

RANDONNEWS

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Montreal's Friendly Outdoor Club

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Randonnée Aventure, founded in 1985, is a non-profit year-round outdoor club for adults, with about 400 members.

Randonnée Aventure offers:

- Saturday, and some Sunday bus trips to prime cycling, hiking and cross-country skiing destinations within a two-hour drive from Montreal. Trips are designed to accommodate all levels – from beginner to expert.
- Long weekend getaways.
- Frequent social events such as picnics, barbecues and parties.
- And more...

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A Special Club...

What makes this Club special? Why is it different? Why do we survive, even grow, in spite of the dwindling population of Montreal anglophones? These are very relevant questions for myself, as President of Randonnée Aventure. I've tried to understand the answers.

First, we know our business. We know how to organize cycling, hiking, cross country skiing, and socializing (not necessarily in that order!) - and at all levels we do them well.

Second, our organization is strong. There is an established structure with well-defined responsibilities assigned to the positions and committees. Club policies are documented and available to the members. Things are not left to chance.

Third, we provide quality services at low prices. As a non-profit corporation, we don't want record profits, just financial stability (which we have). We have no paid employees, and we carefully control our expenses. We pride ourselves in giving value, not in being stingy.

Fourth, we have a strong group of volunteers. There is a lot of administration and organization behind the scenes. There are volunteers who do small tasks on an infrequent basis, and those who perform major, more demanding roles. All are important, and critical to our success. We welcome and always need new volunteers to assist and replace the team.

Fifth, we have a fountain of ideas and creativity. I'm not always sure where they come from, but in addition to the tried and true, we have tremendous creativity for new events. This news letter contains our latest gems: opportunities for both you and I to try.

Last, but probably most important, we have cooperation. Our membership has a marvellous positive, uncomplaining spirit: from unloading skis, to bringing brownies to a party, to arriving back at the bus before departure time, to braving new companions in a condo without complaint. That positive, helpful attitude is delightfully contagious, and essential to the rewards of the Club organizers.

For the few holdouts who haven't caught that spirit of cooperation, please remember that we, the volunteers, have jobs, families, commitments and lives outside RA. This Club, your Club, our Club depends on your cooperation to remain special, healthy, and here for years to come.

I wish you all a very happy holiday season, and lots of fresh snow on the ski trails.

Jill Aspinall



WORD FROM THE EDITOR

The cover of this issue of Randonnews features yet another contribution from our resident artist and traveller, Pete Malagutti. His sketch depicts one of the many glorious sights he found during his recent trip to Alaska. Read all about it in his story on page 10. Susan Harris recounts a week in Virginia, which included meeting some friendly Americans (the four-legged variety). Thanks again to all contributors, and to Elise Brais for her typing help.

Our Social Committee, led by Anne Harper, has come up with some fun activities, including a full moon walk or ski (moonwalk? moonski?) on Mount Royal. Check page 14 for details.

This issue is a bit thinner than the last one — where are all those stories of your worldwide treks, Randonne'ers? Has the recession finally begun to affect Montreal's Friendly Outdoor Club? Or are you just working on something for the Spring issue? If so, keep in mind that the deadline is February 14 (Valentine's Day). We welcome any interesting photos, stories, or even a joke (Club activity-related, of course).

There are a lot of new members this year; I hope to meet some of you at the upcoming social events or on the ski trails. Until then, let's hope for a snowy winter.

Tim Skene

Kicking & Gliding

We start off the '94 cross-country ski season with some of your favourite destinations. We have added a downhill ski day, as well as a Mystery (new destination) day trip. All the ski trips are by luxury coach and include trail fees. The traditional skier's luncheon, with Jim's Granny's sangria, will close the ski season on March 12th. New this year, we are offering cross-country ski lessons on Mount Royal.

Help Wanted: Trip leaders and assistants! We also need people for trail maintenance, scouting and on the Ski Committee. Randonnée Aventure's success depends on its volunteers. As a volunteer, you will have the assistance you need to get the job done, and it's a nice way to meet people. Please indicate on the registration form if you would be willing to participate, and someone from the Ski Committee will contact you.

*Jim Mullett Ski Director
Pat Zebel Ski Administrator*

Ski Touring Tips

Please follow these tips carefully; they are for your comfort and safety:

- Wear layers of clothing - they trap air for insulation and can easily be removed or added to control body heat.
- Avoid cotton fabrics. They hold water and cause heat loss. Wool keeps you warm while wet. Polypropylene (e.g. Lifa or Helly Hansen) wicks moisture away from skin to evaporate. Dry skin is important for warmth.
- Mitts are better than gloves for warmth.
- Carry a breathable windbreaker.
- Gaiters will help keep your wool socks dry, and snow out of your boots.
- Avoid overdressing, as sweating can lead to hypothermia. Control heat loss. Always cover your head, and try to keep your feet and hands dry and warm.
- In your day pack always carry: energy foods and liquids, extra wool sweater, socks and mitts, tape, laces, pocket knife, ski tip and ski waxes.

Cross-country Ski Equipment & Sportswear Clinic

Once again we are going to visit one of the cross-country ski stores in Montreal to have a private showing of equipment, skis, boots, clothing and other related items. There is no cost to attend and we always learn of something new. The time and place are not yet final. For information, listen to the Club tape, and join others in this interesting and informative evening.

Hands-on Waxing Clinic

Do-it-yourself! Bring along your skis, all of your hard and soft waxes of the rainbow, your cleaners, old cloths and any other equipment you may have and want to learn how to use (an iron?) and spend time with other Randonnée members applying the techniques you've learned watching demonstrations. Newcomers and oldtimers are all welcome to come along and get those skis ready for the first heavy snow-fall.

Place: Jim's shop - Western Radiator, 2160 Harvard, corner of de Maisonneuve, in NDG.

Time: Wednesday, January 12, from 7 till 10 p.m.

Cost: Absolutely free!

Ski Trip Leader's Orientation Meeting

For all those who are leading or assisting a day trip this winter, and for those who would like to find out how to volunteer in this important way, come to this event. All details on how to be a day trip leader and a day trip assistant will be provided. It's really very easy and a lot of fun, too!

Time: Wednesday, December 8, at 7:30 p.m.

Place: Call the Club tape for location.

New! New! New! Cross-country Ski Lessons

As many of you have expressed an interest in having some instruction in cross-country skiing, we have arranged for lessons every Wednesday evening beginning January 19, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Mount Royal. Meet at the Beaver Lake Chalet. FREE to Club members. **Important:** Call the Club phone (489-0339) every Monday to confirm your presence. We will run this activity every Wednesday night throughout the season for as long as there is sufficient interest.

