

THE PACKRAT

RMRA Newsletter March 1994

1954 - 1994

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF RAMBLING!!

ACTIVITIES:	Hiking, Backpacking, Climbing, Skiing, Cycling, Canoeing, Mountain-Biking, Snow shoeing, Educational and Awareness Programs, and Social Functions
MEETINGS:	Weekly, Wednesday evenings at 8:00 PM at Rosemont 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

RMRA 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

This is the fortieth anniversary year of the Ramblers! As anyone who has turned 40 knows (and that includes most of us), it is a time to reflect on what has been accomplished in the past. The club has matured with a distinguishing set of traditions and a unique personality. To honour past members and current long-standing members on their achievements, the club will present functions to celebrate our history. A summary of upcoming events appears in this issue. Now is an excellent time to sift through old photos, slides, etc. to bring back memories for us all to share. If you were not into photography you still have your memory. Why not write an article or two for the PackRat? We all want to hear from you!

At this time we are in the middle of ski season, with mild weather and fairly decent snow (better than last year!). One has to think ahead and I am thinking now about the annual river cleanup the club performs at Weaslehead Park during the first week of May. I have been the coordinator for this event for the past two years, and have enjoyed doing it. I am however, a believer in rotating responsibilities to prevent burnout and to bring fresh ideas into the club. To this end I ask for one of you to volunteer to coordinate this year's cleanup, and you can count on me to be there to help out. Thanks.

WALLY DREW, HONORARY LIFE MEMBER, ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAMBLERS ASSOC.

by Reg Fryling

In his later 60's and now enjoying his sixtieth year of skiing, Wally is a wiry, slight, and almost ageless person with boundless energy focused on the outdoors and helping people enjoy them.

Born in Seattle (where his mother still lives), Wally finished high school during World War II and went first to the Philippines with the U.S. combat infantry, and then as a paratrooper in the occupation of Japan. He received a B.Sc. in Geology from Yale in 1950 and an M.Sc. in Geology from the University of Wisconsin in 1951. As a geologist he roamed parts of Oregon, South Dakota, Montana, Utah, and Colorado, interspersed with a stint in Calgary from 1956-60 before finally returning to Calgary in 1963 and becoming a Canadian citizen, "by choice", he emphasizes. He retired in 1991 after 27 years with Sproule Associates which included geological field work in Canadian Arctic islands, MacKenzie, Yukon, and North Greenland, and can now spend more time in the hills and at his neat little home above downtown, where he catches the moods of the mountains through the living-room window.

Wally first joined the Rocky Mountain Ramblers in 1956, two years after its inception, and has been a very dedicated member throughout his time in Calgary. He established the day trips program, winter program, and founded the "PackRat" (Ramblers' newsletter). He was on the executive for more than 10 years, 2 as president, and serves on various committees, including the nominating committee where he always plays a leading role in the selection of candidates to run the club. He played the major part in planning and constructing the Mt. Allan Centennial Trail, completed in 1969, and has organized several volunteer trail work parties for Mt. Allan, the Powderface area, and the Cross Conservancy Area. Except when traveling (he often hikes and explores on another continent in fall and spring), he consistently attends the weekly meetings, setting the stage for the weekend trips with mountain and foothills snow conditions and weather forecasts he has painstakingly put together from various sources. Taking out more than 20 trips a year and participating in many more, Wally, to this day, has legendary strength and durability, sometimes breaking ski trail ahead of the others all day. And he is also quite practical. Back when there was a campground at Moraine Lake, Wally and a group of Ramblers had skied up the road and were camped there. Wally skied out to the open lake shore to get some water, but the snow gave way and there he was in water over his waist. He looked around and said, "well hell, I may as well fill my water bottle while I'm here!" He is also thoughtful and attentive, visiting sick people or looking to the needs of those on his trips. One time he went racing back to the car to get some runners for a hiker with devastating blisters, and on another occasion doubled back to bring a car around to meet the rest of the group completing an unplanned circuit. Another side was revealed to me one late spring afternoon on a larch covered ridge when Wally brushed his cheek against a larch branch tip and said, "Have you ever discovered how soft this feels"?

