



# The Packrat



August / September 2001



*Goat Traverse, AB*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2** President's Message
- 3** Calendar of Events
- 3** Mt. Logan
- 9** Highlights of Executive Meeting - June 11, 2001
- 9** August Bus Trip
- 10** Devil's Head
- 11** Treks, Teahouses and Thars
- 13** Backpacking Army Style
- 14** Riddles
- 15** Public Names Reminder
- 15** General Information Guide - Just Off The Press
- 16** RMRA Executive Committee 2000 / 2001

## Editor's Note

First, I have to start with my apologies to Rick Collier. In my last issue, I mentioned that there were two Ramblers that were part of a team climbing Mt. Logan. It should have been three since Rick is a Rambler as well. Speaking about Mt. Logan, as promised, there is a trip report with good pictures. There are also two other trip reports, one on Nepal and one closer to home, on Devil's Head.

If you are like me, you might think about it twice before complaining about the bad weather or trail conditions after you have read Wally's adventure of 1945 during the war.

Happy Hiking! ❖

## President's Message

*By D. Reimer*

What a lot of world travelling Ramblers have been doing! To name just a few - Spain, Portugal, Greece, Wales, England, Nepal, China, and, closer to home, Alaska and the Yukon. Here's hoping we get to share some of their adventures with articles and slide shows.

I hear that membership now stands at 300. Last year at the end of Sept. we had a record-breaking 314 and it looks like we'll exceed that this year. To all you 'Newies', a huge welcome and we hope you find friendships, challenges, wonderful views and satisfaction at the end of some great hikes.

Again the weather smiled on us for the annual Stampede breakfast. In spite of the glitches everything went well. The grill, booked 3 months in advance, barely managed to be delivered 10 minutes before hungry Ramblers arrived. But Garry Denman and Bill Tajcnar were already in action, doing pancakes in fry pans, on Coleman stoves, like real pros. Wally's rhubarb and the other fruit sauces were delicious and 56 Ramblers, in their Western finery, ate and talked and ate. Thanks to Marietta, Brian, the 2 Barbs, Anita, and everyone else who made this a success.

Website use and familiarity continues to grow. Now we're even getting pictures from hikes – does this mean we're going to have to be a bit more fashion conscious?

The site is also a wonderful way for our former hiking buddies to keep up with us. We have even received an e-mail from a former Rambler now living in Australia. If any of you 'old' Ramblers come back for a visit be sure to look us.

The rest of our old Manual has been published (see notice elsewhere) with those tidbits and tips re the outdoors plus information on bylaws, rules, committees. Even a little history. I note that one category missing from the history is Romance – many of the Club's couples met for the first time on Rambler hikes!

We're still looking for someone to act as liaison for environmental information. If you're interested contact someone on the executive or send us an e-mail.

The first bus trip was good fun (and a good sweat as well) and we look forward to the second one in late August. All you organisers and co-ordinators did an A-1 job. Thanks a bunch.

Enjoy the hiking. Remember, hiking does NOT stop until we put on the skis. Last year there were hikes called every single month. So don't put away your boots on Labour Day. Some of the best hikes are in the Fall. ❖



*Garry at Work!*

**Deadline for next Packrat is:  
September 12, 2001**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### 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. See page 15 for more details.

### FIRST AID COURSES OFFERED TO CASC GROUP

#### EMERGENCY FIRST AID (EFA)

OCTOBER 27, 2001

COST: \$55 (GST INCL.)

This is an 8 hour course on life threatening priorities, airway, breathing and cardiovascular emergencies, CPR for infants, children and adults. Severe bleeding, shock, and secondary survey

#### STANDARD FIRST AID (SFA)

OCTOBER 27 & 28, 2001

COST: \$85 (GST INCL.)

This 16 hour course includes all topics covered by Emergency First Aid (EFA) on the first day. Second day is a more comprehensive instruction on fractures, heat and cold injuries, poisoning, moving and transporting casualties. Short introduction to Automatic External Defibrillation (AED).

To register: call Ethne Dickinson at Oakland Educational Services at 262-3906, or email [ethne.dickinson@oesl.com](mailto:ethne.dickinson@oesl.com). Payment upon registration by cheque or credit card.

**Registration deadline: Oct 19, 2001.** When registering, please identify yourself as a member of CASC, and state course date and level desired (EFA or SFA).

Course location: Foothills College of Massage Therapy, 400 - 7330 Fisher Street S.E.

Steve Logos and Del Trewinnard have moved to BC near Vernon. They would be pleased to hear from any Ramblers when they are in the area. Please contact them ahead of time to at:

724 Upland Heights  
Coldstream, BC V1B 2X9  
Phone: (250) 549-3959  
E-mail: [trelog@home.com](mailto:trelog@home.com)

## Mt. Logan

By Bob St.John

Photos By Rick Collier

In May 2001, Arnold Westberg, Rick Collier, Bob St.John (Ramblers) and Mark Sowinski (Hostel Outdoor Group) ascended Mt Logan via the King Trench route. This article gives a report of the journey as well as a critique of the equipment and clothing we chose for the trip. Perhaps this will be useful for anyone planning to do this trip, or one of a similar nature.

