

# THE PACKRAT

RMRA Newsletter May 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

## 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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## SOCIAL EVENTS

- 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. 17/18 Car camp at the Highwood Group Camp, with a variety of hikes.
- 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 ski trip of Oct. 28, 1956.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hiking season is now upon us. In this issue is an article on ticks and their avoidance. It may also be worthwhile for members who venture into the backcountry to look into the several bear sprays available today for under \$50.00. Park rangers now carry spray, and alpine club mountaineering camps have participants carry spray while travelling to and from camp. I myself carry a cannister, and while I still take all precautions to prevent bear incidents, it is somewhat more comforting to know I have one more ace up my sleeve before I "play dead". The pepper spray debilitates the bear for 5 to 10 minutes while having no long term effects.

Last summer our club did some trail maintenance for Kananaskis Country. We had numerous trips to Prairie Creek and Mt. Allan with various levels of participation. These trips, plus our participation in the River Cleanup and Cross Conservancy upgrading, could lead to "volunteer burnout". Several members, myself included, feel we should try something a little different this year. Besides the one day River Cleanup and one day Cross upgrading, we will be planning a one day "event" for each of Prairie Creek and Mt. Allan. It is hoped that by concentrating the effort, and by adding a social aspect, these events will attract a sizeable participation.

Our 40th Anniversary Mt Yamnuska hike was a great success with 34 participants. It was a sunny and warm day with a slight breeze to cool off with. Wally Drew led 24 up the west end and I and 9 others went up the east end. John Michi sneaked up earlier and caught us on film. 30 of us made it to the top including Roger Woodgate. Congratulations all.

On May 6 I went to the CAOC equipment sale at the Mount Royal College gym. There was a huge selection of quality gear (packs, climbing equipment, clothing, boots, skis, tents, sleeping bags, canoes, kayaks, bikes, etc.). I sold some waterproof clothing and a pack that I had not used for years. I highly recommend this for both buying and selling.

## MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING OF RMRA 2 MARCH 1994

The minutes of the meetings held on 12 January and 16 February 1994 were read and approved.

There was no business arising from the minutes.

### Treasurer

John Schleinich said the current account is down, and he is going to get the exact figures from each account for the next executive meeting.

Reg Fryling had a motion "That we get a digital message machine". Ken Scott seconded the motion.

Reg had been pricing these machines and they are in the range of \$130.00.

After some discussion, all the executive were in favour of buying a new message machine and Reg is going to look after this.

### Social

Anita O'Reilly said she had made up invitations to members for the reunion in July, and is going to announce each week that members take their own invitation and any others they could mail or drop off to other members.

Anita had tentatively booked the Naturbahn at Canada Olympic Park for the Annual Awards Dinner; the cost would be about the same as last year, but she is going to look at other places that may be cheaper. The date set for the Annual Awards Dinner and Dance is October 28.

### President

The President said some members have expressed concern about the advertising in the PackRat. The committee decided that if the advertising is about outdoor activities, etc., there is no problem, but if the advertising is purely commercial in content, we will charge a fee. It is up to the editor to decide.

The president also asked the committee if the Ramblers should still have a membership in CAOC, Calgary Area Outdoor Council. CAOC is a Council for all clubs in the Calgary area. Their fee is \$55.00 per year. CAOC is planning to present a newsletter featuring activities of each club's activities. CAOC is also holding a symposium on newsletter layout, etc. and we can send a representative.

Bob St. John put the motion: "That we continue our membership of CAOC for 1994".

Seconded by Reg Fryling.

2 against, 3 in favour and 1 abstained. Passed.

Bob also made the request we send our PackRat Editor to CAOC's symposium. The fee is \$10.00.

Anita moved that we send Marianne Wolters to the Symposium and pay the \$10.00 fee.

Seconded by Reg.

4 in favour, 2 against. Passed.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

### MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING OF RMRA 20 APRIL 1994

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 1994 were read and approved.

There was no business arising from the minutes.

