

THE PACKRAT

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FEBRUARY 1996

Hiking, Backpacking, Climbing, Skiing, Cycling, Canoeing, Mountain-Biking, Snow Shoeing, Educational and Awareness Programs, Social Functions.

MEETINGS:

Weekly, Wednesday evenings at 8:00 p.m.
Rosemont Community Hall, 2807 - 10 Street N.W.

MAIL:

Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association
c/o Calgary Area Outdoor Council (CAOC)
1111 Memorial Dr. N.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2N 3E4

TRIP INFO:

282-6308 RMRA Hot-line and at meetings.

RMRA EXECUTIVE 1995 - 1996

PRESIDENT
VICE PRESIDENT
TRIP COORDINATOR
TREASURER
SECRETARY
SOCIAL DIRECTOR
PROGRAM DIRECTOR
NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Bob St. John
Ron Hunter
Marianne Wolters
Anita O'Reilly
Darlene Weger
Sheila Quigley
Carol Perkins
Linda Eastwood

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Bob St. John

Here we are at the midpoint of winter. I hope the extreme cold spell of January will not return and we can look forward to some 'warmer' spring skiing. The cold snap certainly curtailed attendance on many trips with some being canceled. Other clubs have also experienced low turnouts to winter activities. I believe the Avalanche Policy is working properly, although perhaps some coordinators may still be apprehensive about applying it to their trips. At the end of the skiing season we as a club should review the Policy and see if improvements could be made to it.

The Members Manual is finally out. Every member of the club is entitled to a copy. Later this spring, and from time to time thereafter, there will be additions and updates to the Manual. It would be advisable to purchase a binder of some sort to allow for easy insertion or replacement of manual pages. If you have any suggestions for improvements or for new topics please talk to one of the Safety Committee members.

Last December the club purchased a group membership card for the Youth Hostellers Association. It allows for all participants on a Ramblers trip to stay at a hostel at members' rates (usually a savings of about \$5.00 per person per night). The savings for one night's stay at the Mosquito Creek hostel by eight Ramblers in early February paid for the card. Coordinators who want more information on this in planning their trips should see Marianne.

In the last PackRat I explained that I had resigned from the CAOC Board due to differences in opinion between the Board and myself as to the direction and operation of CAOC. I also inferred that I would pursue more cooperation with the outdoor clubs in Calgary, specifically ski clubs. Two meetings have been held, and an informal group of clubs with winter programs similar to the Ramblers has been formed as a sub group of CAOC. The clubs include the Ramblers, the Norseman Ski Club, the Bow Waters Canoe Club, and perhaps the Foothills Nordic and the Alpine Club. All these organizations have similar concerns and problems, and it seems natural for them to work together in arriving at solutions. Four committees have formed to deal with: 1) Insurance, 2) Trip Ratings, 3) Courses, and 4) Leaders vs Coordinators. Marianne Wolters, Ron Hunter and myself represent the Ramblers on these committees. The idea is not to create more work and yet another bureaucracy, but to save time in having all clubs work together in a timely fashion. Ideas and solutions that come from this group may not necessarily be suited to the Ramblers, but some may fit quite well. In any event the Ramblers will benefit by keeping abreast of what is happening in the outdoor community. Stay tuned.

A VISION FOR THE BANFF BOW VALLEY

submitted by Banff Bow Valley Study

INTRODUCTION

The Bow Valley in Banff National Park is the birthplace of Canada's national park system and the second national park in North America. In just over a century since the first reserve was set aside, the valley has become the focal point for human activity within a block of mountain parks and a cornerstone for the tourist economy of western Canada.

At the same time, the Bow Valley is the ecological heart of a larger ecosystem that extends far beyond the legislated boundaries of the national park. It contains the major elements of biological diversity in a region where most human impacts have been concentrated in biologically significant areas. It provides vital connections to the foothills, plains and north-south expanse of the Rocky Mountains, and has been recognized as a part of a World Heritage Site.

For more than 10,000 years prior to European settlement, people visited and utilized the Bow Valley on a seasonal or semi-permanent basis and their presence played a role in the evolution of the valley ecosystem. Yet, when it was selected as the route for the Canadian Pacific Railway in the early 1880's, the valley was still part of a vast wilderness that covered much of western North America.