RA Cross-country Day Trips

No.	Date	Destination	Rating	Rest.
1	Sat. Jan. 8	Pimbina (Mont Tremblant)	EM	N
		One of our favourite spots to start the season. Huts on the trail to keep you warm on the first day out.		
2	Sun. Jan. 9	Lac Monroe	EMD	N
		A neighbour of Pimbina's. Chalet with fireplace and washrooms. All kinds of trails.		
3	Sat. Jan. 15	La Mauricie	EM	N
		(Trois-Rivières) One of Canada's National Parks. Good chalet with facilities and plenty of well-groomed trails.		
4	Sun. Jan. 16	Le Petit Bonheur	EMD	N
		(Lanaudière) Some think it is a little difficult. Lots of fun, though, with warming huts available here as well.		
5	Sat. Jan. 22	Far Hills Inn (Laurentians)	EMD	Y
		Perhaps our most popular destination, with 2 buses. Great facilities: equipment rental, or take a lesson from the professionals (at your expense), cafeteria, nice piano bar to relax in at the end of the day.		
6	Sat. Jan. 29	Mont Orford	EMD	Y
		(Eastern Townships) Well-groomed trails, warming huts, washrooms. A delight!		
7	Sat. Feb. 5	St. Jovite (Laurentians)	EMD	N
		Go to Domaine St-Bernard with its bird sanctuary, ski past Grey Rocks (don't get lost; someone did last year!) or just ski! Villa Bellevue awaits at the end of the day.		
8	Sat. Feb. 12	Rivière Rouge (Outaouais)	EM	Y
		Great hamburgers and other snacks in the chalet; small ski boutique, very pleasant countryside to ski in.		
9	Sat. Feb. 19	Mystery Destination	EM	N
		Who knows? Discover a new place to add to your repertoire. Always bring your own food.		
10	Sun. Feb. 20	Sutton en Haut	EMD	N
		(Eastern Townships) A place we haven't visited for some time.		
11	Sat. Feb. 26	L'Esterel (Laurentians)	EM	Y
		Another wonderful old faithful. Great, groomed trails, nice cafeteria, wonderful scenery.		
12	Sat. Mar. 5	Montebello (Outaouais)	EM	Y
		Our next-to-last trip with well-manicured trails surrounding the largest log building in the world. A real treasure!		
13	Sat. Mar. 12	Farmer's Rest	EM	Y
		(Eastern Townships) Our end-of-season party - great food and beverages after a run at the trails. Our hospitable hosts at Farmer's Rest have enticed us back again this year (weather permitting, of course).		

Trail Rating

Easy: flat, machine groomed

Moderate: gentle hills, mixed machine and skier tracked

Difficult: hilly, narrow, wooded trails

Restaurants

Y: available N: not available

Always bring a lunch in case the destination is changed.

Price: \$24 by December 10, \$26 after.

Trip 13 is \$27 by December 10, \$29 after.

Destinations may change due to snow or road conditions. In adverse conditions, call the Club number (489-0339) after 8 p.m. the evening before the trip to verify that the trip is on.

Bus Departure Times

7:30 a.m. Atwater and Ste. Catherine St. (McDonald's)

7:45 a.m. Queen Mary and Décarie (TD Bank)

8:00 a.m. TMR Shopping Centre (Murray's Restaurant)

Trip Registration

Continuing good news! Prices are again the same as last year: \$24 and \$27 for the end-of-season party. Please note that there is a surcharge of \$2 for signups received after December 10. Cheques **must** be dated and received by then for the regular price to apply.

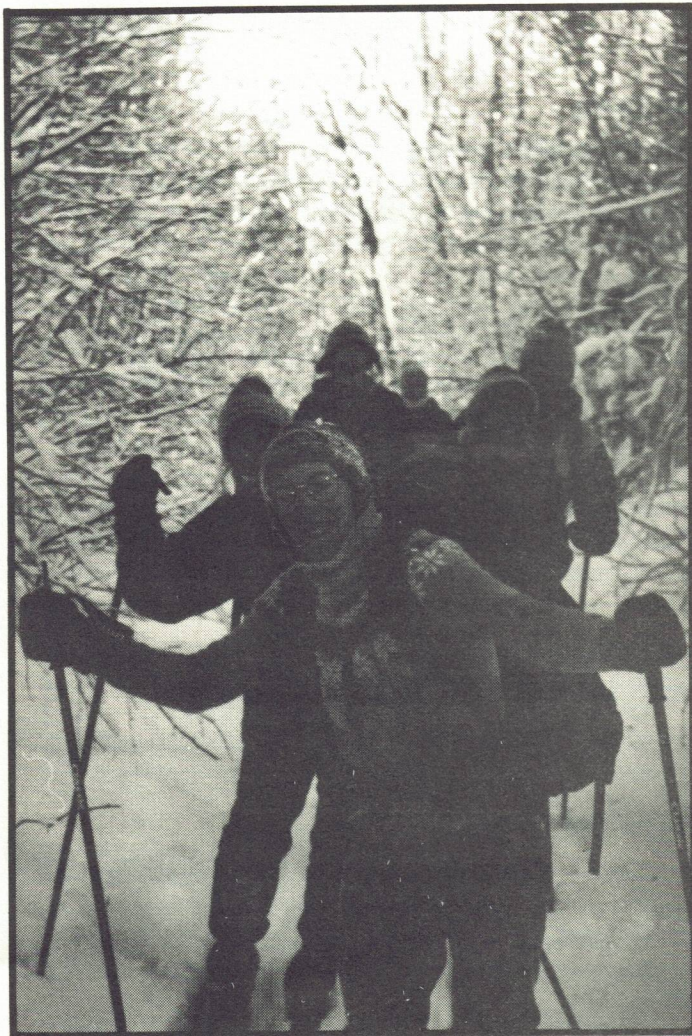
To get your first choice of trips, sign up early by doing one of the following:

- **Mail** the registration form and payment to the Club address.
- Sign up at the **Halloween Party** on Saturday, October 30, Westmount Royal Regiment Armoury, 4625 Ste. Catherine St. West. Registration will be from 8 to 9:30 p.m.
- Come to **Signup Night** on Wednesday, November 10, Atwater Library, Atwater & Tupper St., 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Registrations will be accepted after November 10, but call the Club tape first to see which trips have space available. Your cheque should arrive at least one week before the trip date.

Atwater Signup Night

The fall signup and information night will be at the Atwater Library, 1200 Atwater at Tupper, on **Wednesday, November 10**, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Come on down and talk to the Skiing Committee about the season's trips, or send a friend who wants to find out about Randonnée Aventure.



Some happy Randonne'ers pose for posterity.

Photo by Gerry Bard

Downhill Ski Outing

After the cross-country season has closed, why not change to downhill skis and come with us for the day to Owl's Head in the Eastern Townships? We go on Saturday, March 19, by luxury coach leaving at 7:30 a.m. from only one pickup point: Queen Mary & Decarie (West Side, next to United Cigar Store)

We will leave Owl's Head to return to Montreal at 4:30 p.m. to the Queen Mary & Decarie dropoff only.

