

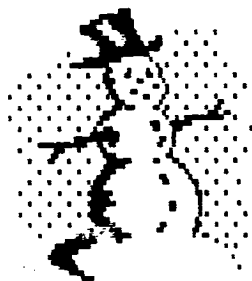
THE

Packrat

AMAA Newsletter

Hiking-Skiing-Backpacking .
Climbing-Cycling-Canoeing
Scrambling and Snowshoeing

HAPPY
VALENTINE'S DAY



FEBRUARY 1992



**THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAMBLERS
ASSOCIATION**

ACTIVITIES: Hiking, Backpacking, Climbing, Canoeing, Cycling, Mountain-Biking, Snowshoeing, Educational and Awareness Programs and Social functions.

MEETINGS: WEEKLY- Wednesday evening at 7:45 PM
Rosemount Community Hall
2807 - 10 Street N.W.

MAIL: P.O. Box 3098 Station 'B'
Calgary, AB T2M 4L6

FEES: Annual Membership: Single \$ 25.00
Family \$ 35.00

TRIP INFO.: 282 - 6308 RMRA Hotline
and at Meetings.

R M R A EXECUTIVE 1991/92

PRESIDENT Reg Fryling
VICE PRESIDENT Alicean Van der Voet
TRIP COORDINATOR Dave Reid
TREASURER Brian Westcott
SECRETARY Irene Willett
PROGRAM DIRECTOR Philip Spaulding
SOCIAL DIRECTOR Deirdre O'Brien
EQUIP. COORDINATOR Ken Frank
NEWSLETTER EDITOR John F. Schleinich

In this Issue:

President's Report.....R.Fryling.....Page 3
Social ActivitiesD.O'Brien.....Page 3
Nordic Trail.....D.Campbell.....Page 4
Fall Rambling.....D.O'Brien.....Page 4
Bob Baxter, the Rambler.....W.Drew.....Page 5
The Tallest Mountain.....J.Schleinich.....Page 6
Skiing around Birdwood.....R.Fryling.....Page 7
Backcountry in New Zealand..W.Drew.....Page 7
Joe Simpson in Calgary.....M.Taylor.....Page 8
XC Ski Song.....W.Drew.....Page 8
Chief Coordinators Report...D.Reid.....Page 9
Meeting the Grizzlies.....J.Schleinich.....Page 10
What are Seniors Worth.....Anonymous.....Page 10

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Chinook winds and our mild winter thus far have provided excellent opportunities for hiking in the foothills and skating on rivers, lakes and reservoirs. Barrier Lake has had large glass areas, Weasel Head was skateable at Christmas, while Prairie Mountain and the Bull Hills have been pretty well accessible for crisp winter hikes.

Some good powder and/or skiable snow, at least, has been found since early winter at higher elevations, such as Healy Pass, Chester Lake, Burstall Pass, Paradise Valley and Elk Pass...So please pass it along - there is a lots to do out there. Encourage others to check out the odd meeting - many trips have been cancelled before they got to the phone message because no one signed up.

I would like to compliment Dee, the Social Committee, and other individuals, who organized and hosted the various parties and social events over the Christmas holidays. The same committee is also doing a good job in welcoming new members at our regular meetings. Thank you Frank and Tony and others for providing us with refreshments each week. The last Packrat was great John!

Happy Valentines
Reg Fryling

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES 1991-92
(left overs)
by Dee O'Brien

Greetings from the Social Committee.

Please participate and help planning other Ramblers social functions.

This year's social functions yet to come:

Valentine Potluck	February	1992
Card Party at Darleen's	February	1992
Open House	May	1992
Stampede Breakfast	July	1992
Car Camp	Spring	1992
Award Dinner	Fall	1992

Committee members and Alicean, our vice president, will be available to meet informally with newcomers to the club on Wednesday nights to provide general information.

Wit ought to be a glorious treat, like caviar. Never spread it about like marmalade.

What is the National Trail ?

from "Hike Canada" Dec.1991/Jan.1992. Published by the National Tr.Assoc.of Canada

Doug Campbell, the founder of NTAC and active in Trail creation responds:

It would be an over-simplification to say it is merely a hiking trail across the country.

"Will it really cross the continent sea-to-sea? What a wonderful idea to think people will be able to walk from the Atlantic to the Pacific."