The coming of the railway and the establishment of the park heralded the first permanent human presence in the Bow Valley. The pace of change accelerated, parallel with similar processes around the world, as civilization transformed the wilderness. Today, dramatic change to the nature of the valley caused by humans is measured in years or decades, not millennia or eons.

Banff is the foundation park in a system intended to represent the diversity of Canada's natural heritage. It is managed and protected under the Nation Parks Act and Policy, which have evolved in accordance with growing public concern within Canada and throughout the world over a diminishing base of wild land.

Yet the history of the Bow Valley within the Park has produced a unique situation with respect to the kind and amount of human activity. Certain facilities and developments within the valley that were acceptable in the early decades of the Park's existence, are not considered appropriate in national parks today. The national transportation corridor, including the Canadian Pacific Railway and Trans-Canada Highway, runs through the valley. Accessibility has contributed to the valley's popularity as a visitor destination and to growth within the Town of Banff. Today, the Town is an incorporated municipality on leased land within the park and the largest visitor centre in any North American national park. Social, economic, and ecological values interact in a complex web of relationships.

The Minister responsible for parks has recognized that the growth in numbers of visitors to the Banff Bow Valley and the need for expanded or enhanced facilities have heightened the concerns of Canadians that the ecological integrity of the park should not be undermined. [In his address to the Banff Bow Valley Round Table in February, 1995] the Minister stated that:

We urgently need a common vision in the Bow Valley. But we cannot come to a common vision unless we work together. Whether we are environmentalists of business people, park administrators or concerned citizens, we will be more successful in working with interested parties and building upon our common ground, rather than becoming divided because of our differences. Canadians, and Albertans in particular, share an intense pride in the quality of life in the Banff Bow Valley. This pride reflects a desire to achieve and maintain a healthy balance and sense of community.

Many area residents believe that the current state of the Park serves as a strong argument for striking a balance between measures to ensure maintenance of ecological integrity and sustainable tourism. They support such mechanisms as continuing to preserve park ecosystems and managing resources in partnership with surrounding jurisdictions.

Their concerns underscore the need to conduct consultations to thoroughly and objectively examine the many issues and to make recommendations concerning the long-term management of the valley.

In response to these considerations, the Minister has ordered a major study of the Banff Bow Valley to be conducted by a Task Force of independent experts. The Task Force established a Round Table representing the broadest possible range of interests in the Banff Bow Valley and asked the members of the Table to prepare a vision statement.

This vision is the culmination of a collaborative effort by a large number of Canadians to whom the Banff Bow Valley is of great importance. The heart of the vision is not in the words but the spirit of cooperation and collaboration in which they were written. At a crucial time in the life of the valley, it is an attempt to reflect on the past, understand the present, and imagine the future.

CORE VISION

The Bow Valley in Banff National Park reveals the majesty and wildness of the Rocky Mountains. It is a symbol of Canada, a place of great beauty, where nature is able to flourish and evolve. People from around the world participate in the life of the valley, finding inspiration, enjoyment, livelihoods and understanding. Through their wisdom and foresight in protecting this small part of the planet, Canadians demonstrate leadership in forging healthy relationships between people and nature. The Banff-Bow Valley is, above all else, a place of wonder, where the richness of life is respected and celebrated.

KEY THEMES

The Bow Valley in Banff National Park is living example of the way in which ecological values are protected while appropriate kinds and levels of human activity are welcomed.

Within the valley, natural systems and all their component native species are free to function and evolve. The Bow Valley supports and is supported by the natural systems of the region around it.

The Bow Valley in Banff National Park is available to all Canadians and international guests, who wish to participate in a diverse range of appropriate activities. They treat the park with respect. The quality of the natural environment is fundamental to the visitor experience, which is enriched by the quality of services provided.

Understanding the value of our National Parks is a part of being Canadian. Education and awareness about national park values, ethics, natural and cultural heritage, and services are provided both within and beyond the boundaries of the park. Introduction to this knowledge is a fundamental part of each visitor's experiences.

A healthy economic climate, based on the heritage values of the Park, contributes to national, provincial and local economies. Businesses evolve and operate along aesthetically pleasing and environmentally responsible lines. Innovative ideas, designs and technology are emphasized when providing services including education, transportation, waste management, and other infrastructure.

Federal, provincial and municipal authorities cooperate in protecting and managing the National Park and regional ecosystem. To achieve this, they nurture cooperation with businesses, organizations, and individuals. Public participation processes contribute to open, accountable, and responsible decision-making. Principles of precaution are exercised when the effects on the ecosystem are uncertain.

