



THE Packrat



RMRA Newsletter



All Outdoor Activities

August 1992

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAMBLERS

ASSOCIATION

ACTIVITIES: Hiking, Backpacking, Climbing, Mountai-Biking, Skiing, Cycling, Canoeing, Snowshoeing, Educational and Awareness Programs and Social Functions.

MEETINGS: WEEKLY - Wednesday evening at 8:00 PM at Rosemount Community Hall 2807 - 10th Street N.W.

MAIL: P.O.Box 3098 Station 'B'

ANNUALL FEES: (from Oct. to Oct.) 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
NEWSLWTTER EDITOR	John Schleinich

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* Count seconds between the flash of lightning and thunder. Five seconds signify one mile. *

Polaris or the North Star is the last star in the Little Dipper. To find it, first find the Big Dipper. The two stars that form the side of the B. Dipper opposite the handle, are known as the pointer stars. Extend the line formed by the pointer stars five times it's length, and you'll see POLARIS, the true North.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Reg Fryling

I am writing at the last minute - the PackRat editor is waiting and it is intermission time at the Wednesday meeting, just before the long weekend. It sounds like a pub in here with everyone busy planning trips.

One recent development which bothers me is C.A.O.C.'s decision to allow as members, outdoor clubs that use motorized equipment as part of their activities - such as A.T.V.s, four wheel drives power toboggans, etc. I feel that there is a very basic difference in philosophies between people who travel in the back country on their own steam and those that do not. I realize we sometimes have to sit down and plan back country usage with those groups, but feel it would be better if they had a separate collective voice.

Please let me know how you feel about this problem.

THE SPINNEY BEAR

by Wally Drew

On a recent wildcat trip four of us "seasoned" Ramblers were at the south end of Rawson Lake after exploring the beautiful flower covered ridge to the NW. I was on avalanche remains out on the adjacent little tarn when the two woman, among the keenest hikers in the Ramblers, called to me in hushed and fearful tones that they saw a BEAR. I joined them (fearless Wally e.n.) and my strong eyes searched the mountain slopes above in vain. Then they indicated that it was closer down and sure enough I saw the animal less than 50 meters away. It had quills just like a porcupine's and looked like a porcupine. The other man, who had been watching a fish in the lake, arrived then to confirm with me that it indeed was a porcupine, granted: a VERY LARGE PORCUPINE. I decided that this new animal discovered by our two distinguished ladies -the spinney bear- should be called a "Porcubear".

NOTICE

The Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association will dispose of it's rental equipment by auctioning it off the last Wednesday in August. The articles listed below will go to the highest bidder, unless the club decides that the minimum bid was not met. The bidding will be secret and is restricted to members only. Your Name, the name of the article bid on and the price offered for the article should be put into a sealed envelope and given to Ken Frank or in his absence to John Schleinich. On August the 26th at the meeting the envelopes will be opened and the bidding results announced. The following articles will be auctioned off: (minimum price per article in brackets)

7 Avalanche transmitters	(70)	3 "White Stay" back-pack tents	(50)
6 Pairs of Snowshoes	(25)	2 Large back-packs (ext.frame)	(25)
4 Sets of cooking pots	(10)	2 Frying pans	(5)
1 Emergency toboggan	(30)	4 Snow saws	(5)
4 Pairs of climbing skins	(20)	3 Campfire grills	(5)
2 Aluminum Shovels	(12)	2 Ice axes	(30) 1
Wood saw "Bow"	(10)	1 Axe	(10)
1 Hatchet	(10)	1 Overlap camp fly	(5)

TREKKING IN NEPAL

by Joyce Tomboulian

After six months of accumulating all the right stuff and keeping it with-in the weight restriction, and getting all the recommended inoculations, I was packed and off on a March 92 Sierra Club trip to Nepal. It was to be a 13 day trek into the Annapurna Sanctuary. In addition there was also a small side trip to the Royal Chitwan National Park, sightseeing in Katmandu and some travel in Hong Kong and Bangkok planned, for a total of 4 weeks. The hard part turned out to be getting from Calgary to Seattle. We were fogged in for two hours in Spokane and arrived in Seattle within 10 minutes of the departure of Thai flight to Bangkok. I had no idea where my well-packed packs were. Two days and many anxious hours later, they reached me in Katmandu just before I would have had to re-fit for the trek.

