

THE PACKRAT

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APRIL - MAY, 1997

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

MEETINGS: Weekly, Wednesday evenings at 7:30 p.m.
Rosemont Community Hall, 2807 - 10 Street N.W.

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

TRIP INFO: 282-6308 RMRA Hotline and at meetings.

RMRA EXECUTIVE 1996 - 1997

President	Bob St. John
Vice President	Barb McInnis
Past President	Reg Fryling
Trip Co-Ordinator	Ron Hunter
Treasurer	Chris Saunders
Secretary	Linda Eastwood
Social Director	Shirley Tajcna
Program Director	Dorothy-Ann Reimer
Newsletter Editor	Carol Perkins

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

It never ceases to amaze me, when I think I will be scrambling at the last minute for articles, RMRA members come through with enlightening stories and informative articles. This issue is no exception.

A travelogue on a trip to the Nevada desert during Christmas left me quite envious after experiencing the extremely cold Christmas we had here, and the story of a leisurely hike on the mountains ended on a disturbing note (at least I thought so).

If you are in the market for a lightweight tent for temporary shelter on hikes, the article on the Zdarsky Tent will certainly be of interest to you.

Also included: first quarter trip statistics, great information on how to keep your energy level up while participating in outdoor activities and the President's Message.

Don't forget about the *Classified Ad* section. No great response as yet, but it is still an option. If you have any items you would like to buy, sell or trade, or if you are in need of any articles, please forward the information to me.

Thank you so much to the members who contributed to this issue. It is because of submissions like these, that the quality of the PackRat Newsletter will continue.

Sincerely,
Carol Perkins

NEXT PackRat issue.....
May 28, 1997
Deadline for Submissions
May 21, 1997

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CYCLE CLINIC

COST: free to RMR Members
DATE: April 18, 1997
TIME: 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.
PLACE: Dawn Jones' home
Crescent Road N.W.

MISSION: To help you get started on a road bike:
 Tips on purchasing
 Riding techniques
 Equipment for the bike
 What you should carry/wear
 Safe riding guidelines
 Eating and riding

This clinic will be followed by an in town bike trip on Sunday, April 27th, Firehall, 10:00 a.m.

KEN'S QUOTABLE QUOTES

"May is often Mother Nature's way of apologizing for February."
— THE GLOBE AND MAIL

"Money can't buy friends, but it can get you a better class of enemy."
— SPIKE MILLIGAN

"If Noah had been truly wise, he would have swatted those two flies."
— H. CASTLE

"It is a funny thing about life: if you refuse to accept anything but the best, you very often get it."
— W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

"Tell your boss what you think of him, and the truth will set you free."
— ANONYMOUS

"The perfect virtue is to do without witnesses what we would do in front of everyone."
— FRANÇOIS DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD



KEN PARK
MLS Realtor

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"Taking Real Estate to New Heights"

President's Message

By the time this issue is out it should be spring. Time to put the boards away and check the hiking boots for hibernating mice. The new rating system put in place for the winter season will be extended to summer hikes and scrambles. Categories will be Trails, Off-Trails, Scrambles, and Mountaineering. Difficulty levels will be 1 to 10 as before. Recently I was amazed to discover that a member did not have a copy of the winter rating description or a list of pre-rated ski trips. Members who can not make a meeting to pick up a copy should let someone on the executive know and a copy will be sent to you.

The CASC group of ski clubs met a couple of times this winter. The Norseman Ski Club wishes to get together with some of us Ramblers to update the winter trip ratings with this year's experience. This should happen sometime in April. The issue of insurance was rehashed by the Norseman with their conclusion that it is not worth while for a small club to purchase it. All participating clubs wanted the CASC group to get together earlier next season (September) to plan joint equipment purchases, courses etc. If you have any ideas how this group could be more useful, let me know as there will be one more meeting sometime in May.

