

# THE PACKRAT

RMRA Newsletter September 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

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As this is the last issue of our fiscal year, I would like to thank the membership for the opportunity of being your president. It was a relatively simple task as the whole executive has done a great job this year. Thanks go to Anita O'Reilly and her committee for organizing the social events, especially the very successful 40th anniversary celebrations; to Barbara Mitchell for the tough job of getting entertaining and informative programs and to members who have given presentations; to Ann Moran for successfully interpreting and printing the executive minutes (not an easy task!); to Marianne Wolters for publishing a professional-looking PackRat and to those who contributed articles; to John Schleinich for his valiant effort to keep the club in the black (blackish-pink?); to Ken Scott for the awesome job of filling in when I'm on my frequent trips; and to Reg Fryling for keeping the stats on all the trips and for recording the phone message after each meeting (*the* most important job). Many others contributed to make the club successful. Wally Drew batted a good average on weather prediction this year. He also organized the two well attended bus trips, was instrumental in contacting past members for the 40th anniversary, and was a main backer of the trail maintenance program. Always cheerful Frank Stanley gets each meeting off the ground with chair setup and coffee duties. Thanks to the "early crowd" and to the coffee shop volunteers for helping in these tasks. Alistair DesMoulins deserves credit for bringing environmental issues to our attention. A committee will attempt to keep the club informed of these issues in the future. All coordinators who took out a trip this year are to be commended. They are the key people in the club. A special thanks to coordinators who put up trips when the board is a little sparse. I would name them but I would also miss someone and get into trouble. Thanks to Dave Reid and Reg Fryling who on occasion run the meeting when neither Ken nor I are present. Last, but not least, I thank the new members who gave this club a try and liked what they saw. If I have missed anyone, then my excuse is that I have a tiny brain.

I have tried above to list duties that the club requires and the people who have performed them. But there is more to the Ramblers, something that comes to an organization with the passage of time. We are here together because we share a common need to experience the outdoors, and with time develop lasting friendships and camaraderie with fellow members. This undercurrent of community came out with the untimely passing of Zita Morgan. Those who knew her well treated her death as one occurring in the family and came together to give her a last farewell. The next time you are in the mountains and have a quiet moment to yourself, think how lucky you are to be there. Zita would like that.

## SHARK MOUNTAIN 1994

by John F. Schleinich

In all probability this was the first ascent of Mt. Shark by the Ramblers as a group, so I feel compelled to describe the trip in more detail.

Alan Kane, in his book: "Scrambles in the Canadian Rockies", writes that Mt. Shark is moderately difficult. I focused on the word moderately instead of difficult. It was a mistake. Mt. Shark is a big pile of rubble. Loose rock upon more loose rock, flanked by steep cliffs. You are never sure whether the hold you are hanging onto is safe, or if the rock you step on will hold or slide away and send you down some very steep slopes.

From the Karst spring, a gorgeous site of cool water on a hot day, we bushwhacked up a hill 500 or 600 feet. The moment you step out of the bush, you face the ridge and your hands are on rock, almost the entire way. Whenever you don't use your hands you concentrate on your footing. One wrong step or stumble and you may need a chopper to take out whatever is left of you.

There are long sections on the ridge, razor sharp, with some rather loose rock, that cannot be bypassed. You feel completely exposed. Almost embarrassing. My partner called it 'exciting'. We came to a particularly intriguing corner around a cliff with only a narrow ledge to walk on. There was no way of knowing what lay around the bend. Should the footing not continue we would have to backtrack. A difficult and unpleasant exercise. We hesitated, looking it over carefully, until a brave woman in our party marched ahead. She ventured onto the ledge and slid around the corner, poking her nose into the unknown. It was safe, and she hollered: "It is OK Pappy, you can come." Pappy went and so did the rest of us.

Another interesting feature was a dangerous down climb, very close to the summit. We had a choice: eat lunch 100 feet away from the top, or go down a 20 foot chimney. We had lunch on the top, surrounded by the most wonderful views only our Rockies can provide. From a sea of mountains, the big ones stood out like islands in wavy waters. Mt. Assiniboine and the Royal Group, in the east we saw the Lougheeds, Bogart, Sparrowhawk and Buller. The beauties of the Rockies made us forget the price we had paid to see such a display.

