



# The Packrat



April / May 2001



*Looking at Marvel Lake, Mt. Assiniboine Area, BC*

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## Editor's Note

This edition of the Packrat includes two interesting trip reports, one to South America and one ski traverse from Sunshine parking lot to Red Earth Creek. You will also find some informative articles about Personal Information and Privacy, a Peakfinder website and Grizzly Update. The Calendar of Events is quite busy too; the hiking and scrambling season is close by.

As a reminder, anyone submitting an article should not use another member's address, phone numbers, or email address without their express permission to do so. Please read Bob St. John's article for more details on the RMRA policy on the use of public names.

Please note that I cannot guarantee the publication of any article submitted after the submission deadline. ❖

## President's Message

*By D. Reimer*

Spring is here and hiking – which never really stopped – is on the upswing. Skiing was great despite thin snow pack. We built Quinzhees, skied tracks and backcountry, went camping (brr!). I even tried snowshoeing – though I learned that climbing over deadfall on snowshoes is not recommended.

The website is up and running well with ideas for improvements coming in all the time.

We've had some great programs. Many thanks to Carl for bringing such interest and variety to our weekly meetings.

On the not-so-fun side, we are again faced with the dilemma of how to protect our 'playground'.

In The Beginning – a few Ramblers came together back in the 50s to enjoy the Wilderness. Pitching tents in beautiful meadows, building roaring campfires, partying in snow shelters!

What a different world we live in today. Restrictions, regulations, permits, closed areas. Once-shy animals being crowded by ever-expanding human spaces (resorts, subdivisions).

The RMRA is NOT a political action group. All we want to do is hike, ski, backpack, maybe see a few wild animals. Yet, more and more it seems that we are being forced into trying to protect a shrinking wilderness.

The 1999 Praxis survey was a major step. The club completed one on behalf of the members plus many individuals added their own surveys. I think we were all amazed when the Government actually moved to protect some of K-country.

A few months later, we had to go through another session of letter-writing opposing the Genesis planned development near Tent Ridge. Remember the 'Tent Ridge Hurrah' and the petitions we signed. We were even more astounded when that project was rejected!

Last June, yet again, Ramblers submitted recommendations for the Terms of Reference for the Evan Thomas Protected Areas Plan. To date we've heard nothing more about this though rumour has it that the Plan will be developed with mostly commercial input.

Now we learn that Spray Lake Sawmills is negotiating with the Government for a Forest Management Area designation under which it takes full control (i.e. no Public input rights) of the timber of the rest of K-Country (except Provincial Parks (e.g. Peter Lougheed), Ecological Reserves (Plateau Mtn.), and Wildland Provincial Parks (Elbow Sheep)). Places like Cox Hill, Jumping Pound Mtn., Bull Creek Hills, Lineham Ridge, Green Mtn. would lie in the F.M.A.

So what are we supposed to do? Personally, I hate writing letters to Government – I can never figure out what to say and by the time I do, it's too late. However, here are a few options:

- join the Alberta Wilderness Assoc.
- e-mail concerns to our MLA's
- send a letter to Premier Ralph Klein (as a Club? Individuals?)
- forget the whole thing and grumble when another chunk of wilderness disappears
- form a committee to keep track of and report on this stuff
- post pertinent information on the web site

WHAT DO YOU THINK? ❖

### Ramblers Tie the Knot

St. Patrick's Day was a special one this year for Jennifer Oss and Chris Saunders. It was their wedding day.

Congratulations Jen & Chris!



**Deadline for next Packrat is:  
May 16, 2001**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### PASKAPOO SLOPES VIDEO

APRIL 11, 2001 @ 8:00 P.M. (AFTER THE MEETING)

Learn about efforts to preserve the "Shaganappi Slopes" for a major urban woodland park, as Hugh Magill, president of the Paskapoo Slopes Preservation Society, presents a 15-minute professional video on the area. The north facing slopes between Sarcee Trail and Springbank, including the Canada Olympic Park site, are a rare opportunity to preserve aspen and poplar woodland in the city and are threatened by over development. To learn more about the slopes and efforts to save them, check out their website at <http://www.paskapoo.com>

### ANNUAL CAOC NEW & USED GEAR SWAP

APRIL 21, 2001 FROM 12:00 P.M. TO 3:00 P.M.

The Annual CAOC New & Used Gear Swap will be held in conjunction with the U of C Spring Equipment Sale at the Olympic Oval. Call CAOC at 270-2262 for details.

### RIVER CLEANUP

MAY 6, 2001 (TIME AND LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED)

Details will be announced at meetings and on the hotline.

### 2001 SPRING OPEN HOUSE

MAY 23, 2001 @ 7:30 P.M.

The RMRA Annual Spring Open House will be held at the Rosemont Community Hall. There will be a slide show on our summer activities and a demonstration table on summer gear. Baking from members will be appreciated.

### ORIENTATION DAY

JUNE 3, 2001 (TIME AND LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED)

The 2001 Spring Open House will be followed by an orientation day open to members and non-members. Details will be announced at meetings and on the hotline.

### PRESENTATION ON COUGARS

JUNE 13, 2001 @ 8:00 P.M. (AFTER THE MEETING)

Ian Ross of Arc Wildlife Services will give a 1-1/2 hours presentation on cougars.

### STAMPEDE BREAKFAST

JULY 7, 2001 (TIME AND LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED)

The RMRA is looking for a volunteer to host the 2001 stampede breakfast. If you are interested, please contact one of the executive members.

### CAR CAMP 2001

SEPTEMBER 21, 22 & 23, 2001

The RMRA is looking for a volunteer to co-ordinate the annual car camp. Reservations have been made at the Highwood Group Camp. If you are interested, please contact one of the executive members.

## Peruvian Adventures - A trip to the jungle

*By Diane Lyders-Reid*

Macchu Picchu is the most popular destination for travellers to Peru but, if you crave more excitement like hunting tarantulas or swimming with piranhas then include a visit to Peru's Northern Jungle in your itinerary.