In March I went to a meeting of the Trails Group, a sub committee of The Friends of Kananaskis Country Cooperating Association. 'The Friends' is a non-profit organization in partnership with Kananaskis Country, Alberta Environmental Protection. Their mission is to promote the protection, visitor enjoyment and heritage

appreciation of K Country by enhancing its goals and activities. 'Friends' sponsor projects through fund raising and volunteers. The Trails Group is concerned with the state of hiking, equestrian, and biking trails in K Country. The meeting had an assortment of representatives from hiking clubs, ski clubs, equestrian clubs, bicycle clubs, naturalist clubs, from K Country, from Calgary Parks and Recreation and from 'Friends of KC'. It was decided to choose at the next meeting a trail project that would be suitable to the group in terms of effort and effectiveness. The purpose is to get various interests working together to achieve a common goal; in this case the upgrade of a K Country trail. It was stressed to limit the project size in order to achieve success.

In the past years I have participated on 'work parties' to upgrade Prairie Creek, Powderface Creek, and Prairie Link trails, as well as on the Centennial Trail over Mt. Allan. These projects turned out to be too large for our club to handle; resulting in burnout from the half dozen or so members who contributed on a regular basis. These community projects (including the Annual River Cleanup) are supported by a relatively small percentage of club members, and predictably the same people. The rest of the club is either unknowing, apathetic, or cynical of these activities. I find it increasingly uncomfortable to promote these projects, worthwhile as they may be, if support in the club is limited. If you believe your club should actively support these projects, please advise me or anyone else on the executive, or write your opinion in the Packrat.

Thanks.

Bob St. John

The PackRat Newsletter
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DESERT BREAK

submitted by Reg Fryling

We landed in Vegas shortly after midnight on December 21/96, picked up our pre-arranged car, and after working our way out of the airport maze began searching for our pre-arranged motel room - the only other pre-booked item besides our return flight thirteen days later (Brieta wanted to squeeze in as many days as possible). Despite strange town, darkness, and foggy brains, we finally arrived.

The sun was shining brightly next morning, and there was greenery as we headed to meet my sister, her husband and the friend they were staying with (on their annual fifth-wheel migration to Mexico), at Costco where we picked up some supplies. Willy, this gregarious friend of theirs, offered us her house on our return to Vegas even though she and her husband would be in New Zealand.

First the hills around Boulder City and then the desert swallowed us a short time later as we headed east on 93 with, pending the weather, the idea of visiting the south rim. "How about having a look", Brieta suggested as we neared a sign that read: "Chloride 4 miles", pointing up a side road in the midst of a rolling and remote span of parched desert. Chloride is a mining ghost town with a handful of tenacious residents eking out a living from the odd wayward tourist and who knows what. We stopped at a little ramshackle curio shop with a tourist information sign. Brieta looked at pamphlets while I ducked through a little hallway to a dark bar room next door, with one table, four bar stools, a coke machine and a pool table, in search of the shared washroom. A lively, fifty-ish woman was telling Brieta that it was snowing on the south rim as she hung up the phone when I returned. She suggested we stay at Laughlin (a little Vegas tucked in the corner of Nevada on the Colorado River), and reserved us a room in the Hilton Flamingo for less than a truck stop motel at Kingman. We next walked down the street to a little log shack cafe. The one customer in there told us to make ourselves at home and the proprietor would be right back from getting the mail. The place was old and rickety, but clean; and we ended up having a big bowl each of delicious chili garnished with a pile of cheese and onions plus all the coffee we could hold for a total of less than \$5.00.

Laughlin consists of approx. a dozen big hotels nestled in barren hills, and utilizing the river for scenic enhancement and river cruises. A river walkway with flowers, lawns, and exotic trees connects many of the hotels with their numerous casinos and fantastic food. An awesome breakfast buffet was \$1.65 for seniors. We'd have perished from overindulgence if we lingered, so down the river to Lake Havasu with its original London Bridge, lit up for the Yule-Tide. Next day we hiked in summer clothes east of town in valleys and on ridges among a profusion of desert plants including some bonny specimens of barrel cacti. As we returned, the loud report of high power

rifles, and old pickup tracks attested to the tenuous nature of the beautiful, unprotected area.

