

THE PACKRAT

RMRA Newsletter
January 1994

ACTIVITIES: Hiking, Backpacking, Climbing, Skiing, Cycling, Canoeing, Mountain-Biking, Snow shoeing, Educational and Awareness Programs and Social Functions

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

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

TRIP INFO: 282-6308 RMRA Hotline and at meetings

R M R A EXECUTIVE 1993 - 94

PRESIDENT	Bob St. John
VICE PRESIDENT	Ken Scott
TRIP COORDINATOR	Reg Fryling
TREASURER	John Schleinich
SECRETARY	Anne Moran
SOCIAL DIRECTOR	Anita O'Reilly
PROGRAM DIRECTOR	Barb Mitchell
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Marianne Wolters

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Seasons Greetings to all and a special welcome to new club members! By now skiing should be in full swing on what I hope will be a firm and deep snowpack. For members who traditionally prefer summer hiking, why not try skiing this winter? There is a wealth of experience in the club to draw upon and a wide variety of trips to choose from. Perhaps some coordinators would consider leading trips to introduce and practice new skills (basic gliding, turning, telemarking, arresting snow slides etc.). None of us are experts, and we are not getting into the teaching business, but I know I could benefit from practice myself. I will be looking into meeting at Canada Olympic Park on Thursday evenings to practice turning and telemark skills.

The executive this year has both experienced and new faces. I look forward to working with them to make this year a productive one. If you have any suggestions on improvements we can make please let any one of us know. It has been brought to my attention that the membership would like to know more of what is decided at executive meetings. To this end the Secretary will include a summary of the meetings' minutes in the Packrat.

On November 18th, I represented the club at the annual Calgary Area Outdoor Council members meeting. Duncan Daniels of Alberta Community Development gave a half hour presentation entitled "Trends In Outdoor Recreation". The underlying theme is that as our population ages we are choosing less energetic recreational activities. The number of people hiking and skiing peaked in 1987, and today golfing, bicycling and walking are popular activities. Clubs such as ours, and others such as the Alpine Club, Calgary Ski Club and Bow Waters Canoe Club are finding it more difficult to attract new members and to keep experienced volunteers. On the bright side it was pointed out that cross country skiing and backpacking were in the top 10 activities that people were keen to try. I believe we can attract these people, however I perceive our club is not as well known as some others. This is a challenge for us in the coming years, to attract new members to sustain or expand our membership. If you have any bright ideas I am all ears.

**SUMMARY OF EXECUTIVE MEETINGS
OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION
HELD AT ROSEMONT COMMUNITY HALL
3 and 24 NOVEMBER 1993**

The Vice President, Ken Scott, asked about a new recorder. The President, Bob St. John, said he had looked at machines that edited the recording, and there was newer equipment on the market costing about \$130-\$170, but intends to find out more options. The Vice President, Ken Scott, suggested a small informational sheet on business card size would be useful, he is going to investigate prices, etc. Also, the first aid course will be arranged hopefully in late winter or early spring.

Pieps

The co-ordinators chairman suggested a motion as follows:

"It is up to Co-ordinators to advise that on trips where pieps are needed, all participants have the same frequency transceivers on the trip". Seconded by Anita O'Reilly. All in favour.

17 November will be the equipment and book sale.

Reimbursements

Four Co-ordinators having been on an avalanche course, were asking for a reimbursement of 25% of the cost which was \$60.00 each. There was some discussion whether to allow this reimbursement, as when the course was announced, no mention of a reimbursement was made. A vote was taken, the majority were in favour, one against. It was stated that a reimbursement of 15% will be made to all co-ordinators who participate on courses. This will be stated at the weekly meeting when such courses are announced.

Treasurer

John Schleinich said that the club was in a good financial position, having over \$3,000 in the bank, also the hall rental has been paid in full for the coming year and the Dinner and Dance expenses have been paid. The club has 60 new members.

Social

The Open House is on 1 December, members of the Executive will give a short talk about the job they do in the club, and coming events they are planning. Reg Fryling will discuss trips, and there will be free coffee, tea and baking.

Also, a free membership will be given away by lottery to absolutely new people only.

The Christmas party will be held on 15 December. It will be a pot luck supper and there will be various games, including a present exchange.

Programs

On January 20, an Avalanche Guide from Kannanaskis will give a presentation.