Laws and regulations affecting the economy and the environment are consistent and predictable. Enforcement of regulations is consistent for all.

Communities in the Bow Valley are healthy and viable and are leaders in the quest for environmental and cultural sustainability. Residents are hospitable and pride themselves in accepting their responsibility for protecting and sharing this natural and cultural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations.

VALUES

As Canadians concerned about the future of the Banff Bow Valley, we are guided by these fundamental values:

- The value of exercising restraint and self-discipline today, for the sake of future generations.
 - The value of nature in and of itself.
 - The value of nature to human experience.
 - The value of National Parks as protected areas.
 - The value of Banff National Park for all the people of the world as a World Heritage Site.
 - The value of the Banff Bow Valley for its essential ecological role in the context of the park and the larger ecosystem.
 - The value of the Banff Bow Valley, including the national transportation corridor, to the national, regional and local economy.
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- The value of safe, healthy, and hospitable communities.
- The value of culture and history
- The value of open, participatory decision-making.
- The value of equal opportunity for a sense of wildness and a range of quality park experiences.
- The value of predictable, consistent and fair regulation.
- The value of competent, accountable management.
- The value of national parks to Canadian's sense of identity.
- The value of wilderness preservation to Canada's image around the world.
- The value of respect for others.
- The value of access.
- The value of education, enjoyment, and other park related benefits of the Bow Valley to visitors.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles guide all actions by government, business, communities, and the public.

- All actions, initiatives and programs undertaken to realize the Vision are implemented in full accordance with the spirit and requirements of the National Parks Act, Parks Canada's Guiding Principles and Operational Policies, and the Town of Banff Incorporation Agreement.
- Standards are defined, enforced, and reviewed so as to ensure the maintenance of Ecological and Commemorative Integrity.
- Regulation and decision-making are responsive, open, participatory, consistent, and equitable.
- There is individual and shared responsibility to provide for protection and preservation of heritage resources, including buildings, within the Park.
- Proactive, adaptive, and precautionary management take into account cumulative effects and limits to growth in recognition of the finite nature of the Valley.
- Service and opportunities that provide high quality, affordable park experiences from front country to wilderness and that enhance understanding of national park values are stressed.
- Stewardship, based on sound science, is practiced through environmentally sensitive management, mitigation, and restoration.
- Education and experiences foster knowledge and understanding of the Banff Bow Valley, its role in the larger ecosystem, and as part of a national park and a World Heritage Site.
- Educational opportunities are provided to foster understanding, appreciation, and respect for local culture.
- Integrity and common sense underlie all decision-making.
- Economic analyses include consideration of natural, social, and cultural assets.
- Only kinds and levels of activities, facilities, and services that are appropriate to Banff National Park are permitted.
- Marketing and communications programs are designed to develop a knowledge and understanding of Banff National Park, including expectations and limitations and reach out to all.
- There is recognition that people enjoy and learn about nature in a variety of ways.
- Residents within Banff National Park act in accordance with Park values, have a

- need to reside, and understand their ethical responsibilities to the rest of Canada.
- The geographic area of the Town of Banff will not change, although the boundaries may be adjusted to achieve the goals of ecological integrity.
- New communities are not developed within Banff National Park; the only communities that exist are the Town of Banff and the Lake Louise Visitor Centre.
- The unique culture and history of the Bow Valley is preserved and presented.
- Planning and decision-making are coordinated on a regional basis.
- The national transportation corridor is maintained and improved.
- Partnerships are encouraged subject to appropriate checks and balances.
- There is a shared responsibility to achieve ecological, social, cultural, and economic sustainability.

TWIN LAKES - GIBBON PASS - RED EARTH CREEK

by Dave Mulligan

December 3, 1995

Correctly rated "upper intermediate" in "orange" terrain, Gert Noer called the above Rambler ski trip in early December. With a mischevious twinkle in his eye, he warned of a tricky descent to Shadow Lake through the trees and to bring a headlamp. When Gert said this, I knew the trip would be interesting. I went and it was.

Six of us, including two friends from the Foothills Nordic, met at Assumption School at 7:00 a.m. and we were ready to leave Castle Junction around 9:00 a.m. Seeing another similar party preparing to leave, we procrastinated just long enough for them to start. They turned out to be a strong party, for despite the trail breaking and a brief glimpse at lunch, we never saw them again. So we started out in several inches of new snow, -10 degrees C, cloudy - not ideal conditions but close to it.