It took us a little over four hours to reach the top; Kane timed it between three and five. In the register on the top there was only one other entry for 1994. It was a ranger and he needed 3 hrs. 20 min. His comment was: "Not one of your every day ridge walks". Very laconic, but he was probably young and experienced.

Going down was very slow. Often we had to wait for the climber ahead to get into a shelter before following. The weather was hot and the skies clear. No thunderstorms, which is very important. In a storm you have nowhere to escape to. Either side of the ridge has steep cliffs; you are practically always exposed to the elements. Running down would be quite impossible.

Good gloves are essential. The rock is sharp and you are constantly touching it. Shorts are not advisable. One member of our party made quite a mess of the skin on her beautiful legs.

Now that you know what excitement awaits you on Shark Mountain, don't hesitate, go for it! Happy scrambling!

## LETTER

by Barb Mitchell

The other day I was lying on the couch waiting for a nap to come by and thinking about the trips that might be going out this weekend. At this point, I realized that if I were a coordinator I would have to dream up a destination and make a COMMITMENT to go by Wednesday!! There would be no more fence sitting. And then a horrible thought!... I would have to actually think and speak coherently (well semi anyhow) at some unearthly hour of the morning - say about 8:00 A.M. I know too well the parking lot scenario where we all stand around waiting for the coordinator to begin the opening round of who's driving who and where. Not only that, but there are tough questions to be addressed... the most common being "where's that?" For someone like me, who is pre-noon challenged, this is as bad as calculating atomic rates of decay in your head - at any hour of the day! By now I am caught up in my nightmare. At the trailhead, there are more directions to be given, a mental list of who might be where (relatively speaking) or with whom (hiking speed speaking), who might take off unbeknownst to the group, etc. etc. - the 'what if list' in my mind is universal in size!! REALITY CHECK - how many hikes have I been on where we have ended up back in the parking lot with fewer bodies than we started with - not too many - for one thing can you imagine the humiliation on Wednesday night? Hey - a thought - maybe there's a conspiracy and body

loss is never reported ... only the coordinator (keeper of the body count) knows for sure. As I continue to lie there on the comfy couch I resolve to limit my stupid questions to the coordinator to say ... oh 50 odd per day ... well maybe a few less.

All this thinking has created a need for therapeutic exercise so I will leave the confines of the couch with these thoughts. All of our coordinators do a truly fine job and do much more than most of us give them credit for. I, for one, would like to thank you for your time, effort, and enthusiasm, without which the club could not exist!

## **RAMBLERS' 40TH ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND JULY 16 & 17, 1994**

by Wally Drew

This mid-July weekend with mid-summer weather was the climax of our 40th Anniversary Year so far. It started off big with 115 attending the Stampede pancake breakfast at Rosemont Community Centre. Invitations had been sent to former Ramblers near and far, and many came. After we had feasted on pancakes, etc. cooked by Shirley Tajcna, her husband, and others, and topped with Del Lavallee's rhubarb sauce, some of the old timers who had helped develop our club were introduced by me. Since there were so many, we just introduced those from the 1950's. Each had stories, often humorous, to tell. John (Hickey) MacInnes, the Founder of the Ramblers, was amazed that we had lasted 40 years when he lasted less than 4. Sandy Vair, who served 7 years as Chairman (President), and his wife Nancy Gay (Stewart) told of the epic Floe Lake trip that produced the first three Ramblers marriages, including theirs. Tom Moffat, Senior Trip Leader (Leaders' Chairman) at the time, and his wife Lucia (Van de Werve) added humour to that story. They had come from Nakusp, B.C. for this event. The third couple making their decision to take the trail of life together on the Floe Lake trip was Henk and Ruth Weisburg Oliemans. Henk was called "The Rainmaker" because it always rained on his backpacks. Herman and Pam Turner Swarte married a little later in Ramblers. Like the Vairs and the Oliemans they had come from Kelowna for this event. Rudi and Bernie Taylor Schippers also met in Ramblers. Bernie threw probably the best parties Ramblers have ever had. She described some of them. Barbara Thompson related how she had played Matchmaker and helped bring some early Ramblers couples together. Another early Ramblers couple that is still here is Tom and Ruth Kirk Thurston. They and Ron "Alpine" Smylie, who used to give us a meeting place in his outdoors store, were more reticent on their addresses to the group. All of the above-mentioned Ramblers marriage couples are still together. Annette Swarte Verhagen and Gerda Leer White added young beauty to the club in the early years. They are still friends. Annette came up from Houston, Texas and was staying with Gerda. The children and even a grandchild of the Vairs and Oliemans were also introduced. Seeing and meeting these early Ramblers plus many others who came from near and far brings the Ramblers' history book alive for readers. Annie Bloomberg, a later Rambler, was here from Ontario, Kathie Bangay brought 3 British Ramblers to our Stampede breakfast. Our club was named after and once affiliated with the Ramblers of Great Britain.