Cost: \$24 before December 10, \$26 thereafter, for the bus transportation. The lift ticket will be at a group rate of approximately \$20, which will be collected on the bus.

Canadian Ski Marathon

February 12-13, 1994

The Canadian Ski Marathon (CSM) returns with a twist this year: For the first time in 28 years the marathon will change direction, starting in Gatineau and ending in Lachute. This presents new challenges for both skiers (imagine skiing section 3 or 8 in the opposite direction!) and for CSM organizers. RA participates in the CSM in several ways. As well as skiing, we are active in trail maintenance and promotion. The CSM relies on volunteers, and our help is important in the following ways:

1. Skiing - The word "marathon" scares off a lot of people but it is misleading. The 170 km, two-day event is divided into 10 sections and you ski as many - or as few - sections as you want. Last year 37 RA skiers won the Maxi-team trophy by completing over 170 sections. Anne Harper will be the Maxi-team Captain again this year. RA helps arrange overnight accommodation to fit all budgets, ranging from the luxurious but expensive Chateau Montebello to mid-priced hotels and inexpensive school dormitories. We also try to arrange car pooling. The CSM is an opportunity to ski lovely trails that are only open once a year, and should not be missed. There will be an information and signup meeting on Thursday, November 25. Please phone the Club tape the week before to find out the time and location.

2. Trail Maintenance - Teams from RA under the leadership of Gerry Bard will be clearing and (maintaining) a section of the marathon trail on 3 days: October 23, November 14 and 20. No experience is required, though a good sense of humour is appreciated!

3. Marathon Volunteers - Over 300 volunteers are usually needed to run the marathon and the trail reversal has created a new need for volunteers from Montreal. RA members who are not skiing and who would like to participate are invited to help with the awards tabulation and distribution in Lachute on Sunday the 13th. Karen Findlay will organize this activity.

4. CSM Promotion - In the past, RA members have helped to distribute registration forms and posters in the Montreal area. If you have a few spare hours in November, Gerry would be glad to hear from you.

Let us know how you want to participate by checking one or more of the boxes on the registration form or by leaving a message on the Club tape (489-0339) for Anne (skiing), Karen (volunteers), or Gerry (trail maintenance and promotion). Looking forward to hearing from you.

Anne Harper

WEEKEND GETAWAYS

Cross-Country Ski Weekend

Gatineau Park

Friday, January 28 - Sunday, January 30

Last year our day trip of cross-country skiing in Gatineau Park and skating on the Rideau Canal in Ottawa was so well received that we decided to return for our cross-country ski weekend in 1994. We have found delightful, cosy accommodation in a small, centrally-located bed and breakfast in Ottawa, called O'Connor House Bed and Breakfast. Our luxury coach will take us from Montreal to Ottawa Friday evening, and on Saturday and Sunday to Gatineau Park, a 15-minute drive away, to revel in the myriad world-class cross-country ski trails. Optionally, you may choose to bring along your skates (or O'Connor House keeps skates for its guests) to glide on the nearby Rideau Canal. There is also snow-shoeing in Gatineau Park. For those wanting to improve their cultural physique, there are many museums in walking distance from O'Connor's.

Included in the cost of the weekend: Return transportation to Montreal, Ottawa and Gatineau Park; 2 nights at O'Connor House with full buffet-style breakfasts; trail fees for Saturday and Sunday; and a hearty buffet-style dinner Saturday evening at Patty's Pub, ten minutes away in Patty's shuttle bus!

Our luxury bus will depart from Atwater and Ste. Catherine (in front of McDonald's) at 7 p.m. **sharp** on Friday, January 28, and from Ottawa on Sunday at 4 p.m.

Cost is **\$140**, and non-members must also buy a \$25 one-year membership. To reserve, you must make a deposit of **\$50**, with the balance due no later than **December 10**. A late payment fee of **\$20** must be added to any reservation received **after December 10**.

Join us for a truly capital weekend!

Wilderness Ski Weekend

Papineau-Labelle

Saturday, March 5 - Sunday, March 6

This event is a great equalizer! We ski together, sweat together, cook together and sleep together in cozy quarters.

Réserve Faunique Papineau-Labelle is our anticipated destination this year, after our successful excursion last year. The cabin will accommodate 15 skiers comfortably. Participants must be able to ski 15 kilometres with a backpack containing a sleeping bag, change of clothing, lunch and liquids for the trail, and food and drink for dinner and breakfast. Cooking supplies and food are coordinated by the trip leader and the load is distributed evenly.

Transportation is by carpool early Saturday morning with return on Sunday evening. Cost for accommodation is \$20 each, to be mailed with your registration form. Food and gear costs are shared among the group.

Since the hut cannot be reserved until November 1, and we may not be able to get our preferred accommodation please save February 26 & 27 as an alternate if you wish to participate. The date will be confirmed in early November.

Smoking Policy

The vast majority of Randonnée Aventure members are non-smokers, and prefer a smoke-free environment. Members who smoke are requested to respect the wishes of other participants, or smoke where they will not be affected.

How to Buy or Sell a Day Trip

Fees for day trips cannot be refunded for any reason. If you are unable to come on a trip, you may personally sell the trip to anyone you wish — a friend or relative. If this is not possible, RA has a service where we will attempt to sell the trip to a member. Once you have activated the RA service, you must not attempt to sell the trip on your own, which might result in double-selling the trip. Priority will always be given to the person who bought the trip through the RA system.

Selling a Trip during the Season:

From Monday to Wednesday prior to the trip, call the Club tape and leave a message. RA will **not** call you back, but if a buyer is found, a cheque will be mailed to you for the regular trip price.

Buying a Trip during the Season:

From Monday to Wednesday prior to the trip, call the Club number and leave a message. On the Friday evening before the trip, call back to listen to the names of people who have been added to the trip list. If you hear your name, show up with \$26 cash or a cheque payable to "Randonnée Aventure". We do not carry change on the bus.

If you don't hear your name, you can still go to the *last* pickup point (Murray's - TMR Shopping Centre at Lucerne Road) where you have a good chance of coming along, as there is often room on the bus due to "no-shows".

RA can neither give refunds nor guarantee the sale of any trip.

Season's Report

What a great season: 11 daytrips, two extended hikes, one wilderness weekend and no one permanently lost. Also, the weekend trips have been superb, especially Gorham, NH and the Presidential Range. Thanks to those volunteers who have made this year a success - the trip leaders and assistants. Thanks also to a few who have gone a little bit further: Maida, Michael, Sue, Colleen, Gerry, Don, Clive and Elise.

Again this year, weather conditions have occasionally looked doubtful, but many have been rewarded with fine days for their efforts. However, you have to take a little risk to catch the most impressive sights when the weather changes.