After a km or so of flatter stuff we all donned skins for the steady ascent to Twin Lakes. Just before emerging out into the open lakes we stopped for lunch out of the wind. Thus fortified, we continued across the slightly damp lake edge admiring the cloudy views of Storm Mountain. And then back into the trees for the final ascent to Gibbon Pass where ice build-up was removed. The avalanche danger was now mostly over, so with a final look at the mountains shrouded in cloud, we descended through the trees to Shadow Lake. The better skiers on fat skis probably enjoyed this, but I was muttering bad words on my 205 cm woods at the back. Gert was very patient as we finally caught the other two bona-fide Ramblers at Shadow Lake Lodge (closed) for a well earned snack.

Then in increasing gloom we descended the 11 km Red Earth Creek fire road to the cars. We just made it without lights to find that the strong Foothills Nordic duo had already completed the short car shuffle. So all that remained was the drive back to Calgary. Thanks Gert, a good trip worth repeating especially with clear skies. 25 km, 800 m vertical, upper intermediate, orange terrain, skins, transceivers, shovels required, 9 hours in good company.

DISCOUNTS AND DEALS

by Ken Park

Nordic Ski and MultiSport Ltd
2 Spruce Centre S.W.
242-2252

10% discount to RMRA
members on all regular
priced merchandise upon
presentation of membership
card

Contributed by Ken Park. If other members know of any discounts
or deals please call Ken at 244-6809

PHANTOM HIKER

"Which is the steepest way, Bob?"
Annon.

ANSWERS TO TRIVIA QUESTIONS FROM PAGE 18

1. Asbestos
2. Cygnet
3. Flower
4. 5 degrees Centigrade
5. Wind Force
6. Yak
7. Starling
8. Poisonous Plants
9. Leaf
10. Cirrus
11. Barometer
12. Contour Lines
13. The Abominable Snowman
14. A Steep Slope.

AWARDS DINNER AND DANCE NOMINATION FORM

Please complete nomination form and return to Linda Eastwood by October 4, 1996.

Best or most creative hiking/XC skiing outfit (Whose was it and describe outfit) _____

Most improved hiker or XC skier _____

Most interesting thing someone said on a Ramblers trip (who said it and what they said) _____

Most interesting item found in a pack (whose was it and what was it) _____

Best joke told on a Ramblers trip (what was it and who said it) _____

Best gossip/rumour (who said it and what was it) _____

Congeniality Award: _____

SKIING THE ROGERS PASS

- CHRISTMAS 1995 -

by Dave Mulligan

For several years now, I'd heard and read stories (in the Alpine Club's chinook) of skiing at Christmas in the Rogers Pass. They seemed to evoke visions of steep, deep powder while getting pleasantly tipsy in the cosy Wheeler Hut each evening. Dodging avalanches and digging out your car at the end of the stay seemed the major hazards. Was this for me? Could I ski such terrain? I decided to find out.

Following various advice, from the U. of C. I rented some suitably (I hoped) wide and short (185 cm) skis with Riva Cable bindings. These cost 4 X \$6.00 + GST for ten days (December 22 to January 2)- a bargain. I booked four nights at the hut at \$14.00 each for me a full member (\$21.00 non-member). I possessed the remaining equipment (e.g., transcievers), packed the usual hut stuff, a pile of food and awaited Wilf Twelker's knock on the door at 7:00 a.m. Saturday, December 23.

The drive via a second breakfast at the Husky in Golden was uneventful. Checking at the warden station opposite the hotel at the pass we each bought a yearly backcountry ski/camping permit for \$35.00. The snow was good, sable, sun shining, temperature about -8 degrees C. Basically perfect. It stayed that way for a week. We were lucky. That day we went part-way up Balu Pass before lugging our heavy packs the 2 km to the Wheeler Hut. Here we met the three families including six children between ages three and eleven and two grandparents, a total of 14 who were to make our stay extra memorable. Getting Wilf's phone number from the Alpine Club's reservation desk, we had already been invited for Christmas dinner. This turned out to be a multi-day affair. Our contribution was two litres each of wine. With multiple trips pulling toboggans, they eventually hauled in a vast amount of stuff including small family presents, a cooked turkey, several guitars and a complete six foot Christmas tree with all the decorations. Grandfather George kept two and sometimes all three woodburning stoves going 24 hours a day. The parents took turns to look after the children while the others skied. The ample food was well organized. The hut was perfect for they occupied one of the three room huts. Needless to say, it was left immaculate.

