

# Brad Harrison

*Wilderness workaholic*

By Andrew Findlay

Sometimes it seems like there's not just one Brad Harrison, but rather several look-alike clones. A person would need jet-powered climbing boots to keep up with this 51-year-old dynamo of energy with an Irishman's gift for a good yarn. To appreciate the pace of Harrison's life, try tagging along with him on a typical day at the Alpine Club of Canada's annual General Mountaineering Camp, where he has been the manager for more than two decades.

On any given morning, he's up before the sun grilling bacon and flapjacks for the early shift alpine starts. Then he'll trade in his spatula for an ice axe and rope, before guiding a team of greenhorns to some distant summit. At day's end, before the climbers have even cracked their first cold beer, Harrison is racing around dealing with the inevitable details and minutiae of operating a backcountry climbing camp - tweaking the solar panels, fixing a kitchen plumbing leak, carving turkey for the cooks, or perhaps jerry rigging a participant's ailing crampon.

Needless to say, he applies this same energy to the various other aspects of a busy life that has its roots in Golden. As a pre-teen Harrison was already wrangling for his father Bill, a legendary Columbia Valley guide outfitter who started running the alpine club camp in the late 1940s, well before the age of helicopter access. The elder Harrison passed away in 1993, but years before that, Brad had taken over management of the then financially struggling GMC; re-building the century old tradition into the successful, perennially sold-out marquee event that it is today. At the same time, he co-owned the backcountry skiing outfit Golden Alpine Holidays for nearly 25 years, while juggling a full-time career as a baggage handler at Vancouver International Airport.

For years Harrison has also been active





**Captions for photos**

on the political side of adventure tourism, working with government as a liaison and advocating for wilderness tourism, while helping to formulate policy around issues of access, tenure and sustainability. His volunteer resume is extensive, including a recently completed tenure as a board member with the Wilderness Tourism Association. Currently, he is executive director of the Backcountry Lodges of BC and Chair of the Canadian Avalanche Association's InfoEx Advisory Group. He is also a member of a joint steering council made up of representatives from the different nature-based tourism sectors and four related provincial government ministries.

There's more, of course. Somewhere in this head-spinning schedule, Harrison finds time to run his own custom guiding enterprise called Brad Harrison Adventures, and he's just been named Industry Training Program Coordinator for the Canadian Avalanche Association. Considering Harrison's long association with the Canadian mountaineering and skiing community, it's not surprising that the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides has chosen to honour the family as the official patron of its upcoming 2008 ball at the Banff Springs Hotel.

"I'm very honoured and mostly pleased that my dad's work as an outfitter is being recognized. Outfitters were the trench soldiers that did much of the work for the "sexy" exploits of guides like Conrad Kain and the Feuz brothers. Those early first ascents wouldn't have happened without them," Harrison says, deflecting the limelight on to his father's legacy.

That's the way Brad Harrison is; he'd sooner crack a one-liner, climb a new route with some wide-eyed alpine clubbers on an obscure peak, or ski a tasty line than he would talk about himself. ✪