The next Committee meeting will be on January 12, 1994 at 7:15 pm. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

CAVALCADE OF COLOUR

by Roger Woodgate

I'd had a sore heel lately, so Darlene announced a cycle trip for Sunday, September the 26th, instead of trudging the mountain trails. Two other club members expressed interest, but neither showed up at the rendezvous, so just the two of us went, on our trusty tandem. Although at first we wondered just how trusty it might be, due to the clicking noises we were getting from somewhere underneath us.

It was a glorious, sunny day, and very soon we stopped by the roadside and changed into shorts.

Our route took us from the Heritage Park engine, along the south side of Glenmore Lake, then through Oakridge and Cedarbrae and down 37th Street to 22X. We continued on the hard-top on the east and south sides of Red Deer lake, then switched south again for several kilometres. We had lunch on a rock by the road-side on a serene hilltop, affording views of the city to the north, and foothills and mountains to the south. We then went a little further south and turned east on Highway 549. At the next T-junction we turned north, passing Strathcona/Tweedsmuir School, and just north of the Calgary Trap and Skeet Club we turned west again. Up to this point we'd been entirely on paved roads but now we had a few kilometres of gravel. We'd hoped to hit the hard-top again at the southeast corner of Red Deer Lake but somehow we didn't go quite far enough west and so finished up coming up the east side of Spruce Meadows, which put us on 14th Street once we had crossed 22X. 162nd Avenue took us east to Lake Sundance and the east end of Fish Creek Park. We returned home by the Bow River path since we didn't need to go back to the rendezvous.

The weather stayed gorgeous all day, though the wind did get up a little bit in the afternoon. The sun shone all day apart from a brief period around 6 o'clock when it went behind a band of Chinook cloud. But it did return briefly just before it set to give a final illumination of the yellows, golds, greens, and reds of the trees and bushes along the Bow River.

Outside the city, the leaves were at their best, mostly a bright yellow contrasted with the few remaining greens, set against a clear, blue sky. I enjoyed all this vicariously, but there were enough fallen leaves to produce a satisfying crunch under our wheels from time to time.

The traffic was light and the countryside was tranquil. South of the city we didn't see a single other cyclist; just a couple of equestrians and some people gathering special grasses from the roadside to put in dried flower arrangements.

We covered 105 kilometres, and by the end of the ride I'd completely forgotten my sore heel, but another part of my anatomy was starting to complain. By golly, the hot tub felt good that night!

JBEL TOUBKAL

by Bob St. John

On a recent tour of Morocco I had the opportunity to climb Jbel (Mount) Toubkal, at 13,655 feet the highest mountain in North Africa. The trip was with Guerba Expeditions, a company based in London, England that specializes in African holidays. Twenty participants plus three Guerba personnel rode in a British Army Bedford truck converted for African 'safari style' travel. During the latter part of the trip we were to stay at Imlil, a mountain village at the base of Toubkal. A few days prior to arriving at Imlil there had been a few of us talking of making the ascent. However when we reached Imlil the group had dwindled to one due to reasons of health (a bug plagued our trip) and lack of funds. I was wondering myself as I had earlier in the trip done bad things to my feet breaking in a pair of lightweight hiking boots. However, at the last moment I said yes, and made the necessary arrangements.

I was somewhat apprehensive for a number of reasons; (a) I was going to wear boots that already put blisters on my feet, (b) I had never gone higher than 11,500 feet before, (c) I was going with a local guide who could not speak English, only a little French, (d) my French is lousy, and (e) the Guerba truck was going to leave for Marrakech after lunch on the day I was to climb. Nevertheless arrangements were made for a guide to awaken me at 4 AM the following morning. At this point I should mention that although there is a trail up most of Toubkal, a guide was necessary to find the trail in the dark, and to make sure I got to Marrakech in case I missed the truck. Besides the guide's fee was only \$50.00.