### The Journey

Arnold, Rick, and I drove 2500 km from Calgary to Whitehorse via the Alaska Highway. Mark chose to fly due to work commitments. The highway is in good condition, and is paved all the way. The highlights were Stone Mountain and Muncho Lake Provincial Parks situated on the northern extension of the Rocky Mountains. These parks would be worthwhile spending more time in as the peaks and ridges there looked very accessible and inviting. We highly recommend spending a few hours soaking at Liard River Hot Springs. There are two large pools that have been for the most part left in their natural state. The remainder of the route passes through boreal forest, and while interesting at first, it can become monotonous over several days.

We picked Mark up at Whitehorse, and continued on to Kluane Lake where we were to be flown in to Mt. Logan. Andy Williams operates a charter service for climbers in Kluane National Park, flying them in two at a time in his Helio Courier single engine plane. When we arrived there were several parties ahead of us waiting for good weather. The skies cleared the next day, and we were soon on our way. The flight to King Trench base camp on the West Side of Logan takes about an hour and fifteen minutes. The cost is \$700 per person (return), and worth it for the views and experience alone. The glaciers around Logan comprise the largest glaciated area in the world outside of the Polar Regions. Here rise the tallest peaks in Canada with Logan being the highest at 5959m (19,550 feet). Flying by Logan was humbling – it is the largest mountain massif in the world. After what seemed quite a lengthy time flying by its north face, we landed at King Trench base camp located on the West Side of Logan on the Quintino-Sella glacier.

*continued on page 4*



*Hubbard Glacier From Plane*

*continued from page 3*

We were not alone at Base Camp – the Geological Survey of Canada (GSC) had a party of twelve geologists and field workers busy setting up a large camp. They had chartered a Twin Otter from Inuvik to fly in tons of supplies for their ice-drilling project. We got to know the GSC party members over the next few weeks as they were to set up camps at King Col and on the Summit Plateau. Their mission was to obtain ice cores from deep in the glaciers to help determine past changes in climate.

The King Trench is the only easy route to the summit, and under good conditions parties can ski right to the base of the summit block. There are three major sections: the King Trench to King Col, the three icefalls to the Summit Plateau, and the final push to the summit itself. The entire route is glaciated, with major hazards being crevasses, and ice or snow avalanches off surrounding peaks. There are no technical sections on the route save for the final ridge to the summit, which could require belays if icy.

The route requires an expedition style whereby supplies are ferried up from camp to camp in stages.

Typically we would sled supplies up to the next higher camp, and then return to sleep at the lower camp. This “climb high, sleep low” system helps with altitude acclimatisation. We tried to keep to the suggested average of 1000 feet of elevation gain per day. Generally we required two days of ferrying supplies followed by a third day of moving camp. At higher camps we incorporated a rest day as well. This style of ascent can be tedious with most time spent pulling heavy sleds. The fun part came when we could ski back down to camp, but this unfortunately was over in no time at all.

The King Trench is a steep sided valley about a kilometre wide that rises from Base Camp at 9000 feet to King Col at 13,500 feet. There are three steps separating two flat sections where camps can be made. The lower step is heavily crevassed; while the upper steps were mainly crevasse free at the time we ascended. Later in the season crevasses can open up here as well. The Trench is dominated by King Peak that resembles the Matterhorn or Mt Assiniboine. For the entire route we could measure our progress by

