

## Two Approaches to Touring the Canadian Championships

by Mark Gibbard and Adrian Zissos and Two Bottles of *La Vieille Ferme*

"You take the high road and I'll take the low road and never the twain shall meet" - Old Scottish Proverb

Adrian: Jim Webster and I arrived in Montreal with \$300 unexpected cash; thanks to Air Canada bumping us back three hours due to an overbooked flight. This played havoc with our minds and set us thinking that money was to be no object on this trip. So we immediately booked into the luxurious Chateau Versailles and went in search of action. We stayed up till three AM at an open air cafe, listening to jazz, drinking beers, eating mussels and dreaming of our upcoming adventures.

Mark: "But where am I going to sit?", I enquired of my western friends who met me at the Montreal airport. With seven people plus luggage, the rocket shaped red transport van looked ready to drop out of orbit. Martin Pardoe pointed to a 2 inch gap between two impossibly large backpacks. "We had to repack the van to make that space for you. Just be happy you're not hanging from the axle like that last hitchhiker we picked up to help pay the gas". "Excellent", I thought. These guys had an aggressive approach to cost minimization. Which suited my seemingly endless status as a student

Adrian: We were so comfortable at the Chateau we thought it foolish to leave, so booked another night. Hey, it was a great deal. Due to having to run the next day we curtailed our evening at one AM. Next day we picked up the rental car - we asked for a convertible but none were left. We settled for a double upgrade to an Acheva - complete with leather seats, walnut panelling, and soft classical music. We reluctantly left the Montreal money pit and headed to the Quebec championships. Between days I drove to Ottawa to pick up Charlotte. We spent a candle-light evening, eating on the banks of the Rideau Canal watching the yachts ply the waters.

Orienteering? Oh yes - very green and two of the longest legs I'm ever going to see. The Day One Monster of 2.5km looked like child's play on day two when I reached the map exchange and was greeted immediately with a 3.5km leg. Jeez, I've been on entire courses shorter than that.

At the same time Mark was being picked up at Dorval Airport, we choose a leisurely drive up the north side of the St. Lawrence River, looking for whales. And decided that tonight ought be the time to put into use the bag full of camping gear that was to become a feeble yet irritating reminder of our good intentions, budget-wise. Tonight, since we were saving money on accommodation, we were able to manage a finer restaurant than usual. The budget? We weren't worried. Not yet.

Mark: We programmed the red rocket on a trajectory for Grand Falls, New Brunswick. A cultural bonding stop was planned for vieux-Quebec to allow us to come to terms with the francophone aspects of our heritage. Our first supply stop was in Trois-Rivieres, where the cheapest restaurant in town was located by driving towards the sleazy end of town until the pedestrians could no longer understand our questions in English. At "Restaurant Sputnik", the *haute-couture* amongst us ordered "*Les Fish'n'Chips*".

It was nearing midnight as we approached Quebec-ville. Some lodgings were definitely required as there was barely room in the van to sit, let alone stretch out. Excellent accommodations were located immediately north of the Trans-Canada Highway courtesy of a friendly Quebec farmer's ruined barn. Well, we actually never met the farmer, but we're sure he would have been friendly given that we'd traveled from the other side of Canada to camp next to his barn.

Adrian: To Bluebell Mountain for the Canadian Relay Championships. After our \$100 pre-race lobster meal at Yorks World Famous Diner it doesn't make sense to pitch a camp - anyways it is much too dark. So we bed and breakfast it - a bargain at only \$50.

Mark: Breakfast the next morning was at a mobile home turned restaurant named "Chez Marnie". The waiter's knowledge of English was limited to the word "milk", so we decided the easiest thing to do was to all order the \$2.99 breakfast special. This fried concoction was served with an extra ladle of grease and should have come with a health warning.

We reached Grand Falls later that day, landed the rocket safely and picked up our race packages. Accommodation was found at a local mosquito breeding farm, turned campground, which charged us \$5 each to feed this years

crop. Martin reluctantly handed over his money, plainly unhappy at the concept of paying for accommodation. "I don't want us to make a habit of this", he stated firmly. It rained all night and we got soaked.

