

P.O. Box 691
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www.sjoe.ca

January, 2017

Newsletter



Wilderness is not a luxury but necessity of the human spirit, and as vital to our lives as water and good bread ~ Edward Abbey



Editorial

Welcome all new and renewed members to the January 2017 newsletter covering events from July 2016 to December 2016. The past six months have been filled with many great outings, some of which brought together over 25 members in attendance which we are very pleased to report. We have a few stories from a few of our club members who have travelled abroad and we are so pleased they have agreed to share stories of their adventures with us.

Highlights of Events:

July ~ Wauklehegan Lake

Such a grand event. The only way to get to the cabin was by boat. Spent the day exploring the lake, socializing at the cabin and enjoying a potluck feast before calling it a day.



August ~ Cradle Brook

We may get tired hiking to Cradle Brook, but we never get tired of hiking to Cradle Brook. The long coastal trail of the Fundy Footpath is challenging, but rewarding.



September ~ Redden Falls

Another re-visit to Redden Falls never lets us down at the end of the trail. The falls are beautiful as always and was a pleasure to share it with members who were seeing it for the first time.



October ~ Turtle Mountain

The day was rainy as we made our way to Turtle Mountain but the weather cleared as we arrived and enjoyed our lunch and a photo op with spectacular views.



November ~ Honda Trail

This is a fun hike that was well attended that took us from one end of St. Martins to trails above the caves.



Editorial cont'd...

December ~ Piccadilly Mountain

It never rains in California, but it sure does over Piccadilly Mountain. That didn't stop us from enjoying the hike. We even spotted two owls.



Regular and long-standing SJOE members might find it hard to understand why more people don't get out -doors or more physically active but statistics on health and well-being make it very clear that too many people do not. Maybe we can mutually learn something from this project which will lead to an increase, even if slight, in the number of local women and seniors who gain a love of outdoor activity. I'm sure you will welcome any of them who might come to any events in 2017 and I'll keep you posted on the project.

Adventurously yours,
Becky Bourdage

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR SJOE MEMBERSHIP FOR 2017!

Mail the accompanying application or sign up at the AGM
See the form sent with this newsletter

or go to: www.sjoe.ca
to print one

\$10. Individual / \$15. Family



SJOE Activity Badges!

See the President at the AGM
or call Becky (693-2299)
if you'd like your first or additional, SJOE badge

SJOE Thanks the Province of New Brunswick

We are pleased to advise that again this year, SJOE received a grant (\$1050.) from Tourism, Heritage, Culture, via Hon. Minister John Ames, for a project in 2017 called "Women on the Move". The Sport, Recreation & Culture branch promotes physical activity, and through grants to clubs like ours tries to reach certain target groups who may not regularly participate in physical activity. One such target group is women and seniors. Our plan is simple: as your President, I will meet with some local women's groups to share SJOE information, encourage them to join us, and also survey them to learn what specific kinds of barriers stop them from participating in outdoor activities.



Looking back at 2016

Véloroute des bleuets – Blueberry bike route

In September 2016, a group of friends, from SJOE, went on a wonderful cycling trip around the Lac St-Jean in the Saguenay district of Quebec. It was a 12 hour drive including a ferry crossing from Riviere du Loup to Saint Siméon to get to our departing point at Alma Quebec. We crossed the Saint Lawrence River under sunny skies on Monday morning to drive on the east side of the Saguenay fjord. We had the time to do a small hike in the **Fjord-du-Saguenay** national park. We went to Sacré-Coeur-sur-le-fjord. This view point overlooks an area where the Beluga whales supposedly mate. In this location the water was over 500 ft. deep. No whales were visible on this day. After leaving this scenic spot, we headed to the beach so we could dip our feet in the cool water of the Saguenay River. Couldn't miss that!

We arrived at our hotel in Alma where we had a nice supper at Mario Tremblay's restaurant. (Montreal Canadians hockey player in the 70's).



Day 1: Alma to Peribonka 75km.

We biked a bit in Alma to find the official start of our bike route. Wow! These trails are fabulous. We are in a small town, but also in the woods. We arrive at our start point. We will not see this intersection again for another 4 days after we complete our loop. We stopped at the Maison de la veloroute to buy some souvenirs. Off we go, our ride has started! There are bike lanes when we are along the main roads and bike crossings whenever we needed to cross a road. Everything is well indicated on where to go.