Wally is also active with the Foothills Nordic Ski Club and the National Trail Association of Canada. He has organized and coordinated trips for the Women's Singles Ministry and the Adult Singles Ministry, and in the past set leadership standards and lead trips for the Colorado Mountain Club of Denver. Last weekend (at the time of writing), Wally thoughtfully called an "easy/lower intermediate" skip trip to Ochre Creek for variety and for the benefit of our newer skiers.

**SUMMARY OF MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING
OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION
HELD AT ROSEMONT COMMUNITY HALL
12 JANUARY AND 16 FEBRUARY 1994**

The President, Bob St. John, said Marianne Wolters is willing to lend the club her telephone message tape and recorder on a trial basis for a month. The club will see how this recorder works, as it needs no batteries and the message can be 10 minutes long.

The President also suggested that it would be a good idea if we change the advertisement in the yellow pages of the Calgary Telephone Book from showing the Rosemont Hall address to read as "hiking, cross-country skiing and outdoors club" if the same fee is charged.

Treasurer

There are now 86 paid up members. A new membership list will be out soon.

Social

Anita said there would be a pot luck on February 16 for Valentine's Day.

As this year is the 40th anniversary of the club, Anita thought that a committee should be set up to make suggestions as to what can be planned for this event, i.e.: a weekend with various trips, could be a reunion and a hike up the Centennial Trail, plus a Dinner and Dance. Anita is going to announce at the club meetings for volunteers for the committee, and any ideas from the general membership.

A further Executive Meeting was held on 16 February 1994, and the 40th Anniversary Committee's proposals and approximate fees have been approved.

SOCIAL EVENTS

March 2nd marked the celebration of the RMRA's 40th anniversary, with a cake with 40 candles at the weekly meeting. The following events are planned:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| May 8th | A Mount Yamnuska hike to commemorate the inaugural hike of May 9, 1954. |
| July 16 | A Stampede Breakfast will be held at the Rosemont Community Centre at 10:00 a.m., followed by a memory lane afternoon. There will be a few short afternoon outings. |
| July 17 | A commemorative Mt. Allan hike/work party, followed by a potluck dinner at Opal Shelter. |
| Sept. | A September car camp at Highwood with a variety of hikes. The exact date will be announced later. |
| Oct. 28 | The annual awards dinner and dance will be held at the Naturbahn Tea House. |
| Oct. 29 or 30 | Elbow Lake ski trip/hike to commemorate the inaugural skip trip of Oct. 28, 1956. |

TENTATIVE LIST OF PROGRAMS

- | | | |
|---|----------|---|
| C | March 9 | Rolf Twilker, 'Hidden Corners' slides |
| | March 23 | Alberta Fish and Wildlife - Goat Relocation |
| C | April 13 | Bob St. John/Wally Drew - Morocco slides |
| | April ? | Peter Sherrington 'Golden Eagle Migration' |
| | May ? | Art Davis slides |

C = confirmed

NEW ZEALAND NOV/DEC 1993

by Dave Mulligan

My annual vacation in late 1993 was a third visit to New Zealand. Having only a month, it was restricted to the North. Besides visiting the common touristy places, primarily by the excellent bus service, I was also prepared for some hiking. Carrying a backpack, sleeping bag, boots, YHA card, traveler's cheques, clothes, etc. I arrived in Auckland mid-morning after a twelve hour flight from Los Angeles, and easily phoned a booking into the Parnell YHA Hostel whose doorstep I reached by shuttle bus.

New Zealand's 50 YHA Hostels are the best in the world. The YHA card gets discounts everywhere and is worth having even if you never stay in a hostel. The YHA provides sheets and blankets but a sleeping bag is required for the equally good Backpackers hostels. Single accommodation is about Can. \$10.00 nightly and many have some family or double rooms if required.