The trailhead was in Pokhara, 200 km and 9 hours away. The bus ride was risky, but the group was congenial, we all had our lives in the drivers hands. By contrast the trek was almost a piece of cake! The trails were excellent, after all they are the transportation arteries between villages through the Annapurna foothills (from 8 to 11,000 feet). Huge Mountains up to 27000 feet, such as Machapurchase, Annapurna I to IV and Dhaulagiri were not too distant. There was a lots of hiking up and down, but rather soft by Rambler standards. 10 miles and about 3000 feet gain was considered a long day. Total trek was 80 miles. It was all luxurious tent camping. A group of 15, we had our own leader as well as a Sardar and 26 Sherpas. Those were the porters, cooks and friendly companions. All we had to do was walk! After being awakened in the morning with hot tea and cookies, I don't know if I will be able to handle real back packing again. However, the toilet and washing facilities were another story. We all developed strong squatting

muscles, and a river, no matter how cold, was pure bliss.

Unlike our back country in the Rockies, the Nepali foothills are mostly terraced and well populated. It's hard to imagine a populated place without a road system, electricity, telephones and much consumer goods. Bottled water, beer and pop were available almost anywhere. The people do have the basic food and seemed healthy and happy, always friendly and eager to entertain us with their unique folk music and dancing. They are gentle people where violence and crime are virtually unknown and they work hard to farm their land without modern equipment. We were blessed with stupendous weather. Every day was warm and sunny. We found only a few patches of snow on elevations over 10,000'. We saw no large wildlife, but plenty of flowers and birds. Unfortunately, we did not get high enough to meet the Yeti!

A tour such as ours has it's merits, but at times some of us wished we could do more, -go all the way to Annapurna base camp, for instance. We watched with envy as independent trekkers covered more ground and had more adventurous stories to tell. As an introduction to Nepal, this was good, but it would be very easy and cheap to hire a guide, sleep in primitive guest houses and subsist on local food. One might get a trifle tired of the universal staple, (and trots e.n.) daal bhaat (rice and lentils), but could carry other supplies for some variety. By contrast we were spoiled on good camp food. This trip was more than an outdoor adventure for me. It was an experience of a totally different way of life in a part of the world almost inconceivably different from my own. The memories of exotic sights, sounds, smells, the friendly people, and hiking through the colourful terraced foothills and villages against the backdrop of the highest mountains in the world will always be with me!

CLIMBING KAROLAND

by Francisco Galli

From the plane between Penang and Medan, we could see the dark storm clouds rising to great heights. Far below us the sea was the colour of lead. But of course, being the rainy season in North Sumatra we did not expect the weather to be perfect.

Medan had nothing to attract our attention. A big city with congested traffic, terrible pollution, broken sidewalks and open sewers was not to our liking, so in less than one hour we were on our way to the highlands. The bus was old and falling apart. It was overcrowded and the ever present smell of clove cigarettes permeated the air. However, it was an exciting ride from sea level to 1400 m (4600'); the narrow road climbs relentlessly in tight switchbacks affording good views of jungle and cultivated valleys, ridges enveloped in mist and small hamlets among patches of banana and papaya trees. In about 3hrs we reached our destination: Brastagu, in the heart of the Karo highlands, a fertile plateau of fields and pine forests, from which a few volcanos rise towards the sky. Blessed with a pleasant climate and populated by the pleasant and friendly Batak people, it was welcome surprise in Indonesia.

From the garden of our guesthouse we could see our objective for the following day: Gunung Sibayak with a plume of smoke emanating from it's broken crater. With an elevation of 2200 m (7200') it is an easy climb and a popular one too.

It was a crisp and clear morning when we started our hike after a short ride to a small village at the foot of the volcano. It was a steep climb. With our rudimentary Indonesian we were able to find the right path and were on our way thru the fields for a short time before entering dense forests and taking an extremely steep and muddy trail. As it turned out this was only a shortcut and we soon rejoined the

main trail with well constructed stone steps to avoid erosion and the path being washed out in the daily rains. Hundreds or maybe thousands of steps later we took a break in a small clearing and made an offering to the volcano goddess, thus ensuring a safe trip. Being smokers we did not have any problem. The ritual is to insert a cigarette in a stick and watch it burn away. The thick forest seemed devoid of all life. We could hear branches thrashing and howling high above us but couldn't see a thing. Occasionally something crashed thru the bushes, a bear or leopard, perhaps.