After a somewhat sleepless night I was awake when the guide came for me at 3:45 AM. After fumbling into some clothes I had rather expected to have a bite to eat, but no, we were to start right away. I found out his name was Mohammed, a name given when their real name is too hard to pronounce, (i.e. call me Mike). I told him my name was Bob, but he pronounced it more like Boob. The first two kilometers or so were through the village and up a river valley. He set a fast pace, almost running along the paths of the village and up the rocky trail. It was hard to keep my footing on the loose rocks with only the light of our head lamps showing the way. Due to language problems, our conversation was limited, but every five minutes or so he would ask "Ça va, Boob?", meaning "how are you, Bob?", to which I would reply "Très bien", fine. It soon occurred to me that he may be trying to find out what shape I might be in. I was determined to keep up, even push him on a bit. This went on for about an hour as we ascended a ridge, him asking how I was, and me replying fine, fine. Finally he stopped, smiled and said in broken French "we'll make the top for sure". At this point I had to finally take a pee. It wasn't until mid-stream so to speak that I realized I was pissing straight towards Mecca, something one does not do in a Moslem country. I would pay for it later on.

After one and one half hours of steady climbing we reached a high valley. It was beginning to be light out and I could see the surrounding peaks. There was little vegetation, only some thorny scrub bushes, and a skiff of fresh snow higher up. The peaks were rugged but accessible via scree slopes. Mohammed mentioned that nearby mountains had ski lifts and received plenty of snow. At the head of the valley was a half-way hut made of stone. Inside was a party of ten hikers from Holland and Germany who had reached the hut the previous day and had stayed overnight. We had breakfast with them (hard bread, apricot jam and sweet mint tea). They spoke good English, and we traded stories of our Moroccan adventures. Soon we were off again, with the summit peak in sight. The trail became iffy at best, and it was good old Rocky Mountain scree scrambling for two hours. The view from the top was unimpeded for 360 degrees. We could see all three regions of Morocco, the coastal plain to the northwest, the barren, rugged Atlas Mountains, and the interior desert far to the southeast. It was cool on top at -5 deg Centigrade and a brisk wind. Mohammed provided a snack of apples, walnuts and bread while I wondered what the Arabic graffiti on all the big rocks meant. I was relieved that the altitude had not affected me, but I was starting to wonder about my feet.

Mohammed wanted to descend the 7,200 feet to Imlil via a short cut, and bypass the trail. Soon we were running down the steep scree, and shortly after I was going to pay the price for peeing east. My feet were now being tortured, and I had to slow right down to one painful step after another. After half an hour of this I explained to Mohammed that this could not go on. I had with foresight packed a sturdy pair of sandals and put them on. Instant relief, although sandals on scree are still a slow combination. I was so annoyed with my boots that I offered them to Mohammed who accepted them with glee. They alone were worth more than his fee.

I was resigned to the fact I would not make it in time to catch the truck, so we went at our leisure. Part way down we stopped at a small hamlet and had mint tea. Everyone came out to see us and there was much chatter between them and Mohammed. I presume by their looks and polite laughter that I and his new boots might be the subject of conversation. I was glad I was bringing happiness to them, and the tea was refreshing. We passed several groups of hikers on their way up, some looking in amazement at my sandals. I conveyed in a nonchalant manner that this was normal for Canadians, and we saved our boots for hard climbs. At a small store near Imlil I bought soft drinks for the both of us, and we took our time drinking them and chatting to locals. Little did I know the truck had left late and I missed it by five minutes!!

The ride to Marrakech was an adventure in itself. From Imlil to Asni I rode in the back of an old pickup truck. Passengers would be picked up and dropped off along the road. Mohammed came with me and he knew just about everyone. Polite laughter and discreet looks gave me some idea of their conversation. It was in good fun and I was made to feel one of them. From Asni to Marrakech we rode in a regular taxi, a Mercedes. In Morocco Mercedes are a very popular car. Apparently they are quite inexpensive and are durable enough to meet the challenges of hot dusty third world roads. Four of us crammed into the back seat, two in the front bucket seat and the driver made seven. I made the mistake of opening a rear door window to the whining complaints of the others that it was too cold out (17 deg C). Indeed the heater was on! Strangers riding together in these taxis become immediate close friends, you have to. One brought out a six inch hunting knife and peeled a rather wormy apple. He cut it into seven sections and offered it all around. To stay on friendly terms with this fellow I accepted my section and without looking at it too closely swallowed quickly. Luckily no goats eyes were offered. We arrived at Marrakech just in time to catch up to the Guerba truck.