The season began with an immensely successful Outdoor Literacy Clinic, for which I would like to thank all those who spent time organizing, preparing the material and being responsible for a portion of the event: Gerry, Maida, Colleen, Clive, Don and Elise. It will finish with the carpool hike to popular Mt. Laraway in Vermont.

For next year, I would like to welcome Clive Brewer as Assistant Director. If anyone has suggestions or ideas, we have started to plan next year's activities and always welcome members who wish to be more active. I know you may be busy, or modest, or whatever, but everybody can contribute to a variety of tasks.

Andrew Byrne

Weekend at Johns Brook Lodge

Four-and-twenty intrepid RA hikers, ably captained by Diana McDougall, ventured deep into the Adirondacks on July 3-4 this year. The objective was Johns Brook Lodge, a base from which to tackle lots of interesting hikes that time won't allow us to do on a daytrip. This is an area RA has visited before on Wilderness weekends, but this was the first stay in the Lodge.

The Lodge was a great success. The night's accommodation included dinner and breakfast and the staff prepared two excellent meals, including home-made ice-cream! (Beer was not included, but some enterprising members managed to procure some).

The hiking was spectacular. Armstrong, Gothics, Basin, Saddleback, Haystack, all conquered in terrific weather. Acrobatic descents of steep rock slides, wonderful views, a great weekend (except for the bugs, which were just awful). Fortunately the ever-helpful Lodge staff came up with a miracle cure - vinegar smeared on bites prevents itching!

Many thanks to Diana for organizing the weekend. All agreed that the trip would be worth repeating, perhaps even staying two nights instead of one, to maximize the hiking. And perhaps out of bug season!

Clive Brewer

Late Season Hike

Sunday, November 14

Derek Wisdom is organizing a late fall hike for strong and intermediate hikers, at Chertsey, near Rawdon. For more information, call Derek at 352-6849.

Long Trail Maintenance 1993

What do Hazen's Notch, the Frank Post Trail, Eden Crossing and the Forester's Trail all have in common? They are access points to RA's portion of the Long Trail (LT) near Jay Peak in northern Vermont. It has been an active year for trail maintenance on our ten of its 265 miles. With the help and guidance of Rolf and Sharon Anderson of Vermont Voyageur, Rand and Michelle of the Green Mountain Club (GMC) Northern Trail Crew, Lars Botzjorns and Paul Neubauer of the GMC, the place "don't look the same".

This past Spring, we (the core group of RA trail maintainers) revamped our operation. Inventories were updated, tools cleaned and repaired, and joint decisions were hammered out to streamline and improve our organization. The initial hard work has brought gratifying results. We have met all our goals and objectives for each trail maintenance weekend, and accomplished the following:

- Spring walk-through from Belvidere - Tillotson - Haystack
- Water bar work completed at Hazen's Notch.
- Tillotson Camp clean up accomplished and temporary directional and camp signs installed.
- Approximately 12 "blowdowns" met their demise with the help of Maureen Robertson's chainsaw expertise.
- Reroute of the Forrester's Trail completed in August, 1993.
- Seeding of Frank Post Trail completed.
- Permanent signs for Tillotson Camp and LT Trail devised and sent to Don Hill of the GMC. Installed in July 1993.
- New stone pathways installed around the beaver dam reroute.
- Three puncheons (bog bridges) installed on LT North just past Tillotson Camp.
- Completed summer brushing and blazing of trail.

To the core group of RA trail maintainers, I thank you all: Allan Feider, Hélène Millas, Maureen Robertson, Derek Wisdom, Diana McDougall, Ian Deakin, Mike Habib. And to our new trail maintainers, much thanks and appreciation for a great job. We need new voices and input to keep RA trail maintenance going.

Trail maintenance never stops, and as I look at the calendar, October 16th is just around the corner. Time to get waterbars cleared for the winter, drainage dips completed and ditches clear for spring runoff..... I love working trail.

Colleen Wilford

Trail Maintenance in Quebec

On May 1st this year, the RA trail maintenance team got its first look at the amount of work needed in the Lac Supérieur region of Mont Tremblant. Our small, but efficient team joined up with Intercentre members to clear trails near the summit of Mount Nixon. Our trek also showed us that a lot of work remains.

This fall, another group of RA members will team up with the Intercentre committee to clip and shave the summer's growth on La Vache Noire, a section with a spectacular view of Mont Tremblant and the Lac Monroe region. There is an urgent need for people to help open up this trail, and provide Intercentre with willing and able hands.

On Saturday, November 6, the RA team will head up to Lac Supérieur. If you would like to help out, just call the Club tape and leave your name and number.

Mike Serniuk

BACKPACKING IN VIRGINIA

After last year's exhilarating week of backpacking in Baxter State Park, Maine, I didn't want to lose the experience I had gained learning how to pack, what to bring, how to light the stove! So Colleen Wilford, Maureen Robertson and I set out this past July for another week of backpacking, this time in the mountains of Shenandoah National Park in Virginia.

We spent fifteen hours on our first day, driving from Montreal to Skyland Lodge on the Skyline Drive in Shenandoah National Park. It sounds terrible, but actually, it went well, with each of us taking a turn at the wheel of Maureen's truck. Once there, we found the accommodations to be plain, but very well done and in harmony with the forest.

After breakfast in the Lodge the next day, we drove to our chosen trailhead and set out for a five-day backpacking trip. We hiked along the Big Blue-Tuscarora Trail which extends about 220 miles from Shenandoah north to Pennsylvania. No, we didn't do all that, I'm still in training! As there was a drought in the area, we were somewhat concerned about having sufficient water for drinking and cooking, so we decided to camp at Overall Run Falls which was only about 3 miles along the trail. There were no actual falls, but certainly plenty of water for our needs.

Shenandoah abounds with wildlife, and we saw several deer and fawns. Deer visited us each night at our three different campsites, and almost looked like they were begging for table scraps. Of course, feeding the wildlife is not permitted. It was great to see them so at ease among us.

The next day we moved along and came across another spot with waterfalls and a pool for swimming. Yep, we figured this was a good spot! Up went the tent and on went the bathing suits. As we hiked along the trails we saw abundant evidence of bears. Did you know that, in addition to berries, bears eat pine cones? Maureen and I saw a small bear the first day. I guess it heard us singing and ran away as quickly as possible! Colleen came face to face with another bear a few days later as she rounded a corner of the trail. They both stopped short, surprised to realize they had to share the trail with each other. Guess who won? Maureen and I were quite surprised to see Colleen coming back towards us waving her hands to silence us and let us know we had company. By the time we composed ourselves and resumed our hike, our neighbour had disappeared.