A visit with some friends at, always warm but rather flat Yuma, on Christmas Day, and we were off toward Tucson, stopping at Dateland only to be told this was the only day in the year when there were no dates to be had. Passing through market gardens, farmland, and lots of desert, we turned south and hiked in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument Park - high ridges and deep, lush valleys with some spectacular specimens of the Organ Pipe. This particular hike was delayed about an hour while we and a gathering crowd armed with screwdrivers and wire tried to retrieve the keys from the ignition of our little locked Dodge. Before again heading east, we enjoyed the old town atmosphere during an overnight at the copper mining town of Ajo.

With, temporarily, a brief look at Tucson, we stopped at Nogales, Arizona; and next morning strolled around its Mexican counterpart, topping it off with a delightful lunch complete with shots of straight tequila and fresh limes. Back towards Tucson, we had an interesting tour of the galleries of Tubac with its artists and artisans; and a visit to White San Xavier Mission - I believe the oldest mission in Arizona, and still very much in use.

Biosphere 2, set amid gardens and myriad support buildings in the rolling hills northeast of Tucson, is a 3 acre series of glass domes sealed off from the outer world (Biosphere 1) where 7 different mini ecosystems ranging from ocean to tropical forest attempt to function. After an initial quite successful 2 year stint, teams of scientists continue to spend shorter periods sealed off from the world, measuring and learning about the fragile balances of our globe. The project is privately funded.

Tucson struck us as a lively, upbeat city where we enjoyed a swim outside in warm sunshine; and Trader Joe's, which, despite the rather dubious name is a chain of food/health stores that specialize in natural, chemical-free products, at attractive prices.

The return journey took us through Phoenix before the morning rush hour, then a stroll around the artsy shops of Wickenburg in the heart of some dry ranching country, followed by another overnight at Laughlin - pricier this time, on the eve of New Year's Eve, but still cheaper than Vegas, which, by the way, was apparently fully booked. We turned off the road to Vegas next day to stroll along in the pleasant afternoon sun on the sandy shore of Lake Mohave (reservoir) at the sleepy resort of Cotton Cove. Various sized boats and fishing equipment could be rented; and a couple of people set off in kayaks with overnight gear aboard while we had lunch in the park.

We'd soon had enough of the crowded, multiplying "Venus Fly Traps" of downtown Vegas, and spent most of our remaining time hiking in the fascinating Red Rock Canyon Park with its huge red and tan boulders; and afterward enjoying the comforts of our well-appointed borrowed home.

*1996-97 Trips: Frist Quarter
October 1/96 - December 31/96*

Trip Co-Ordinator	Trips							
	Total Trips	Total Days	Person Days	Hike	Cycle	X-C Ski	Downhill Ski	Snowshoe
DesMoulins, Alistair	1	3	9	1				
Drew, Wally	1	1	3			1		
Hunter, Ron	1	1	10	1				
Jones, Dawn	2	2	11			2		
Kittle, Kay	1	1	8	1				
McInnis, Barb	2	2	5			2		
Mulligan, Dave	2	2	5			2		
Noer, Gert	5	5	33	2		3		
O'Reilly, Anita	2	2	15			2		
Papasideris, Peter	2	2	11			2		
Pattison, Helga	1	1	2	1				
Reid, Dave	4	4	68	4				
Saunders, Chris	4	4	19	2	1	1		
Sinclair, Alastair	2	2	16	2				
St. John, Bob	2	2	7	1			1	
Wolters, Marianne	8	8	31	2	1	5		
Total	40	42	253	17	2	20	1	0

Hikes	17	19	154
Cycle	2	2	6
X-C Ski	20	20	89
Downhill Ski	1	1	4
Snowshoe	0	0	0
Total	40	42	253

