bumblies on the broken granite of Crescent Spire.

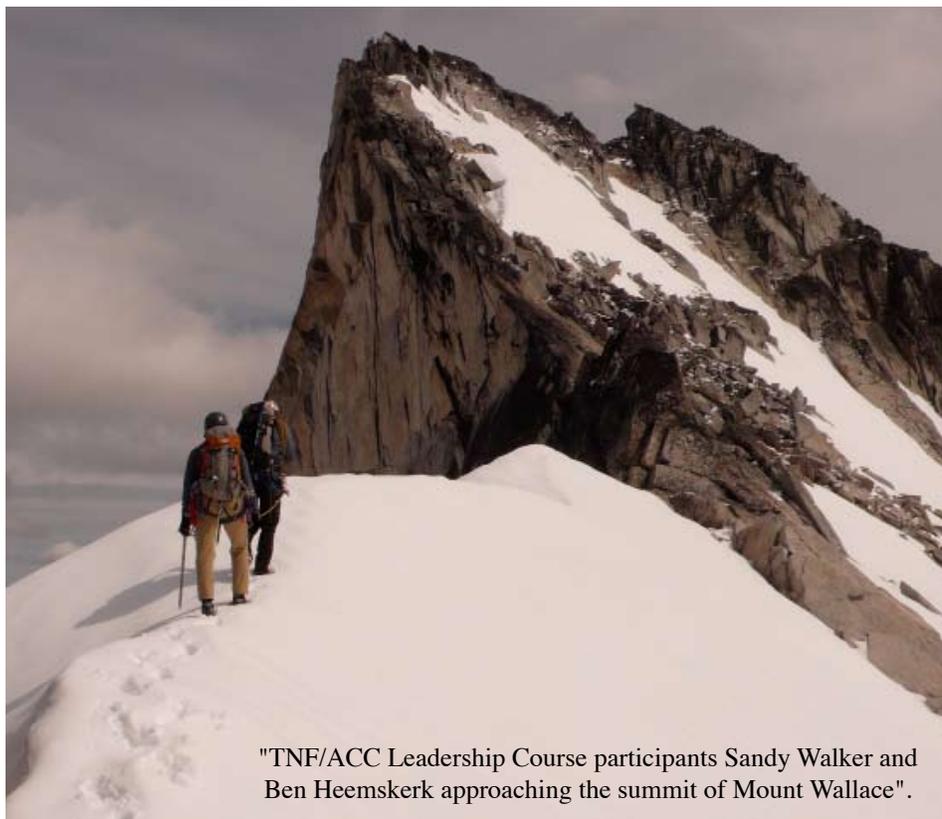
Though at times it seemed that Cyril was doing his best to ignite a full-on helmet fire (and I admit he succeeded at least once!), it was all exactly what myself and nine other experienced ACC amateur trip leaders had come to the Vowells for – the ten of us represented this year's successful applicants at the annual The North Face – Alpine Club of Canada Summer Leadership Course. Held during Week 5 of the club's General Mountaineering Camp, the main goal of the demanding course is to help members who are already leading trips become better, stronger, and safer leaders for the Sections and for National

Camps, primarily in the alpine setting. All of the participants are required to contribute a great deal as volunteer leaders for their Section in the future.

The course was expertly led by two outstanding guides, Helen Sovdat and Cyril Shokoples, and a tremendously experienced and insightful amateur leader, Roger Marchand. As it was part of the GMC, many of us also benefited hugely from the presence of more experienced amateur leaders and guides from whom we were able to glean valuable beta on routes and numerous other tips and tricks that helped us learn our alpine craft. I also learned a lot about the club and other sections (and the ACC's one lone chapter!) from the other participants who came from Sections across the country, many with a tremendous amount of mountaineering and leadership experience. I cannot think of a better setting and group dynamic for learning so much about mountain leadership.