Our third campsite was the best of all. A true waterfall, with a wide brook and overhanging trees provided shade from the hot sun and a haven for butterflies. We had a great place for bathing, a clear, spacious area for our tent and a lovely setting for two days. Colleen and Maureen went on a day-hike from there the next day, while I stayed behind to enjoy the magic of this faery-tale land. I quietly sat on the large rocks in the brook and watched the antics of a number of butterflies. They were very beautiful and captivated me for a couple of hours.

Later, when Maureen and Colleen returned, we all gathered on the rocks to peer into a pool of clear water in the hopes of glimpsing a large speckled trout (Oops, I've given myself away as a northerner. Apparently, only northerners use the term speckled trout. A local Virginian told me that Virginians have another name for this fish but I don't remember what it is.) As we peered into the depths of the pool, I happened to turn my head and my eyes widened as I pointed out to Maureen and Colleen two long, brown snakes which had come out to sun themselves on the hot rocks. We immediately jumped back and maintained a certain distance between us and them. From the descriptions in the guidebook, we deduced that they were copperhead snakes and, yes, were poisonous. One of them slipped into the water to have a swim and look around for some insects for dinner, I think. Needless to say, we were well out of the water and prepared to relinquish all claim to our pool forever. He eventually returned to bask in the sunlight again and while two of us stood guard, we each took turns going for a dip since it was so hot.

We finally hiked out after four nights on the trail, putting some of the Appalachian Trail under our feet as part of our route back to the truck. There were great tasting berries to pick along the route and we finally met a few people. Before this, we had not seen another person for three days.

Back at the truck, we drove to Big Meadows Campground on Skyline Drive and set up camp there. Next day was a day hike up Old Rag Mountain, which we had been advised not to miss by everyone we had spoken to. Old Rag was great fun, with tight, narrow boulders to wedge yourself through, up, over and onto. It was my first experience landing on my head while hiking. The narrow path led up between rocks to a small ledge, big enough for one person. Maureen had scrambled up there and was waiting, watching me. She must have put one of her hexes to work, because there was no way I could figure out how to get up there. I was on the ledge from the waist up, with my feet dangling in the air. (It wasn't dangerous, don't worry!) I just kept inching forward until I had most of me on the ledge, then rolled over on my back and tried to recover from the aches and pains of laughing so hard. Maureen, of course, was killing herself! No help from that friend!!

That night we drove to the George Washington State Forest, and found a great little campground there where we stayed. Dinner was at a charming old Virginian hotel in a small town, which one normally finds by accident as we did. No doubt, the best meal of our trip, with their Blue-Ridge Ritas (a Marguerita with Blue Curacao) coming in a close second, in my opinion.

On the drive home, we stopped in Pennsylvania to visit Gettysburg, the place of Abraham Lincoln's famous speech after the Civil War. We also stopped in Lancaster County, the home of the Amish, Mennonite and Brethren plain people of Pennsylvania. Definitely, there is lots more hiking and cycling in that beautiful state to be explored as well.

Susan Harris

NORTH... TO ALASKA

Alaska. I know you've always wanted to go there. To experience this huge, vast, wild area is on every outdoor enthusiast's agenda. This past July, I went backpacking in Denali National Park. The highest peak in North America, Mt. Denali (previously Mt. McKinley) was extending an invitation to me. To enjoy this trip even more, instead of flying out there, I drove my own vehicle, a Nissan Pathfinder. I wanted to really build that sense of anticipation. I have always been powerfully attracted to the mountains, and have hiked extensively in the Rockies, as well as the Himalayas and now the Alaska range. This is living.

I left Montreal July 6, and arrived in Fairbanks, Alaska on July 16. As an aside, I've always wanted to go north of the Arctic Circle, and had the opportunity to accompany a bush pilot on his regular mail run to Allakaket, Anaktuvuk Pass and Beddles. Anaktuvuk Pass is a small Inuit community of 250 people, roughly 220 km north of the Arctic Circle and some inhabitants still live in sod huts. These are basically log cabins, 10 feet by 15 feet and covered with plenty of insulating sod. They're very sturdy, plus they are very warm in the winter. Outside these primitive homes are racks to dry caribou skins. And beside them are, in this land of contrasts, satellite dishes. One young Inuit I talked with seemed to know more about Chicago than his own little village. Our flight back to Fairbanks followed the Alaska pipeline. This is truly an engineering marvel. Sometimes above ground, sometimes running under the surface, for more than eight hundred miles.

I then hopped into my trusty Pathfinder, and drove for six hours south to Talkeetna, our base for the trip. Talkeetna is the base for all summit attempts on Mt. Denali. (Talkeetna is Athabaskan for "Where Three rivers meet". The rivers are the Tokositna, Chulitna and Susitna) We would be flown into Denali Park and would land on a glacier called Slide. Six of us eco-vacationers, two guides and three pilots loaded our packs into three 4-seat bush planes equipped with skis. The flight was simply sensational. Our altitude was only about 4000 feet, so we felt that we were in and among these mighty peaks of the Alaska Range. The views of Mt. Denali and its surrounding peaks, glaciers and valleys were simply exquisite.

The planes landed on a small, smooth, snow-covered glacier. At this point Brian Okonek, our guide, mentioned we would be doing about 20 miles for the week. The six of us backpackers looked at one another as if to say, is that all? For a week? However, before the week was over, we walked through thick, lush, alder bushes, through rushing glacial streams, and up and down glacial moraines that were over 120 feet high. These moraines consisted of material which seemed to be ejected from a rock quarry. Rocks from six to 25 feet wide offered a continuous threat of twisted ankles and complete loss of balance. Needless to say, we took our time.

After landing on Slide Glacier, we hiked down to the Great Gorge. The gorge comprises six 5000-foot vertical rock faces, and the floor of the gorge is the Ruth glacier, 2.5 miles wide, 20 miles long and 7000 feet thick. We would be hiking along the lower five miles of it over the next two days. It was in this

setting that we made camp for our first night in Denali National Park. To say it was spectacular is simply insufficient. We were camped in a valley which supported tundra and little else. Across the valley was a huge glacier that was continually rumbling like distant thunder, not to mention the clear views of some breathtaking peaks. In addition, we had coined a new unit of measurement, the Alaska mile. An example of this was one twelve-hour day in which we hiked a grand total of six miles. The terrain was so difficult in this wilderness area, that an average day covered just four miles. That's moraine, snow, streams and climbing 2,000 vertical feet before lunch. Whew!

Each and every day was spectacular and different. We hiked along the lateral moraine of the Ruth Glacier and viewed beautiful green valleys, highlighted with bright pink patches of fireweed. Beautiful weather prevailed, except for two days of mist and low ceilings. But any mountain region creates its own weather, so five days of sun and no days of rain was rare and quite welcome. From the Ruth, we ascended straight up an 1800-foot, 70-degree, incline (and I thought Mt. Dix was tough). Instead of switchbacking up this grade, we... went... straight... up. With about 50 pounds on our backs, this was tough. Our guide, Brian, was also an accomplished mountaineer (he has conquered Mt. Denali 22 times and been on 27 expeditions). So, for him, this was a piece of cake. For us... well, it felt good to get to the top.