During our year in Peru the November All Saints holiday gave Dave a break from the Ministry of Energy and Mines and an opportunity for us to do more sightseeing. Our first choice was Madre Dios, the southern highland jungle but Aire Continente was not co-operative so we opted for Iquitos and the Amazon rain forest. There is a great profusion of tour operators but after some research, we decided on Explorama. \*They operate several jungle lodges and are associated with the ACEER laboratory, which runs the famous canopy walk.

Iquitos, the starting point of our trip is located deep in the jungle and is accessible only by air or by a long river trip. The town is currently thriving because of ecotourism and oil discoveries in the Amazon basin. As the plane began its final approach we could see below an unending vista of green and a ribbon of water curving through the endless forest, our first sight of the Amazon. Explorama personnel met us at the airport and we were transported in an open sided bus through streets buzzing with rickshaw motorcycles - a popular means of transport in the area. After the misty grey atmosphere of Lima the blue skies and 30degree temperatures were a welcome change. In the town we noticed the stores fronting the street were without the guards or heavy iron gates that is the norm in Lima.

In no time our small group of eight tourists and two guides was aboard the launch and headed downstream on the Amazon - a mile wide at this point. The swift flowing water was the colour of milk chocolate and as we started off our guide, Ricardo, pointed out last season's changes in the river channel. During the rainy season in the mountains the river rises over 30 feet and this volume of water makes frequent changes to the course of the river, as well as causing considerable erosion. The river was busy with all kinds of craft, from dugout canoes propelled by poles and local, open boat

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river taxis to flat-bottomed barges several stories high filled with produce that was protected from sun or rain by thatched roofs. We passed larger wharves where several Peruvian navy gunboats were tied up, a reminder that the jungle is the place where terrorists, such as the shining path still hide out.

Our destination was Explorama Napo lodge, located on the Napo River some 100 miles from Iquitos in the Sucusari Nature Reserve. The trip took several hours by jet boat but there was plenty to see en route. Along the water's edge people fished, kids played and women washed clothes. On the banks above the river were small settlements with thatched roofed huts and fields of corn. In the trees we searched for birds and monkeys. After an hour we left the swift flowing Amazon and turned up into the more tranquil waters of the Napo River. Human settlements became sparser and the diversity of trees increased as we were now in primary growth forest. Finally the boat nosed into an even smaller winding stream and within a few moments we were landing.

The welcome committee was somewhat diverse. Several smiling dark skinned mestizos who run the lodge, as well as Charlie, a young capybara (an animal looking like an overgrown guinea pig but actually of the rodent family) and an aptly named trumpeter bird. The buildings are all on stilts and joined to each other by covered walkways. Between the dining area and bedrooms there was a wooden bridge which spanned a small gully. The gully was dry when we arrived but by next morning it had become a sizeable stream. The accommodation was basic, a room with walls that do not quite extend to the high thatched roof. Above and around the beds mosquito nets were suspended although during our five-day trip we saw few mosquitoes. We concluded the netting would be useful for protection from whatever dropped out of the thatch at night! There were no windows, just curtains covering the open space facing the jungle. A basin and jug of water were provided for washing and one simply emptied the basin by tossing the water through the open space into the ditch below – a great way to save on infra structure like pipes. The showers provide uniform temperature - cold only -but in the jungle heat that was not a problem. The latrines were nearby, small rooms made of woven palm fronds each with a wooden seated throne and a dirt floor. Thankfully, for some

reason they were odour free. At night kerosene lamps, provide the lighting. They are lit promptly at 6 p.m., and on the walkways burn throughout the night.

Our first night at Explorama Napo was memorable. Sitting on the deck sipping pre-dinner drinks we watched as brilliant flashes of lightening zigzagged across the sky. By dinner time the storm had moved overhead and was accompanied by torrential rain and crackling thunder. Now we could really appreciate the reason for the covered walkways connecting the buildings. At dinner we met a congenial group from Salt Lake City and these four people, plus their guide joined us for the rest of the trip. As we sat in the dimly lit dining room chatting after a meal that included local catfish and fresh papayas, Ricardo noticed a movement in the corner of the room. He beckoned us closer and there moving speedily across the floor was a tarantula, eek! A Large black and furry shape that quickly disappeared through a crack in the wall.

Our guide, Ricardo - jungle born, was knowledgeable about many aspects of the rain forest. During our first afternoon we visited the "herb" garden where the local Shaman makes up medicines used by the jungle people for generations. Cats claw, which has anti-inflammatory properties or Boton de Oro, which is used for toothache, were but two of many medicinal plants he showed us, as well as spices such as the paprika plant and lemon grass. Whenever we went walking in the forest Ricardo had a 6<sup>th</sup> sense and very quickly identified where we would see monkeys and birds. On our walks we sighted squirrel monkeys, tamarins and marmosets as well as many different birds, such as toucans with long yellow tail feathers, green parrots, flights of parakeets and many others. Sometimes we had to cautiously skirt hordes of militant army ants or long rows of leaf cutters scurrying back to the colony with their green leaf burden. There were all kinds of new and different plants and trees that Dave, as a biologist, found extremely interesting.

Night two was spent at an even more primitive camp deeper in the jungle – Explorama Tambo. We had a roof mounted over a sleeping platform that was enclosed by mosquito netting. The camp shower was a small woven matt enclosure equipped with a water bag hung overhead. You released the spigot and voila "running" water. Dave and I however chose the

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alternative arrangement and bathed in a stream fed pond. "Refreshingly cool," we said shivering, but the goosebumps were worth such a unique experience. Once night fell the velvety darkness was lit only by the glittering stars of the Southern Hemisphere above and our small flickering candles. Around the campfire the guides entertained us with stories and legends of the jungle. "Take care," Paul warned us, "of the forest demon. He comes disguised as a person you love, lures you into the forest and there turns you into a tree, forever trapped in the forest." After such an early start with the same planned for the next day we were all abed early. Much to my disappointment the night sounds of the jungle were rather mundane. Other than the voice of the laughing frog and the gentle rustling of the leaves, the whistles and wheezes of humans snoring were the only other sounds filling the night air!