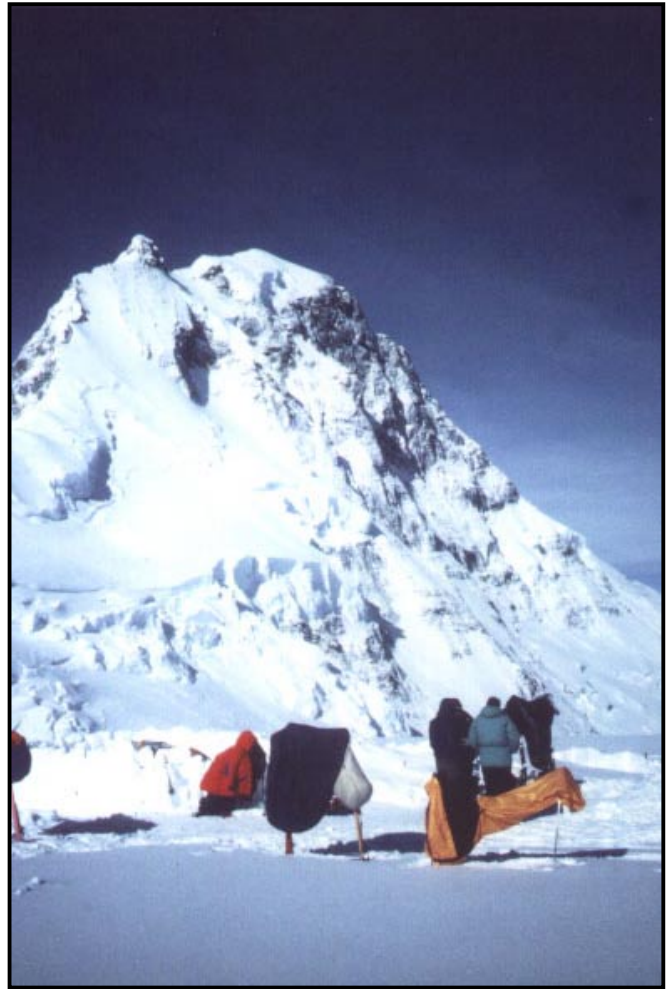
*continued on page 5*

*continued from page 4*

comparing our position with the height of King Peak. It was daunting to realise that we would be looking down on King Peak as we made our way onto the Summit Plateau. As this route is the most popular on the mountain, we were not surprised to find that most of the way was marked by wands set by previous parties. We were lucky as well to utilise abandoned camps complete with snow walls. This saved considerable time and energy as we only had to do a few repairs to sagging walls to make these camps usable.

The section from King Col to the Summit Plateau Camp at 17,000 feet went over three icefalls. The first one directly above King Col was spectacular with large leaning seracs, and is considered the crux of the route. It is steep enough to warrant kick stepping up and down, although if conditions are good it could be negotiated on skis. This section is heavily crevassed, and includes a 300-meter stretch that is threatened by icefall off Queen Peak. Parties generally rope up both ascending and descending through these hazards. There were two very large crevasses spanned by somewhat precarious snow bridges. We wondered if these bridges would last through the climbing season ending in late June. It was in this section that we experienced the effects of altitude. We all seemed to have less energy, breathing became somewhat laboured, and our appetites faded. It took us longer to break camp, and the uphill pulls seemed to take forever. Near the top of this section we were looking down on King Peak, and the views of the St. Elias Range Mountains were fantastic. In the distance the Pacific Ocean could be seen.

The third section is on the Summit Plateau. This is a relatively flat feature of 80 square kilometres on which the 8 peaks of Mt Logan lay. On the King Trench side of the route we had met several parties either ascending or descending. Here we were alone, and felt truly isolated and vulnerable to nature. At this altitude the nighttime temperature average  $-35\text{ C}$ , rising to  $-25\text{ C}$  during the day. At this time of year there is about 20 hours of daylight and 4 hours of dusk. It is possible to travel all day without the use of headlamps. We were excited to be close to our goal after 18 days of slogging and sledding. On May 26<sup>th</sup> we set off for the summit at 10:30 am. Our route would take us almost to the top of west Peak, and then down to the intervening col below



*King Peak from King Col*

the main summit. We had hoped to ski this entire distance of 10 km, but we soon encountered icy conditions requiring us to cache our skis and proceed on crampons. I do not know where the time went, but we took twice as long as we had planned. It was 10 PM when we reached the base of the summit. The weather had been fine up to then, but rather ominous lenticular clouds in the distance indicated a change was coming. To turn back would require us to retreat to our last cache in the icefalls section. It would then be several days before we could try for the summit again. We decided therefore to continue up to the summit, and arrived just before midnight. We were now quite exhausted, and in increasingly windy conditions. We had envisioned being on the summit exhilarated with tremendous views all around. Instead we saw only hints of the panorama in the dim light. It was almost anticlimactic, and we did not linger long – our thoughts

*continued on page 6*

*continued from page 5*

were on the task of getting back to camp. We were lucky the winds were not accompanied by blowing snow. As it was the next seven hours were harrowing – we could not afford the time or the energy to get off route, or to fall into a crevasse. We were all dehydrated, tired, and somewhat hypothermic. I had the misfortune of freezing my left thumb – how I do not know. I had no recollection of my hands being particularly cold, and my other fingers were fine. We arrived back at camp at 7:30 am, 21 hours after we set out. The next day was spent resting while a blizzard blew outside. My thumb would now be a concern for the remainder of the trip.

We decided to retreat off the mountain as quickly as possible. Luckily we got a good weather break, and were down at base camp in two days. We could have been down quicker, but the extra supplies we had needed to be sledged out as well. I kept my thumb warm by using chemical heat pads. It was now turning dark coloured, and looked like a typical textbook case

of frostbite. Andy flew us out after 22 days on the mountain. We were ecstatic to see green trees and be in warm spring air. The rest of the journey was spent getting back to Calgary. While we took 5 days to drive up to Whitehorse from Calgary, we returned in two long days. My thumb is now recovering nicely and should be quite normal except for sensitivity to cold -all in all a small price to pay for such an experience.

## **Critique of Gear**

### **Skis vs. Snowshoes**

The Trench route can be skied most of the way, and under good conditions can be skied to the base of the summit block. Some parties use snowshoes, however they do not benefit from the fast returns back downhill that skis provide. As well skis may be better than snowshoes to break through deep snow and bridge over crevasses. If you are a poor skier, then snowshoes offer more stability – you do not want to fall too often where hidden crevasses may be present.