After these outdoors events, we went into the hall for John Schleinich's "Down Memory Lane" slides and Ruth Thurston's old movies of Ramblers' activities. There was an afternoon bicycle trip by Bob St. John and an easy hike by Ken Scott to round out the day.

On Sunday we went to our Mt. Allan Centennial Trail. Bob St. John and I had work parties of 11 on the south side and 6 on the north side respectively. Some took the opportunity to hike over the top and down the other side. John Schleinich had 21 on his hike up to the summit of Mt. Allan. To end the big weekend about 55 of us enjoyed the potluck picnic supper organized by Anita O'Reilly and helpers at the Opal Picnic Area on the Kananaskis River.

Thanks go to Anita O'Reilly and her committee for organizing this outstandingly successful weekend, with a special mention to Linda Eastwood who sat for hours at the breakfast registering guests and making name tags with the year they joined. What really made it great was so many Ramblers and ex-Ramblers coming from near and far to celebrate our 40 successful years.



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**SOCIAL COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE 1993 - 94 SEASON**

by Anita O'Reilly

The Winter Open House in November was well attended by over 60 people. There was a draw for a free membership and refreshments and baking were available.

Approximately 45 members enjoyed the Christmas Pot Luck Dinner held on December 15th. Finn Christiansen donated a hand carved wooden truck as a draw prize. Thanks Finn!

Barbara and Allan Cassley very kindly offered their home for a New Year's Eve party. Allan organized games and entertainment for the evening, and everyone brought food for a midnight buffet

February 16th was the date of our Valentine's Pot Luck.

On March 2nd we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Rocky Mountain Ramblers with a birthday cake. We were all thoroughly amused by the home movies shown by Tom Thurston and narrated by Ruth.

A hike of Mount Yamnuska occurred on May 8th to commemorate the inaugural hike of May 9, 1954.

Over 80 people attended the Summer Open House held June 29th.

THE EVENT OF THE YEAR was the Ramblers' 40th reunion weekend. On July 16th, 115 Ramblers and former Ramblers met at the Rosemont Community Centre for a Stampede Breakfast. Wally Drew introduced former members and great stories were told and heard by all. A collection of old movies and slides entertained all well into the afternoon. Mount Allan was the site of our reunion hike and work party on July 17. The weekend closed with 55 people attending a pot luck supper at the Opal Shelter. A special thank you to the reunion committee and all other volunteers who helped to make this such a successful weekend!

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

September 17 and 18 - car camp at Highwood Group Camp

October 28 - Awards Dinner and Dance at the Calgary Winter Club

October 29 or 30 - Elbow Lake ski trip or hike to commemorate RMRA inaugural ski trip of October 28, 1956.

**STRANGER - FRIEND**  
**Sonnet on the Death of Zita**

by Roger F. Woodgate  
 9th August, 1994

A life has passed among us on this earth.  
 We knew you, yet we really were not knowing  
 What thoughts and dreams went with you from your birth,  
 Until this day we gather at your going.