The next day's highlight was the canopy walk. After downing scrambled eggs flavoured with wild sweet red peppers we trod silently through the jungle to the start of the walkway. Several flights of wooden steps access the first platform and, as it was early in the morning, we had the whole place to ourselves. What an extraordinary feeling it is to be 100 feet above the ground with only the tops of the trees between you and the sky and an endless vista of trees stretching as far as the eye could see in all directions. One at a time we crossed the swaying walkways, anchored to large trees, which bridge the gap between each viewing platform. I found the walkways easy to navigate but felt a little nervous on the swaying platforms when all eight of us were on the same one. Altogether there are 12 walkways and 12 platforms totalling half a mile in length. Here at the top of the canopy we were eyeball to eyeball with lizards sunning themselves on branches and close enough to examine the pink-blossomed Bromyella plants. Overhead were flights of parakeets, toucans and tiny hummingbirds. As we started down a troop of black mantled tamarin monkeys came swinging through the trees.

During the afternoon I opted to relax in a hammock with a book. The rest of the group went fishing! Piranhas are easily baited on hooks with bits of raw beef and the anglers rapidly caught enough for dinner. Everyone was then ready for a swim so, after watching the guides enjoying the warm water of the Napo River, Dave and the others fearlessly jumped in. Quite an experience –

seems as long as there is no blood in the water these Piranhas won't bother you. The staff cooked the fish for our evening meal and although small they are firm fleshed and very tasty.

That night, somewhat apprehensively, we went tarantula hunting. One hole by a path that looked quite innocuous during the day became something else when Ricardo using a flashlight and stick teased a large tarantula out from it. Paul caught the spider and turned it over so that we could see the two large fangs that inject venom into its victim and the belly covered with stinging hairs. In spite of being assured tarantula venom is not particularly toxic to humans we preferred to view from a distance not wanting too close an encounter with an angry tarantula.

For the third night we went back up river to the Explorama Lodge which is located on the Amazon about 50 miles downstream from Iquitos. The Amazon flows along at 4 miles an hour so progress against the current was much slower. This allowed plenty of opportunities for more wildlife watching especially for the pink dolphins, found in this part of the river. The muddy water makes sightings difficult but we eventually glimpsed several long snouts and pinkish grey backs as they turned and twisted around the boat.

Explorama Lodge is much larger but essentially constructed the same way as the Napo Lodge. The lodge has its share of resident wildlife including Willie an orphaned river otter with a penchant for visiting people's rooms, and several pairs of macaws with gorgeously coloured plumage.

Near the Lodge is the local rum factory, built over 100 years ago and still using the old but user-friendly technology. There is no electricity. Two horses power the equipment that crushes the sugar cane. The cane juice is fermented in hollowed out logs then most of it is distilled. Some of the alcohol is used for tinctures but most becomes 40% proof rum – potent stuff. A portion of the cane juice is boiled in shallow copper basins to produce a light sweet molasses. The crushed cane is fed to the water buffalo so everything is utilised. Near the factory is the local bar where we sampled the highest rum, the owner insisting that we taste the various flavours he had concocted by adding various herbs. As a memento I purchased a small bottle of ginger

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flavoured rum that certainly enhances the flavour in a ginger tart that I make!

The night of our "fish" diner we met an extremely interesting woman and it was for her cat Otoronga (an Indian word meaning jaguar) that we saved our fish heads. Linnea Smith, an American internist came on an ecotour vacation in 1990 and was so taken with the jungle she left her Wisconsin practice and returned to work with the Indian people here. In 1993 with the assistance of Rotary clubs in Duluth U.S.A. and Thunder Bay, Canada, her clinic opened for business. Basic by our standards, it provides much needed medical and dental care to Yagua, and Riberenos people along this part of the river.

Coming from our highly organised and automated lives, visiting the homes of the Riverenos people is quite a contrast. St Pedro de Rio Napo is a typical village along the river. During the day the adults work in the fields they have cleared in the jungle. Seasonal flooding along the riverbank makes it suitable for growing rice and grazing water buffalo. Home is a large open platform, built on stilts and covered by a thatched roof of platted palm leaves. At the back is a small enclosed area for sleeping. Not much privacy as families share the same room. The women cook over an open fire built on an enclosed and raised bed of soil near the family living area. There is no electricity and running water is the river flowing nearby. No flush toilets no telephones and no television. A small store sold basic staples, and because it had a radio served as the meeting place for the village. The children, with their big brown eyes and shy smiles, were as curious of us as we were of them. There was a one-roomed school that had only the most basic equipment. The ACEER lab runs an "Adopt a School" Program and the money raised in more affluent countries goes towards buying books and other essentials. We learned that the village people receive little financial help from the government – but then they pay no taxes either.

Before leaving for the trip back upriver we visited a Yagua Indian village. Inside a traditional round meeting hall several men, dressed in long grass skirts and partnered by women in short red cotton skirts with grass tops, performed a slow shuffling dance. Accompanying them were two men beating on deerskin covered drums while another played a wooden flute.

Outside the tall thatched structure local handicrafts were on sale. There were skilfully carved gourds depicting various animals of the jungle, seed necklaces, as well as palm strips woven into bags and baskets or fashioned into dolls. We all tested our skills with the blow dart – the men, with more hot air had better blowing power but not much accuracy. In the hands of the Yagua hunter it looked so easy!

On the return trip to Iquitos we had a brief stop at Explorama Inn 40 km. down-stream from the town. Here with manicured lawns and paved pathways was civilisation. Rooms, with en-suite bathrooms, flush toilets and hot water for bathing.

The six of us who had not only survived but loved the Tambo experience, were unanimous in our opinion that our Spartan accommodations had been much more fun and somehow more real. By washing in cold water and using pit toilets we felt we had lived more like the local people and had gained a better understanding of their lives than we would have done in this twentieth century environment.

One final thing remained before boarding the plane – a souvenir that would epitomise our jungle experience. In a Chinese run hardware store I found the perfect thing, to remind us of our unforgettable Amazonian jungle trip, a glass bottomed kerosene lamp exactly like the ones used at Explorama. Now, when I rub it if only that genie would appear!