THOUGHTS ON X-C SKIING

- to save you money
- to keep you safer on the trail
- to make it a fun sport

GET READY:

1. This means that you will have a body with an ability you recognize. Using a flat area the distance of Riley Park may be for you. Wouldn't it be even better if you could take a body fit enough to stay on skis for several hours and even be able to try a few uphill?
2. Be well nourished.
3. You do not need to purchase special clothes for x-c skiing. Just remember to not wear jeans (get too wet and won't dry) and to not wear downhill ski clothes. You will be better off wearing several layers of sweaters, and a Fall type jacket, rather than a down type jacket. A problem in x-c skiing is usually keeping from sweating. You will sweat unless you dress "layered".
4. You must stay dry to stay energized and alert. You must stay fed and hydrated also.
5. Bring a well rested body to a x-c outing. Trips leave exactly on time so leave enough time for sleep and for a CHO breakfast before meeting your friends/club members, etc.
6. Pack your gear the night before the trip. A trip may be as far as Bragg Creek or a few km on a golf course. Carry a pack. Even children should carry a small pack.
7. Wax your skis at home the night before the trip. A green base with a blue "kicker" is a pretty safe bet.
8. The pack will contain CHO food (sandwich), a hot thermos (sweet tea or hot chocolate), trail mix, cookies. Emergency food such as some extra bars with nuts/fruit, cookies/raisins/juice. Take plenty of fluid. Fluid gives energy. Alcohol and caffeine cool the body. The pack will also hold extra mitts, socks, sweater, toque. Carry wax in your pocket or pack. Have a scraper and cork handy. Some people carry a spare ski tip, a flashlight, space blanket, moleskin for blisters, a whistle.
9. Dress layered. Wear layered gloves/mitts on your hands. Wear a head covering. Wear warm socks, also layered. Have the socks high enough to tuck in your pant legs. Ladies wear pantyhose as one layer; stirrup type pants are good for another layer. Borrow gaiters until you decide the sport is for you.
10. Keep the day pleasurable. Do not overdo. Have keys to someone's car and have a companion who is willing to go back to the car with you. Traveling alone is not safe even on short trips. A first sign of hypothermia is being cold, then irritable, then the mind plays strange tricks and may cause you to wander off the obvious trail and even to take off life-giving warm clothes and your pack.
11. You will notice that I have not made any recommendations for the type of skis for you to purchase. This is not my role. I will say that most individuals who plan on skiing out of town will purchase skis that have to be waxed. This allows for the versatility of types of snow conditions and temperature. Those who plan to ski on the mountain trails seem to purchase skis with metal edges. There is always some controversy (friendly) between skiers who wish to have the lightest equipment and those who want wider skis, heavy supportive telemark boots. Right now many people are going with the light trend. Perhaps renting and trying both methods is the best way.

Submitted by Dawn Jones MSc.RD.

Dawn offers cross country skiing orientation seminars and beginning x-c ski classes through Campus Recreation at SAIT. Phone 284-8030 for details.

CHOCOLATE MOUSE RECIPE

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 oz semi-sweet chocolate
- 1/3 c sour cream
- 1 c chocolate wafer crumbs or Oreo cookie crumbs
- 1/3 c icing sugar or chocolate wafer crumbs

silver balls for eyes
almond slivers for ears
string licorice for tails

1. Melt chocolate over hot (not boiling) water or place in microwave at 50% power
2. Blend in sour cream, stirring well
3. Stir in 1 cup of chocolate wafers or Oreo cookie crumbs
4. Mix well!!!
5. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour
6. Roll small TABLESPOONS of mixture into pointed balls.
Sort of MOUSE SHAPED, not too big, these are mice NOT chocolate RATS!!!
7. Roll lightly in wafer crumbs or Oreo crumbs or icing sugar
8. Place on wax paper, and refrigerate until firm

This recipe will keep up to two weeks, or you can freeze them!!

Submitted by Marg Lowndes. These mice won first prize at last year's Christmas pot luck.

SOCIAL NEWS

The Christmas potluck was held on December 15th. Everyone enjoyed great food and great gifts! Thanks to Finn Christensen for donating the door prize of a wooden horse.

The New Year's Eve party was held at Barb and Alan Cassley's. Approximately 24 people played "Guess the Christmas Carol", participated in the Olympics, then enjoyed champagne and goodies. Thanks to Barb and Alan for their hospitality and creativity, and to Anita O'Reilly for her organization!