Higher up the trees became smaller and covered with moss, as most of the time this zone is enveloped in mist. Shortly we were on open slopes climbing straight to the jagged crater rim. From there we could see the small lake at the bottom of the crater and a few fumaroles staining the rock a brilliant yellow. Masses of steam with a strong odour of rotten eggs emanated from fissures in the ground. To the south another volcano rose majestically, the perfect cone shape, into the sky. In other directions a complex system of jungle clad ridges stretches into the far distance, the highest ones being obscured by mist and clouds. We enjoyed the views and bright sunshine until dark masses of fog enveloped everything around us. By 11 am all visibility was gone and we started down. The thousands of steps pained our legs, which were used to sandy beaches. Two hours later we were soaking our tired muscles in the hot springs, but for two or three days we kept feeling our sore legs from relentless pounding of the steps.

As we returned the sky was covered in cloud, but a few rays of intense sunlight shone in patches here and there, giving the scene a magic quality and making the valley a beautiful place to be.

HIKING IN THE LAKE DISTRICT - GREAT BRITAIN

by Darlene Weger

For the third time, Roger and I had the opportunity to stay at a Holiday Fellowship House and spend a week hiking in the British Country Side. This May we went to Derwent Water in the Lake District. For a long time now, I've heard about this Lake District and how beautiful it was, and it is But---

Not but the weather. The area has a reputation of being very wet (it rains most of the time). However, while we were there it was sunny and hot most of the time with occasional light showers.

Not but the lack of challenge. At first it looked like we had not much height to gain, the mountains lack rugged peaks, and they appeared more like small hills with grass growing to the top. However, elevation gain on some more difficult climbs was 2000' to 3000'+ and some had more rocks then you would guess looking from the highway.

But--- there were a lot of people hiking in these mountains even mid-week, (however, it was school break). The ranger told us that on a nice long week end there have been as many as 400 people at one time on a single popular mountain!!!!

But---all their hiking areas are also used to graze sheep which keeps the grass very short and I hardly saw any wild flowers except along the ditches. And as for trees, well they do have trees, especially in the valleys but compared to our foothills and parks, well, there is no comparison. How very lucky we are, hiking in Western Canada!! Yes, we live near greatest hiking country in the world!! (My unbiased opinion).

But I have enjoyed all my hiking in Great Britain, high country or low, there still is plenty to see and there is a lot of green there too.

Final But where else can you stop and have a Pub Lunch! We did not do this on our more serious days of hiking but there are a lots of country paths to hike over there that include a pub or two on route.

The Qualities of a "Great" Coordinator.

compiled by J F Schleinich

Find someone who is an athlete, willing to accept risks, someone who radiates confidence and strength and has years of outdoor experience, but not too many years to his name. A person with excellent knowledge of the back country, supplemented by abilities to read maps and compass. Preferably, that person should have survived avalanches, rockfall, bear attacks been rescued from crevasses and overhangs, bivouacked in bad weather, survived storms on high mountains and was hung up on cliffs and rockwalls. This person should be familiar with deep snow conditions, building igloos and be able to survive in sub zero temperatures and whiteouts. Of course they have to be expert skiers and climbers, have a love for the unknown and always be prepared for the unexpected. If for some strange reason you can not find such a person, then look for a friend who is willing to contribute and share in everything you do in the great outdoors.

"Those Himalayas of the mind are not so easily possessed.
There's more than precipice and storm between you and your Everest."
C. Day Lewis

MONT BLANC 1982

by John F Schleinich

On August the 8th, almost exactly 10 years ago in 1982, I was standing on top of the Alps with my three buddies, exuberant and happy, for we finally made it. It was Mont Blanc. At 15800 ft the highest peak and one of the three giants in the Alps. My friends with me were: Bob, an Austrian, Schlot, from Bern Switzerland, and his wife Monique from France.

It all started many years before, in the comfort of soft chairs and music by Mozart, when Bob mentioned that he and his wife wanted to go up Mont Blanc at some future date. Not long before this conversation, I had heard that a chopper landed on the top, so I rightly assumed there would be enough space for more than two, and suggested they let me know when they decide on the date and I would like to join them.

In spring of 82 I received a letter from Bob. In August, a party of six was going for the top, and if I am still willing, I was welcome to join them. End of July I flew to Europe, met Bob and his wife in Buerchen, Switzerland and together with his son drove to Chamonix, the rock-climber's city in the French alps. In Chamonix we met the other three members of our party: Schlot, his wife and their 18 year old daughter.