Through the hostel, I bought a bus ticket return voucher for the North Cape and after looking over the Auckland sights, set off a couple of days later for the Bay of Islands and the extreme North. I was to enjoy a commercial cruise around some of the Bay of Islands and later a trip down 90 mile beach in small bus. On return I wound down in the small town of Dargaville with a morning's horseback riding on the beach (Can. \$15.00) and later a 40 km return bicycle ride and short hike up the nearby Tokatoka Hills and Maugaraho Rock. This was especially relaxing and reinforced thoughts of a future extended visit by bicycle. Many do this, but it's not all bliss as the roads are never straight, often hilly and the wind usually blows along with the infamous rain.

Returning via Auckland (the only town I didn't really like), the next stop was the thermal area of Rotorura. A mini Yellowstone, it attracts nearly one million visitors yearly (second only to Queenstown - a South Island "Banff"). This was interesting as were some agricultural shows. One Asian tourist ended up sitting backwards on a big "tame" bull much to the amusement of the crowd. But the highlight was probably feeding the lambs which many children from the crowd did to their delighted surprise.

Thence to my only serious hike: a two night affair around Lake Waikaremoana in Urewera Park. Very hot weather, good huts and trail and varied international company. Later on to Gisbourne on the East Coast and by bus to the North East Cape. This area of New Zealand is the most Maori and is consequently the most laid back but also somewhat rundown. But the Backpackers hostel at Hick's Bay was excellent, offering a surprise free dessert one evening and a 4:30 a.m. visit to be the first in the world to see the sunrise (from the East Cape lighthouse - Can. \$12.00).

After a quiet couple of days and a cool dip in the ocean, by hitch-hike around the North coast. This method of transport, desirable here due to the limited bus service, and favoured all over by many younger travelers, proved surprisingly easy. From Tauranga, on my last Sunday, I joined up with a local hiking group for a trip up the dormant volcano Mt. Tarawera outside Rotorura. Good weather made for a great day on unusual terrain. Finally to Auckland, some souvenir shopping and the 28 hour flight home with American Airlines through Los Angeles.

Why New Zealand for the third time? Well, they speak English, are very friendly, have a vast variety of activities, very scenic, I feel safe, costs are roughly the same as Canada and lastly they have the world's best ice cream! The Lonely Planet guide books "Tramping in New Zealand" and "New Zealand" are both pretty good. The airfare is around Can. \$1600.00 return depending on the season. There are 3 million people and 70 million sheep on a land mass the size of Alberta. Only Auckland is at all crowded. You can certainly get to most sites by bus, but a couple or larger group should consider renting a VW type motor home. Cars and other transport are relatively expensive. I hope to go back some time.

JOFFRE JITTERS

by Bob St. John

Last summer on the August long weekend three of us set out on a three day backpack to climb Mt. Joffre. Joffre is located in the French General range of mountains south of Kananaskis Lakes. The approach was to be the relatively direct route around the south shore of Upper Kananaskis Lake, up to and around Hidden Lake and on to Aster Lake where we would camp. It was with disappointment when we learned that the approach was off limits due to a bear closure. A sow and two cubs made Hidden Lake their home, and had recently chased off some intruders.

Our only option was to make a much more circuitous route west to Three Isle Lake and back southeast along a high-line ridge to Mt Northover, northwest of Aster Lake. The three of us (Gert Noer, Peter Roginski, and myself) loaded our packs at the Kananaskis Lake parking lot. Our packs were heavy with the usual camping gear (two tents), and additional glacier and climbing gear (rope, crampons, harnesses, etc.). Saturday was a glorious day weather wise, as would be the whole weekend. (lucky indeed for last summer). It is a good trail to Three Isle Lake, and after lugging ourselves up the steep headwall bit before the lake, we were glad to stop for lunch by its shores. The lake itself was quite low, and our traverse around its south shore was easy. We picked up a game trail that led us south up a valley to Defender Mountain. The vegetation was lush and the going was grand. At the head of the valley we could see our route climbing up a steep scree slope to the ridge of Defender. This part was a bit of a slog, but a breeze on the ridge crest was refreshing. The view was spectacular. Across the Palliser River valley rose the majestic Royal Group crowned by Mount King George. It was starting to feel remote and somewhat wild. The ridge to Northover is described in some books as being 'airy', but the footing was always firm and we did not feel exposed. We could now see Joffre rising like a snow capped fang, an impressive site indeed. By late afternoon we reached our camp site on the south flank of Northover, in a hanging valley with two tarns.