The last hour of that day, as we were getting closer to our destination, it was pouring rain and windy since we were on the windward side of the Lac St-Jean. It was a bit of a challenge biking up long inclines in a deluge but really it was the only significant rain that we received in our entire week. Never the less we arrived in style, looking like drowned rats and wringing out our socks. Since Peribonka is a small tiny village and being at the end of the tourist season, the only restaurant was closed for the season. Friends of our host at the B & B Au petit Bonheur, offered the guests, a traditional supper in their home kitchen. We were treated to a nice salad and vegetable soup. All the vegetables were fresh from the owner's garden. Numerous homemade preserves were made available. For our main course---- a traditional Tourtière du lac St-Jean (a meat pie cooked for 6 hours) and for desert fresh blueberry pie.

Our group filled up the entire B&B. The next morning, we enjoyed a very appetizing breakfast.

Our bikes were dry since we had a place to store them, which was the case at every B&B that we stayed. The locals are very supportive of the cycling crowd here.



Day 2: Peribonka to Normandin 72km

Another nice and sunny day for us, a bit windy but we are having a good time and enjoying the scenery. We stopped for lunch in Dolbeau-Mistassini near a wild raging river filled with white water and huge rapids. After lunch, we stopped at a cheese and creamery place for a blueberry soft ice cream dipped in chocolate. The chocolate was made by the Trappist monks who live nearby in a huge

Looking back at 2016 Cont'd...

stone monastery. There were many huge statues here. Each individual statue represented a specific village in the surrounding municipality of Dolbeau-Mistassini. Our rest stop for the day was at le gîte Makadan in Normandin. It was a large house with a general store/gas station of yesteryear incorporated into a dining room. All the walls and original merchandise counters were filled with antiques.



Day 3: Normandin to Roberval 65km

Another great day with paved bike trails through picturesque blueberry fields, forested areas and pastoral farm land. Idyllic to say the least. We did a little 3km detour to see the “site touristique Chute à l’ours”. A huge wide waterfall (picture attached) made it worth the detour. There were some hiking trails and a campground here but no time for that. We stopped in St-Félicien where the “blueberry bike buddies” (Francine, Susan and Ruth) showed off their **veloroute blueberry shirts** for a picture. We arrived in Roberval at this very nice B&B called “les 2 soeurs”. Originally it had been a presbytery. The waters of Lac St Jean literally lapped at the back door. Another great meal was had in a small restaurant recommended by our host.

Day 4: Roberval to Alma 76km

We were told that this was the nicest part of the veloroute and it sure was. We were along the Lac St-Jean with some beautiful views. We stopped for lunch at the Micro brasserie du lac for a good homemade beer and lunch outside. Then it was back to Alma. What a great bike ride this was.

All along the veloroute there were nice rest areas with picnic tables, access to washrooms, water and even air for our tires. At times we were in the

woods, sometimes on a back road in the middle of the country with nice barns and at other times for up to 10km along the main highway. There were signs indicating the presence of bicycle and a well indicated paved bike lane on both sides of the roads. This veloroute is well developed and oriented towards the cyclist. Maps and a smart phone application made it easy to find our way and to find interesting attractions to see. Hospitality and food were great everywhere we went.

On Friday afternoon we arrived back in Alma. We had just completed the most popular bike route in Quebec. In total we biked 291 kms. Eight of us biked and Harry (Gail’s companion) was our support vehicle and transported our gear. Two companies offer shuttle service but Harry our Sherpa was by far the best. He met us at our resting points and at mealtimes. Harry had brought along his guitar so one afternoon during our “happy hour” we had a jam session. A big thankyou to Harry

We left early the Saturday morning to drive on the west side of the fjord du Saguenay River. We wanted to do one more hike in this beautiful Fjord-du-Saguenay park. We stopped in Baie Eternité sector of the park near Cap Trinité to hike the “Statue trail”. This statue has a special history. It was erected in 1881 and measures 25ft high called the Madonna of Saguenay. She has been watching over the sailors on the Saguenay ever since.