#### Treasurer

John Schleinich said the current account stands at \$1,981.21 and the chequing account at \$1,949.57, which makes a total of \$3,930.78.

Memberships are now at approximately 106.

John mentioned that our phone bill comes to about \$45.00 per month, and was wondering if we really need to advertise in the Yellow Pages. It was agreed that we would discontinue this, and the secretary will see if we can cancel this advertising before the new edition of the Yellow Pages.

#### Social

Anita O'Reilly was still surveying other places as an alternative for the Annual Dinner and Dance.

There will be a reunion committee meeting on the 27 April 1994.

A volunteer coordinator will be asked to lead the commemorative trip up Yamnuska on 8 May 1994. On that day we hope only this hike will go out.

The annual car camp has been booked at the Highwood Group Camp once again for the 17/18 September weekend.

#### PackRat Editor

Marianne Wolters said she was unable to attend the CAOC symposium on newsletter writing. The new PackRat will be issued in early May.

#### Programs

Barbara Mitchell said there is a talk and slide show on Baffin Island tonight. On 4 May 1994, Bob St. John will show slides of Morocco. Barbara said she will be planning more for the coming months.

#### Trip Coordinators

Reg Fryling said the spring meeting of the coordinators will be held on 5 May 1994 at 7:30 p.m. at the Horseshoe Room at Molson's Brewery. Reg also mentioned that the summer rates for car fares should be announced tonight.

The message machine has been purchased and is working OK.

Reg suggested that we keep an Operation Guideline list of recommendations and proposals that have been made, i.e. the change of car fare rates on a certain date.

#### President

The President said we have had an offer for the old message machine of \$25.00. All were in favour to accept this offer.

Bob also mentioned that CAOC (Calgary Area Outdoor Council) has a mailbox member clubs can use for a \$10.00 fee per year. The RMRA will probably avail themselves of this service, once our lease has run out at the Post Office, which will be at the end of July.

The club has had Tony Moran get estimates for decals and the minimum we can order is 50. We will have a survey of club members to see if it would be worth getting a supply.

There had been a suggestion that we have executive meetings at committee members' houses; after some discussion it was decided to keep the meetings at the hall, as it was felt the meetings would go on longer in a home as there would be no deadline to start the club meetings.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

## SUMMARY OF CALGARY AREA OUTDOOR COUNCIL UPDATE -APRIL 18, 1994

(If you need more information about any of the following items please call Kathy at 270-CAOC.)

### UPCOMING EVENTS IN CALGARY'S OUTDOOR COMMUNITY:

**May 13-15** The Alberta Wilderness Association's 25th Annual Conference will be held May 13-15. This year's conference will celebrate the past, present and future of wilderness and wilderness spirituality. Call 283-2025 for details.

**May 5** The Calgary Field Naturalist's Society is hosting Calgary's First Annual Bird-a-Thon! Call 285-8553.

### MISCELLANEOUS:

Leisure Learning Services offers an Outdoor Living Skills Certificate Program which includes: basic wilderness survival; map and compass navigation; gear, grub and bears; and wilderness first aid. They also have a number of outdoor programs specifically for women -- hiking, biking and kayaking.

Tread Lightly Canada is a new national association dedicated to protect lands and waters through conservation education, is now underway. Kerry Edwards, a recreation forester with Alberta Environmental Protection, explains that: "Tread Lightly is aimed at getting people to use natural areas wisely, without littering and tearing up the trails and vegetation. We'd rather see behaviour modification through education and peer pressure rather than through more regulations or enforcement." The Tread Lightly education message is easy to understand:

Travel only on designated routes.

Respect the rights of others.

Educate yourself.

Avoid environmentally sensitive areas - stream banks, meadow and wildlife.

Do it (trek, ride or drive) responsibly!

For more information on the Tread Lightly program, contact Kerry Edwards of Alberta Env. Protection at 427-3582.

**Warning:** Several reports of car break-ins at the Lake O'Hara parking lot, along with other lots and trailheads in Banff and Kananaskis area. Don't leave valuables in your car.