*continued on page 7*



*Seracs above King Col*

*continued from page 6*

Skiers use both Telemark and Alpine Touring equipment. Choose the type that you ski best on. Snow conditions can vary from deep powder to wind scoured hardpack. Telemark skiers may have to modify any overboots to work properly in the bindings.

### **Boots, Boot Liners, and Overboots**

If using skis, then plastic boots are probably superior to leather boots. Leather boots would be difficult to keep from freezing up over the length of time needed to complete the route. The synthetic liners of plastic boots can be dried out or at least kept warm at night inside your sleeping bag. Three of us used Intuition boot liners that are made of dense foam molded to your feet and the inside of your boot. Other than some hot spots that soon went away, these liners proved to be very effective in the cold temperatures on the summit plateau. These liners can also be worn as foot warmers inside the sleeping bag. All of us had special ordered Forty Below overboots that insulate the bottom of the boots as well as the tops. The Intuition liners may have

made these overboots redundant, but they did provide added insurance against cold feet, and can be worn around camp. I wore a thin pair of polypro socks, Intuition liners, Alpine Touring plastic boots, and ordinary supergaitors. My feet were never cold.

### **Tent**

We used one 4-person Mountain Hardware Trango 4 expedition tent rather than two 2-person tents. The benefits were: a) less weight per person, b) the group was all together for discussions and cooking, c) it was warmer inside, d) less snow walls needed to be built, and e) four people could erect the tent quickly, especially in poor conditions. Some disadvantages were a) it was somewhat crowded inside with no room for packs, and b) there is no redundancy and less flexibility with one tent. A large vestibule is necessary to cook in when conditions are poor. We used snow pickets to anchor the four corners. Frozen condensation was a problem in the mornings, and a scraper (credit card) was useful to remove much of it.

*continued on page 8*



*Summit Block of Logan*

## Stoves

We had three white gas stoves: two MSR Whisperlites, and a MSR Dragonfly. While the Dragonfly put out more heat up to 14,000 feet, the Whisperlites were the only stoves that worked well at higher altitudes. We believe the difference in performance was the Whisperlites' fuel line, which passed through the flame, and thus preheated the cold gas. Fuel consumption was less than the expected 200 ml / person / day. This was due to the efficiency of one-pot meals for four.

## Sleds

We used sleds that we made from Crazy Carpets. They were good on the ascent as they slid easily, were light, and could be rolled up when not used. On descent they became awkward pigs – rolling over and hard to control. They can be managed somewhat better when two are tied together side by side, with one person steering in front, and the other braking from behind. Perhaps commercial sleds with solid rods linking the skier to the sled would be a superior choice.

## Safety Equipment – Transceivers, Rope

We took avalanche transceivers but did not use them. The headwall slope above King Col can slide, but we were roped together anyway for crevasses. The rest of the route is on lower angle slopes, however avalanches have come down King and Queen Peaks and run across the Trench. Here again, we were roped on ascent, and travelled quickly on descent (roped if in crevasse fields).

## Navigation Aids – compass, wands, GPS

We used wands extensively, both our own (150) and those of other parties. A GPS is useful as a backup, but is not accurate enough to locate a route through crevasses, and does not operate well in very cold temperatures. A GPS is useful to get a general position in a whiteout.

## Clothing

A really warm expedition parka is a necessity. Otherwise clothing worn for cold Rockies weather is suitable for Logan, including face mask, goggles, and very warm mitts.

## Satellite Phone

We debated about taking a satellite phone – was it a toy or a necessity? In the end we were glad to have had it. It provided a link to families who benefited from progress reports, and in the case of an emergency it provided the means to receive and send vital information.

## Sleeping – Bag, Overbag, VLB liner

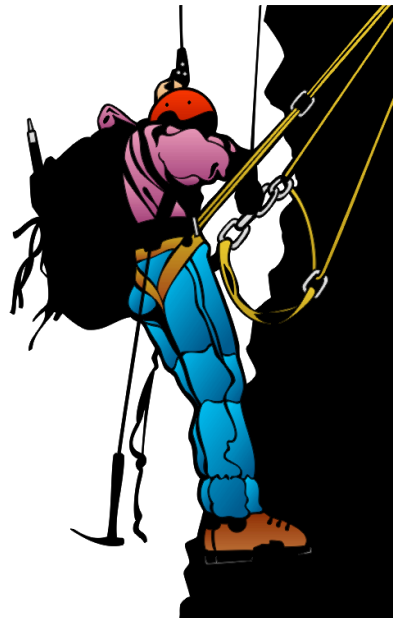
A good winter down bag (-30 to -35C) with a synthetic overbag worked well. Two found Vapour Barrier Liners useful, but perhaps overkill. We found that any moisture in the bags dried quickly in the cold morning air.