In 1878, Charles-Napoleon Robitaille, a Quebec-city merchant travelling on the frozen river of the Saguenay went through the ice along with his

Looking back at 2016 Cont'd...

horse and merchandise. Imploring the Virgin Mary for help, he finally managed to pull himself out of the water. Having become very sick as a result, he again pleaded with the Holy Virgin to let him live another ten more years so that he could take care of his family. Wanting to give thanks to "She" who saved him twice, Robitaille decided to have a statue of the Virgin erected on Cape Trinité...The statue was shipped to L'Anse-Saint-Jean on a steamer but a handling error sent the statue overboard. Fortunately, it was made of white pine and it floated. It was then towed by rowboat to the foot of Cape Trinité, a 15 km trip. Originally made from three wood blocks, it had to be cut into 14 sections before it could be hauled to the top of the cape by hand; a job that took eight days to complete." Cape Trinité rises almost a 1000 ft. above the Saguenay river.



"I just love how they come individually wrapped to seal in the flavor."



After this nice hike, we caught the last ferry from St-Siméon to Rivière-du-loup to head back home.

What a great week it was with such great company! It is a bit far to travel to but it is definitely worth the experience on this intermediate level bike trail. September is a great month to do it, since the tourist season is slower and there are no mosquitoes. We were fortunate that the weather was great, the hospitality and the bed and breakfast we stayed in were amazing.

Francine Losier

Special thanks to our tour guide Francine. We could not have done it without you.

Your SJOE biking friends

***Hike, bike
and
paddle
more,***

***Worry
less...***

Looking back at 2016 Cont'd...

In Search of a day without Rain My first multi day High Altitude Hike

When I made my bucket list following my retirement, one of the treks on that list was to hike in the Himalayas. After reading *Beneath Blossom Rain: Discovering Bhutan on the Toughest Trek in the World* by Kevin Grange, Bhutan became my first-choice destination for this adventure. When fellow hiker Verna Poirier mentioned during last spring's Grand Manan Trip that she was planning such a trip, I was all ears. So, began the planning for the greatest adventure of my life.



We booked the adventure with the World Expedition adventure tourism company. The group we met in Paro, Bhutan included 2 Americans, 2 New Zealanders, 2 British, 6 Australians hikers and of course Verna and I from Canada.

The Warm up (Acclimation) Trek to the Tigers Nest or Taktsang Monastery

Just to acclimatise us for the more challenging Chomolhari Trek, we climbed up a steep winding path to the Taktsang Monastery that hangs on a cliff edge. During the 8th century, it was believed that Guru Rinpoche flew to this site on a tigress' back to subdue a local demon.

Starting at 2602 meters we climbed to 3286 meters over 4.25km. The views were terrific as we slowly made the climb, and stopping for a cup of tea at the tearoom cafe. Started feeling the altitude near the top of the trail, but thankfully given effective advice on how to slow down my breathing by Laura. Before reaching the monastery, we had to climb down, then up 700 steps to reach the monastery via a bridge across a gorge just below a majestic waterfall.

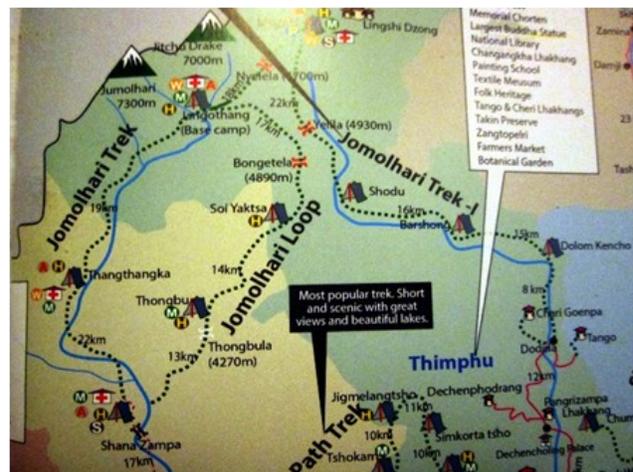
Before entering the Monastery, we had to leave our packs, phones, cameras and poles in lockers and to remove our shoes before entering several of the 10 Lhakhangs (temples). The Lhakhangs were impressive and our guide RB went to great lengths to explain the Legends and Buddhist rituals regarding the Monastery.

On the return journey, it was mostly downhill after crossing the gorge and climbing back up the 700 steps. We did stop again at the tearoom where we enjoyed a very filling lunch of traditional Bhutanese dishes

The Chomolhari (or Jomolhari) Trek

This was supposed to be an 8-day 7-night trek, but unfortunately, for us Bhutan had experienced its heaviest Monsoon season in years, and an unusual weather system was keeping the remnants of the monsoon over the region. Therefore, for reasons I will explain later the trek became a 7-day 6-night trek.