\*Explorama website is excellent for trip information:  
<http://www.explorama.com/exploin.htm> ❖

### **Results of Ken Park Ski Quiz**

Booby Price: Tom Pascoe

Draw Price: David Kellett

Four Ties: Kay Kittle

Wally Drew

Danielle Tardif

Denis Longuépée

Three were at the meeting and after some challenging questions, the winners were:

Kay, Denis and Wally. ❖

# Personal Information and Privacy

*By Bob St. John*

The RMRA collects personal information from applicants when they apply for membership. Some information is required: your name, address, home phone, and an emergency contact name and phone. Other information is optional: business phone and email address. With the advent of the website, the issues of how the club uses and protects this information has re-surfaced. This article reviews how we currently use this information, and the steps taken by the Association to protect the privacy of information. In particular, a new term, "Public Name" is introduced. I also offer, free of charge, my own thoughts on these topics.

## **Your Name:**

When you become a member you are required to sign the Membership Application form, which establishes a contractual relationship between you and the Association; therefore we need to know your name.

## **Your Address, Phone Numbers, and Email**

### **Address:**

This information provides one or more ways for the Association to contact you. If you want the Packrat and notices mailed to you, then the Association needs your address. If you want the Packrat and notices e-mailed to you, then the Association needs your e-mail address. The Association rarely needs to contact you by phone, but other members may wish to. The contact information you provide us is for your benefit, but it is not essential. You could use the RMRA phone line, the website, or attend Wednesday meetings to get all the information you need to fully participate in the club without providing us any contact information at all.

### **Privacy Preferences:**

You can control what information is made available to other members, both on the printed Membership List and the online Membership List located at "Members' area/Look Up a Member". Your name is displayed, but you can choose to not have your address, phone numbers, or e-mail address displayed (e-mail addresses are not put on the printed list in any event). These privacy preferences can be selected when you fill out the Membership Application form, and can be

changed online by members at "Members' area/Update Your Personal Info", or by informing the Membership Director.

## **Emergency Contact Name & Phone Number:**

We require this information, but we currently do not have an efficient method of accessing it. Unless we develop a way to use this information, we should question if we need to collect it. The trip signup sheet has space for participants to voluntarily provide an emergency contact. Another club provides membership cards on which members can put contact information. This card, if carried by members on trips, would provide emergency information where it is needed – in the field.

## **Website ([www.ramblers.ab.ca](http://www.ramblers.ab.ca)) – Members' area:**

The Association uses the website to store members' information. There are three advantages in doing this:

- 1) the site provides a convenient, centralised location that is controlled by the club – previously this information may have been stored by individual Executive members on their own computers;
- 2) the site will provide continuity over the years as Executives come and go – permanent processes to use this information (mailing lists, membership lists, etc.) are being built that will allow any Executive member to fill in for another if need be, and to make the jobs of new Executive members easier; and
- 3) the site allows individual members to conveniently change their own information online.

The Association wishes to keep members' information secure from the public, and to honour the privacy preferences of individual members. To this end, the Website Committee, with special acknowledgement to our webmaster Keith Walker, has utilised the best available technology to secure the Members' area (encryption and secure communications – see "Website Help/Website Security Measures" for more information on this subject). Members are provided a username and a password to gain access to the Members' area. Here they can change their own information, including their privacy preferences, as well as view other members' information according to preferences set by them.

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## **Website – Public area:**

The RMRA is an active club with a proud history and friendly members, and the Public area of the website should reflect this. Visitors to the site could be people looking for an outdoor club to join, or perhaps they could be past-members considering rejoining or just keeping in touch. Our public image is very much determined by how we present ourselves in the Public area. Static information about the club: who we are, what we do, how to contact us, and how to become a member is easily available. In addition, we offer our historical and current issues of the Packrat and a listing of recent trips with reports for the public to read. The Packrat and the trip reports present visitors with a more human face to our club than does the static reference material mentioned earlier. As the site is developed there will be additional information to arouse the interest of the public.

A privacy issue is how the Association uses members' information in the Public area. The Packrat and trip reports are two instances where member's names, and in some cases other information, may be mentioned. Using names makes newsletter articles and trip reports more personal and interesting. If you look at some of the historical Packrats I think you will agree that reading about who did something is often as interesting as what they did. However the Association should also be careful to respect the privacy wishes of its members. The Web committee has come up with a solution - the use of Public Names.

### **Public Name:**

You will decide how your name should appear to the public, if at all. You may choose to use your full name as you provided it to us (this is the default), any combination of names and initials, or you may choose to not have your name appear in the public domain at all. The most recent Membership Application form (rev. 16feb01) has a provision to provide your Public Name. Members can change their Public Name online by accessing "Members' area/Update Your Personal Info". For those who cannot access the website, please contact the Membership Director.

### **Important:**

**Members should act now if they wish their Public Name to be anything other than their full name**

**provided to us previously. Public Names will be used on the Public area of the website (trip reports, online Packrats), and on the printed versions of the Packrat and Membership List. Members' regular names will still be available for viewing in the secure Members' area of the website.**

### **Using Public Names:**

If you wish to use a member's name in an article for the Packrat, or in a trip report for the online "Recent Trips", you will have to do a quick check on how that person wishes their name to be used. You can easily do this by checking the printed Membership List, or by accessing the online list at "Members' area/Look Up a Member". Here you can view that member's Public Name. If it is blank, then they do not wish their name to be used. For Packrat articles you should check with that member about including them in your article, as a courtesy. This is especially important as this system is phased in over the next several months, and reflected in new Membership Lists published after March 2001.

In this article I have used Keith Walker's name. It took me about 10 seconds to look up his Public Name online. I also checked with him that I was going to use his name in this article. For trip reports I check Public Names, but I do not always check with members personally. Trip reports only last for 60 days on the site, and I usually only mention who were participants on the trip. If I were to mention someone's antics on a trip, I may check with them first.