We camped in the increasing mist and then descended into Alder Valley, seemingly named because of the very annoying Alder bushes. These dense shrubs, resembling mini-trees, seemed to reach out and grab our packs and throw us down for the count. We were also constantly practising our pig callingsooooo-eeeEEE? This to let the large population of bear and moose know that we were coming through this densely vegetated area. We did not want to experience a mutual, unexpected meeting. It took us a day and a half to negotiate four miles through this stuff. We would start at 8:30 in the morning, and because the sun set close to midnight, we would hike until seven or so. The sun would rise around 4 am, so it never really got dark.

After crossing streams which were just glacial ice a mile up the valley, we started to increase our altitude, something that does not happen gradually here. Again we ascended straight up a steep, 1500-foot incline. We camped on an unnamed pass, and the clouds were so close, we could almost touch them. However, bits of blue sky were trying to break through the mist and fog, and it looked so promising that our spirits were, indeed, sky high. We wanted to see Mt. Denali.

The next day dawned with a low ceiling and we were climbing into it. Needless to say, visibility was perhaps 75 feet. We trusted Brian to guide us to our destination of Alder Peak, elevation 4270 feet. We made camp in the clouds and could see nothing. Our collective sense of direction was non-existent. As we removed our soaked socks and boots, and got comfy, the sky began to clear. We were getting more and more excited. "Let's go up to Alder Peak (another 400 vertical feet) and sit and watch the sky clear." It did - almost. It was as if the curtain of the most anticipated Broadway show of the year was opening very slowly,

just to tantalize us. There was a hint of Mt. Foraker, and... oh... was that Mt. Hunter? Denali was still socked in. At 20,320 feet, it was substantially higher than the cumulo-nimbus curtain. We stayed up until 10 pm, and then it was time for bed.

We didn't have to leave until noon tomorrow, so we stayed on Alder the next morning. The pure mountain air filled us with childlike exhilaration. The sky was clearing, and we had breakfast on the saddle of Alder Pass. We relaxed, one read a book, I practised tai-chi (what a setting!) waiting for Denali to clear, and within a 15-minute span, it did. It was splendid, stupendous and massive. It was 18 miles away and occupied our entire field of view. We posed for photos, we gazed, we absorbed the enormous size of this world-class peak. We were awestruck. A rare opportunity to see this mountain as few have seen it was opened for us. Some visitors to this region have never seen Mt. Denali due to poor weather, and there it was. This was great. We were happy. And it was time to leave.

We started the descent and viewed a number of bears and moose through binoculars. We were descending into their domain and made preparations to increase our awareness of them. It took us two more days to reach the Tokositna River, the trip's terminus. En route, we picked blueberries (for our pancakes at breakfast), watermelon berries (the size and shape of jelly beans but with a surprising taste of watermelon) and cloud berries (tasted like mild yogurt). The tundra quite abruptly changed to a boreal forest. Tall, lush grass, 40-foot pine trees (some covered in moss), dense alder brush, and a shady deciduous canopy, in which the mosquitoes thrived. The familiar

terrain was welcome. And then there were the bogs, ground which resembled a sponge, covered with 12 inches of grass. We walked on this spongy terrain for about two miles. However, the sun was shining brightly, the mosquitoes were not bothering us, and the water in our boots was actually quite refreshing.

We finally reached our destination, which was the confluence of Alder Creek and the Tokositna River. There, a local resident was to pick us up in his powerboat and skim across the silty river surface, while avoiding accumulations of driftwood, to return us to Talkeetna.

Once back in this hamlet of 200 souls, I had the wonderful opportunity to meet a world renowned photographer, equivalent to Ansel Adams. His name was Bradford Washburn. Within the mountaineering community, he is a legend. He has climbed the major peaks in the Himalayas and Alaska and had developed a revolutionary method for photographing mountainous regions of the world. His wife, Barbara, was the first woman to climb Mt. McKinley (during the 1930s). Meeting him was yet another thrill on this amazing trip.

That evening we checked into hotel rooms, cleaned up, and had a non-freeze-dried meal at the local meeting place, "Latitude 62". After relaxing our tired bones, a couple of us went out to look at where we had just come from. Mt. Denali was now 60 miles away, yet it still managed to dominate the skyline. Although it was past midnight, there it shone, still capturing light from the setting sun. Just spectacular.

Pete Malagutti

CLASSY ADS


Therm-a-rest self-inflating mattress, good as new, 3/4 length. Best offer gets it. Call 281-1922 and leave a message.

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Call 281-1922.



The Cycling Report - 1993

Well, there goes another season! All good things must come to an end. Besides, if we cycled all winter, we would be denying ourselves the pleasure of breaking in our butts to the saddle every spring!

It's time therefore to reflect on the season just ending, even if nostalgia is not what it used to be! We've had yet another tremendous cycling season and the weather was superb, due mainly to our cycling co-directors who made regular banana and muffin offerings to the cycling god at Al's shrine on Prud'homme.

This year, we returned to the Coolidge Hotel in White River Junction for the always popular RA Victoria Day weekend. Often when you return to a place where you had a great time it's not so much fun the second time around, but that wasn't the case with the Coolidge Hotel. A great time was had by all. The hospitality was what we've come to expect, and the weather co-operated!

Once again, we're able to report that the state of RA cycling is healthy and vibrant. We added an extra trip this year and reduced our trip cost, and preliminary findings show another 100% sold-out season. Credit is due to your cycling committee for planning and overseeing another successful season; and the trip leaders, their assistants and scouts, for their work in organizing and running the trips. The 1993 cycling committee members were Jill Aspinall, Elise Brais, Mike de Tracy, Cathy Ladanowski, Egon Nickel, Al Ramsay, Linda Shear, Jan Wilk, Ray Stevenson, Gail Tedstone, Wayne Waters, and Monika Malecka (who also was cycling administrator).