The trek started at a camp in Shana altitude 2860 meters, following a morning drive along winding dirt roads. We reached our campsite after a mere 5.5km trek following the Paro River. Soon discovered the elevation changes I could manage without difficulty at home are certainly more challenging at this altitude. That evening we experienced the first of many heavy rain showers that became all too frequent throughout the trek.



Day 2 was a 16.5km challenging hike through tall and thick forest, with many views of waterfalls along the Paro River. The continuing rain made the trail very muddy and the rocks we scrambled over very slippery. Very tired at the end of the day, and very grateful to arrive at the Thangthangka campsite altitude 3700 meters.

Looking back at 2016 Cont'd...

More heavy rain overnight, so lots more mud greeted for day 3's 19km Trek. The guides broke the group into three to accommodate some of the group who were coping with altitude better than the rest of us and wanted to walk at a faster pace. Both Verna and I stayed with the slowest group and let the Intermediate and faster groups go on ahead. Just before lunch, we passed an Indian Army Camp and accepted their invitation to stop in for a cup of tea.

When we met up with the rest of the group at the lunch stop, we discovered the two proceeding groups had declined the invite for tea. Following lunch, the clouds partially cleared revealing fantastic views of tall peaks as we continued our trek above the tree line to the Chomolhari Base Camp altitude 4100 meters. Thankfully, for a short few minutes the clouds cleared enough to get glimpses of the Peak of Chomolhari Mountain.

Upon awakening the next morning, it was interesting to see that thanks to the overnight rainfall the peaks that were clear last evening are now snow-capped. This is an important rest day set aside for acclimatisation. We did go on a short trek to a nearby lake where we participated in the "10 pieces of litter program" organised by World Expeditions. 10 Pieces is an environmental sustainable tourism initiative. Simply put, group tour travellers are encouraged to pick up 10 pieces of litter. Credit for this initiative should go to Lisa the Program Director who was actually one of the Australians in our group. Most of us picked up considerably more than 10 pieces.



That evening we were informed that we could no longer continue on the route for last four days of the Chomolhari Trek. Due to heavy rains, a mudslide had knocked out a bridge. Therefore, we would continue our trek along the one day shorter Chomolhari Loop. After 3 nights of heavy rain and muddy condition caused by heavy rainfall, everyone welcomed the prospect of an extra night in a hotel.

Day 5 was the toughest day of the whole trek. Starting out at 4100 meters, we climbed to the 4890-meter Bongetela Pass before descending to the camp at 3834 meters over a distance of 17km. The climb up to the pass was a real test of my endurance requiring continual concentration to control my



breathing. The views were spectacular crossing two glacial valleys in between three significant climbs. I was almost run over by two Yaks prior to the first ascent causing me to jump off the trail to let them pass. I think it was a male on heat chasing a reluctant female. The second ascent started after passing Tshophu Lake, a very narrow bench cut trail up the side of a mountain. Before reaching the top, a fast-moving stream had to be crossed, which involved balancing over narrow questionable stable rocks.

Visibility was very poor when we reached the peak of the Bongetela pass so promised views were non-existent. This was eclipsed by the great feeling of achievement on reaching the highest point of the whole trek. After a long decent, steep in places, we finally reached the Soi Yaktsa campsite just before nightfall.

The 14km penultimate day of the trek was noted for mud, mud and more mud. We started out climbing through a forest with the impressive sight of lots of "old man's beard" lichen hanging from the branches of many of the trees. Then we followed a ridge at the top of a valley, with non-existent views of the mountains on the other side of the valley thanks to the low cloud. After lunch, we climbed to the Takungla Pass at 4580 meters, before descending to Thongbu our final night's camp site at 4180 meters. The group was quite alarmed to discover that the camp had been set up in a very wet boggy swamp. With reports of more heavy rainfall that night, we all feared we would wake up floating in a waterlogged tent.

Looking back at 2016 Cont'd...