Skiing on the 24th up the Alushan drainage, I found the gap in my equipment. My regular skins did not provide enough grip for the wider skis. It was difficult to climb up the tracks. This was partially remedied the next

day when I reverted to the strap-on "snake" skins but my shoulder still got a workout. Otherwise the wider, head-height skis worked fine and even when working my way through the lower trails in the trails, I was grateful for their short length. Over the following days we skied Balu Pass, Lookout Notch, Seven Steps of Paradise, and some slopes near Perley Rock. The weather and snow were perfect. Ascending I kept up with Wilf and although couldn't manage his elegant turns on the heavier alpine equipment (with locking heels), cranked some satisfactory tele-turns. The highlight was probably the 1500 m vertical, 14 km return, nine hour round trip up the Seven Steps of Paradise. We just made it back before complete darkness.

The families first treated us to Christmas Eve dinner, a mixture of hors d'oeuvres, savouries, etc. heated on the wood stoves as the propane ran out. Then on Christmas Day it was a full turkey dinner with all the trimmings. And just as I was to start preparing my Boxing Day pasta, we were invited to partake of the plentiful leftovers. With ex-Rambler, Anna-Gret, now living in Penticton splitting an excellent Chinese supper three ways with her friend Monica and I the first day, it was day five before I cooked supper. Wilf and I refilled the propane tanks by borrowed tobaggan was surprisingly easy. Evening entertainment was usually singing and finally a game of Hearts easily won by Wilf. With the extra food and good ski conditions we stayed an additional day, returning via the same Golden lunch spot on Friday December 29.

Various other parties came and went. I will especially remember the three Americans who wanted to move to Canada and had heard of the area via the Internet and Chic Scott's recent book "Summits and Icefields": this provides some good information, as does a map by Murray Toft. If you go, I would suggest advance hut booking through the Alpine Club (403-678-3200) to avoid disappointment. They had 30 booked for the New Year and were close to the 24 winter capacity at Christmas. Staying in the summit hotel at about \$25.00 nightly is also reasonable. You need to be a fair skier and don't expect the above perfect conditions. According to Wilf who has been there for ten consequent years, you often have to break trail through two feet deep powder.

Avalanche potential is very real and a stop at the Warden Station essential. Costs will vary as the National Parks standardize their "pay as you go" policy.

Have fun. I did.

EXECUTIVE MEETING

MINUTES

December 6, 1995

PRESENT: Bob St. John, President
 Darlene Weger, Secretary
 Anita O'Reilly, Treasurer
 Marianne Wolters, Coordinators Chairperson
 Linda Eastwood, PackRat Editor
 Ron Hunter, Vice President
 Carol Perkin's, Program Chairperson
 Rey Gryling, Past President
 Frank Stanley, Coffee Shop

ABSENT: Sheila Quigly, Social Chairperson

MINUTES OF THE PAST MEETING:

Minutes of the last meeting were not read.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Phone System: Marianne feels she has worked the bugs out of the system and is going to give Programs and Social their sections for input.
Motion: Moved by Marianne, seconded by Anita that the club buy the "Friday" answering machine. All in favour.

The club will buy the machine from Bob St. John and Bob will buy the clubs machine.

REPORTS:

PRESIDENT - Bob has been in touch with the Norseman's Club who have asked us and several outdoor clubs to a meeting this coming Friday. The purpose of the meeting is to see if there is enough interest among the various outdoor clubs to cooperate on some joint projects, for example, first aid courses. The Norseman's do set aside funds for these types of programs. Ramblers may be asked to contribute. Bob, Marianne and Ron will attend.

Bob distributed Chapter 2 of the Membership Manual for the executive to review and return next week. He hopes to have the manual ready for the Safety Committee by December 20, 1995

TREASURER - Anita asked if we should be reinvesting the money currently invested in a G.I.C., Anita will look into the conditions of the G.I.C. should

we need the money for some unforeseen expense.

There are currently only 84 paid up members. Some coordinators have not paid their membership fees yet. Anita now has a new membership list. We made \$93 profit on the AD & D.

PACKRAT - The next PackRat will be out next week.

VICE PRESIDENT - No report.