Our camp was idyllic with no sign of human habitation. At 8200 feet elevation the air was clean and crisp, offering superb views of the Royals and surrounding peaks. Tomorrow would be an early start.

Up at 3:30 AM. It's quite dark and fairly cool. Muscles are somewhat stiff after 22 km of backpacking and sleeping on some stubborn rocks. We have to leave early to climb and descend Joffre before noon, before the sun softens the snow. Our packs are lighter without the camp gear, but plastic boots make for awkward footing. The route to the base of Joffre seems straightforward on the map, only 8 km as the crow flies. Unfortunately that 8 km is mostly steep and loose moraine. It is eleven AM before we reach the Mangin Glacier and we rope up and put crampons on. The heat on a glacier can be intense, and this was a hot sunny day. The north face seems plastered with glistening snow, and there is a worry about stability. The Mangin steepens and becomes the north face rising 1100 feet to the summit. The steepest bit is just over 40 degrees. As we proceed the snow remains firm and makes for good kick stepping. From roping up to the summit we didn't stop for an hour and a half. I was quite exhausted during the last stretch, but the scenery opening up was a drug to keep going. We stayed roped up on top as the wind swept crust was still sloped and dangerous. It was windy up there at 11,200 feet. The views were uninterrupted for 360 degrees. I was however starting to get jittery about the view of our route down. The glistening slope steepened and disappeared leaving only the Mangin Glacier 1100 feet below. I was unfortunately imagining what it would be like to slip.

After a few pictures we started back. It was unnerving, rather like walking over the edge of a giant ball. I was hesitant, but knew there was no other way. I stopped and discussed this with the other two. I had a feeling they too were anxious to get down. It was verbally pointed out to make each foot plant count, to go slowly, and to make proper use of one's ice axe. Just the act of verbalizing a fear and then going over the basics made the decent actually quite enjoyable. Nevertheless I was glad to reach flat ground once again and could finally allow myself to relax and feel accomplished with the climb. The trip back over the moraines was tiresome, but made easier by the sense of success. After dinner, we got our cameras out and hiked up the east flank of Northover. The evening sky was clear, and the setting sun cast warm colours over the French Generals. As the sky darkened a full moon rose to the north of Joffre. It seemed unrealistically large. It was quite a sight. Joffre with snows reflecting both the last sun rays and the luminescence of the moon. It was still and quiet, with no human presence other than ourselves for miles around. It had been a special day.

If the day of the climb was one to remember, the last day packing out may be one to forget. We decided to take a short cut over the glacier north of Northover, and down a valley eventually intersecting the Three Isle Lake Trail below the headwall. This route would be shorter and offer new scenery. All was fine except for the last kilometer before intersecting the trail. The three of us agreed that neither had been through any worse jumbles of alpine fir, slide alder and underbrush. Although the trail was tantalizingly in sight, it took an hour to reach it, scratched and bleeding. The trek out to the parking lot seemed a bit desperate with the packs weighing as they did and the sun beating down. I guess the world has to be in balance, the good and the bad. Looking back now it was a winner overall.

PROPOSED EXPRESSWAY THROUGH EDWORTHY PARK

The City's GoPlan includes an expressway connecting Shaganappi and Sarcee Trails, through Edworthy Park. The Edworthy Park Heritage Society (EPHS) is seeking assistance in preserving Edworthy Park. The City's GoPlan InfoLine is 268-3666.

For more information on the EPHS or expressway issues, please contact one of the following:

Larry Klassen	249-9813	Phil Handcock	246-4372	Gord Cook	283-3978
Janice Johnston	686-0497	John Davey	242-0315		

The following events are scheduled:

- April 27, 1994: GoPlan Draft Recommendations which will form the basis of Calgary's new transportation plan will be presented at the Municipal Building Atrium from 7:00 - 9:30 p.m.
- June 9, 1994: A City Council public hearing will be held on GoPlan progress (time and location to be announced).