Despite the persistent overnight rainfall, the tent thankfully stayed dry. The biggest question was, "who was doing all the snoring"? We were quickly informed that the culprit was a yak that had spent the night wandering around the camp. The trek started with a climb to a 4270-meter Thongbula pass followed by a ridge walk that revealed the occasional views as clouds started to recede. The 13km hike finished with a 1470-meter steep switch-backed descent to Shana at 2800 meters. My left great toe became . When I finally removed my boots at the hotel, I discovered a significant haematoma had developed behind the toenail.



The next day was spent with the group in Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan. The bonus for losing a day of hiking was that it provided the opportunity to attend the Thimphu Tshechu, a festival of dance and costumes witnessed by thousands of people. The following day after lunch, Verna and I said goodbye to the rest of the group and started on our second adventure, a scenic and cultural tour of Bhutan. The many stories from that adventure will have to wait for another opportunity to tell.

Trevor Fotheringham

Special Events

Wellness Fair

Once again, the Saint John Outdoor Enthusiasts participated at the Fall Wellness Fair which proved to be another positive experience. The Club gained two members who attended a hike the next day and joined on the spot.

Thank you to Becky, Trevor and Marion for donating your time to make the Club's attendance at the fair a success.

Kings Landing

This year's Thanksgiving at Kings Landing was a huge success and enjoyed by all. We spent the afternoon walking around the village visiting the buildings and the goings on that took us back to the past and finished the experience by attending the Kings Head pub prior to sitting down for Thanksgiving supper.

Good fun, good company!



Looking back at 2016 Cont'd...

Christmas Social

This year's Christmas social was very well received by all. The potluck meal had a wonderful variety and was absolutely delicious. We decided this year to include a photo booth which was enjoyed by many. Thank you to Bill for coordinating the photos and providing the props.

The dance was a big hit as well and a big shout out to Chris and Lori Kennedy for providing the music and sound system.

We have put together a little photo album to show you that we really know how to have fun!!



Looking back at 2016 Cont'd...



Delicious potluck supper



Becky strutting her stuff



Fun, fun fun



What's a dance without a Conga?

Ramblings by the President...



Our many social add-ons and pot lucks really cement the fun we have as a group, so here's wishing that 2017 sees us outdoors with enthusiasm, in record numbers.

*Adventurously yours,
Becky*

Hello Fellow Enthusiasts!

Hello fellow enthusiasts! For 2017, I am personally hoping to "**HIKE MORE, WORRY LESS**" and I'm sure many of you have seen this slogan on the internet. It serves to remind me that since hiking and being outdoors bring such great rewards we all deserve more of it. Thanks to SJOE members, I can enjoy the outdoors - safely and with fun and friends.

As usual, our fine and loyal group of SJOE volunteers made for a very good 2016 by leading, or helping with lots of activities - including a fun and energetic Christmas social where we showed we can enjoy ourselves in heels as well as boots, and that our "moves" are not just adapted to trails. *Yee-haw!*

The first quarter 2017 Events calendar is pretty full and we'll also have some special "one-of" activities this year, so stay tuned. Why not tell others about us since many people would enjoy our club if they became acquainted? Oh, and don't forget to renew your membership by the end of March since we'd love to keep you coming outdoors with us. That brings me to urge members to also offer (or reoffer) as board or committee volunteers, please. With enough of us, we easily share the tasks which keep the club healthy and functioning, so why don't you think of taking a turn, or if you have in the past, helping again? New people, new ideas and new energy make for a successful club.

At the March 24th AGM we'll have more details about past and future SJOE activities but for now in brief: 2016 saw SJOE members participate in 3 community outreach fairs, complete some trail work in Rockwood Park and the Fundy Footpath, enjoy several camping, paddling and cycling outings, plus a historic site and maple sugar farm visit, Fundy coast clean-ups and of course - hiking - by the hundreds of kms.

**SJOE
25th Anniversary
long sleeve
wicking shirts
are still available
for sale.**

**Sizes up to XL are
\$15.00**

**Contact June at
847-4774
(evenings) to
place your order.**

Available Sizes:

M—7

L—4

XL—3

Upcoming Events

SJOE Annual General Meeting 2017

& Pot Luck Dinner



**Friday, March 24, 2017
Club Room, Ruth Ross Residence
Rocmura Nursing Home
Burpee Avenue, Saint John**

Expect Emails with Details

**The board is planning now,
and we hope to provide some good company,
good food, a bit of social time,
and oh yes, a business meeting too!**

See you there!