- Adrian: The Canadian Relay Championships. Is it my imagination or am I getting old? Originally scheduled to run with Mark and Mark representing Alberta in H21, it turns out I'm eligible to run with Jim and Gerraint in H35. Qu'elle horror! Since I'm the only other H35 around, I give up my place to Martin and run with J & G. We kick, and aim for PEI, our spiritus bolstered by two gold medals. Gold did you say? Ha! Who needs a budget? Even so, its a frugal night - eating on the ferry and camping (whoa! do you mean, like, in tents?) beside the ocean.
- Mark: The H21 relay race turned out to be a clash between those Orienteering titans, Alberta and Quebec. Alberta was in the lead at the end of the second leg, but a brilliant run from Quebec's third runner, Mark Adams, gave them the gold medal. Alberta was second and Ontario third. A sombre crew steered the starship that evening towards the sandy shores of PEI. A quality nights accommodation was found in a hayfield beneath clear New Brunswick skies.
- Adrian: Can't stand it. Yesterday's low expense day is getting us down. Got to spend money. So to St Anne's Lobster dinner. After settling the bill our minds are content (having long ago eradicated the word *budget* from our brains) but physically we can hardly move being stuffed full of mussels, lobsters, pie and wine. But my neck is acting peculiarly today and I need medical attention. So under doctors orders we're forced to give up camping and seek out real beds. This news makes me a hero to my travelling companions.
- Mark: PEI. Mental preparation for the individual champs began here, in a prone position on Cavendish beach. Inspiration was found from a visit to the house of Anne of Clean Tables. A fierce discussion broke out within the group over the need for a shower. The pro-shower faction won, and we regrettably booked into a campsite. Finding our campsite located in the middle of the main trail to the washrooms, the majority of the party grabbed their sleeping bags and spent a tranquil night on the beach.
- Adrian: Supposed to be at training event today but my neck continues to be the source of excruciating pain and needs more physio and so we stay on PEI and once again are forced into a "real bed" under doctors orders. My status as hero continues to grow.
- Mark: The Individual Champs. Martin, turbo-powered by an enormous pasta meal from the night before, upset the field with the fastest time in H21. Eileen Traynor powered by the same lethal fuel returned a similar performance in D19. The banquet that night was a festive occasion. After fierce bidding, I was very happy to secure my six COF coffee mugs for \$22.
- Adrian: Much against the advice of the physiotherapist I decided to run albeit on course 7 instead of course 8. Placed third and am determined to risk all tomorrow for victory. Any chance to spend money on meals is stolen by a pre-paid banquet. Nevertheless, I manage to drop a few bucks on the silent auction. I am totally confused by Mark's happiness over the coffee mugs since for only three dollars more I bought a massage by beautiful Marie-Catherine de Quebec to be administered after Day Two. I am, however, obliged to donate my treasure to my girlfriend Charlotte who views this purchase with much in the way of raised eyebrows. She reciprocates by offering me her 90 minutes with national team coach Ross Burnett. And of course, my neck still demands a proper bed.
- Mark: Martin wins day 2 and the H21 Canadian championship, the first time it's ever been won by an Albertan. Now a celebrity we had great difficulty dragging him away from his many admirers. Whilst packing up the tents, I noticed out of the corner of my eye, Adrian, Jim and Charlotte demolishing lobsters. And so began a mad dash back through Maine to get people to flights in Montreal. We slept that night in a comfortable ditch in Maine.
- Adrian: Day two. Wow - I catch everyone - Canadian Champion in H35. My stature as hero reaches unprecedent heights. This calls for celebrations!!! But, we are momentarily travelling with Mark and friends. So, since we have a 50% off coupon, its the Burger King in St John. \$37 for ten people. Wierd, man, very wierd. But as Mark's crew blasts off into the sunset we stroll into Bangor, Maine, for a hot tub, quiet evening sipping Marguiritas and then a warm bed and soft pillow.
- Mark: We were rudely awoken in our ditch by a farmer who informed us that we were camping right next to his bear traps. The ensuing quick departure led to an on time arrival in Montreal and my flight back to Calgary.

Adrian: Drive back into Montreal. Time to culminate our great holiday. The five star Hotel du Fort tonight where we brush elbows with Jean Charest (Federal Minister at the time) and then off for our last meal of mussels before we drift off to sleep with visions of Visa bills dancing in our heads.

Statistics (after all, we are both scientists) averaged over ten days:

Average Cost of Accomodation Per Night Per Person:	Mark: \$2.09	Adrian: \$ um, don't ask
Average Cost of Meals Per Day Per Person	Mark: \$9.04	Adrian: \$ don't ask this one either
Average Kilometers Driven Per Day:	Mark: 402km	Adrian: 357km
Average Pinball expenditures Per Day	Mark: \$0.50	Adrian: \$nil
Average Fun Per Day	Mark: lots	Adrian: lots

***So, which way would you go?***