TRIP COORDINATOR'S CHAIRMAN REPORT OCTOBER TO MID FEBRUARY 1993-4

Compared to the same period last year, there are more cross country skip trips - 46, compared to 36 last year, likely due to better snow conditions this year. As you can see, there were several quite active coordinators, but John Schleinich leads with 14 trips. Dave Reid had the most people out with 68. On behalf of the club, I would like to thank the co-ordinators for a job well done. It seems that coordinators always come forward to fill gaps in time and/or difficulty level of trip, when the need arises. Incidentally, if a non-coordinator member has a particular trip or level of trip in mind, please either bring it up at a meeting, or ask one of the coordinators. Some varied and interesting trips have developed in this way.

Happy Rambling, Reg Fryling

SUMMARY OF RMRA COORDINATOR ACTIVITY

October to mid-February 1993-94

Coordinator	Status	Total Trips (Days)	Person Days	X-C Ski	Day Hike	Cycle	Back Pack or Hut	Snow Shoe
Angus, B.	F	2	16		2			
Davis, A.	F	2	22		2			
DesMoulins, A.	F	3(7)	17				3	
Drew, W.	F	8	36	8				
Folkins, R.	F	1	8		1			
Fryling, R.	F	2	5	1	1			
Jones, D.	F	1	2	1				
Kittle, K.	F	1	17		1			
McInnis, B.	A	3	7	3				
Mulligan, D.	F	4	33	1	3			
Moran, T.	F	1	2					1
Noer, G.	F	4	16	3	1			
Reid, D.	F	7	68	6	1			
Schleinich, J.	F	14	66	9	5			
Sinclair, A.	F	6	51		6			
Sobon, J.	F	1	2	1				
St. John, B.	F	9	63	8	1			
Taylor, M.	F	1	3	1				
Twelker, W.	F	1(3)	3				1	
Watson, K.	F	1	4		1			
Weger, D.	F	1	2			1		
Westcott, B.	F	5	54	4	1			
Total	22	78	497	46	26	1	4	1

COMPARISON OF RMRA OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES OCTOBER TO MID FEBRUARY 92/93 TO 93/94

1993-94	October		November		December		January		February		Total	
	Trips	People	Trips	People	Trips	People	Trips	People	Trips	People	Trips	People
Hiking	15	140	8	58	2	12	-	-	-	-	25	210
X-C Ski	-	-	4	21	16	98	18	108	8	33	46	260
Lift Ski	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	1	2	3
Snowshoe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	2
BackPack	1	3(9)	-	-	1	2(4)	1	2(4)	-	-	3	7(17)
Cycle	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Work Party	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
Skate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1992-93												
Hiking	15	144	7	59	3	21	-	-	1	13	26	237
X-C Ski	-	-	1	2	9	54	17	95	9	44	36	195
Lift Ski	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Snowshoe	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	1	4
BackPack	3	7(14)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	7(14)
Cycle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Work Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Skate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	2

*The number in brackets represents number of person days, e.g. 3 people for 3 days

WILDLIFE IN WINTER

by Del Lavallée

It was an exceptionally beautiful day for a ski outing in the Ribbon Creek area recently with the added bonus of seeing or hearing wild things such as moose, dipper, woodpecker and the ubiquitous gray jay.

Seeing Mt. Collembola reminded me of another hardy winter survivor - this one a primitive insect-like creature called Collembola that I saw on January 25 this year on a skip trip up Bryant Creek.

The clue to finding this little one is the appearance of what seems like soot in the ski tracks. These little guys are small - about 2 mm. long - there must be literally millions to make themselves so obvious to our eyes. On closer observation of the dark patches they form on the snow, movement is suddenly discerned. The literature tells us that Collembolas have a rear-end, forked appendage tucked under the body that enables them to jump and which suggests their common name: springtails. They are also referred to as snow fleas.

Springtails make themselves conspicuous on the surface of snow in winter, but can also be found on ponds in summer, as well as on vegetation in meadows and forests.

Research apparently has not resolved the reasons why they swarm in such huge numbers. Possible reasons include mating, mass migration due to over-population or perhaps even for socializing.

The observation of nature can be very fascinating and adds yet another dimension to the pleasure we experience on our hikes and ski outings.