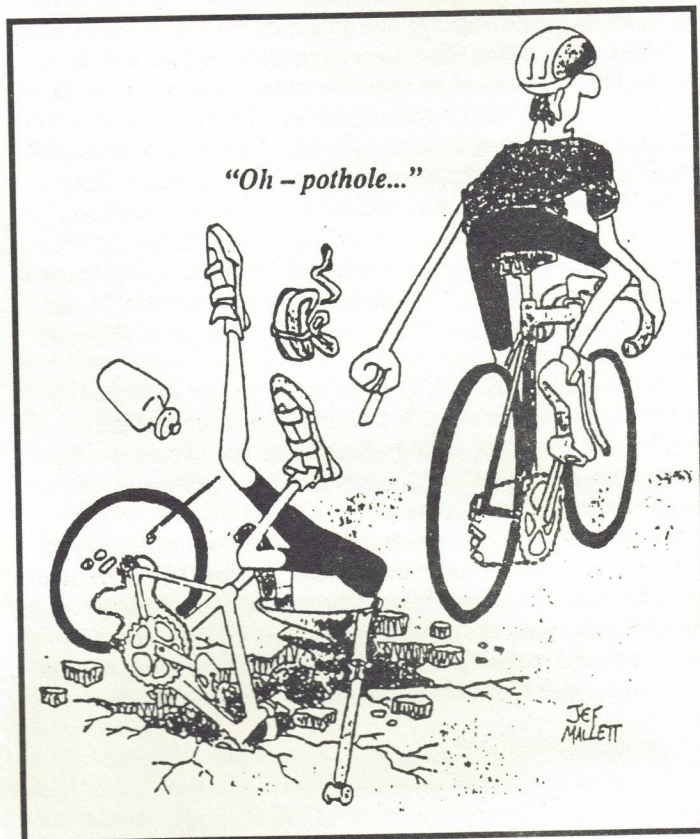
In addition to the Club trips this year, we had a number of other activities: the trip leaders briefing (thanks to Cathy Ladanowski); the cycle repair clinic, which is more successful every year (thanks to Jim Mullett); the Lachine Canal promotion which was handled by Egon Nickel and Linda Shear; and the very successful (inaugural?) West Island Tour & BBQ, also run by Linda and Egon.

The ritual Rideau Lakes Tour double century (100 miles each day on a June weekend) was attended by some 35 RA members. They were the usual mixture of: those who do it because they always do it; those who are doing it for the challenge; and those who don't really know why they are doing it! This year's tour was blessed by good weather on both days, which was very unusual. One year, it rained so much, it seemed like we were cycling *through* the Rideau Lakes! Congratulations to everyone, especially the first-timers. Some of them had never cycled more than 50 miles in one day at the start of the season, never mind two consecutive 100-mile days! These gutsy riders show us all that personal goals can be met by combining dedication, determination and a planned training schedule.

For those of you thinking of entering next year's Rideau Lakes tour, please note that applications must be mailed early in the year. Finally, we're always looking for people, just like you, who are ready and willing to lend a hand in some way or another. "Think not what your Club can do for you but what you can do for your Club!" Leave your name and phone number on the Club tape, or indicate your interests on the registration form.

Now, where did I put my skis?!

Al Ramsay & Ray Stevenson



Discounts for RA

The following stores offer RA members discounts on regular prices. Present your membership card when making a purchase.

Blacks Camping Int'l
3525 Queen Mary Rd.
739-4451

Dr. Bike
559 Lakeshore Rd.
631-2198

Sirens Ski Shop
6131 Sherbrooke St. W.
482-2734

Cascapedia Sports
263B St-Jean Blvd, Pte-Claire
694-6374

The Trading Post
5385 Queen Mary Rd.
484-3447

McWhinnie Cycle Inc.
6010 Sherbrooke St. W.
481-3113

Norway Nordic
127 rue Ste Anne,
Ste Anne de Bellevue
457-9131

Cascapedia Sports
263B St-Jean Blvd,
Pte-Claire
694-6374

Le Yeti Boutique Plein Air
5127 St-Laurent
271-0773

VB Cycle Inc.
6344 Victoria Ave.
738-21201

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The Pre-Season Shape-Up

FOR THE SKIS:

Removing Klister

It is better to remove klister right after skiing – no one does, but it is a good idea! Bring your skis inside and let them warm up. It makes the klister softer and easier to remove.

1. Scrape off as much as you can by chiseling with the spreader and wiping the spreader off with a rag.
2. Now use the liquid wax remover and a rag to remove the rest of the klister. Avoid removing the glide wax from the tips and tails of your skis. Wipe the sidewalls and top deck of the ski carefully if you plan on putting the skis inside your new BMW.

An/Une INVITATION

Pour les membres de
For the members of
RANDONNÉE
AVENTURE

COME AND VISIT!
Soyez les bienvenus!

TUES, OCT. 26, '93
Mardi, le 26 oct. '93

8:00 p.m. 20 hrs

VIDEO, INFO, FUN
AND FOOD!

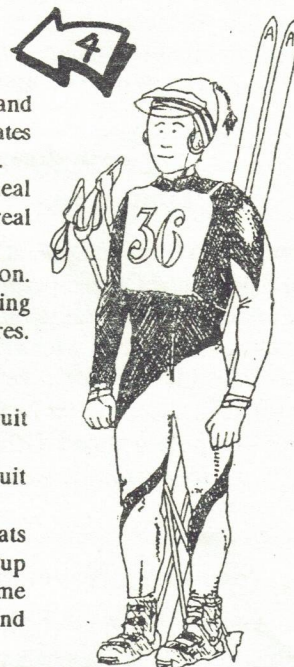


Bring a friend!

FOR THE SKIER:

- See that you eat well: that you have sufficient food, and that the greater part of your energy comes from carbohydrates taken in before you go to the camp or the competition.
- Eat a good breakfast every day, where the basis is oatmeal or muesli (granola) – not just a small helping, but a real portion!
- Eat lunch as soon as possible after the training session. Remember: the more time that passes between training and eating, the longer it will take to re-fill glycogen stores. Eat an extra plate of spaghetti, rice, or potatoes.
- Do the same for evening meals as for lunch.
- Take a snack to the ski track. Something easy is best: fruit is good, or something in a thermos.
- If you want something sweet after training, take fruit rather than candy.
- Eat a "night meal": the Swedish cross-country team eats an extra "night meal" every evening during the World Cup season. This consists of muesli and milk, bread with some sort of spread such as caviar, warm water with honey, and some fruit. Emphasis is on the muesli.

- Avoid steak, fried food – they contain too much fat. French fries and chips can be good, but for an athlete who wants to be at the top, they shouldn't be eaten very often. Ask for extra spaghetti or rice at each meal.
- Discuss and plan meal times: make meal times and training times fit together!



FOR THE BUDGET:

2 FOR 1 TUNE-UP... UNTIL/JUSQU'AU 31 OCT 31/93

SHAPE UP YOUR SKIS! Get a FREE tune-up with the purchase of a tune-up at regular price (clean/glider)
DES SKIS en FORME! Obtenez une mise au point gratuite avec l'achat d'une mise au point au prix régulier. (nettoyage / fart de glisse)

CROSS COUNTRY SKIS ONLY!
SKI DE FOND SEULEMENT!

Social Stuff

Tuesdays, October & November Volleyball Fitness

Tom Ravnay will again offer a **Volleyball and Ski Fitness Program** at Wagar High School in Côte St.-Luc. This is a great way to get in shape for the ski season with exercises that have been specifically designed for cross-country and downhill skiers. The 10 week program will run on Tuesdays from September 28 to November 30, 6:30 - 8:30 pm. The cost is \$55. Please call Tom at 849-8884 for details and to sign up.