Our instructors did an excellent job during the intensive eight-day course of developing our individual "hard" and "soft" leadership skills, and we covered a tremendous number of different skills during some excellent days in the mountains climbing peaks such as Crescent Spire, Brenta Spire, Mount Wallace and several others. During intensive instructional sessions and while undertaking climbs as one large group and eventually as smaller teams, we had numerous opportunities to refine many of our technical skills such as rope handling, glacier travel, navigation, anchors, rock and crevasse rescue systems, route planning and finding, communications and (by far the most difficult) short-roping and transitions. We also had ample opportunities to work on our soft skills surrounding the roles and responsibilities of trip leaders, emergency situation management,

*...Continued on page 5*



"TNF/ACC Leadership Course participants Sandy Walker and Ben Heemskerk approaching the summit of Mount Wallace".

### North Face...Continued from page 4



communication, group dynamics, conflict resolution and a myriad of other skills. We planned and lead all of our own climbs throughout the week, under the tutelage of our instructors. I finished the week with newfound confidence in my ability to lead participants safely in an alpine setting.

I was immediately able to put my newfound skills to the test the week following at our Section's first-ever summer mountaineering camp at Lake O'Hara. Successfully leading four participants, with the assistance of Bryce Brown, to the summit of Mount Lefroy easily ranks as one of the best and most satisfying days I have ever had in the mountains. Giving those individuals an experience they will never forget, and learning a lot more about myself in the process of putting everything I learned in the course together, easily rivals any of the "bigger" climbs I've managed on my own. The success felt like a "graduation" climb...well, maybe from Kindergarten to Grade 1 in the school of mountain leadership anyway. I'm already looking forward to my next opportunity to learn more and contribute to the club as a leader.

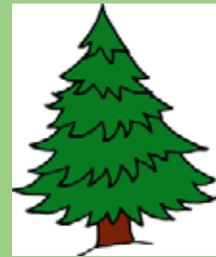
I am eternally grateful for the support I received from the section to attend the course (I could not have afforded it on my own), the Executive's support of my application, Frank Pianka's endorsement letter and the reference letters written for me by Jack Coulis and Bryce Brown. I will always be grateful to my instructors, Cyril, Helen and Roger, the rest of the amateur leaders and of course the other guides and leaders that were working the GMC and spared some time for us junior leaders to learn from them. This course is made possible through immensely generous sponsorship by the The North Face and heavy subsidies from the National office, as well as Section support. Thanks to everyone involved! -NB-

### Write for the Gazette!

We are always keen to include some section news in the National ACC Gazette. If you would like to write an article about an interesting project or news item, please contact Gazette Editor Lynn Martel at [gazette@alpineclubofcanada.ca](mailto:gazette@alpineclubofcanada.ca) with your article idea. We look forward to hearing your stories!

### Sign up for PAPERLESS Outcrops!

Our section would like to reduce the amount of paper we consume, transport, and eventually throw away.



If you haven't done so already, update your online profile to read this newsletter online. If you sign up for a new web user account, the default is paperless.

### Address Changes and Renewals

If you did not get this newsletter and are wondering why, it could be that you did not update your address change on the national website, or you did not renew your membership after receiving your expiry reminder.

Its easy to renew your membership or update your address info online at [www.alpineclubofcanada.ca](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca) or if you prefer, you can call Judy, your friendly local membership rep, at 577-7950.

*While the main purpose of Outcrops is to communicate information to our membership about the ACC and specifically our Section events and activities, space is occasionally allotted to more creative or opinion/editorial pieces. Given the close ties of some of our Section members with Himalayan people and climbing, we felt it was worthwhile sharing this submission with our membership. Our readers should note that this article does not in anyway reflect the official position of the TB Section or the Alpine Club of Canada and should not be taken as an official statement of opinion or position. Thoughts and opinions expressed herein are the sole responsibility of the author. Feedback is welcome, and can be directed to the Newsletter Editor at [brycebrown99@gmail.com](mailto:brycebrown99@gmail.com).*

### **Editorial**

## **The Latest Conquistadors of the Useless** **-Justin Allec-**

On May 8, 2008, China celebrated reaching the top of Everest. Those of us at home were able to witness the torch-lighting ceremony through the power of streaming video. If you were in doubt as to the significance of this latest ascent of the third pole, China quickly put it in perspective with the help of mainstream media sources. It was a historic event, an achievement, a testament to the human spirit, and what the Olympics represent.