COORDINATORS CHAIRPERSON - Marianne discussed the motion made at the coordinator's meeting that we throw out all the old transcievers. It was decided that we would keep them for practice and mark them "for practice only".

Reimbursement for those attending workshops and the possibility of having a pool of funds for education was discussed. This will be passed onto the Safety Committee to develop some type of guidelines.

PROGRAMS - Carol said the Safety Committee requested some programs. These will be forms held as follows:

January 17 - a Novice Evening
February 14 - Trip Ratings
March 13 - Group Management
April 10 - Group Gear

SOCIAL PROGRAMS - Annual Christmas Dinner will be held Wednesday, December 13, 1995. Linda Scarlet will be playing the piano for the carol singing.

THE COFFEE SHOP - Frank reported it was doing well.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Hostel Group Membership - Bob had been asked to look into getting for our club a Hostel Membership card. This would allow Ramblers to stay in any hostel at a discount rate. Cost: \$40. It was decided that we try it for a year, actively promote it, keep track of how much it is used, and assess if it is something we wish to continue.

2. New Members Night - The possibility of having a new members night more often, once a month for example was discussed, then tabled for next meeting.

NEXT MEETING

January 24, 1996

THANKS TO THE RAMBLERS FAMILY

by Wally Drew

At times recently when the chips are down the Rocky Mountain Ramblers have proved to be very supportive like a big family. This was illustrated most strongly with the sudden deaths of Zita Morgan and Ron Folkins. In a much lesser tragedy I wish to gratefully thank the Ramblers for their help and support during my partial incapacity after dislocating my shoulder in a XC ski fall. Special thanks go to those who waited to take me home to their's from hospital, drove my car and equipment home, have fed and chauffeured me and have loaned me a typewriter. All this is making my worst Calgary winter easier to endure. Thanks again to all of you.

PHANTOM HIKER

"I don't want to do it if I don't have to."
W.

KEN'S QUOTABLE QUOTES

"Rare is the person who can weigh the faults of others without putting his thumb on the scales."

- Byron J. Langenfield

"Wise men talk because they have something to say; fools talk because they have to say something."

- Plato

"A committee is a group of individuals who singly can do nothing, but who together agree that nothing can be done."

- Fred Allen

"Advice is what we ask for when we already know the answer but wish we didn't."

- Erica Jong

"You're never a loser until you quit trying."

- Mike Ditka

"Speak the truth, but leave immediately after."

- Slovenian Proverb



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COORDINATOR'S MEETING

November 29, 1995

This special meeting was called to order by Chairman Marianne Wolters at 7:10 p.m. There were eleven Coordinators present.

MINUTES:

Not read.

ASSISTANT COORDINATORS:

New Applications:

1. Peter Fisher

Had been a leader. Has taken the two day avalanche course. Wants to take out hiking, skiing and lodge trips. Accepted as Assistant Coordinator.

2. Ken Park

Application read. Experienced. One day CPR course. Will take the Avalanche course. Accepted as Assistant Coordinator.

AVALANCHE DANGER RATING SCALE:

Ratings complete and are being distributed to the coordinators. Wally said that these are subject to change and should be assessed over the winter as we take trips out. Ratings should be discussed by the group and if there is a disagreement with the rating it should be put in writing. Ratings will be reviewed by the sub committee responsible and can be changed at the Spring Coordinators meeting.

There was discussion on the ratings and it was stressed that these are minimum safety ratings only and coordinators would still have the right to ask for more equipment and would need to make decisions based on local conditions.

MOTION: Moved by Wally, seconded by Dave Mulligan, that Red Trips should be canceled under high avalanche danger. All in favour.

MOTION: Moved by Marianne, seconded by Mary Taylor, that Yellow Trips should be canceled under extreme conditions. Motion carried.

MOTION: Moved by Wilf, seconded by Gert, that the old single frequency transceivers be eliminated from the Safety Policy and all old club models be thrown out. Motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 19:48.

Recording Secretary: Darlene Weger

LEVADA WALKING, ETC. IN MADEIRA

by Wally Drew

First an introduction to Madeira where I spent the last week of October and first week of November 1995 on a British Ramblers' walking holiday. That was the beginning of the wet season so there were fresh flowers and green grass.