## Food

We took way too much food. All of us lost appetites with altitude, some more than others. Take food that you really like and that is easy to prepare. We found soups, and foods you can nibble on worked well, especially above 17,000 feet.

## Medical Kit

We took an extensive medical kit including an antibiotic (Cipro), Diamox to help adjustment to altitude, and an anti-inflammatory (Ibuprofen). While all of us had one or more mild symptoms of altitude sickness (headache, loss of appetite, lethargy), none of us took medications. Only after my thumb was frostbitten did I take Cipro and Ibuprofen. ❖





# Highlights of Executive Meeting - June 11, 2001

*By D. Reimer*

## Reports

Finances are good with 230 signed members. Printing for the Activities Guide remains the highest cost item.

A letter, signed by about 30 Ramblers, was sent to Hon. Gene Zwozdesky concerning the status of the Evan Thomas Recreation Area Management Plan, expressing some of their concerns and asking for information.

The Stampede breakfast will be held July 7 at the home of Marietta Portigal and Brian Westcott. Charge will be \$5. A volunteer to co-ordinate the car camp Sept 22/23 is still needed.

The Open House and Field Day were both a success though only 15 participants attended the Field Day. This suggests that either the Field Day should be cancelled or possibly done in conjunction with another club such as the Hostel Outdoor Group.

Packrat mailings remain about 55 for surface and 100 for e-mail. Packrats published after Sept 30 are being checked for Public Names, prior to being put on the website's public area.

## New Business

New guidelines were established for acknowledging persons presenting programs at meetings. They are: Outside presenters who give general interest programs (e.g. hiking books, environmental information) will be thanked officially by the club (letter or card from the Program Director). Outside presenters who have special expertise that is particularly relevant to the club (e.g. information on bears, cougars) will be offered compensation in the form of a donation to an organisation or cause of their choice. A budget of \$150 to \$300 for this will be set annually and managed by the Program Director.

Presenters of programs of an educational nature (e.g. safety, first aid) will be paid a competitive professional fee. Funding will come from the seminars & courses budget, generally set about \$300 to \$400/year. Purchase or rental of educational material (e.g. videos) will also come under this category.

Members who present general interest programs will continue to be thanked by the applause of those present.

Having a member (or 2) whom would act as environment information gatherer on behalf of the club was discussed and considered a good idea. The President will ask at the meetings for a volunteer.

Names chosen as Public Names (to protect privacy or for security) will be used on all Rambler printed material (the Membership list, the website, the Packrat) except official Club correspondence (direct mail such as for the Packrat).

The Packrat editor will act as an e-mail server for non-commercial items of specific interest to RMRA members.

The remainder of the Ramblers' Manual (with Bylaws, goals, pertinent articles and general club information) will be published shortly.

A short discussion on acknowledging injured members was held. Past policy has been to mention it at meetings (part of a trip report). Then individuals who know the injured person fairly well will often arrange to send cards. It was decided to continue this policy. ❖

## **August Bus Trip**

Sunday, August 26, 7:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Hike start location: Moraine Lake.

Possible Trip options:

- 1) Paradise Valley above road - Mount Fairview - Lake Louise : 18 km, 1000 m gain, TL 4
- 2) Sentinel Pass-Paradise Valley loop : 17 km, 707 m. gain, TL4
- 3) Sentinel Pass-Paradise Valley-Saddleback - Lake Louise: 20.2 km; 1130 m. gain, TL4
- 4) Consolation Lakes - Panorama Ridge - Taylor Lake - Taylor parking lot : about 20 km, 930 m. gain, SC6 ?.

Total cost about \$17 if we fill the bus, possible \$3 discount if you have a park pass. Cash deposits of \$10 will be taken starting August 8th meeting.

Co-ordinators interested in co-ordinating one of the options please contact Ron Hunter.

## Devil's Head

*By D. Mulligan*

On Saturday, 14 July 2001, three of us left Calgary at 6.30am in Rita's 4-wheel drive Subaru car heading for Devil's Head Mountain (MN8) in the North Ghost area. It was a fine weather day as we parked at the first ford (GR252867) at 8.30am. We left our river crossing shoes at GR228868 and started up the drainage towards the mountain. At first the going was easy (OT3) but deteriorated in the upper reaches and we made an exciting exit (SC6) to the knoll at GR217884 where we enjoyed an early lunch break. Alda had taken a minor tumble on the lower logs slightly twisting a knee. But, aided by John's photo, we traversed over rough talus to reach the mountain base under the notch (GR206896) at 2.00pm.