It was also performance, with the mountain as stage, and it has all been done before.

In order to put the nineteen climbers (including one token Tibetan) in a position for the world to notice, China spared no expense. Ignoring nearly all the developments in mountaineering's history, the Chinese used siege tactics remi-

niscient of the British expeditions of the 1920s. Observers can only be in awe when considering the accomplishment of a mountain-wide climbing ban enforced by an army, when compared to the few bags and the faint hope that your average, modern, climber carries.

China is familiar with how other nations have claimed peaks, as well as the fact that there are no more blank spaces on anyone's map. By way of anachronistic methods, China engineered a guaranteed victory, a televised conquest of the mountain. They wanted a message that everyone would understand. Success would not be measured by ethics or by the exertion needed on the route, but by the political intention to move a mountain.

Why all this expenditure to achieve what has already been done? Why celebrate what has become commonplace? China knows that Hillary, along with several hundred others, have already reached Everest's summit, and that there are stoves that burn at all levels of altitude. But when you saw the ecstatic summit party waving Chinese and Olympic flags, the excess of this becomes recognizable, even familiar. As with their siege tactics, the summit celebration, complete with torch-lighting, had been learned from watching those who had gone before.

If this climb, this conquest of Everest, is meant to put forth an ideal, one geared for public consumption and celebration, then what of the methods used to ensure it is a success? The only reason for streaming video needed to be on the summit was to show all of us that

China, through martial law with a veneer of communism, could reinvent what we considered at one point to be the impossible. The mimicry of victory, when supported by nationalism, reminds us that accomplishment and recognition in mountaineering can still be bent to domination. Not just domination over the difficult and dangerous landscape of Everest, but also over the other climbers and the cultures who use the mountain to give their own ascents meaning. -JA-

### **From the web:**

**How to safely use auto-locking  
belay devices:**  
[www.planetfear.com/article\\_](http://www.planetfear.com/article_detail.asp?a_id=477)  
[detail.asp?a\\_id=477](http://www.planetfear.com/article_detail.asp?a_id=477)

**Climbing Magazine's 2008 re-  
view of 23 different climbing  
shoes:**  
[www.climbing.com/print/](http://www.climbing.com/print/equipment/2008_rock-shoe_review/)  
[equipment/2008\\_rock-shoe\\_re-  
view/](http://www.climbing.com/print/equipment/2008_rock-shoe_review/)

**Earth Details has made their  
Canadian 3D Contour maps  
available free of charge:**  
[www.earthdetails.com](http://www.earthdetails.com)

**Banff Centre for Mountain  
Culture: Film and Book Festi-  
vals — November 1 - 9, 2008**  
[http://www.banffcentre.ca/](http://www.banffcentre.ca/mountainculture/)  
[mountainculture/](http://www.banffcentre.ca/mountainculture/)

**“The Right Thing” Blog**

**-Jeffrey Seglin-**

My oldest grandson, Evan, started a new family tradition last year by asking everyone around the Thanksgiving dinner table to tell a story about themselves or to sing a song. When his father’s turn came this year, he told the story of a hike to the peak of Mt. Katahdin that he recently had taken with my daughter and their two sons.

Mt. Katahdin is the highest mountain in Maine, with its tallest peak reaching more than 5,200 feet. Getting to the top presents a challenging hike, particularly for an 8-year-old and his 6-year-old brother. Somewhere along the trail Evan’s resolve began to waiver. He sat down and told his parents and brother that he would wait while they continued up to the summit. Before they could convince him that this was not an option, however, a small group of young hikers from Quebec came upon them.

A young woman in the group noticed that Evan was distraught. She walked up to him and told him that she had had similar bouts of hesitancy on many hikes in the past. The thing that helped her, she said, was a special plaster she wore. She took out two seemingly ordinary bandages from her backpack and handed them to Evan. “I have an extra one you can have,” she said. “And here’s another in case you need it on the way down.”