First impressions focus on the obvious and many look no deeper than that, dismissing the National Trail as a scheme to benefit the few.

True, the hiking enthusiast may see it as a challenge, an Everest in achievement, but mammoth treks appeal to the very few. More attractive is the thought of finding new and exciting places to walk, which the National Trail will provide, some within close reach of home, encouraging people of all ages to share the outdoor experience.

The environmentalist may regard it as a ribbon of parkland winding through the more populated southern regions, helping to protect natural landscapes from development, linking existing parkland creating a bond uniting environmental interests across the Nation.

The Naturalist will find it as yet another refuge and preserve for wildlife, providing new areas to observe the natural scene.

Sociologists may see it as an ever-vibrant meeting place for our peoples and those from other lands; artist may catch and record on canvas or film the diverse range of our natural wealth through the seasons and in all weather; historians and archaeologists may influence its route and delve into this broad cross-section of the continent.

Essentially, the National Trail will be a place to enjoy the outdoors, to walk, to relax, to exercise, to recreate.

For the long term the National Trail aims at pressing needs: to provide more recreational areas to accommodate burgeoning new lifestyles in fitness; to preserve our places of scenic, cultural and historic value before more development encroaches; to forge a link across the Nation; to unify the forces of environmentalism.

D.Campbell

Fall of 1991 Rambling.

by Dee O'Brien

Walking through the rolling hills and ranchlands of Central British Columbia was the perfect way for Elisabeth Radford and me to relax our minds and exercise our bodies, last October. And we did more: swimming, aquasizing, aerobics, and circuit training, soaking in the hot tubs and eating delicious spa meals with other guests in the main dining room. Elisabeth rode from two to six hours a day, on Queen, her horse for the week. Evenings led to card playing, moonlight hayrides and time out for being spoiled with a massage and pedicure.

Our accommodation was a 3 bedroom cottage with balcony looking out over the hills, complete with full kitchen, dining and living room. There would have comfortably been room for four.

We were at "The Hill Health and Guest Ranch", 8 miles north of the 100 Mile House, an hour's drive south of Williams Lake where we were flown in by Air B.C.

From Dec through March, the ranch is the course of 200 miles of tracked nordic trails. Total cost for the 6 nights, all food included and entertainment as well, was \$ 622.00. We are definitely going back.

BOB BAXTER, Honourary Life Member

*1917 +1991

Bob Baxter left for the "Happy Hiking Grounds" on December 24, 1991, after a long battle with cancer. He was introduced to the Ramblers in the late 50's by Tom Thurston when they were both working for Field Aviation out at the Airport, where as Bob put it he "was selling prop wash." Bob always had a great gift for words with a keen sense of humour. I still remember his describing me as a "Volkswagen with a Cadillac engine." His only complaint against his good friend, Tommy, was that Tommy hadn't told him about the Ramblers sooner.

Bob was born in Montreal but raised mainly in Trois Rivier's, where as he put it "winter was sure." But his love for the Rockies and Foothills kept him here in Calgary for the last 40 years of his life in spite of our Chinook winters and undependable snow cover. He became a bilingual Canadian at an early age, because French was necessary to make a hit with the girls in Quebec.

Bob spent most of his life doing what he really liked to do and not unhappily chasing the dollar. He loved books, and went into the used books business in 1960. Bob's Book store was home to the Ramblers for our weekly meetings and equipment storage from 1960 to 1971, when we finally outgrew the larger store at 1026 - 16th Ave NW (something about the fire regulations). In 1965 it took several trips in several Rambler vehicles, to move all the dusty books and Ramblers stuff from the store in the little old building at 211 - 16th Ave NW. to the nice newer store.

Bob could never understand why Ramblers did not read more. He ultimately became recognized as the Dean of Calgary's used book dealers.

One of Bob's last remarks about his life was "---I've had a ball." A truly happy man.

Bob also found time to enjoy Ramblers trips and serve on the executive. He was awarded the silver Pin for leadership in 1962 and served as a Treasurer from 1963 to 1966.

Even after we had to move out of Bob's Bookstore (later Bob's Books) and even later than that when he was no longer able to hike or ski with us, Bob served as the Ramblers answering service, until finally replaced by high tech., which as Bob put it "could not answer questions". Ramblers or interested strangers could phone Bob at his store and find out about upcoming trips and other information about the Ramblers. It was for this valuable service that Bob Baxter was awarded an Honourary Life Membership.