Saturday, October 30 Halloween Party & Signup

Westmount's Royal Regiment, 4625 Ste. Catherine St. W. from 8 pm till...? Come in costume and join us for dancing, door prizes and registration for the ski season. Registration desk closes at 9:30. \$5 with a party snack, \$10 without. Suggestions include pâtés, crudities, dips (salsa, guacamole, cheese), fruit slices, finger foods, bat's blood, eye of newt, but **please - no potato chips!** Offers to help with decorating, door duty or the food table are welcome. Please leave your name on the Club tape.

Sunday, November 21 Ice Skating

For old members and new! Join us at 4 pm at the **Bell Amphitheatre**, 1000 de la Gauchetiere (Bonaventure Metro) for an afternoon of skating followed by dinner at a nearby restaurant. Admission is \$4.50, but will be reduced if we are a group of more than 15. Locker and skate rental are available. Rsvp to the Club tape, leaving a message for Elise by Friday, November 19, so we know how many dinner reservations to make.

Sunday, December 12

Holiday Potluck Dinner Dance

Please join us for this festive event starting at 5:30 pm at McGill's Thompson House, 3650 McTavish, above Penfield. A dish for six to eight people, valued at approximately \$8 is required for admission. Your last name determines the category of your contribution:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| A - Be | Breads: an assortment - with basket |
| Bi - Bra | Crackers: a variety - no soda biscuits |
| Bre- Fi | Dessert, pre-sliced if possible |
| Fo- G | Fruit ready to serve |
| H - Le | Appetizers, finger foods, crudities, dips, no chips |
| Lo- R | Main Dishes: meat dishes, cold cuts, cheeses, pastas |
| S - T | Salads, veggie, pasta, potato |
| V - Z | Quiches, slightly warm |

Food should be on platters and accompanied by serving utensils. (Put your name on any servingware you bring). Please do not bring a dish to be defrosted or heated. RA will supply plates cutlery, napkins and coffee. Drinks will be available from the cash bar. If you want to help out with decorating or the food table, please leave a message on the Club tape.

Thursday, January 27

Moonlit Ski or Walk on Mount Royal

Bring a flashlight and meet at the Chalet at Beaver Lake at 7:30. Perhaps we'll go for refreshments after. Feb. 24 is the rain date.

Sunday, March 13 Dow Planetarium & Supper

Come and see the stars! (celestial, not Hollywood). We will see a show in the afternoon then go out for supper. The details are still a bit cloudy, but they will become clearly visible in the Winter Randonnotes and on the Club tape.



Can you identify these costumed Randonne'ers at last year's Halloween Party?

Photo by Gerry Bard

Social Dancing

Some of us had a great time learning to trip the light fantastic last winter with Rosie and Tony. Our cries of more! more! more! have been answered. While classes have already started in September, we are offering a second 6-week session in late October. The cost is \$84, and the class is limited to 30 participants, so sign up early. **Note:** You don't need a partner to participate, and friends of members are also welcome.

Times are 7 to 9 pm, on Wednesdays, Oct. 27, Nov. 3, 10, 24, Dec 1, 8. The location is the gymnasium of the Montreal Association for the Blind, 7000 Sherbrooke Street West, NDG, (just across the street from Loyola Campus of Concordia University).

Dinner-Dance: On Saturday, November 20, Rosie and Tony will host an evening of dining and dancing. A great chance to put on those fancy duds and kick up your ballroom heels! Exact details of the location will be available soon, but mark your calendar now for this tremendous evening. Cost will be \$53, payable directly to Tony and Rosie.

For more information about this event or registering for the course, call the Club number and leave a message for Susan Harris.

First Aid Course

RA is encouraging members to take a 16-hour First Aid Course with The St. John Ambulance Brigade, and a subsequent 8-hour Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation Course. If you have never taken this type of course or if you would like to renew your certification, now is the time. Make sure you have the skills to help someone at work, home or on one of RA's activities.

Cost: \$75 for the First Aid Course or \$120 for the combined First Aid/CPR course. RA will refund half the cost of the First Aid Course (\$37.50) or the Combined Course (\$60) to each Club member who successfully completes them. The CPR course cannot be taken alone.

Location: St. John Ambulance, 1407 Mountain St. (just north of Ste. Catherine St.)

Dates and Times: First Aid: Saturday Nov. 6 and Sunday Nov. 7 from 8:30 to 4:30. CPR: Saturday Nov. 13, 8:30 to 4:30.

For more information, leave a message for Anne Harper on the Club tape (489-0339) before October 27.

A minimum of 12 people are required for the course to take place, so sign up early!

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October

- 8 - 11** Sugarloaf, ME Weekend Getaway
- 16** Sat Larraway, VT hike
- 16 - 17** Trail Maintenance
- 23** Sat CSM Trail Maintenance
- 26** Tue Norway Nordic RA evening
- 30** Sat Halloween Party & Sign-up

November

- 6** Sat Quebec Trail Maintenance
- 10** Wed Atwater Library Sign-up Evening
- 14** Sun CSM Trail Maintenance
- 14** Sun Late season hike, Chertsey, PQ
- 20** Sat CSM Trail Maintenance
- 21** Sun Ice Skating & Chinese Buffet
- 25** Thu Cdn Ski Marathon Information Night

December

- 8** Wed Orientation Night for Trip Leaders
- 12** Sun Holiday Dinner and Party

January

- 8** Sat Pimbina X-C day trip
- 9** Sun Lac Monroe X-C day trip
- 12** Wed Waxing Clinic at Jim's
- 15** Sat La Mauricie X-C day trip
- 16** Sun Petit Bonheur X-C day trip
- 19** Wed First X-C Ski lesson on Mount Royal
- 22** Sat Far Hills X-C day trip
- 27** Thu Full Moon Ski on Mount Royal
- 28 - 30** Ski Weekend (Ottawa/Gatineau Park)
- 29** Sat Mont Orford X-C day trip

February

- 5** Sat St. Jovite X-C day trip
- 11 - 13** Canadian Ski Marathon
- 12** Sat Riviere Rouge X-C day trip
- 14** Mon Deadline for Spring Randonnews
- 19** Sat Mystery destination X-C day trip
- 20** Sun Sutton-en-Haut X-C day trip
- 24** Thu Raindate, Full Moon Ski on Mount Royal
- 26** Sat L'Esterel X-C day trip

March

- 4-6** Wilderness Ski Weekend
- 5** Sat Montebello X-C day trip
- 12** Sat Farmer's Rest X-C day trip and party
- 13** Sun Dow Planetarium & dinner
- 19** Sat Owl's Head Downhill ski day trip

April

- 9** Sat AGM, Signup and Spring Party

For the latest information on Club events, call the RA tape at 489-0339