Evan put on the plaster and headed on up Katahdin. Along the way

they would occasionally spot the same group of hikers, who always greeted Evan with a thumbs-up signal. The boy exuberantly completed the climb. When he and his family had descended the mountain and reentered their campsite, the young women burst into applause when they saw Evan, his brother Luke and their parents.

The story of the young woman’s small act of kindness brought into stark relief how great an impact it can have if we choose to reach out to another person in apparent distress. It begs the question of whether we’re ethically obligated to help others when it’s within our power to do so.

Fourteen years ago, as I was standing outside the entryway to a Manhattan hotel and looking for a taxi, a somewhat-unkept man approached me.

“Do you ... ,” he began. Before he could even finish, I responded with a curt “I don’t have any.”

He paused, looked at me and said, “Of course you don’t.”

He walked on.

I had assumed that the man was approaching me for money. In my haste to hail a cab without having to deal with anything else, I was quick to brush him off. For all I know, he may have been trying to ask me for directions. I’ll never know. I’ve regretted my knee-jerk response ever since.

We are not ethically obligated to help every stranger who crosses our path. But if helping others is something that we hold to be a core per-

sonal value, then the right thing to do is not to dismiss those who approach us for assistance -- certainly not the way I did, without even giving the man a chance to ask.

My experience 14 years ago changed how I have responded to similar situations ever since. But it paled in comparison with how a young woman’s decision to be kind when she didn’t have to gave an 8-year-old boy the confidence he needed to complete his climb. -JS-

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**



**Banff Mountain Film Festival – World Tour**  
**Sunday, January 25, 2009**  
**Thunder Bay Community Auditorium**

**First Summer Mountaineering Camp—Some Comments**

**-Frank Pianka-**

Upon returning from our first mountaineering camp and after a few days of rest and some time to reflect, I asked the participants from our section to submit candid comments on how they felt about it. Here are some of the comments:

- Having a cook was awesome, accommodations were comfortable and the people were fantastic!
- We could have used more winter time sessions practicing self arrest, short roping and “light duty” belays.
- I now have a better understanding of the mountaineering environment—very different from technical climbing—definite increased level of risk.
- Pre-trip document from Nick was clear on fact that mountaineering involves exposed and committing environments, but this was not fully grasped until experiencing the serious consequences of even a small mistake.
- “What to pack” list was excellent.
- “Blending” with the Manitoba section into a single group did not seem to happen.
- Consider having one every two years.
- Maybe selecting participants should be used to match skills with objectives for better group unity.
- Not everyone knew what they were in for. Better personal preparation suggested.
- Leadership and organization by Nick, Bryce and Frank was appreciated and very well done.
- Some scrambles not done to ACC TBay safety standards.

Our first summer camp effort had participants with a wide range of abilities with some exploring the mountain environment for the first time and others experienced and keen to climb hard. Teams with appropriate objectives fell together over the week, but maybe attending a week of the GMC may be the best route into the mountain experience for the beginning mountaineer. We’re open to ideas about how to run any of our events, so if you have any, speak to any of the camp participants and ask them to pass it on. It was agreed that the best thing you can pack along for doing anything in the mountains is a good level of general fitness!

***WANTED***  
***NEWSLETTER EDITOR!***

Looking for a rewarding way to help out the club?? We need an energetic individual to put together our newsletter. Previous experience with word processing, layout software and photo editing are helpful. Also maybe if you can spel gud and grammar is impotent then u are the person we are looking for.

Please contact the Section Chair Nick Buda at [nick.buda@gmail.com](mailto:nick.buda@gmail.com) if you think you may be interested.

**Grigri Safety Notice**

Petzl announces a new technique for belaying a leader when using its Grigri self-braking belay device. Petzl has produced a new video which demonstrates the two acceptable lead belay techniques to be used with the Grigri. The video is featured on the Petzl website on the Grigri product page. Please note the exact URL to link to the video:

[http://en.petzl.com/petzl/frontoffice/Sport/static/services/GRIGRI/video/grigri\\_movie\\_en.htm](http://en.petzl.com/petzl/frontoffice/Sport/static/services/GRIGRI/video/grigri_movie_en.htm).