For further CAOC news, refer to the bulletin board. Other topics are:

June 9-11 Vitalize 94 - Volunteers are Family

Volunteer Centre Seminars for Nonprofit Organizations

GoPlan

Focus on the Future - A New Perspective on Sustaining Alberta's Forests

The Future of the Four Mountain Parks - Banff, Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho

Upper Red Deer River Recreation Management Plan

Urban Park Master Plan Update

Proposal to Regulate Power Boating on Calgary's Bow and Elbow Rivers

## FUN SUN SAFARI IN COSTA RICA

by John F. Schleinich

The last two weeks in March, and a few days in April, Wally and I spent our time in Costa Rica. We went on a safari organized in Canada by Fun Sun. It was a safari in the true sense of the word. We did everything, or almost everything. When, at the end of the two weeks, our tour guide asked how we had liked it, one young girl in our group answered exactly the way I felt: it was exhausting and too long. The guide was surprised at the 'too long' attribute, but when a trip is all action and very little or no time given for doing sweet nothings, the time certainly does not fly. It does not drag either, but it goes by very much noticed, and, therefore everything seems long. (Do you agree?)

The killer for me was the early rises. Day after day, the tour guide needed us by seven or rarely eight o'clock, but my roommate never slept, it seemed. Wally was always going or ready to go. Excited by all the new experiences offered, he was up at five, wakened by a loud alarm and a phone call from the desk. Couldn't risk missing breakfast. New to me were white water rafting, jungle walking, and spelunking. Snorkeling, swimming in surf, mountain biking, and hiking were not, but the way they were done on this safari gave us the impression of doing something new.

For instance snorkeling. I snorkeled for many years in different waters all over the world and saw all kinds of sea life. But, on the Caribbean side of Costa Rica I saw sea snakes for the first time in my life. The ones that bite you dead within a few minutes. I saw barracudas again, but here after I was told that everything is safe except for sharks, of course. Sharks we did not see, and I think they were mentioned only to make our snorkeling more interesting. Sting rays and moray eels were not mentioned either, yet I came close to both, and was glad to see them.

Mountain biking was not new either, yet the roughness of the road and the inclined made it a new experience; it also made sore bums. Personally, I enjoyed the jungle walks. No tigers or leopards, but no wild native head hunters as I was used to seeing in Tarzan movies, but plenty of rain. The rain in the tropical jungle is quite an experience in itself. It pours. And one can almost see how everything in rain grows and lives. When the rain stopped the jungle came alive. The noise was fantastic. Every creature rejoices and moves as if happy, thanking nature for the life sustaining water just received.

We saw live volcanoes and heard them rumble and roar; we saw hundreds of new birds, which amazingly all have names. As we left the jungle we saw a crocodile in the sun, motionless, waiting for a meal. We saw native houses on stilts on river banks hugging the jungle, living from it -- and with it. And we saw many happy people.

The last two days we spent in private homes to get a better feel for the culture of this country. Walking through the village we saw the young dancing to the same crazy tunes our young ones do, we saw people gather in a church as we do. They love as we do, are happy or sad, they fear and hurt, pray and cuss much the same way we do in our country.

However, Wally tells me that they are not as business-oriented as our culture is. He tried to get a haircut, only shortly before the shop opened. Although the barber saw him looking in and motioning him to open, he would not, and rather lose the three dollars than give up his ten minutes of dolce far niente.

## WRITING TO POLITICIANS

By Reg Fryling

Perhaps many of you feel as I usually do, that you are just one small voice so why bother? So I've reproduced my letter and Premier Klein's reply in case anyone gets some inspiration either from Premier Klein's somewhat encouraging reply, or from a feeling that you could easily rattle off a letter of as good or better content and quality than mine. And, letters to politicians do not require postage. Following are the two letters:

Dear Sir:

I would strongly urge you to please support, and do everything in your power to obtain the Government's endorsement of Special Places 2000: Alberta's Natural Heritage. I know there are pressures from industry, but I think we have ample natural resources outside these "Special Places". I think the overall financial gains from tourism throughout the years would more than justify leaving these "Places" intact, not to mention the lasting recognition our Government would receive for preserving such a precious gift to our children and everyone else who comes this way.

