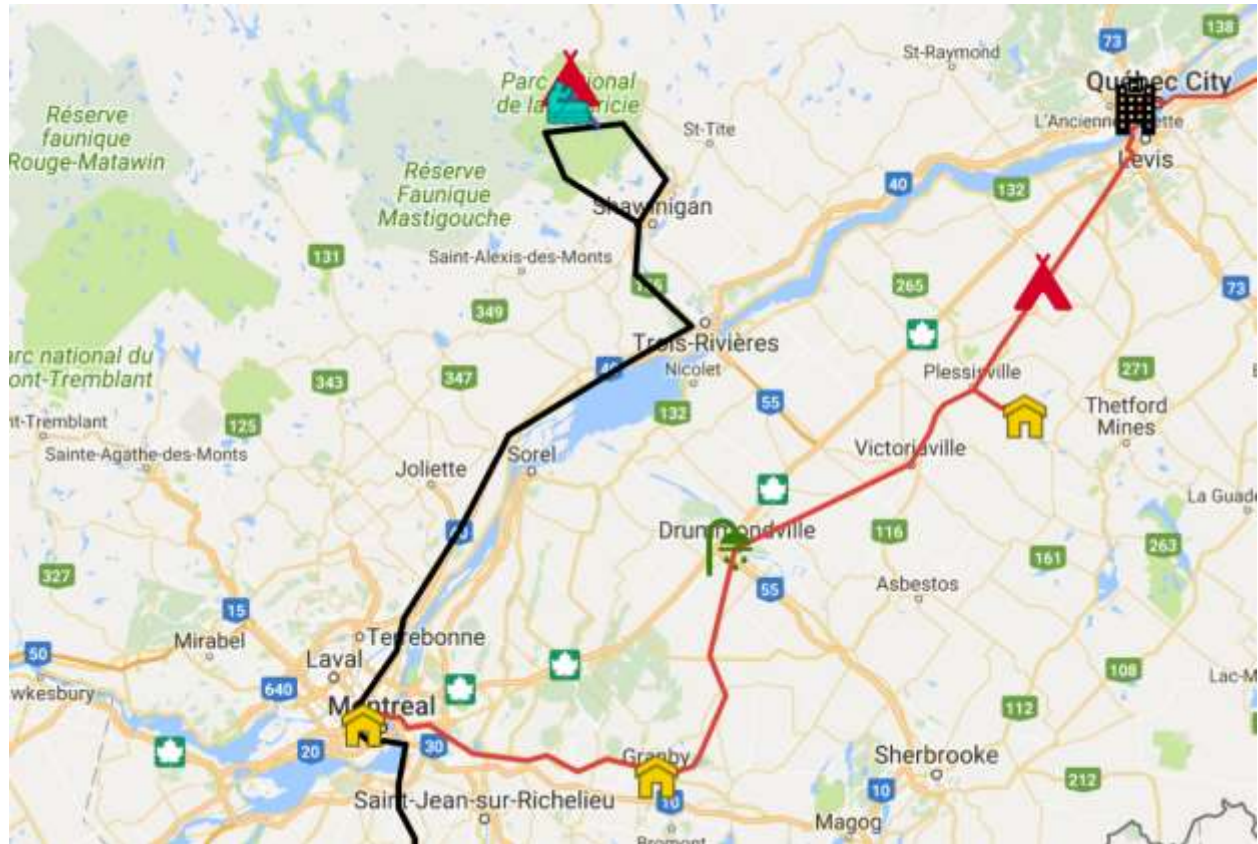


Season 2 – Part 5. Montréal.



Fr 2.10.2015, day 82. Montreal!

90 km were still between us and Montréal, the next big milestone in our trip. We stayed mainly on the bike path and slowly we came into more populated areas. The first landmark of Montréal I recognized was the Olympic tower. Then, crossing a bridge, we finally caught the first glimpse of the skyline and soon afterwards we were crossing the St. Lawrence on the Jaques Cartier Bridge. It was very strange for me to bike through the streets of Montreal after all those years. The street names were all still familiar, but I somehow recognized almost nothing. Even Cotes des Neiges and the Plaza, where I spent so much time didn't feel very familiar.

On Cotes des Neiges a car stopped us and a guy, Jacques, stopped us. He said he was planning a bike trip and was interested in our gear. I didn't think much about it, but gave him our blog address and said I'd look forward to have a coffee or something with him.

We were planning to spend some days with my former room-mate Cristian, who was still living in the same place, now with his girlfriend Annie. He hasn't changed a single bit and is still as crazy as ever. He very warmly welcomed us and didn't stop talking about all sorts of things. Poor Siria was absolutely exhausted, and so at about 1AM we finally got to bed.

Sa 3.10.2015, day 83. How quickly a day can pass!

We got completely absorbed by Cristian. We had breakfast and suddenly it was 1PM and time to go to a party of some of his Quebec friends on the Rive Sude. We headed off in his battered Toyota Echo that had a broken starter having quite a memorable time maneuvering the car out of parking slots by hand before pushing as fast as we could to get the car running and jumping in as the engine kicked in.

His friends were very real Quebecois. With house, lots of cars, pool, grill, fireplace, two dogs. It was a very nice and relaxed evening. Everyone simply cooking whatever they had brought along and sharing this and that. It's really nice to have such occasions to see into the lives of the locals.

