

These are trip reports from Brian Faughnan, done for the McGill Outdoors Club from 1999 to 2002. They are provided here as a part of his memorial page (<http://www.faughnan.com/brian/memorialservice.html>).

These reports are in no particular order, see the bookmarks for dates.

Climbing at Seneca Rocks, Trip Report Nov 2, 1999

Actual trip was probably the week before - last week of sept 1999.

Standing on a ridge - two feet wide - towering eight-hundred feet over the valley floor, a warm, gentle breeze blowing through my hair, I looked down upon the panoply revealed before me on all sides: deer gamboling about in the forests to the west, men toiling in the farms to the east and I knew I looked upon the face of God... and he said: Y'all from Kaybec?... So you guys gonna secede from the union or what?

After driving from Montreal to the 'Gunks and from the 'Gunks to Seneca Rocks (14 hours all told) Kevin and I arrived at one of the few places on earth where the forces were great enough to lay down layers of sedimentary rock, turn it into quartzite, then flip the layers on end to form giant fins of rock protruding from the earth (apologies to Lea et al. if I have any of this wrong).

We stayed at Seneca Shadows Campground, aptly named for it is literally in the shadow of those looming blades, for \$6 US a night. This got us a camp site with a spectacular view of the Rocks and use of a toilet with running water and a hot shower (maybe luke-warm would be a better description, but good enough). The nights were freezing, but every day we were shocked at how warm it got on the rocks - as soon as we hit the sun on the East Face we would be broiling. There were only a handful of people at the campground and on the Rocks so we were able to climb just about anything we wanted.

The first day we started on the South End and climbed Candy Corner (5.5) to Skyline Traverse (5.3) (2 pitches) then crossed the Broadway Ledge on the East Face (scramble, 4th class) to Conn's East (5.5) (3 pitches), which took us the rest of the way up and across the East Face over to the North End of the South Peak. The route then climbed over the ridge to the south and the summit of Seneca. Then we crossed through a notch on the East Face and rapelled down the West Face. A day of easy, but perhaps the most spectacular climbing I've ever done - incredible views at every turn and lots of variety.

We found it was best to start the day on the South End or the East Face to get the morning sun, then climb the West Face in the afternoon. Several top-notch easy to moderate climbs (5.3-5.9) ascend the South End right from the trail. It is possible to start immediately on the West or East Face, but it involves some pretty strenuous hiking/scrambling/downclimbing and being lazy bastards we preferred to climb up from the South most of the time. Ecstasy (5.7) is another relentlessly vertical climb on the South End with two quasi-hanging belays that is perhaps the most popular climb at Seneca - with good reason.

The rock and the nature of the climbing is a lot like the 'Gunks. This was revealed to me most spectacularly on a climb called West Pole (5.7+). It has a double overhang and excellent protection in the crack that cuts through both overhangs - which was good since I decided at one point that feet were not necessary for climbing and managed to stretch the tendons in the fingers of my left hand, wrist, elbow and shoulder - a neat trick, but not one that should be attempted by amateurs. If done wrong, it can be quite painful and quite debilitating. Of course, it was no problem for me so I finished the pitch and led the next one - at which point I thought it might be a

Climbing at Seneca Rocks - Trip Report (fwd)

good idea to end the day. At the bottom, I decided I was bored with climbing at Seneca and suggested we hike instead.

In the morning, we left for Montreal - ah well, nothing lasts forever.

Brian (the one-armed man)
(happy-go-lucky-soon-to-be-former Rock Exec)

Climbing in the White Mountains
Wednesday, May 26, 1999.

Well the climbing trip this weekend went exactly as planned. We arrived at the Mt. Cannon parking lot on schedule and slept beside the highway, lulled to sleep by the gentle passage of 18 wheelers. By 7:00 a.m. most of us had left for the climbs, while certain decadent individuals who slept in a hotel started after 8:00 a.m. (along with their evil minions of course).

Mike and Ashley climbed Whitney Gilman in about 1/2 an hour, a nice warm up before breakfast. They opted not to climb every other route on the cliff so as not to embarrass everyone else.