Your family, your friends, your foes, your lovers  
 Each played their part in chapters of this book;  
 Yet none could really read between the covers  
 Which chronicle the life you late forsook.

Your life to celebrate is now our quest;  
 With memories of joy, and happy hours  
 Spent walking midst the things you loved the best:  
 The earth, the sky, the trees, the birds, the flowers.

And now we bid you farewell at the end;  
 Enigma, Stranger, yet above all, Friend.

## RMRA TRIP COORDINATORS' CHAIRMAN REPORT Oct. 1/93 to Aug. 21/94

by Reg Fryling

The annual report for the 94 A.G.M. will include the missing period (Aug. 22 - Sept. 30, 1994).

Using last year's figures, I have projected to Sept. 30/94 for comparison with 1993 as follows:

	Total Trips	Participants	Hikes	X-C	Cycle	Backpack
Oct. 1/92 - Sept. 30/93	268	2026	178	58	8	17
Oct. 1/93 - Sept. 30/94	243	1864	130	63	19	18

Art Davis so far has the most person days (239), followed by Dave Reid (188), Wally Drew (177), Bob St. John (169), and Alastair Sinclair (162). The total number of trips, participants, and hikes appear to be down, but back packs are about the same, and cross-country ski and bike trips are up. My thanks to Dave Reid and Ron Folkins for filling in at meetings.

### SUMMARY OF RMRA COORDINATOR ACTIVITY 93/94 Oct. 1/93 to Aug. 21/94

Coordinator	Status	Total Trips (Days)	Person Days	Hike	Bike	Back Pack	Canoe	Work Party	X-C Ski	Downhill Ski	Snow Shoe
Angus, Brieta	F	4	19	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Campbell, Doug	F	5	48	5							
Davis, Art	F	21	239	21							
Des Moulins, Alistair	F	10 (20)	55	1		9					
Drew, Wally	F	17	177	6				3	8		
Folkins, Ron	F	10 (15)	87	1		7					
Fryling, Reg	F	12	37	1	8				3	-	-
Gonsolves, Diana	A	4							1	1	
Jones, Dawn	F	1	2						1		
Jull, Dick	F	-									
Kittle, Kay	F	1	17	1							
Ladouceur, Dave	A	1	8	1							
Lavallee, Dell	F	1	4						1		
Logos, Steve	F	-									
Lowndes, Dick	F	2	16		1				1		
McGill, Peter	F	1	6				1				
McInnis, Barb	F	3	7						3		
Michi, John	F	1	2		1						
Mulligan, Dave	F	6	45	5					1		
Moran, Tony	F	7	48	6							1
Noer, Gert	F	7	19	4					3		
Reid, Dave	F	16	188	9					7		
Schleinich, John	F	24	127	11					13		
Scott, Ken	F	8	70	8							
Sinclair, Alastair	F	14	162	14							
Sobon, June	F	1	2						1		
St. John, Bob	F	21	169	6	1			3	12		
Taylor, Mary	F	1	3						1		
Twelker, Wilf	F	1 (3)	3						1		
Watson, Ken	F	3	17	3							
Weger, Darlene	F	3	16	1					2		
Wescott, Brian	F	5	54	1					4		
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>211 (35)</b>	<b>1649</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>



Canadian Heritage  
Rocky Mountain District  
P.O. Box 900, Banff, Alberta  
T0L 0C0

July 28, 1994

Bob St. John,  
President  
Rocky Mountain Ramblers  
P.O. Box 3098 Station B  
Calgary, Alberta  
T2M 4L6

Dear Mr. St. John:

*Thank you for polling your membership and providing copies of the survey. I very much appreciate this information and that it is available for analysis by my staff. I am heartened by the high level of support from your membership for fees and somewhat surprised by the unanimous support for an all inclusive fee. I do however wish to clarify that backcountry concessionaires (and indirectly their customers) currently pay lease, license and other fees based on legal agreements with parks. These costs will be reviewed as existing agreements expire. In addition, next year the customers of commercial operators will also pay the Wilderness pass fee.*