### **Using Other Personal Information:**

You should not use another member's address, phone numbers, or email address in the Public area without their express permission to do so. Of course you are free to use your own information if you so choose. Note that the personal information of guests and minor children **is not** placed on the website database, nor is it published on the Membership List.

### **My Thoughts:**

I give you my thoughts on what information the RMRA should collect, and how it should be used. Perhaps this will stimulate other members to comment on this subject:

1. The RMRA should only require a member's name, and that's all. All contact information such as address,

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phone numbers, email address, etc., should be optional. Address information is necessary if a member wants the Packrat and notices mailed or e-mailed to them, but that is their choice. Members should use their privacy preferences to reveal only the information they wish other members to see. The right of a member's privacy should outweigh the convenience of other members to have access to that information. I think most members will want to continue to give other members one or more ways to contact them, but some may not for their own valid reasons.

2. Emergency contact information should not be collected and stored on our database. We are not using it effectively, if at all, and therefore we should not take the risk of having it misused somehow. If an emergency situation develops on a trip, the person or persons involved will either be able to provide emergency contact information directly (i.e. they are conscious), or they will not be able to provide it (i.e. they are semi-conscious or unconscious). Certainly in the latter case professional emergency personnel (police, wardens, rescue teams, hospital staff, etc.) will be involved. They have the resources to find family members of the victims, and the skills needed to properly inform them of the situation. However, we could assist these professional people if we did provide emergency contact information in the field. The current provision for an emergency contact to be provided by participants on trip sheets is probably the best way to collect and use this information. In this way the information is relatively private and secure, and available when needed – on the trip. The idea of placing emergency information on Membership cards could be considered as well, but how many members would carry them? ❖

### **REMINDER: FIRST AID FOR THE BACKCOUNTRY**

APRIL 26 - 27 (EVENING) & 28 - 29 (ALL DAY), 2001

COST: \$120 (COURSE SUBSIDY AVAILABLE UPON COMPLETION)

Three day First Aid program tailored to the outdoor enthusiast. This course covers Standard First Aid and CPR, plus one full day of wilderness type scenarios. Several Ramblers took this course last year. Space is limited; please register early to avoid disappointment. For more information or to register call Danielle Tardif at 210-2501.

## **Peakfinder – A Web-Based Encyclopaedia**

*By Dave Birrell*

With the knowledge that our members share a love of our mountain landscape and its history, I hope that many of you may be interested in a project of mine that is now available to all through the Internet. This collection of data has been assembled for my own information and pleasure and hopefully that of others.

A database of all the peaks in the Canadian Rockies between the U.S. border and 54.25 degrees latitude is the foundation of Peakfinder. For each of the 1476 mountains, the site presents basic information related to the peak's location, elevation, range, etc. as well as its naming and first ascent history. For over 500 of the mountains, additional related information is provided.

Photos of 120 or so of the mountains are currently available and more will be added soon. We need help with this and if you have a photo of a mountain or two and would like to see them as part of Peakfinder please follow the instructions on the site.

Peakfinder also includes biographies of 85 individuals who played a significant role in the history of the Canadian Rockies and who are often mentioned in the information related to individual peaks. For climbers, the introductions to the routes in Sean Dougherty's book, "Selected Alpine Climbs" have been added. There are plans in place to expand what Peakfinder has to offer in a number of ways in the near future.

Monthly features include a featured "Mountain of the Month," a mystery mountain, and a newsletter containing an esoteric list of the month, unusual mountain name, a "Guess who's honoured in the Canadian Rockies," and other articles.

Please have a look at [www.peakfinder.com](http://www.peakfinder.com). Many of our members have specialised knowledge of our Canadian Rockies. Peakfinder is a big project and any assistance and feedback is appreciated. Please email me with corrections, additional information you feel would improve the site, or comments. ❖



# Healy Pass, Red Earth Creek Traverse Feb. 24 & 25, 2001

*By Garry Denman*

The four participants Kaare Berg, Yolande De Visser, Terry Manning and Garry Denman left Calgary Saturday morning in stormy conditions. The drive to Banff was in blizzard conditions with poor visibility. Why would anyone attempt let alone want to ski over Healy pass in these conditions? But we continued. As we were picking up the permit from the parks office in Banff, blue sky appeared overhead and soon all the clouds moved out of the area leaving behind about 20cm of fresh fluffy snow.

After leaving a car at the Red Earth parking lot we started our trip from the bottom of the Sunshine gondola. The 660 meter climb to Healy Pass was made easier as three skiers had gone ahead breaking trail all the way to the top. More clouds had moved in and it was snowing as we reached the pass, "typical" was a comment made. After a brief stop at the pass, the fun was about to begin with a long downhill run to the Egypt Lake shelter. I pushed off from the top and within three meters my skis broke through the mid layer crust and into the sugar snow below. I came to a complete stop on a 30-degree slope with ski tips under the crust. "This isn't going to be that much fun after all." With dampened enthusiasm we formed a line and broke trail going downhill. After a couple of kilometres we found an old ski track buried under the fresh powder. Following this down we were soon at our destination.

The Egypt Lake Shelter is situated in a meadow on the west side of Pharoah Creek. The accommodation is very basic with plywood bunks, wooden tables and benches, a wood stove, lots of firewood outside and an axe. The cabin heated slowly so picture this, four Rambler inhabitants eating supper wearing down coats, headlamps and burning candles as the centrepiece. Ah what fun! By bedtime the temperature had finally risen to a comfortable level. Outside the sky had cleared once again, stars everywhere and cold. We loaded up the stove with wood hoping to maintain some heat during the night.

Sunday morning the cabin temperature had dropped to -4°C, not bad while in a warm sleeping bag but some one had to get up to get the fire going. The vote was three to one that fire lighting is a co-ordinator's responsibility. The temperature out side was now

between -25 and -30°C (two thermometers) brrrrrr. The 8:30 sunrise over Healy Pass was spectacular. By 9:30 our departure time, the bright sunshine, blue sky and the still crisp air created a dazzling winter display. You should have been there.