A cairn indicated this was the correct gully as Rita and I started the real scrambling. Soon after (70m vertical?), our gully narrowed to an over-hanging crack and face. Was this the crux pitch? If so, it was too much for us (5.9??) so we retreated only to find the adjacent gully more promising. But by now, Rita with an upset stomach had had enough, so I continued alone for what I threatened might be a 1.5 hour look. It was 3.00pm. The gully "went", jogging right near the ridge to the crux 2 metre "climbing" move overlooked by a chain secured by 2 expansion bolts. Soon up and over I continued aided by sporadic cairns and past another 2 metre (unprotected) tricky face to the summit plateau. It was 4.30pm, a bit late. In 10 minutes, I signed the register, ate an apple, had a drink, took a photo, took a leak, put on my harness and started back down. The register was newly replaced by Alan and Sim last year and had 4 entries total. They included a party with Mark Sowinski (HOGS), and Carmie (RMRA) and Frank. My entry was the first this year.

The descent over the usual loose rock went smoothly with a careful eye on the route and a short rappel of the crux. But when I arrived at the base at 6.00pm, Rita and Alda had already left (at 5.30pm) anticipating a slow descent with the bad knee. I continued at speed along the rough trail to a previously viewed ridge but no one about. We were 15 minutes apart in the same valley looking out for each other but saw no signs. So, despite the poor 40-metre contour map, I managed to side hill down around to the West Side of the cliffs

reaching the road at GR203869 at 8.00pm. It was 4km along the road to the car, which I reached at 9.30pm. No sign of the others and river shoes still hanging in the trees. I hoped they were uninjured. They hoped for the same of me.

Dusk arrived about 10.30pm and I made myself comfortable in a small cave near the car as rain threatened. Here I spent an acceptable night despite the attentions of a pika, which occasionally ran over my toque-covered head and nibbled my boots. Even at +8°C it was cool. Daylight at 5.30am, what to do? I decided to wait until about 10.00am before trying to borrow a cell phone from a nearby camper and/or walk out (8km to top of hill and hitchhike on a gravel road with no traffic). It was with much relief when Alda and Rita showed up in fine spirits at 9.30am after a similar night high on a wooded bench. They eventually exited via a West drainage complete with trail at GR197867, which is the route I now recommend. Before we stopped in Cochrane for coffee, we managed to cancel our "rescue" by the RCMP, which had been instigated by Alda's concerned husband. And so home to Calgary by noon Sunday in time to get some groceries and have an afternoon nap.

My sincere thanks and apologies to Rita and Alda who were benighted due to my summit excursion. Also to Barb, Ron and our president who were alerted by the RCMP and to Alda's husband for the worries. She had just joined the Ramblers for this trip (gave the cheque and completed waiver to me at Shouldice). New members can be assured that this is NOT a normal type of first trip or any trip for that matter. It is the first time that I have been benighted in 10 years with RMRA and many other years in the mountains. Despite all the above, I enjoyed the trip and I hope to repeat it sometime, preferably in one day.

I hope to see you all on many more "normal" trips.

Additions by Rita Polt:

Alda and I left at 5:30pm because we thought it would take Alda a long time to get down with her sore knee, and indeed Dave would probably catch up to us if he hadn't fallen off the mountain. Indeed, she walked

*continued on page 11*

*continued from page 10*

down at about half normal speed. When we gave up connecting with Dave we thought there was a good chance that valley 3, which we were in, would get us down to the North Ghost faster than climbing over the ridge to valley 4. So we descended the creek for a long way, only to find at the very end that the creek became a canyon. Lesson for others: If I had carried a map, like Dave, I would never have attempted this "short-cut" because the cliffs at the end of the valley would have been obvious. So finally we had to backtrack up the creek, replenish our water and climb up the ridge towards valley 4. Since this was all happening at a snail's pace, we got to the top at 10.00pm and could see that the way down was doable. It was getting quite dark at this point and my prescription sunglasses didn't help at all. So we found a bivouac site in some krummholz near the top of the ridge, from where we could see the lights of Calgary. At 5:30am we started out again and found a nice trail down into valley 4 from the North end of the 3-4 ridge. The rest is history. ❖

## **Treks, Teahouses and Thars**

*By Ron Mason*

Micheline and I have just completed another of our wild Asian tours, this time to China, Tibet and Nepal. Obviously I can't include all the interesting things that happened to us so I shall concentrate on Nepal just now.

We started our trip in Beijing with a hike along The Great Wall, saw The Forbidden City and Mao Tse Tung, saw the amazing Terra Cotta Warriors, cruised up the Three Gorges of the Yangtse and hiked along The Tiger Leaping Gorge. After a month of hectic travelling from Beijing to Lhasa, covering over 8000km, we flew over Mt. Everest into Kathmandu.

We were looking forward to a laid back trek in the Himalayas and that is what we got. I should mention that not only had Micheline never been trekking but less than a year ago had had a hip joint replacement. She was justifiably nervous. She needn't have been.

To start the Langtang trek a full day's bus ride - and what a ride! We weren't able to get on the earliest bus and as we set out on the second bus we encountered a long delay. We discovered that the early bus had gone over a cliff, killing nine passengers! We did, however, arrive safely at our destination safely, after a short walk up a hill too steep for a full bus-load!