Madeira is a subtropical Portugese island off the coast of Morocco. That makes it warm all the year but seldom cool or hot at low elevations. The highest peaks - over 1,800 metres and even over 6,000 feet get a few days of snow in winter. While I was there temperatures ranged from lows of 16 degrees to 18 degrees C at sunrise to highs of 23 degrees to 25 degrees C in the afternoons. Only the last walking day was cooler. Even up in the mountains the temperature was never below 10 degrees C on our walks. There was quite a bit of cloud, especially in the afternoons, but adequate sunshine too. When it rained it was usually a brief, drenching, wind-driven downpour much like our most severe summer thunderstorms but without hail or lightening. There was a thunderstorm one evening that briefly knocked out electricity.

Madeira is a small island about 50 km long E-W and 25 km wide N-S but very precipitous with virtually no level land or sand beaches. The airport's one runway is so short that only smaller jets can land and they can't take off with a full load of fuel. So they must fly ten minute to the tiny flatter island of Porto Santo to refuel at a military airfield. One third of the 300,000 Portugese inhabitants live in Funchal, the capital and only city. The rest live in small towns, villages and farms terraced into the lower slopes, mostly on the southside of the island. Most of the remainder including the steeper north side is forested with pine, eucalyptus, chestnut and heather trees. The soil is so fertile that a small plot can support a large family. With European standards food and water are safe and with virtually no crime streets are too. There are no native mammals or snakes and no screens are needed for insects.

Much of the walking done by our group of 18 (17 Brits and one Canadian) and an excellent woman leader was along Levadas. Levadas are irrigation ditches contouring along the mountainsides at various levels to bring water to the farms and villages during the dry summers. They have steep slopes or cliffs on the uphill side and dikes of earth, stone or cement along the

downhill side. The flat tops of the dikes are usually about 1/2 metre wide. They serve as paths for tourist walkers and local residents. Some villages have no other access than the levadas and associated paths and stone/cement steps up and down to them. So they often have street lights along them. Walkers have to go single file and it is sometimes a little difficult to squeeze by oncoming people. A head for heights is beneficial as the downhill side usually drops off steeply, or even vertically offering fine views down over terraced farms and villages to the Atlantic Ocean hundreds of metres below. Sometimes views extended to neighboring uninhabited islands. Places where a group could get off of the levada for a break or lunch were sometimes few and far between. There were tunnels too so a flashlight was needed.

Levada walking is virtually level but access to and from them is usually via steep roads, paths, and steps. We would take public buses or taxis up from our oceanside hotel in little Ribeira Brava where we stayed the first week or Funchal, the second week, to commence our walks, usually along more than one levada. So we would loose a lot more elevation than we gained by walking down to a lower bus stop or our hotel. We usually left it after 9:00 a.m. and walks averaged about 15 km (L. Int. level for us).

Going to a different area each day we got to almost all parts of the island. On the very steep north side we walked forest paths above and down to the ocean. We got up a few summits too. Most spectacular was the High Peaks Trail connecting the third and first highest peaks by clinging to cliffs or knife-edge ridges and going through tunnels. It bypassed the second highest peak which is a huge gendarme. On top of the highest, Pico Ruivo, el. 1,800+ m/6,100+ ft, it was a mild 15 degrees C even though we were mostly in cloud.

Walking nearly every day and eating good seafood, fruit and veggies was a nice way to see a pretty and safe island.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS



1. What is the only rock that can be woven?
2. What is a young swan called?
3. What are corolla, filament and stigma parts of?
4. Change 41 degrees Fahrenheit to Centigrade.
5. What is the Beaufort Scale used to measure?
6. Name the mammal living at the highest altitude.
7. Name the most abundant wild bird in the Americas.
8. Foxglove, Hemlock and Larkspur are types of _____.
9. What are epidermal cells, paisade cells and veins part of?
10. Clouds resembling "mare's tails" are called _____.
11. This instrument measures atmospheric pressure.
12. What are lines connecting points of equal elevation on a map called?
13. By what common name is the "Yeti" known?
14. What do contour lines which are close together indicate?

Answers on Page 8

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 14, 1996
 Trip Ratings Forum

March 31, 1996
 Group Management Forum

April 10, 1996
 Group Gear Forum

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PHANTOM HIKER

"If you're not living on the edge, you're taking up too much space."

J.

February 7, 1996

How can you get very far,
If you don't know who you are?
If you don't know what you've got?
And if you don't know which to do
of all the things in front of you,
Then what you'll have when you are through
is just a mess without a clue
of all the best that can come true
If you know what and which and who.