Anticipating trail breaking the nine kilometres along Pharoah Creek to the Red Earth trail we set off. Luck was on our side once again as some skiers had broke trail in to the Warden's Cabin just a short distance from our shelter the day before.

The ski out was pleasant taking just over five hours to reach the Red Earth parking lot. The temperature rose to -15°C, the sky remained clear and sunny all day. The snow cover was more than adequate with only a few ice flows to watch out for.

A wee pint and some pub fare in Canmore rounded off a fine trip indeed. ❖

## **Update to the Outdoor Activities Guide**

The March 2001 update to the Guide has either been mailed to you with this Packrat, or is available for pickup at Wednesday meetings. It consists of 5 page replacements. It is important for members to keep their Guides up-to-date as it forms part of our waiver documentation. The online version of the Guide has been updated for viewing as well.

## **Guests and Minor Children Forms**

Forms are now available, either at meetings, or online at our website, for the participation of guests or minor children. Instructions are on the forms. The website now has very detailed instructions. Phone Bob St. John at 237-0041 if you feel these instructions could be improved in any way.

## **Co-ordinators Spring Meeting**

This year's Spring Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 P.M. at Ron Hunter's place. Phone Bob St. John at 237-0041 if you would like to have items placed on the agenda, or if you wish to become a Co-ordinator.

## Grizzly Update

*By Shirley Tajcnar*

I'd been wondering about the fate of the three bears that were captured In Skogan Pass, near to Nakiska last fall following two separate mauling incidents. Curiosity and concern finally drove me to pick up the phone to see what I could find out. Dorothy-Ann tells me other members have expressed interest and would appreciate this update.

Trish Exton-Parder at the Calgary Zoo says the sow, now named Nakiska, took just a few days to integrate with a group of two females and one male. She is putting on weight and is doing as well as can be hoped in her case scenario. The male, named Skoki, was an habituated bear captured in similar circumstances to Nakiska.

The two four year old female cubs, one bigger than its mother, were radio-collared and released. They stayed together for about a week and then separated. They are presently penned up separately and are hopefully both alive. According to Area Biologist, Kananaskis Country, John Jorgensen, it is not unusual for cubs to stay with their mother for four or even five years.

Back in 1996 Bryan Benn, who was involved in the Eastern Slopes Grizzly Bear Project, spoke of a radio-collared female whose range took her close to Kananaskis Village. She was very reclusive, avoided human contact and was rarely seen. It was hoped she would teach her cubs similar behaviour. Unfortunately, she eventually tangled with man in 1999 and met her end in a self-defence hunting incident.

With the demise of this bear and the removal of the habituated Nakiska, two females have been removed from the area. Hopefully Nakiska's two radio-collared cubs will replace them, and survive and thrive.

Parks Canada, Calgary Zoo and a host of other organisations and agencies are promoting 2001 "Year of the Great Bear." Calgary Zoo is hosting a "Bear Fair" on May 5th and 6th with celebrations and educational presentations all weekend. For more information visit the website at:

<http://www.yearofthegreatbear.com> ❖

### **WARNING! WATCHOUT FOR "THE PHANTOM SKIER"**



**The Phantom Skier knows all .....  
Sees all....., hears all! (and tells all!)  
He's everywhere! He's everywhere!**

The following are quotes from conversations overheard on the Tonquin Valley trip:

- a) " Should we put our skins on now? " L.B.  
(Heard often and directed to anyone who would answer)
- b) " Do I get a hug now? " B.S. to L.B.  
(Also heard frequently)
- c) " We should be close to the hut now. It's right around here someplace. " D.M.
- d) " An historic moment in recent Ramblers history, folks. Ken's using skins! " K.P.
- e) " You brought in 16 lb of food for one Dinner? " B.S., C.C., K.P., L.B., D.M., M.N., S.G., J.Q., A.W.

# The Feasts of the Tonquin Valley Eleven / Feb. 1-5,2001

*By Ken Park*

## Day 1, Thurs. Feb. 1

Five hours of driving the Trans-Canada Highway and the majestic Icefields Parkway brought us to the trailhead just south of the Marmot Basin Ski Area access road near the Town of Jasper. The usual trailhead uncertainty prevailed as to what wax to use and the fact that the temperature was at 0°C didn't help any. Most of the group got the wax right the first time and we were finally on our journey. The 11km ski into the Edith Cavell Youth Hostel was a relentless, monotonous uphill ski on a summer access road that afforded almost no views of the surrounding peaks. We made good time, however, and including a lunch stop we took about 4 hours arriving at the hostel at about 2:30 p.m. Our group numbered 11 tired souls and that combined with another smaller group of 4 made for a very cosy, busy sleeping cabin with plenty of snoring going on that night (not me, of course!).

The kitchen cabin was spacious and featured a sofa, easy chairs and even a rocking chair in front of the fireplace stove. Propane gas lamps and cooking stoves made for a great comfy evening. Feast #1: Prepared by master chefs Gary and Kaare was a pig-out of the highest order. It started with a soup of pasta, veggies and beans followed by 2 smokies each (the size of bananas) and perogies cooked in onions with bacon and sour cream plus a large size of sauerkraut. After dinner mints/candies were given for dessert and a good thing, too, especially after the onions and sauerkraut. Those 2 guys skied in with an incredible 16 lbs. of food for just 1 meal!

There were 11 of us but 2 people did their suppers separately, so the remaining 9 broke into food groups of 2 or 3 people each resulting in each group only having to prepare supper for the others just once during the 5 day – 4 night trip.

## Day 2, Fri. Feb. 2

We headed out at about 9:30 a.m. under somewhat blustery and cloudy conditions but at least it wasn't cold and most of us didn't need to re-wax our skis. The first few hours of skiing were mostly a combo of gentle downhill or flat through a pleasant tall-tree forest. A most welcome treat considering the slog that we

endured on day one. At one point though, we had to do a short bushwhack with skis off to get by a particularly nasty ice flow across our path. By this time the wind had subsided and snowflakes were gently falling decorating our packs and clothing. Lunchtime entertainment was provided courtesy of Joan when she donned a hat reminiscent of a court jester in medieval times. The back-country paforazzi were jostling and milling around feverishly snapping pictures left, right and centre, saying "Joan over here!..." "Joan, look this way!".... "Joan, smile!"