submitted by Ron Hunter

**Calgary Area Outdoor Council (CAOC)
Annual Outdoor Equipment Sale**

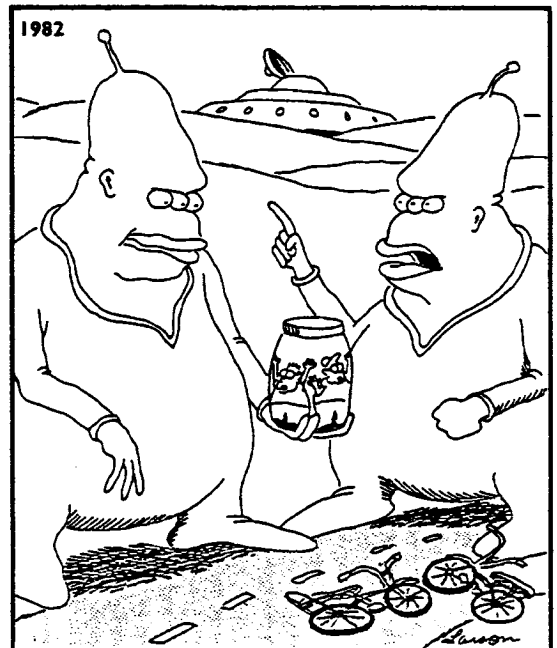
May 2-3 Mt. Royal College - Main Gym

**Pre-consignment - Monday, April 28, 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.
at CAOC - 1111 Memorial Drive N.W.**

**Consignment - Friday, May 2, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
- Saturday, May 3, 9:00 - 11: a.m.
at Mount Royal College - Main Gym**

**Sale - Saturday, May 3, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
at Mount Royal College - Main Gym**

submitted by Ken Park



"Now don't forget, Gorok! ... This time punch some holes in the lid!"

The Zdarsky Tent

Submitted by Bob St. John

Over the past few years I have been on the lookout for a lightweight, practical temporary shelter for use in emergency situations. I am sure most coordinators and many participants have at one time or another given thought to an unscheduled bivouac. The following situations could easily occur:

a) Someone is injured (broken joint, limb, etc) on a hiking trip and will require a rescue. Meanwhile it is raining (a cause of the accident due to slippery ground). The immobile person is in shock and in danger of becoming hypothermic. What to do depends on the situation, but tending to the victim and arranging for an evacuation would be two requirements. Perhaps two people could stay with the injured person and the rest could hike out to initiate a rescue. Tending to the injured person involves first aid, keeping the person comfortable, and giving moral support. All three are made more difficult if it is raining, if there is a cold wind blowing, or both. A Zdarsky tent can keep all three people dry, out of the wind and therefore warm. The cocoon affect of the tent lends a cheery atmosphere to what could be a dismal situation. At the very least it is a quick shelter solution while a more viable option is built (perhaps a lean-to), or it is sufficient in itself as a shelter.

b) A ski binding breaks and will require some time to repair. It is -25 C and blowing. Fiddling with screws, wire, duct tape or perhaps fast setting glue requires mitts off. A Zdarsky tent provides quick, roomy shelter to make the task somewhat more pleasant.

The requirements that I felt were optimal for a temporary shelter are:

1. Water and wind proof: must provide the basics of shelter from the elements.
2. Lightweight: lugging around a relatively heavy tent or tarp is not appealing.
3. Roomy: can accommodate more than one person comfortably.
4. Simple: quick, a no fuss setup.
5. Durable: if one strong gust of wind shreds it, then it's useless.
6. Multiple uses: the more uses it has, the more valued it is.
7. Fire resistant: for safe operation of a stove.
8. Inexpensive :

The Zdarsky tent does not meet all the above requirements, but it is the best I've seen so far. It is basically an 'A' frame style pup tent made of coated nylon. It has no floor or poles, but does have two ventilation slits with Velcro tabs and six loops for optional tying off (two skis can give support for each end). My rating for this shelter would be:

1. Water and wind proof: [B]. Being made of coated nylon with sealed seams, and having overlapping flaps on the ventilation slits, it would be resistant to rain; but with no floor you would have to sit on packs to keep dry from any ground moisture. In a strong wind it would flap around with no floor, but with a loop on each corner it could be made more secure. It is large enough to tuck the sides of the tent under you.
2. Lightweight: [A]. 550 grams including the extra loops and stuff sack. Also small in size.
3. Roomy: [B]. Three people can get inside the shelter in a sitting position. No stretching or lounging about.

4. Simple: [A]. A very quick shelter, just get inside. In most cases you would not need the tie down loops.

5. Durable: [C]. Ripstop nylon is heavier and more expensive, but an alternative. Time and experience will tell if simple coated nylon will do the job.