Su 4.10.2015, day 84. Sunday in Montreal

We got up, had a quick breakfast and headed out before Cristian could tie us up too much. Siria went to the doctors to get her ear checked as she has been noticing that one ear is not working as well as it should. Unfortunately it turned out that it is not simply some wax or something and so she'll have to go and visit a specialist. We then headed out together for a tour of Montreal, went to the Tamtam, then on down-town, then down to the harbor and on to the Old Town. There we had another one of those magic moments. An Acapella band "JukeVox" was singing everything from Michael Jackson to Elvis to Spice Girls. Absolutely fantastic! We then went to my old local pub, Hurley's on Crescent. This was not as nice an experience as I had hoped. There was a band playing, but not many people listening. There was one table full of idiots that were sitting right next to the stage and continued talking. I really hate this. No appreciation at all for what it means to be on stage singing live music.

We finally got home just after Cristian and Annie. This was lucky, as he had forgotten to hide the key for us.





Mo 5.10.2015, day 85. A visit to the CRCT.

I had arranged to go for lunch with Jean Philippe from my old group at the Ecole Polytechnique. It was quite an interesting walk down memory lane. Not much has changed, I still remember the café, the elevator and all the halls and corridors in the University. I finally found that nothing at all has changed at the CRCT. The desks and workplaces are all completely unchanged. Even Arthur and Chris are still there, even though they are both retired for a long time. I quickly met Patrice as well and then went off for lunch with J.-P.

He told me all of his life's story. His time at CalTech, getting married to Kim and the birth of Renée. Now he is hoping to get a fixed position at the Ecole Polytechnique. I hope he gets it, definitely he is one of the smarter people I know and I wish him best of luck in any case! Afterwards I met up with Jacques Cardyn who I had met on the road into Montreal and his brother Bouduin. Siria also came along and we sat in the café chatting. They were absolutely great guys! Soon we had a plan to go on a sailing trip with them to Lake Champlain, sailing Amanzi up northwards to her winter berth.

In the evening Annie cooked us a wonderful salmon and potato dinner with apple crumble to finish off. It was absolutely splendid!

Tu 6.10.2015, day 86. Heading off Canoe Camping

Siria had an appointment with the ear specialist at 12, the plan was to go canoe camping directly afterwards. But Cristian had his usual problems getting ready and it was about 4 when we finally headed out. And of course we got stuck in traffic. When we finally got to the park he took a wrong turning and

we went into the part the wrong way. We were planning to get the canoes and head into the park in the dark, however we ran into some park rangers and they were not having it, so finally we camped outside the park some place down at the river. Always the unexpected with Cristian 😊.

We 7.10.2015, day 87. Canoe camping experience.

Again it took forever before we could head off in the morning as Cristian got distracted by all sorts of things, but we finally made it.

We then patiently let him indoctrinate us on exactly how to carry the canoe, how to paddle, how to do this that and the other and tried to concentrate on simply enjoying the wonderful nature and tranquility of the park.











Th 8.10.2105, day 88. Finally made it back home at 2 am!

The park really is absolutely amazingly beautiful! When we got up there was a light frost and the lake was steaming slightly. We took a little paddle up the lake to find a spot to have breakfast, leaving our camping stuff where we had spent the night. When we got back it seemed that Cristian had lost both his inflatable mattress and also his cooking pot (or maybe he had packed it away somewhere and forgotten about it?) and again it took him forever to pack up everything and get going. We then spent some time looking for the lost items and time just kept ticking on... By the time we really got going it was already getting dark.

We finally made it back to the car park, then loaded the canoe onto the roof, pushed the car down the parking lot to start her up, brought back the canoe and finally were on the road back home. We were a bit stressed out by the lateness of the day, as we had to contact Jaques to organize the next day's sailing trip. But also this we managed to somehow get done... We finished off having a pizza and I drove the rest of the way back home finally arriving at 2AM.







Fr 9.10.2015, day 89. Bye bye Montreal and hello USA!

We waved good bye to Cristian at about 10:30 and went up to the Wilderton Center straight into Tim Hortons to get organized. Jacques and Bouduin finally wrote that they would arrive round 1:30, giving us some wonderful peace and quiet to just simply sit down and relax.

Then the two brothers arrived. I went out to fill up the car with all our stuff. Along with all our stuff, there was also an outboard motor. Incredibly we managed to stash everything into the Jeep. In the meantime Siria disappeared into the supermarket with Jacques and returned with piles of food.

And so we headed off towards the US border. I was really wondering what the customs would say when they saw the pile of stuff in the car. But finally everything went as smooth as silk, the biggest problem being the Cardyn's lemon that they brought along for G&T. It is illegal to bring lemons into the USA!

We got to the marina, locked our bikes away in the garage and got aboard Amanzi, a wonderful classic Sparkman and Stephen's design sloop. We packed everything away, while sipping a steaming mug of coffee and eating a slice of delicious tarte au sucre. Then we fired up the Diesel and chugged out of the marina, hoisted the sails and sailed over to a small bay on an island not far away. There we dropped the Anker and snuggled up inside for some wine and G&T and helped Jacque prepare dinner. The meal that would close this second episode of our remarkable journey was –how symbolic- a Swiss Fondü.