For the remainder of the day's skiing the weather stayed co-operative. Our destination, the ACC Wates-Gibson Hut, adjacent to Outpost Lake was hidden from view high above us as we approached the general vicinity. A steep ascent was necessary on an established trail but due to recent snowfalls the switchbacks up through the trees were covered over and hard to follow. Because of this we actually went up too high and missed the hut. When we all gathered to figure out where we were and where the hut might be we broke into two groups to find it. Bob decided to try the time honoured "slash and crash" method downhill through the trees while Dave's group elected to use the scientific method. He and Kaare worked with topo map, compass and Kaare's GPS device. I chose to be a non-committed observer. I observed that Bob won. Tired and relieved we reached the hut at about 4 p.m. having put in about 15 km. Feast #2: Another sumptuous meal ensued, this time created by Bob and Lori. Thick, aromatic minestrone style soup tickled the taste buds and was followed by a main course of penne pasta mixed with chunks of chicken, broccoli and pea pods. Dessert gave us a choice of 2 different puddings followed by liberal quantities of smarties.

Playing Hearts and nodding off in front of the fireplace took up the rest of the evening.

## Day 3, Sat. Feb. 3

Another nice day temperature-wise (-8°C) greeted us but with high overcast clouds. To-day's day trip is to Amethyst Lakes, a round trip of about 15 km. It began with a decision to take a "shortcut" over Surprise Point across a boulder field on the flanks of Paragon &

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*The Author at Maccarib Pass*

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Dungeon Peaks and then some bushwhacking through the forest all with the idea of avoiding having to lose elevation and gain it again on a more established trail. To say that this adventure was “extreme bushwhacking” would be an understatement. After an hour and a half of clambering over the boulder field and crashing through the jungle, climbing over logs and such we finally broke clear of the trees and the approach to the first of the Amethyst Lakes came into view. After a much welcomed rest and snack stop we crossed the first lake without incident. After re-grouping we decided to carry on and cross the second larger lake heading toward Dixson’s Cabins (now Tonquin Valley Ski Lodge). About half way across the wind picked up violently and that combined with blowing snow must have simulated what Admiral Scott and his party must have encountered nearly every day on their expedition to the south pole in the early 1900’s. Reaching the shore near the cabins we sought to find out if the camp was open and serving tea and goodies. Luck would have it that, yes indeed, it was open and we were warmly greeted with tea and juice “on-the-house” but, alas, we were just about an hour too early to savour the cinnamon rolls that Gloria, the mother of the owners, was in the process of making. Gloria was a delightfully friendly, cheery and charming lady with pure white hair and rosy cheeks. She seemed genuinely happy to see us as they had no guests yet and had just opened for the season. The camp dog

“North” also took to us as well and, tail-wagging, made a point of visiting each one of us individually to receive a ritual petting.

Heading back, after re-crossing the lakes, about half the group chose to return via the longer trail we had so cleverly avoided earlier. It turned out we were treated to a lovely ride through fresh untracked powder snow down and down and down on a twisting, turning trail through what seemed like an enchanted forest. The price of our pleasure was having to ski an extra couple of kilometres back to the ACC Hut but all agreed it was worth the price. Meanwhile Dave, Bob and Arnold went to find a better short-cut than our morning short-cut in order to save some time and distance for our long 27 km trip out on the last day. To be fair to those who had done the short-cut over the boulder field on a previous trip in the area, they had much more snow and hence, a much more pleasurable short-cut. Feast # 3: Carmie, Ken and Dave’s turn. For appetisers it was fresh celery and carrot sticks accompanied with bread sticks, followed by Knorr tomato-basil soup. The main course was copious quantities of beef stroganoff garnished with corn and mushrooms for good measure. Dave wowed the group by serving 2 whole fresh pies that he skied in with; one apple and one cherry which he served with custard!

After dinner the deck of cards came out again but a new wrinkle developed that night. Over the laughter

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and hubbub in the hut we could hear something outside. It was Sim singing powerfully to the darkened sky with a most beautiful and lyrical voice. She obviously was happy and had a good day and was at peace with the world.

#### **Day 4, Sun. Feb. 4**

Today's goal was a modest one due to tomorrow's long trip out. Arrowhead Lake was about 5 or 6 km away but the elevation gain was a hefty 1200 ft. in the last course of kilometres. Traversing some rather long meadows along a frozen, snow-covered stream we all took our turns at trail-breaking in the deep snow. It seemed our group might have been the first party into the area this season for we could see no evidence of previous ski tracks. The trail upward at the end of the meadow proved to be quite steep and so everyone had to put on skins, even Kaare's woodies were no match for the grade. I made tongue-in-cheek club history by also having to resort to skins. My much deserved reputation for being steadfastly stubborn in refusing to use them had thus been forever vanquished. Drat!!! In the somewhat less than desirable socked-in conditions it was difficult to tell just exactly where we were in relation to the lake. We all met up for lunch on a ridge just across from a magnificent view of the blue Eremite Glacier and its well-defined terminal moraine far down in the valley below us. After lunch 4 people went on further to find Arrowhead Lake and 6 headed back hoping to have some fun telemarking down the steep slopes to the meadows. One slope in particular delighted Maria, Arnold and myself so much that we climbed up and skied down 4 or 5 times. After a few early tele-flops we figured out the snow, took pictures of each other's superb? form and had a great time. For all we knew, this might be the only tele-skiing we might have. It turned out later we realised that at our lunch break earlier we were actually over-looking Arrowhead Lake but didn't see it because of the mist that prevailed.

Upon return to the ACC Hut at about 2:30 we found that Gary, who was having a day of rest, had the hut toasty warm, had buckets of water already boiled for hot drinks and had swept and tidied-up the cabin. What a domestic kinda guy! (you'd better keep him, Jean!) A while later Dave returned from the group of 4 but Bob carried on trying to keep up to Lori and Sim.