6. Multiple uses: [B]. Use as a tarp, as a ground sheet, as an emergency locator, as a crude stretcher.

7. Fire resistant: [F]. Treat the material with a fire retardant, or do not use a stove in it.

8. Inexpensive: [A]. \$20.00 for materials. You can make it yourself, or if you are needle and thread challenged like me, have it made for another \$38.00.

As you can see, I do not think it is perfect. Perhaps ripstop nylon or another material would make it more durable. Adding a floor would make it more of a shelter, but less easy to use if wearing crampons or skis, or tending to an immobile person. For fire resistance the material could be treated. It is all a compromise with expense, simplicity and weight. Despite some shortcomings, in my view it is superior to some other solutions:

- Bivi Sack: room for only one person; may be difficult to get an injured person in one; not as many uses; relatively expensive.

- Sleeping bag: same as a bivi sack only not waterproof and bulky to carry.

- Space blanket: a good choice inside a Zdarsky tent.

I recently had a Zdarsky tent made for me and took it on two trips. On the Tonquin tour I brought it out at one lunch stop and the group had fun trying it out. I quickly shoveled a platform to sit on with a trench for our feet. Although it was cool out (about -10 C with a breeze), three people in the tent were noticeably warmer, cheerful, and cozy. I chose a bright red coated nylon which acts as a black body to the sun's energy while retaining radiant heat from the people inside. The large ventilation slits not only provided air, but let the people see outside, preventing a claustrophobic atmosphere. We used skis to support each end making the tent roomier. On Alistair DesMoulins' snow caving trip to Mosquito Creek I used it as a ground sheet in our cave, an unplanned alternate use.

Who was Zdarsky? I have no idea, however he or she had a good idea. This all came from an article entitled "The Zdarsky Tent" by Murray Toft, which appeared in the December, 1993 issue of the Alpine Club of Canada's "The Newsletter". For the upcoming months of April and May I will have copies of Toft's article and my Zdarsky tent at Wednesday meetings. If there is enough interest perhaps we could get some made. I got Susan Jankowski of THREADS (242-2777) to make mine. She did an excellent job on the tent, and does custom work for the MEC.

BUTTERFLY SURVEY OPEN TO EVERYONE

The Canadian Wildlife Federation is co-ordinating a butterfly and moth survey this spring and summer across Canada to determine the numbers and distribution of Lepidoptera. It is felt that monitoring these fragile insects is a good indicator of the states of larger ecosystems. Observations can be made at home, other places in the city, or out of town. If you are interested, phone 1-800-563-9453, ask for Butterfly Survey, and leave your name, phone number and address.

ENERGY ON THE TRAIL

ENERGY, WHETHER SUMMER OR WINTER, COMES FROM YOUR CONDITIONED BODY, AND YOU CORRECTLY FUELED SELF. LET'S TALK ABOUT THE LATTER. THE FUELING WILL COME FROM YOUR CONSISTENTLY EATING A BASIC MINIMUM OF '5532'. THIS IS A SIMPLE FORMULA FOR THE FOOD GROUP AMOUNTS THAT YOU SHOULD INGEST DAILY.

5 SERVINGS OF CARBOHYDRATE FOODS (CHO)
5 SERVINGS OF FRUIT AND/OR VEGETABLES
3 SERVINGS OF MILK/MILK PRODUCTS
2 SERVINGS OF PROTEIN FOODS

To prepare yourself for a safe energetic RMR trip do the following:

- Regularly eat a variety of foods from the 4 food groups as set out above
- You will get enough fat in your diet without consciously adding it
- Eat pleasure foods but only in moderation..think of them as treats..share portions
- Eat and drink normally the night before a trip
- Your body should not still be metabolizing liquor as you begin a trip (It should be well hydrated to start the trip. Liquor the night before dehydrates)
- Do not come on a trip in a dieting mode. This is not the time to deprive your body
- Eat a breakfast before you come. It should consist of 2-3 servings of a CHO (minimum) (That could be a large bowl of cereal with fruit on it or several slices of toast)
- Adding greasy foods to this breakfast may give you a heavy slow feeling on the trail
- Bring a CHO food and some juice to drink in the car before you get to the trail head
- Have a pack well stocked with food and drink for your trip. Bring extra for after the trip
- Bring extra food also in case of an accident and an unexpected overnight
- Pack some hot drink in summer and winter. Hypothermia conditions occur any season
- Caffeine drinks (weak tea is okay) give you cold hands and feet
- Do not pack food that will spoil in hot weather. Freezing food before packing helps some
- Putting easily spoiled food in a firm container with an ice pack helps also. Weight!
- Bears will like you if you carry food or empty cans that have a strong odor
- In winter do not carry juicy fruits that will make your hands sticky and cold
- Carry out all garbage. Some people "toss" fruit peelings. Not such a good idea
- EAT FREQUENTLY ON THE TRAIL. ONCE YOU ARE HUNGRY YOU HAVE WAITED TOO LONG. It will take 20 minutes to re-energize.
- DRINK FREQUENTLY ON THE TRAIL. ONCE YOU ARE THIRSTY YOU HAVE WAITED TOO LONG.

If you have any particular questions I may be contacted

submitted by Dawn Jones

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TWENTY-FOUR YEARS EXPERIENCE

CANYON CREEK

submitted by Reg Fryling

It was snowing lightly Sunday morning, February 9 as Brieta and I pulled into the Canyon Creek/Ice Caves parking lot and wondered if we should have brought skis instead of walking boots. So far only one little white truck was parked, and it looked like it had been there at least overnight.

The skies started to clear as we picked our way long a well packed snowshoe/boot shouldered between the limestone cliffs of Prairie Mountain and the Mighty Moose - thankful, not to have skis after all. Among other dreamy thoughts, I reflected on how aptly the creek was named as we climbed gently along the narrow valley, sometimes through interesting rock cuts with stories from past eons revealed on the exposed walls, and sometimes through belts of evergreen and deciduous trees, crossing and recrossing the withered, frozen creek.

As often happens with general use trails, it dwindled steadily until only the track of a few of the more adventurous remained. Luckily these, except for one usually separate ski track, were made by snowshoes. Even so, by the time we had reached the broader, more open valley beyond Prairie and Moose, there was deeper, more drifted snow, and the trail became quite challenging.

The warm and pleasant day, aided out in the open by a breeze, started to cool; so, after some lunch and a little more exploring, we turned back. The sun was lower and the breeze stronger as we neared the relative shelter of the canyon.

Ahead we could hear a snow machine, and I began to wonder about the laxity of rules, until, as we drew closer, along came another snow machine driven by a Park Ranger. Soon we could see that someone was down and being worked on. It was an older man with ski boots on. The rangers placed the man on a trailer and continued to administer CPR as they headed carefully back towards the parking lot. Another ranger got names and particulars from everyone before also heading back. There were ski poles, pack, and his little dog (apparently well), but no skis around.

The two girls who first came upon the scene said they tried to revive the man, but his arms were stiff, apparently from the cold, and it appeared as if he had been there overnight. The dog must have remained with his master, and quiet, as we passed within about 50 feet earlier that day.

There was a lot of hustle and bustle around the parking lot including one helicopter, two ambulances and about seven park vehicles, as well as a number of private vehicles - with, of course, their compliment of individuals. The victim was pronounced dead upon arrival at the parking lot, and so, after I D's were collected for the police, a steady exodus began. So much for a quiet day in the mountains!

I learned later that the victim had a heart attack, was 68 and skiing alone.

Program Information

April 9, 1997

Getting High in Nepal

Last fall Linda Eastwood, Anita O'Reilly and Bob St. John journeyed to Nepal to spend time trekking. They will show slides and tell about their adventures during this holiday.

Early May

(Date not finalized)

Jon Rollins of the Organization "Alberta Underground" will tell "all" about caving, drawing on his experience as a spelunker in our own backyard, the Rockies and foothills.

For updates, call the hotline at 282-6308 - mailbox 4

Upcoming Events:

July - Stampede Breakfast
September - Annual Car Camp

Details will follow at a later date

Social Events

The Valentine's Day potluck held February 19 was enjoyed by 23 members. Food was great. Door prize of a bottle of wine was won by Terry Kaufman.