Thank you, and the best of luck on this one.

Yours sincerely,

Reg Fryling (signed)

Dear Mr. Fryling:

Thank you very much for your recent letter regarding the Special Places 2000 initiative.

I appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts and concerns with me. I know the Honourable Brian Evans, Minister of Environment Protection, would be most interested in your comments, and I have forwarded a copy of your letter to him for his consideration. As elected representatives we feel a deep sense of responsibility to be responsive to the views of Albertans. It is important to receive input from concerned Albertans, such as yourself, to assist and guide us in our deliberations.

Thank you again for writing. Your views are important to us.

Sincerely yours,

Ralph Klein (signed)

## PROFILE OF A RAMBLER - ART DAVIS

by Reg Fryling

Art was born in North Bay, Ontario in 1927, where he remained until striking out on his own, first around Ontario and then the U.S. In 1966 he ended up in Calgary - a transfer as a time-keeper with a construction company. He joined the staff of the Alberta Liquor Control Board in 1972 where he worked until deciding to take an early retirement in 1988. He has one daughter and three sons, one or more of whom you may have met on a Rambler outing when they were with their dad - although lately you're more apt to meet a dog. He has been divorced for some time.

The Ramblers gained this valuable member on November 12, 1969. He became an assistant leader in June 1970 (term leader changed to coordinator in 1982) and a full leader about a year later. He was PackRat Editor for two years, 1979-81, and is still a major contributor. Up until December 1993 he has coordinated 266 trips including hikes, climbs, XC-skiing, overnight back packs, summer and winter ice climbing, and car camping. Since 1977, Art has coordinated 15 annual overnight snow-cave and igloo trips, and since 1982, annual beginners' backpacks, generally for two nights.

One of Art's more memorable trips was a ski backpack up the Athabasca Glacier onto the Columbia Icefields, Easter 1976, aiming for Mt. Columbia. But it was a whiteout! They hung on for two nights and built an extra igloo to pass the time. Art says it was "... a great experience but don't want to repeat it, once is enough what with crevasses and ice falls from Mt. Snowdome". In August 1989 Art coordinated a two night backpack to Caldron Lake, and all nine people and four dogs made it to the summit of Mistaya Mtn. (3095 m / 11,115') and exchanged registers for ACC in almost perfect weather. One time in the midst of dropping his car at the planned trail-end at Takakaw Falls, Art quickly locked his station wagon, jumped into another car, drove around to the trail-head at Emerald Lake and took off up the trail and over the top. He was enjoying the scenery when he discovered his car keys were missing. He scurried on down the trail because he'd left them in the ignition with the car running -- still running 4 or 5 hours later!

In July 1979 Art was hiking toward Three Isle Lake to meet a group of returning Rambler backpackers when he "... heard a bird making quite a racket. I yelled 'shut up' and a minute later got a good bash on the back of the head, like being hit with a hard cushion, except I could actually feel the feathers. I never even saw what it was and not until I was picking up my glasses, which wasn't hard to do as I had been knocked down onto my knees, did I discover that I had received a few good gashes on the top of my head and left side of my face, one missing my left eye by about a quarter of an inch. Its talons must have been razor sharp as I never even felt them." A Ranger later said it was a goshawk that had been diving at people all weekend.

Art recalled some injuries to participants on trips he was coordinating. On April 26/81, descending Wind Ridge, One person slipped on mud covered ice and fractured a bone in the leg. She was carried down the ridge by turns. On Oct. 2/86, climbing Mt. Andromache, one person was struck by a rockfall and received a compound fracture of the femur. The rescue in this case was by helicopter. On May 24/92, during an easy hike up Wasootch Creek, one person slipped on a gravelly slope and broke an arm, but after first aid, was able to walk out. On Jan. 9/77, returning on skis down Brewster Creek, one person was gashed on the leg by the steel edge of his ski during a fall, and ended up riding out on a horse! You might check with Brian Westcott for more on that one.