They apparently had also returned to the hut but then decided to explore a pass in the direction of Fraser Glacier past Outpost Mountain. Feast # 4: Maria and Arnold were the chefs du jour and they warmed our innards with minestrone soup with zucchini. The main course featured beef cooked in rice enhanced with mushrooms and sweet red peppers. Not content with such a masterpiece they sated us with an additional side of carrots and green beans. Their culinary "you won't top this!" tour de force was a glass of red wine for everyone followed by a dessert of cheesecake and chocolate pie. Wow!! Gonna hafta go on a diet when I get back.

#### **Day 5, Mon. Feb. 5**

"Early to bed and early to rise" goes the old saying and so it was with the Tonquin Valley eleven. We were up and packing at 6 a.m. in order to be ready to head out when there was enough light to safely do so. The first half kilometre or so was downhill through the woods and down along a creek bed so caution was paramount if we were to finish the 27 km and over a 1000 ft. of vertical in today's journey. At least our packs would be quite a bit lighter with 5 days of food having been consumed. This day was a little cooler to start than the previous four, still not bad though, at  $-12^{\circ}\text{C}$  but it was overcast again with poor visibility and a fresh snowfall of about 10 – 15 cm. These conditions made for one of my most indelible ski memories ever. Gliding down through the forest in the fresh, fluffy untracked powder and across meadows in the quiet stillness and half-light of dawn was a breath-taking, serene and almost surreal experience. A mist hung in the air creating a world of black and white, shades of grey and dark, dark green. What a way to start the day!

After taking the shortcut trail that had been scouted out 2 days earlier, we again broke clear of the trees. This was now a time for decision or as Dave put it "the point of no return". Considering the cloudy, overcast sky, limited visibility and new snow cover, should we carry on out over Maccarib Pass? That could entail a lot of trail-breaking and route-finding not too mention possibly no views of the much fabled beauty of the pass. Should we go back the way we came in? That route would be slightly shorter, safer and mostly downhill. Add to the mix the possibility of skiing in the dark at the end of the day on the longer Maccarib Pass route and a

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real dilemma presented itself. After much passionate discussion of the pros and cons, which consumed a precious 15 to 20 minutes, it was decided to take a poll to see what each person wanted to do. Much vacillation, second guessing and advocacy of points of view followed but the results shook out at 9 for Maccarib Pass and 2 to retrace our access route. Joan, who decided to retrace, was concerned about a painful ankle due to her boot rubbing on it and Gary elected to keep her company. Nine for the pass was a good number in the event of heavy-duty trail breaking and for safety in numbers.

The crossing of Amethyst Lakes was thankfully windless this time. The overcast was beginning to dissipate but not quite enough to get complete clear views of the famous ramparts, a series of 3000 ft. high peaks and spires which rose like a fortress wall from the shore of the lakes for nearly 10 km. All during our 5 day trip we enjoyed only about a 20 minute window to view their majestic beauty. At the end of the lakes we encountered our first really deep snow as we sought the route to the pass. Each person could only break trail in the bottomless snow for about 25 metres before getting winded. A short time later we found the established trail by way of a tree that was flagged with red surveyor's tape. Previous skiers had created a good base to ski on and this saved us from many kilometres of trail breaking and skiing in the dark. By now the sky had cleared and the sun gods shone upon

us through crystal clear blue skies. Out came the sun cream and we climbed steadily on the very long ascent to the pass. The stunning scenery was mind-boggling. I used nearly a whole roll of film on this day alone. There was absolutely no wind at the top of the pass so we spent a while drinking in the 360° views around us. The remainder of the trip would be downhill so scraping off our grip wax would give us a fun ride down the other side of the pass. The rest of the trip was pure joy in the sun despite our skis icing up on Portal Creek's thin snow cover and having to cross way too many sidehill ice flows on the last few kilometres of the trail. We arrived at our shuttle cars at about 6 p.m. as dusk approached. As agreed earlier, the "nine" would meet the "two" at the Athabasca Hotel in Jasper. Gary and Joan had made it out a full 2.5 hours before us so they spent their extra time being tourists.

This was a great trip for all of us and for me particularly as I had wanted to do the Tonquin Valley ski tour for many, many years but because of its length and logistics I knew of no one who could or would go. Thank you, Dave, for all your organising and associated hassles and thank you, Maria, for supplying pictures for this article. (Mine are still in my camera!).

Dinner at the Athabasca dining room was pleasant but a bit anti-climatic. After all, how could their chefs possibly equal the previous feasts of the Tonquin Valley Eleven??



*From L. to R.: Hear No Evil, See No Evil, Speak No Evil*

## RMRA Executive Committee 2000 / 2001

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|--------------------|---|
| <b>Activities:</b> | Hiking, Backpacking, Skiing, Cycling, Climbing, Scrambling, and Mountaineering, Educational and Awareness Programs, Social Functions. |
| <b>Meetings:</b>   | Every Wednesday evening at 7:30 P.M.<br>Rosemont Community Hall, 2807 - 10 Street NW  |
| <b>Mail:</b>       | Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association<br>c/o Calgary Area Outdoor Council (CAOC)<br>1111 Memorial Drive, NW<br>Calgary, AB T2N 3E4      |
| <b>Trip Info:</b>  | 282-6308 Information Line and at Meetings   |

### Monday Evening Slide Shows

U of C, Kinesiology B-132. Starts at 7:00 P.M.

**FREE ADMISSION**

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|---------|--|-------------|--------------------------------|
| Apr. 2  | The Nahanni – River of Adventure                 | Presenter:  | Dave Hibbard                   |
| Apr. 9  | A Day in the Life of Sea Kayaking the B.C. Coast | Presenters: | Laureen Macintosh & Chad Mckay |
| Apr. 23 | Kananaskis Country – Adventure So Close to Home  | Presenter:  | Julie Walker                   |
| Apr. 30 | Canoeing the Bowron Lakes                        | Presenters: | Jarret Bell & Rob Vickers      |