On the trek we employed a guide and a porter so we travelled with just daypacks. The guide was not really necessary but he kept us entertained singing Nepali pop songs. We started up a trail leading past the local school and immediately we were surrounded by at least a dozen children, all wanting to hold our hands. One girl of about 8 read to me from her book in Nepali - then to my surprise opened another book and read to me in English. As we climbed through the forest the crowd diminished as children dropped off at their homes until we were alone again. The first day's hike was only about three hours and in fact only one day was more than four hours.

In the village where we were to stay interesting things were going on. Several women were weaving sashes of various widths and at the Gompa (Buddhist temple) there were a group of painters making fabulous images

*continued on page 12*

## **LEARN SPANISH!**

**FROM A NATIVE SPEAKER  
WITH PROFESSIONAL  
TRAINING**

**INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL  
GROUP LESSONS**

**ALL LEVELS**

**For More Information  
call Silvia @ 276-7324**

on the walls. After a comfortable night we set off - downhill! We wound our way down through barley and potato fields, losing about 300m in altitude before we reached the Langtang River. From now on it was all up! We crossed the river on a suspension bridge - can someone tell me how they get the long heavy suspension cables up there? No roads, no helicopters or skyhooks

This day turned to be our longest(9h) and we were pretty tired by the time we reached the teahouse. Our rooms were basic, stone walls and foamies to sleep on, but there was a solar heated shower, a welcome feature of most teahouses.

We got into the habit of rising at 6:00am and this meant that we usually finished at about lunchtime. This day was only about four hours but it was a beautiful hike through rhododendron forests and we got our first views of snow covered mountains. Another short day brought us to Langtang Village - a village mainly of teahouses. We were now above treeline and more magnificent mountains came into view.

Next day brought us to Kyanjin Gumpa, the high point of our trek. We had made it to 3900m with no plumbing problems, loose hip joints or AMS (Not related to PMS). It was a beautiful spot, surrounded by high mountains (when the clouds cleared) and with a dairy producing fresh yak yoghurt (yakurt?).

We spent a couple of nights here and I climbed a peak just above the village - 4340m the highest point so far. As we started our descent from Kyanjin Gumpa our eagle-eyed guide spotted about ten thar (I didn't know what they were). Soon I saw them, large brown animals appearing to be something between a goat and a deer. They were incredibly agile and they moved about on the sheer cliff.

As we travelled back down the valley we met heavy traffic coming up. Porters were carrying either 50kg bags of cement, or heavy metal gratings for a bridge under construction. Perhaps I should have waited to see how the cables came up!

The next day we saw langur monkeys on the opposite side of the gorge and we watched birds on the rocks beside the roaring river. We stayed at a small farm where they were growing corn, beans, potatoes,

squash, peppers, melons, onions and even marijuana (wild). They even had a beautiful flower garden in contrast to the relative squalor in which they lived.

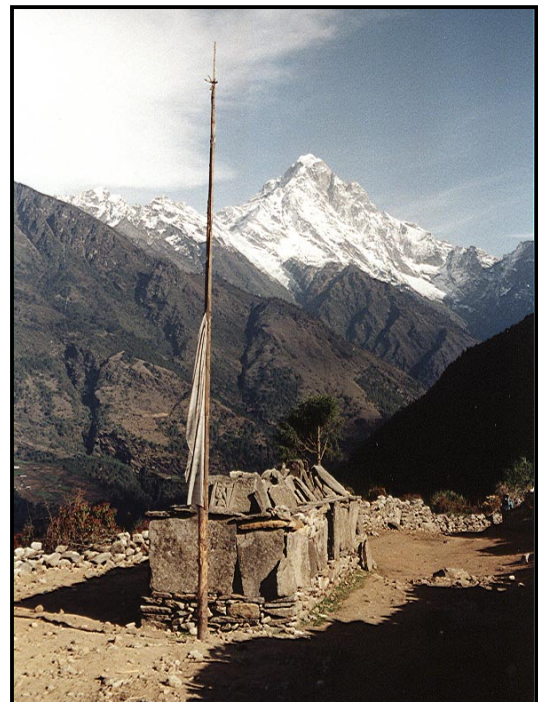
All that remained was a short walk to the road and another hair-raising ten-hour bus ride back to Kathmandu

We still had a few days to spare so we took a trip to Bhaktapur, one of the old Newar city kingdoms about 45 minutes drive from Kathmandu. This is a delightful town and is how I imagine Kathmandu would be like without traffic. The architecture is superb with a collection of temples, towers and pagodas of every shape and size. Most striking are the incredibly detailed woodcarvings on all the buildings, looking almost new after 400 years.

It was time for Micheline to leave. Because of a transport strike she had to go to the airport by rickshaw, and was lucky not to have to walk. Meanwhile I was off on further adventures.....