The weather was miserable. We holed up in a primitive hotel and waited. Three days later the weather forecast for the next few days was sunny and warm. We looked for a guide, found them to expensive, and decided to do it on our own. We all had experience in the mountains, even the youngest: Bob's 16 year old son. We were packed and ready.

Next morning we took the train to the trail head. From there we took a gondola up 5 to 6 hundred feet, where the trail began. The first section was easy hiking and scrambling, and a fairly flat glacier walk to the first hut, the Tete Rousse at 10,378 ft. It was a pleasant overnight stay in good company with a good meal, served by the hut owner. In the evening we sat outside eying the 2000 feet high rock-wall which we had to climb next day. The second hut, Goutter at 12,520 ft, was at the foot of a glacier which went almost to the top of the mountain. It was a steep wall. I knew my partners were good, and I was praying not to disgrace myself.

At sunrise after a good breakfast, we were on our way. Near Tete Rousse we had to cross a couloir, iced up in the morning, but we could hear the water below the ice rushing down the steep glacier into oblivion. We had crampons on, and were using ice axes, and made it across safely. On the other side, we prepared for the climb. A scramble, which got more and more difficult and near the top the wall became almost vertical, with a big void below us. I counted on cables fastened to the rock, a common scene in the alps, similar to the cables going up Ribbon Lake. They were there and we used them anxiously. We met roped-up parties coming down with guides and we had to manoeuvre by them, not trusting those "Green-horns", we were jittery.

Late in the afternoon we reached the hut, safe and in one piece. What a madhouse that was. There were three rooms: One to sleep in, one to leave your packs in, and one attached to the kitchen to eat in. Big enough to accommodate maybe 20 people comfortably. But I guess there must have been a hundred of us. What a nightmare. And the toilet..gruesome.

The sun was shining and we stood outside admiring the beautiful landscape, the Mont Blanc Massive. Beautiful, yet so hostile. This year it claimed already 46 lives, and before we left a couple or three more.

(E.N. the reason for this article: not enough publishing material submitted.....and Phill gave me the idea.) - Conclusion in the next issue.

Trip Coordinators Chairman Report: April to June 1992

by Dave Reid

The number of trips and activity is very similar to this time last year. The most active coordinators are Art Davis (14), Wally Drew (6), Ken Scott (6), John F. Schleinich (14) and Alastair Sinclair (5). Many thanks to Brieta Angus, Ken Scott and Alistair Des Moulins for helping with the weekly trip reports and recording the answering machine.

**TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF RMRA COORDINATOR ACTIVITY**

Coordinator	St	Days Hk.	Per/D	X Ski	Hike	Cy	Co	Backpk
Angus, B	F	2	11		2			
Campbell, D	F	3	19		3			
Davis, A	F	14	131		14			
Des Moulins	F	2 (5)	23					2
Drew, W	F	6	51	1	5			
Foltz, A	A	1	12		1			
Frank, K	F	3	10		2	1		
Fryling, R	F	1	2			1		
Kittle, K	F	1	6		1			
Logos, S	F	3	35		3		1	
Lowndes, D	F	1	4			1		
McGill, P	F	1 (2)	4					
Michi, J	F	1	10		1			
Moran, T	F	1	6		1			
Noer, G	F	4	17		4			
Reid, D	F	1	8		1			
Schleinich, J	F	14	62		14			
Scott, K	F	6	87		6			
Sinclair, A	F	5	72		5			
Sobon, J	A	2	9		2			
St. John,	A	3	27		3			
Watson, K	F	1	4		1			
Total:	22	76-80	610	1	69	3	1	2

**TABLE 2
COMPARISON OF RMRA ACTIVITY
APRIL to JUNE 1992 and 1991**

	1992	1991
1. Total Trips	76	76
2. Total Person Days	610	645
3. Dominant Type of Trip (Persons)		
a. Total day hike	69/574	62/538
b. Total x - c ski	1/2	1/3
c. Total downhill ski	0/0	2/8
4. Average Trips/Coordinator	3.5	2.9
5. Average No. of Persons Days/Coordinator	27.7	24.8
6. No. of Coordinators With 5 or More Trips	5.0	5.0
7. Number of Active Coordinators	22.0	26.0