Simon and Sophie pooled their resources and managed to survive the traffic jams atop Wiesner's Dike along with the clever misdirection inserted into the guidebook to root out the unworthy.

Bruce led his posse (Elaine and Genevieve along with his minions Kevin and Christiane) up Lakeview. They took their time, secure in the knowledge that they had the keys to all the cars.

Brian and Michelle went up Sam's Swan Song, which, according to the guidebook involved difficult route finding, a long day and loose rock - but still rated 3 stars! Brian discovered that all these things were very true and that lots of wet, slippery moss could be added to the list - and lets not forget the convenient shower located near the top of pitch 8.

Once at the top, they decided that taking the trail down was only for weenies so they opted to bushwhack through the dense brush. After several hours of this, they were having so much fun that they opted to stay there all night. The night was warm, and the cool breezes merely served to alleviate the heat. Dawn the next day was a beautiful sight, so they were reluctant to return to the cars right away. Instead, they felt that 3 1/2 more hours of bushwhacking through dense pine trees would be more fun.

The others were so jealous that they hiked back up to the top of the cliff in the morning to join Brian and Michelle in their bushwhacking adventure. Not only that, but apparently word spread about the fun everyone was having so the local Sheriff's office, Fish and Game and the Park Rangers got involved to. By the time Brian and Michelle came down, the parking lot was a happenin' place - and all that entertainment was free!!!!

Sunday, everyone was so exhausted from all the partying that they opted to top rope a few climbs at Mt. Rumney.

Monday it rained and so the story ended on an ignominious note - but with plenty of memories for all!!

Another smashing success!!!

Brian (no I don't always need a rescue) Faughnan

Hiking the Rocky Peak Ridge (Sunday, Sept. 9)
Wednesday, September 5, 2001

Hello all,

The people interested in the hiking trip so far are:

Brian (2-man tent)
Jill
Balthazar Lauzon
Nick Cowan (3-man, 2-man tent, van)
Jean
Wolfram Dressler

If anyone else is interested, the plan now is to leave Saturday night (~6ish) to camp overnight and get a crackling early start for the hike Sunday. I believe this was the consensus day to do it. This is a strenuous hike that will involve bagging several peaks along a fairly exposed ridge to get to Mt. Giant in the Adirondacks (NY state) then take the short, steep trail down the other side. The hike up will take approx. 7 hours and the hike down about 1.5 hours.

This is not a technical hike in any way, it never exceeds class 2, but it is not for beginners since it will be fairly long with a lot of vertical rise. If anyone brings a brand new pair of hiking boots to try out on this trip, I believe I have the right to shoot that person on sight (I need to verify this with the new constitution).

In order to do this hike, however, we will need at least two cars so we can leave one at each trailhead. If necessary we could rent a car, but I believe that if we all wish hard enough one will appear. No gourmet cooks have appeared either and I always like eggs florentine before a hike - so wish for that too!

The costs will be:

gas: ~\$10/non-driver
food: ~\$5 breakfast+whatever for lunch
camping: free
car rental (if necessary): ~\$20/non car owner
equipment rental (if necessary): \$2 incidentals

for damn foreigners only:

entrance permit to US: \$6 US and you must bring US cash for this because they will not accept CAN. If you've already crossed the border in the last three months, then your permit (or whatever it's called) is still valid.

You supply whatever you need for camping, plate/bowl +

utensils for breakfast and food for lunch/snacks.

If you want to come along please email your phone number, whether you have a car, tent or stove, and any personal information you'd like to share such as credit card #, bank account #, social insurance #, any inheritance your up for and whether or not you'd be missed should you suddenly disappear. Thanks,

Brian
939-2195

Hiking in Hautes Gorges (May 24-26)
Tuesday, May 14, 2002

Would anyone be interested in camping and hiking in the Parc National Hautes-Gorges-de-la-Riviere-Malbaie which is about 1-2 hours north of Quebec city or about 4 hours drive from Montreal on the weekend of May 24-26? Some of the best scenery within striking distance of Montreal. If you are interested, please give me your phone number, available equipment (car, tent, stove, pots, water filter, etc.) and any other relevant information (astrological sign, political leanings, future career plans, etc.).

