
A TRIBUTE TO RON FOLKINS

by Hanna Cunes (May 1995)

Even after these past months it's difficult to believe that none of us will see Ron again. For the first few weeks after Ron's death, like many of you, I kept expecting him to appear, to walk through the front door or to see him quietly among us along a trail or when we stopped for lunch. Dorothy Ann and I talked about seeing someone who looked like Ron while skiing Deception Pass in March. How strange that was. Maybe it's part of the denial we go through. It's also hard when reality sets in and we try to come to grips with his permanent absence.

I told my sister-in-law that none of us had a chance to say goodbye. When I spoke of the fun trips we had in the last year--camping, backpacking, hiking, our Christmas trip to San Antonio, the last evening we had together watching a movie and dinner, and how we Ramblers laughed together at lunch just before the accident, she said that was our way of saying goodbye.

In January Ron wrote his father a letter, something he rarely did since we made several visits to Wainwright every year, mentioning his work south of Revelstoke, our recent Christmas trip and philosophizing about life. Maybe this was a way of saying goodbye to his father.

My first Rambler meeting was somehow intimidating for me. Those double doors were hard to open but, I was determined to go hiking. It was Bob and Liz (former Ramblers) who were first kind to me, maybe they saw the look of apprehension. Mary Taylor also spoke to me since she recognized me from my office where she had once worked. With much difficulty could any of us find a dearer, kinder or wiser person to share our common interest and friendship.

I remember the day Ron and I met, through Ramblers, in September of 1986. It's still clear in my mind, like it was yesterday, what he looked like, what he was wearing and where he stood at a meeting when I heard him

speaking to announce a trip. I signed up for that trip so I could get to know him and our attraction for each other was mutual. During one of our first ski trips that winter, Ron said something I will always remember. Strangely enough, we were skiing out from Burstall Pass when I passed him, he was patiently waiting for me, and he said something sweet; "you are the mayonnaise of my ham sandwich of life, lettuce stick together." At first I didn't think I heard those words right and then I giggled. It was one of his typical indirect approaches.

We shared many Ramblers trips and they became a special part of our lives. Over the many years that Ron was a member he considered Ramblers a family and his loyalty to them was very strong. I too have, over my 8 years with the club, enjoyed a variety of mostly wonderful and memorable trips. In all sincerity, joining Ramblers has been one of the best things I've done. I have met some of the finest people I know through Ramblers.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Ramblers for so much help in so many ways. The food you brought to Ron's service, the phone calls, cards/letters and the friendship you offered has touched my heart and will always be remembered. Bob St. John needs to especially be thanked and acknowledged for his devoted time and energy. Ramblers are fortunate to have him as a president. His memorial ski trip was special to me and many others who were able to come. During that trip I came across a perfect snow angel along the trail and stared at it for awhile. I said to someone behind me "maybe Ron made it".

We all knew Ron in so many special and wonderful ways. His Tilley hat, the way he stood with his hands in his pockets, his dilapidated pack which he said could be used "for one more season", his beloved 1964 Corvair that he could always fix, his love for water power projects, will all be fondly remembered by us. We'll all find joy in remembering his special virtues and take comfort in these memories.

My dear mother said recently that every day is a gift.

May Ron's spirit ramble and soar where there are other peaks to conquer.