Art enjoys introducing new people to the back country on both day trips and backpacks, but is also still very much at home nimbly scrambling around on some of the harder trips. He is also keenly interested in the recent history of the west country and has spent hours investigating old mining sites with their various artifacts. He is a familiar figure at the Wednesday night meetings and can often be observed quietly setting out or gathering up the chairs.

## GHOST RIVER BACKPACK

By Alastair Desmoulines

I could almost sense the horror in the minds of the membership when I announced this backpack at the 27th April meeting. "Backpacking in April! - What does this guy think he's doing? - Doesn't he know there is snow out there and that it can get cold at night?". I did not bother announcing the two backpacks I did in February 1992! I figured that if the snow or weather is not suitable for skiing in the mountains then why not backpack in the front ranges. As for there being snow and cold in April - well sure, but at least one is more mentally prepared for it than in August (see my article "August Snows" in the Christmas 1992 PackRat), and one has to be prepared for freezing temperatures at any time of year in the mountains.

Gail and I were a bit later than usual getting away on the Saturday morning as we'd been to the "Canadian Brass" concert the night before. We finished our packing and it was 8:15 by the time we set off for the mountains. We took our vehicle 7 km beyond the normal parking spot at the top of the hill overlooking the valley and parked just before the road fords the river.

We left the vehicle at 10:45 and hiked for the most part on the rough track which follows a cutline up the valley. It was a fine sunny day and warm out of the wind. We made three crossings of the river, which were no problem as the water was no more than a foot deep - we did however use our running shoes, putting them on before the first crossing and putting our boots back on after the third one. We had lunch then made our way up the valley west of Devil's Head. At 14:00 we came to a main stream junction and decided to camp. We could then explore the narrower branch and maybe get to a col northwest of Devil's Head before supper and then go up the other branch the next day. The weather was clouding in a bit and it looked as though it might rain.

We put up the tent, hung the food up a nearby tree, and set off up the narrower branch of the valley. I always enjoy exploring valleys that I've not been in before. This one was walled in on both sides - the water sometimes ran in a trench forcing one to scramble up on one side or the other. We noticed a white mountain goat above the cliffs in front of us. We stopped and watched it through binoculars for a while. Three others appeared. They all knew we would not be able to get up to them. We continued up the valley to the next stream junction. We had hoped to take the right fork here but the narrow entrance to this side valley was blocked by a 30 foot high frozen waterfall. We sat and admired the scenery for a bit before returning to camp for supper. After supper (the usual chicken noodle soup, followed by Kraft Dinner and salmon, followed by Jello pudding) we sat for a while by the fire before going to bed early at 20:30 so that we could make an early start the next morning.

On Sunday morning I got up at 6:30 and put the porridge on. The weather was cloudy and it looked like it was snowing to the south. After breakfast we left camp at 7:50 and walked up the more westerly branch of the valley. We passed two frozen waterfalls, one extending at least 300 feet above us. The valley then narrowed, the valley bottom was also full of soft snow so we eventually climbed up the snow free side of the valley and traversed about 200 feet above the valley floor on terrain slightly flatter than that just above the water. It was only snow free for a short while as about the time it started snowing. As we got near treeline we had to posthole about 60 steps in soft snow until we were above the trees.

It stopped snowing so from our 7000 foot elevation vantage point we could see two further branches of the valley, one of which we probably would not be able to go up as it was blocked by a waterfall. However the other branch was accessible and it looked as though one would be able to get into the first one from it over the intervening ridge. This is how I plan future trips! Also, we saw another mountain goat and on the ground around us were numerous clumps of mauve/purple flowering moss campion. We had seen several clumps of moss campion lower down, but here one had to be very careful not to tread on any.