*Fees collected through the Wilderness Pass will be used to offset some of our operating costs such as the provision of information, trail and campground maintenance. In a climate of increasing fiscal restraint, this fee will assist Parks Canada in maintaining the high level of service and facility standards our backcountry travellers have come to expect. This fee allows us to share some of the costs with those actually using the services and facilities. Enclosed is a fact sheet which provides specific details on the proposed fee.*

*In establishing new fees such as the Wilderness Pass, we have been guided by principles of fairness and appropriateness. Services are charged for on a cost recovery basis; where there is a personal benefit derived by the individual. This helps shift some of the financial burden away from the general taxpayer, to the person directly benefitting from the service.*

*We are encouraged by the positive response and constructive suggestions we have received from backcountry users so far. This fall the Wilderness Pass strategy will be reviewed and we will strive to incorporate suggestions for improvements. We will retain your name on our mailing list, and send you information updates as they become available.*

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*I very much appreciate the time and effort the club took to conduct the survey and thank you for forwarding the information to Parks. I will ask my staff to consult the Rocky Mountain Ramblers further as their review of the Pass fee progresses.*

Sincerely,

C. Zinkan  
A/Director



# FACT SHEET

## THE WILDERNESS PASS

The backcountry experience in Canada's Rocky Mountain National Parks is of the best in the world. The spectacular, unspoiled wilderness of the F Mountain Parks offers backcountry users superb opportunities for solitu personal and physical challenge, tranquillity, excitement, discov achievement, self reliance, freedom, and adventure.

A "Wilderness Pass" charging backcountry visitors a nightly fee, has b introduced for Banff, Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho National Parks this sumr This Pass represents an investment in wilderness protection and helps ens that this quality experience will be available for years to come.

Some important things to know about the Wilderness Pass are:

- Implementation of the Wilderness Pass fee helps Parks Canada ensure t Canadians will continue to benefit from their system of National Parks. T fee partially shifts the financial burden for support and maintenance of backcountry from the general taxpayer to those users who benefit direc from the services provided.
- The fee is \$5 per night per visitor, up to a maximum of \$25 per trip. Seas passes will also be available at a cost of \$35.00 and will be good for all F Mountain Parks. Children 12 and under will not be charged the fi Day-users will not require a Wilderness Pass. (We anticipate that a new i will be introduced in 1995 to replace the existing motor vehicle license fi and the revenue from this fee will support maintenance of trails accessible day-users of the parks.)
- The purpose of the fee is to partially off-set the cost of trip-counsellir information, maps, trail maintenance, and campground maintenance. The f is not sufficient to support the cost of trail construction, Park Warden patro resource studies, or the variety of other services that are provided.

- At this time, there is no fee in addition to the proposed Wilderness Pass fee for the use of the Bryant Creek and Egypt Lake Trail shelters. Parks Canada is reviewing the future of backcountry shelters through the Four Mountain Park Management Plan Review.
- Parks Canada will not charge a fee for the use of the Alpine huts this year, however the Alpine Club of Canada is authorized and does charge a fee for use of these huts.
- Commercial operators are under separate business license and/or lease arrangements. These agreements will be reviewed for future years to ensure an equitable application of fees.
- We intend to consult backcountry users and other stakeholders through visitor surveys and personal contact. We appreciate any comments and constructive suggestions with respect to backcountry fees.
- A refund policy is in place for visitors as circumstances warrant.
- Visitors who do not purchase a pass are subject to fines under the authority of the National Park Regulations. Increased compliance monitoring will occur for this and all other fees charged for services offered by Parks Canada.
- Wilderness Pass fees will be applied directly to improved backcountry maintenance and services in compliance with Treasury Board Guidelines.

Please contact the following Backcountry Managers for further information:

Keith Everts  
Banff National Park  
(403) 782-1407

Brian Wallace  
Jasper National Park  
(403) 852-6155

Ed Abbott  
Kootenay National Park  
(804) 347-9361

Terry Winkler  
Yoho National Park  
(804) 343-8324