Brian
939-2195

Trip Report (Franconia Ridge, NH)
Tuesday, May 14, 2002

Easily one of the top five hikes in the northeast. Spectacular approach up the Flume slide trail, which was relatively dry despite several dire warnings, and a nice peak. The approach through the snow to Little Haystack was nothing special but the three peaks after that more than made up for it. The weather was sunny, the breeze plentiful, the snow crunchy, and the hut on the Greenleaf trail horrifically expensive (\$60USD/night).

We camped at a similar horrifically expensive camping area called Lafayette Place (\$8USD/person/night). The most expensive camping area I have ever stayed in.

Mea Culpa, Mea Culpa, Mea Maxima Culpa :-(

I didn't investigate the cost carefully enough, I was just glad that it was open. There is a federally operated camping area not too far away (Russel Pond) and there may be others. The federally operated campgrounds charge per site, not per person and are significantly cheaper. The other option is to hike in a little bit to the Liberty Springs tentsite, which is about 1.5km in and 400m up the trail. The camping is free there, but the water source is questionable so you would need to boil (5 minutes) or bring purifying tablets (iodine or the new chlorine drops).

Aside from the cost, the hiking was great both days and the weather cooperated after a ferocious windstorm Friday night.

On a side note, Natalie attempted to report to her Superpower Overlords about the German cabal seeking control of the communist MOC. The cabal was wise to her transparent plan to exceed the speed limit and use a QPP officer as her courier, so she was given no chance to give him her "insurance". Undaunted, she tried again at the border with the help of a martial arts master wanted for smuggling, but Ekaterina (a.k.a. Catherine) used the little known Australian martial art billabongarvo to silence him. So swiftly did she accomplish this that the border guards were none the wiser. Completely fooled by Ekaterina's "Australian girl-next-door" cover, Natalie succumbed to the inevitable and cooperated, going so far as to play vintage German music on the radio.

Nicolai was then free to report to Michael about his fifteen-year deep cover operation while Sonja lulled the rest of us to sleep using her "infinite loop" story technique. We tried to resist, but only Christina and I managed to stay awake through the

soothing and peaceful, howling windstorm. Eventually, none of us were strong enough to resist their core message:

"Speed limit? What the hell is that, some kinda condiment?"

German cabal

Michael
Nicolai
Natalie
Sonja
Ekaterina (a.k.a. Catherine)

R.O.S.

Brian
Spiro
Christina
Albert

Scrambling in the 'Dacs: Gothics
Monday, June 21, 1999.

Hey all,

The weekend trip was changed to a day hike up the slide on Gothics. The weather was perfect and the bugs were very reasonable. We managed to follow the wrong fork in the stream, got lost and hiked up some obscure overgrown slide to the east of the one we wanted. In other words, almost an ideal scramble. Despite my worst fears, the bushwhack atop the overgrown slide was almost genteel in comparison to some in recent memory and we were able to get back on the trail fairly easily.

In fact, it was so quick and easy that I realized we would get back way before dark if we took the route straight down, so we decided to bag a few peaks on the way back instead. We hit Mt. Armstrong and Upper Wolfjaw, but opted not to hit Lower Wolfjaw. We still managed to get back with an hour of daylight to spare - no need for the headlamps, much to my disappointment.

The group was a tight one; just Simon, Kevin, Michelle and Brian. Simon worked through his fear of moss and lichen, even commenting on the amazing traction thick, wet moss provides. Kevin battled a headache while I battled my ongoing cold. Michelle, having diligently overcome her crack problem at Bark Eater, still has to deal with her drinking problem. She blamed it on a "wide-mouthed Nalgene bottle," but we know better - it's time for an intervention.

In short, the Gothics slide remains to be conquered, but soon, very soon, it shall be done.

Brian

NEXT EPISODE: THE GUNKS!!!!