It then began snowing heavily so we headed back towards camp stopping for some lunch under a tree on the way. We stayed high, traversing through the trees, until we were above our camp, then a convenient scree chute gave a fast descent to the valley floor.

The tent was wet with snow; we packed up, and had some hot tea (I always like to make tea before starting the trip back to the vehicle). It was still snowing at 14:00 as we began the trip back. There was not as much snow as on the 1988 August long weekend, neither was it as cold as in the Purcells on 22nd August 1992. We returned to the vehicle by the same route as we'd come in on Saturday, Luckily, the wind blowing the snow was coming from behind us for most of the way. We did not bother changing into running shoes for the river crossings on the way back. We reached our vehicle at 16:15 and almost immediately it stopped snowing! We had a good supper at the Canyon Rose Restaurant in Cochrane before getting home, somewhat earlier than usual, at 20:00.

## TICK TALK

by Alf Skrastins  
(reprinted from July 1988 PackRat)

It is rumoured that, after the success of *Jaws*, *Grizzly*, and similar exploitation films, Hollywood has ready for release a movie entitled *Blood-Sucker*, a story about a band of crazed ticks that terrorize a national park, leaving paralysis and spotted, feverish death in their wake.

Judging by the dread some people have for the little beasts, the film might be a financial success. However, a little knowledge of the enemy combined with some care can go a long way toward blunting the threat posed by ticks.

The tick that is of concern to mountain travellers is the Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever Tick or wood tick which goes by the scientific name of *Dermacentor andersoni*.

It is found throughout the interior mountains of British Columbia and the Rocky Mountains of Alberta and British Columbia as well as the far southern parts of Alberta and Saskatchewan. They become active as areas become free of snow, which, depending on the area, can be anywhere from March to May and the ticks remain active for about ten to twelve weeks. In dry areas "tick season" can be over by the middle of May while in some areas they can be active until well into June.

Although the nymph and larval stages of ticks require blood gorges to grow, it is the adult tick which usually attacks man. These ticks are about the size and shape of a sunflower seed, having a hard brown body, with grey markings. These arthropods have eight legs, two of which are used to hang onto brush or grass along the trail while the other six are extended in search of a possible host. The movement of wildlife or man along the trail causes vibrations which stimulate the tick to begin questing motions with its outstretched legs, enabling the parasite to grab onto a passing host.

The tick then crawls up the host until it attaches itself in one of the hairy areas of the body, usually at the back of the neck and at the base of the skull. After burrowing its mouth parts into the skin, the tick begins to gorge itself on the host's blood, in order to get the nourishment it requires for reproduction.

A toxin which is present in varying strengths in some, but not all, ticks can produce a condition known as tick paralysis. This seems to be more of a problem in the interior of British Columbia than in any other region, but it has been known to occur in Alberta.

The first symptoms of the paralysis occur about four to five days after the tick begins feeding. Paralysis starts with the legs and gradually ascending until within three days it affects the arms and finally the internal organs and throat. If the heart and lungs are not affected, recovery can take place within a few hours of removal of the tick. If the tick is not found, death may result.

Wood ticks are also carriers of the deadly Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, which is characterized by extremely high body temperatures, agonizing muscular tension, and a spotty looking rash.

To prevent ticks from attacking, it is a good idea to wear trousers tucked into boots when hiking in infested areas. While hiking or during breaks, check areas like the back of the neck for what will feel like a small bump, and use a fine toothed comb to check the hair. Also keep an eye on your hiking companions who will not notice a tick crawling up the back of their shirts. Make extensive daily examinations for ticks, paying particular attention to the pubic regions and the back of the head and neck.

Ticks can be removed from the body by a very, very slow and gentle pull. Other techniques for removing them include covering them with Vaseline or painting them with nail polish. Since ticks 'breathe' through holes in the sides of their bodies this will 'choke' them and force them to let go to fight for their lives. This will normally remove the tick mouth parts which are responsible for the paralysis and fever. Finally treat the wound with a disinfectant and if there is any indication of paralysis contact a physician immediately.