Bob had a happy, loving and secure family life with his wife, Marie, his son Doug and daughter, Jean. Doug left his home and studies in Victoria to help out at home and in the store in Calgary during the last year of his father's life. It takes a good family to raise a son like that.

I was honoured to represent the Ramblers as a pallbearer for this great man at the funeral service on December 28, 1991. A number of Ramblers attended in spite of short notice in the middle of the holiday season. Those of us in the club early enough to really have known Bob Baxter, will miss his wit and friendship while remembering his many contributions to the Rocky Mountain Ramblers.

Wally Drew

The Tallest Mountain.

by John F Schleinich

Mt Everest has always been considered the tallest of the Giants in the Himalayan Range. In 1987, however, new measurements indicated that K 2, a mountain only several hundred feet lower than Everest, was not measured correctly and it most likely is higher than previously believed.

As we know it today, the first attempt to reach the top of Everest was in 1924 by George Mallory, who in the process lost his life on the Mountain. K 2, was also attempted in the twenties by an Italian expedition under Spoletto. They too failed.

To fully appreciate the problems linked with measuring those high and distant objects, I compiled a few facts from a recent Television production named "The Tallest Mountain".

The Himalayan Range was formed approx. 40 million years ago, when the Indian and the Asian plate from the north collided. The process of subduction and thrust is still ongoing and Everest therefore rises yearly, and in years to come, everything else remaining equal, might exceed the 9000 meter level.

In 1700 a British navy lieutenant, Raynolds, started surveying India and published the "Bengal Atlas" in 1776. A surveyor called Lambdon, also a navy lieutenant, began a triangulation survey up north toward the Himalayan range. The hazards were numerous: tropical climate, wild elephants, snakes, tigers, but most dangerous the malaria mosquitos. It was a tremendous undertaking, mostly because of the enormous distance and required accuracy. Thousand miles and seventeen years later, Lambdon died without completing his project.

His successor was George Everest, you guessed it, also a British navy lieutenant. Everest was a fanatic for accuracy. He constructed a base line in the Dehradun plains and used six ten foot bars for triangulation, put end to end to cover the thousand of miles. Errors in this type of surveying with theodolite, compiled; in order to remain reasonably accurate, an error of only half of one inch was permissible over a distance of several hundred miles.

As the surveying gets closer to elevated terrain, spirit levelling for heights is introduced. It is in a way a vertical triangulation, especially when the terrain becomes very steep.

Everest too, did not last to complete the project. He died of exhaustion and a fellow by the name of Andrew Vaugh took over and completed the project. At the time Nepal had it's border closed and the surveyors had to choose a much longer trek to circumnavigate the inaccessible provinces.

After 50 years and 16000 miles they measured a mountain to be 29002 ft high. The highest mountain in the world. Nobody figured to find such a prize, since the survey was not directed to this purpose. They named the Mountain Everest, because Everest was the one most instrumental to the completion of this work. Nepal had no choice, since they were obstructive to the survey, by closing it's borders.

When in 1987 the question about K 2 and his 28250 ft was challenged, an old member of Spoletto's expedition, Artito Edesio, now in his 90ties provided the means and ways to measure both mountains the same way, by satellites.

Everest remains the Tallest of all.

Skiing around Mt. Birdwood.
by Reg Fryling

I was working out as a couch-potato on the eve of the New Years, when a call from Gert suggested a little skiing. The next day nudged me from complacency. We discussed the possibilities as we drove toward the blue sky and grey mountains. Because of the reasonably stable snow conditions and the small amount of the same, we decided to try to circumnavigate Mt. Birdwood. The first obstacle and perhaps the crux of the trip, would be the pass between Snow Mountain and Birdwood. The hardened old snow might be too hard to climb without snow axes and crampons.

Our fears were gone as we kicked steps and used an anchored ski in each hand for balance. On the top we had a magnificent view of the upper Spray River valley and the wild western slopes of Birdwood. Our route picked, we skied across an open hard packed bench system and then side-hilled along through well spaced trees in about 8 inches of old protected powder. We angled up to the pass south-west of the two lakes which are just west of Commonwealth Pass. The two lakes are in a bowl between the passes, and would not be a good place in unstable snow conditions. We were able to traverse and kick-turn our way across the bowl in the variably crusted snow.