Moon Shadow (a.k.a. Mt. Santanoni trip report)
Tuesday, April 30, 2002

The weight settled uneasily on our shoulders, we entered the moon-dappled, crystal-wrapped forest. The squelch of mud and the crunch of snow the only sounds we heard, save for the distant cry of the loons on Moose Pond.

The abandoned carcass of Camp Santanoni greeted us at the first turn. Moon shadows played across the Danger: Do Not Enter signs and the gleaming wetness of the dimly visible meat hooks in the cold stone basement. Andrew drew his broadsword with a rasp of steel on leather at the sharp knock of wood against stone, ready to defend us all against the ninja hordes, but there was no sign of a living soul.

Clouds drifted across the moon, momentarily shrouding the camp in darkness. Andrea tittered nervously and turned on her head lamp to scan the impenetrable forest. Viai spun around, her warrior's braid whipping behind her, and boldly led the way.

"We can't be scared by bumps in the night," she said in a booming voice that belied her diminutive form and thrust back at the shrouding darkness, "we have leagues to travel before moonset and devil take the hindmost."

She strode down the path, not waiting to see who followed. Andrea set off immediately while Andrew shrugged eloquently and sheathed his sword before breaking into a jog to keep up. I stayed behind for a moment and stepped onto the flagstone path surrounding the looming vastness of the main building. For a moment, only a moment, I could have sworn I'd seen a figure with skin as pale as the moon slip behind the stone colonnade. Must have been a trick of the eyes, a will 'o the wisp, or maybe just a moon shadow.

. To be continued

Climbing at Val David
Tuesday, June 1, 1999.

First off, give me a break about the ****...feeble skills...****
message - it was an accident - sheesh!

Second, a bunch of us went climbing Saturday at La Bleu and some went
Sunday as well.

Before I go any further, I want to express my appreciation to our
insect overlords for allowing we humble mortals to survive. We know
that we climb at your sufferance and that any blood tax you take is
only for our own good.

Simon sauntered up Samurai (5.10b overhang, etc.), describing it as a
hard 5.6. Mike went up as well, but he rated it as an easy 5.7. I, on
the other hand, fully agree with the guidebook - but I am a mere
mortal.

Andre and Christiane were very anti-social, not to mention
disrespectful to our insect overlords, and opted to climb on their own,
only briefly deigning to acknowledge our existence.

Colin, after partying all night and dealing with the problem of too
many women, too little time, had some trouble - but also the perfect
excuse.

Michelle needs to deal with her drug problem before she can improve.
She is completely unrepentant and even expressed the desire to do "more
crack" than before. A bad example to all.

Eventually, we gratefully thanked our insect overlords for their
sufferance and left with skin, if not sanity, intact. We soothed our
sorrows at Niko's.

Sunday's events I'll have to leave to someone else.

=====
your feeble skills are more than a match for my own
=====

Brian

-----Original Message-----

From: Brian Faughnan

Sent: Monday, April 12, 1999 1:19 PM

To: McGill Outing Club

Subject: Climbing at Poke-o-Moonshine

Howdy,

The trip this Sunday went well. Little on the cool side, but you take what you can get. Did the slab with six people on one route. Not recommended for speed, but good for socializing. Turns out Jen is a kleptomaniac in love with at least one of the horsemen of the Apocalypse (although she could be a bigamist!). Colin is a masochist with the eerie ability to induce migraines. Simon is too lazy to put in his own pro and is dealing with a deep psychosis involving certain forms of vegetation, particularly moss and lichen. Michelle is fascinated by the configuration of car seats and is prone to spout comments like, "This seat wouldn't be very good for someone with a hip replacement!" Kevin deals with his megalomania by commanding large groups of teenagers and dreaming of turning them into a coordinated strike force.

Aside from that, the trail down is nonexistent due to ice storm damage, so major bushwhacking is the order of the day. Above all, it was good to get some altitude.

Brian,

B.Eng, M.Eng, BFA, RURP, RP(?), HPGLRE (Happy Go Lucky Rock Exec - for those who don't know.)