The snow was crusted above the trees on the Commonwealth Creek side, but we found some good powder in the trees. After reaching the valley floor, we soon picked up a ski trail to follow, leading out of the valley. From there a maze of logging roads and ski trails eventually got us back to the Burstall parking lot, just before dark. An excellent finish to the year!

Skiing in New Zealand.
by Wally Drev

In Rocky Mountain Ramblers country skiers drive to down hill ski areas, and touring skiers don't expect to see ski lifts in the back country. That is often true in New Zealand too, yet I found one exception.

One of the seven national parks I walked in during my 4 weeks in Oct.-Nov.1991, was Nelson Franks National Park in the north end of the southern alps on the south island.

From our alpine lodge in the vullage of St.Ormaud our bus took us to Mt. Robert car park at 2900 feet, about 900 ft above lake Rotoiti. From there the Pinchgut track swichbacked up to Bushedge shelter at 4630 ft at timberline.

From there on the trck went up the open gentle crest of Mt. Robert, fully exposed to the wind, to Belan Hut at 4760 ft and then on to Ski Basin Hut at 5150 ft. That last hut looked down over the Ski Basin with it's ski lifts. I had hiked 6 or 7 km and climbed 2300 ft to get within sight of Ski Basin. There are no roads to it. I had come the shortest way.

Being far ahead of the group I had time to continue my solo side trip on and up along the crest, to the top of the seconf ski lift at 5300 ft. I had to quit there because the gale was so fierce, I coulff hardly keep on my feet and it was snowing.

The area (Skifield as they call them in New Zealand) was already closed for the season in November 3 (=May 3 in the northern Hemisphere) although the Wakapaka Skifield on Mt. Ruapehu in Tongariro National Park on the North Island was operating until November 17 (=May 17) after an

unusually snowy winter.

As I fought the wind on my way back along the exposed crest I thought about what the down hill skiers had to endure skiing or more likely carrying their skis up to, and along that open crest in winter gales to get to their ski lift.

Joe Simpson Coming to U of C
by Mary Taylor

Joe Simpson author of "Touching the Void" is speaking at the U of C on March 18th. If you enjoy reading or hearing about adventures you never ever want to experience, mark this night on your calendar and/or pick up the book.

In May 1985, Simpson and his companion Simon Yates set out to climb the formidable unclimbed west face of 21 000 foot Siule Grande in the Peruvian Andes. They got to the top still enjoying themselves but on the way down the nightmare began. Simpson fell off an ice ledge driving the lower bone of his right leg through the knee joint. With both climbers exhausted and frost bitten, Yates began lowering Simpson 3000 feet, belaying by digging sits in the soft snow. Well down, Simpson was lowered over a cliff in a whiteout. Yates unaware of what has happened but with hands freezing and seat collapsing, finally cut the rope to save himself.

Simpson's survival makes an incredible story. For me it is the story of someone who returned from the dead - and wants to do it again, no less.

Song for an XC Ski Trip on Ski Tour.

by Wally Drew

One late December evening preceding a Rambler ski trip, I started singing a song, making it up as I went along. I was trying to use the tunes of "Oh Christmas Tree" or the Boy Scout be prepared song. I never could sing a song all in one tune or one key anyway. See if you can fit it to one or both of those tunes. Here are the words:

We shall see what we shall see
Oh goodness me, what shall we see?
We shall see the rising sun
And know a pretty day's begun.
We shall see the mountains clear
With all their elk and sheep and deer.
We shall see white powder snow
On glist'ning peaks and trees below.
We shall see ski tracks we've made
Winding through both sun and shade.
We shall see the Alpenglow
And then we'll know it's time to go.

Trip Coordinators Chairman Report: October to December 1991

by Dave Reid

The number of trips in this period is less than last year largely due to the poor snow conditions which have reduced the number of x-c-ski trips. The most active coordinators are Wally Drew, Ken Frank, and John Schleinich. Happy rambling in the new year.

TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF RMRA COORDINATOR ACTIVITY
OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 1991

Coordinator	St.	Trips (Days)	Person (Days)	X-C Ski	D-H Ski	Skate	Hike	Backpack
Des Moulins, A	F	1(3)	18					1
Drew, W	F	4	27	1		1	2	
Frank, K	F	4	14				4	
Fryling, R	F	2	10	2				
Jones, D	F	4	13	4				
Logos, S	F	2	10	1			1	
Lowndes, D	F	2	20	2				
Moran, T	F	1	11				1	
Pattison, H	F	2	8		1		1	
Reid, D	F	1	7				1	
Schleinich, J	F	4	17				4	
Scott, K	F	1	32				1	
Sinclair, A	F	2	21				2	
Twelker, W	F	2(7)	25				2	
Watson, K	F	2	4		2			
Westcott, B	F	1	22				1	
TOTAL:	16		248	10	3	1	20	1

Table 2
Comparison of RMRA Activity
October to December 1991 and 1990

	1991	1990
1. Total Trips	35	47
2. Total Person Days	248	265
3. Dominant Type of Trip (Persons)		
* Total day hike	20 (179)	19 (128)
* Total X-C ski	10 (51)	20 (94)
* Total downhill ski	3 (9)	3 (20)
4. Average Trips/Coordinator	2.2	2.8
5. Av.No.of Person Days/Coord.	15.5	15.6
6. No. of Coord. with 5 or more trips	None	3
7. Number of Active Coordinators	16	17

The Meeting with the Grizzlies.

by John Schleinich

It happened on a beautiful September Thursday hike in the Upper Kananskis area. June Sobon, Jim Dixon and myself hiked up the Upper Elk Lake via Fox Lake near the west Elk pass. A week earlier we hiked up Frozen Lake, and at West Elk Pass I noticed an entry in the log book, that a mother Grizzly and her two cubs were sited in this area about 10 days ago. I hoped, in my self-destructive, attitude that perhaps we too would be so fortunate as to see the bears. As I found out later June also was hopping for the same thing.

We got to the Elk Lakes, where we met the Ranger. She told us about the bears, and how they followed them for a while until they left the area. She was sure that they were far away by now. (shocks)

But was she ever wrong...and our wish came through.

Nearing the West Elk Pass, to the left is a beautiful meadow. Just right for bears. We were walking briskly and in silence, enjoying the solitude on a Thursday when all the other "Gorbies" stayed home or on their jobs. And then we heard it....

First I thought it was people, and was annoyed. Then..perhaps deer, but the noise was too powerful, maybe a Mouse,..many Mouses, and then it ran across my path, about FIVE short feet from me: a BEAR. I wanted to be sure, and looked for the hump, praying it wouldn't be a black bear again. There it was...it was a Grizzly, not the mother but the two year old cub. Never mind, what went through my mind at that moment, I turned around and calmly walked back, and so did June and Jim. Now that I have seen my Griz, I hoped it would go away, the whole tribe, especially the mother, who was growling something fiercely only a little distance away behind a thin line of trees.

Praise the Lord, they did move away. The cub ran back to mother, and all three of them moved into the meadow. About fifty or so, feet away, mam stood up on her hind legs and sniffed the air. The most beautiful sight I ever saw out there. Her light brown hair around her neck was shaking, as she turned her head and sniffed. And was she ever big, and well fed. A majestic animal. In my heart I sent her a "thank you" message and bid her good by and a good winter.

Then, till the end of the trail, June blew her whistle.

What are Seniors Worth?

We are worth a fortune: with silver in our hair, gold in our teeth, stones in the kidneys, lead in our feet and gas in our stomachs. As I grow older, changes come into my life, and frankly I've become a frivolous old gal.

I am seeing five gentlemen every day. As soon as I wake up, Will Power helps me get out of bed. Then I go to see John. Next Charlie Horse comes along and when he is here he commands a lot of my attention. When he leaves, Arthur Ritis shows up and stays the rest of the day. He does not stay in one place for long, so he takes me to bed with Ben Gay. What a life! Oh yes I forgot, I am also flirting with Al Zymer.

The preacher came to call the other day. He said at my age I should be thinking of the hereafter. I told him: "OH I do, all the time. No matter where I am, in the parlour, upstairs, in the kitchen, or down in the basement, I am always asking myself--- now what is it I am here after?"