**Note from the editor:**

*When Danielle and I were in Nepal in 1994, on one of our Treks, we came across a group of about sixty men carrying a steel cable. They were about 2 metres apart and the cable was folded and carried over one of their shoulder. It was like a big centipede moving along the trail! ❖*



## Backpacking Army Style

*By Wally Drew*

Now at the height of the backpacking season it may be interesting to some to compare Ramblers style today with old Army style in the Philippines. In 1945, the final year of World War 2, we camped out every night for months in the jungles & coconut groves on Luzon. It could be called backpacking because we carried everything with us except some of the food and camped a different place virtually each night. At times we were re-supplied with ammunition, food and occasionally a change of clothes. We travelled light with a small muzette bag slung over one shoulder. It contained poncho, rations, basic toilet articles, repellent, Halizone, a little Red Cross writing kit and not much else. Heavier load was carried on web belt (ammo, 2 quarts of water, grenades and small shovel) or in hands (rifle). Oh yes, the bayonet was on the belt too. Additional ammo was carried in a bandoleer over a shoulder. Some times we had an additional weapon. I carried a bazooka for awhile.

We just wore pants, shirt, combat boots & steel helmet. No warm clothes or sleeping bag needed. It was hot every day and warm every night. The heavy steel helmet stayed on no matter how hot it was. We drank stream or even swamp water by putting Halizone in it. We seldom got chances to bathe or wash undies and socks. Once I never got a chance to take off boots & socks for many days and nights of heat & rain. When we finally got change of socks mine from my feet stunk so badly I put rocks in them and threw them as far as I could. As a result I ended up in a tent field hospital after the end of the campaign with jungle rot. It was cured with Penicillin. Being Infantry we travelled by foot (hiking).

Now for the camping. No tents. At the end of each day we dug rectangular foxholes with our little shovels only deep enough with the dirt piled up around the sides to protect us from flat trajectory fire: rifle, machine gun, etc. Nothing could protect from mortars, artillery, grenades or rockets. The foxholes would be arranged around a rough oval. Typically we had 3 men per foxhole. It would be big enough for 2 to lie down. The 3rd would sit up by the feet on guard. We took turns, each up for 2 shifts per night. If it rained hard the foxholes would fill with water. We put steel helmets

under our heads to keep from drowning. Getting out of the hole at night was not an option even to relieve yourself. Anyone out at night was a "J" (Jap). One of our men forgot that and was shot by one of our own. We had our rifles on us day & night. It was more important to keep it dry than our bodies.

We were pestered by flies all day & mosquitoes all night. They overlapped in the evening when we had a chance to take down our pants and relieve ourselves. The insects did take full advantage. I did get malaria and also sunstroke. One morning I awoke at dawn and felt something on my forehead. As I brushed off the finger-sized centipede it bit my forehead. It was worse than any bee sting I ever felt. One afternoon we dug in early in a coconut grove. I decided to add some luxury to our foxhole by lining the bottom with palm fronds. I picked up a branch to cut off the fronds with my bayonet. Instantly big ants on it swarmed all over me and stung like bees. I had to take off all clothes to get rid of them. I really had ants in my pants.

So, when you are backpacking and things get a little rough with weather, etc. just be glad you have tent for shelter, can leave it to relieve yourself, the mosquitoes don't carry malaria and no one is trying to kill you. ❖



*Wally Enjoying Some Pancakes!*



*Some Ramblers Enjoying The 2001 Stampede Breakfast*

## Riddles

1. A customer walked into a cigar store and gave the clerk \$5.00 for \$2.00 worth of cigars. The clerk did not have change so he took the \$5.00 next door to the drug store and changed it for five \$1's. The customer left with the cigars and \$3.00 in change. The drug store clerk came rushing into the cigar store shouting that the \$5.00 bill was counterfeit. The cigar store clerk gave him a good \$5.00 bill. How much did the cigar store clerk lose in money and cigars?

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the smallest number of ducks in a line, if there are two ducks in front of a duck, two ducks behind a duck, and a duck between two ducks?

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

3. A rope ladder 10 feet long is hanging from the deck, over the side of a ship. Each rung is one foot above the one below. If the bottom rung is resting on the surface of the water and the tide is coming in at the rate of 6 inches per hour, how long will it take for the water to cover the third rung (from the bottom)?

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

SET ASIDE A DATE FOR  
**RAMBLERS' ANNUAL CAR CAMP**  
For the Year 2001  
**HIGHWOOD GROUP CAMP**  
**SEPT 21 and 22**

Join Ramblers for our  
**2-night camp.**  
Come Fri. night and hike Saturday.  
Stay for a **sumptuous Pot Luck Supper.**

Come Sat. night and hike Sun.  
Or come Fri. night and stay both nights,  
hike one day or both days.

Lots of great hikes possible!  
Also great food!!!

Cost: \$13/unit/night, payable in advance  
(need a minimum 10 units per night)

Unit: A unit is a family, a couple, 2 people  
sharing a site, or a single in one site.

Deadline to Register: Sept 5,2001

Contact: Dorothy-Ann Reimer 225-2499



## Public Names Reminder

*By D. Reimer*

Concerned about your name being used in Rambler material? Then designate a Public Name. Public Names are used in the Packrat, the Membership list and the public area of the website.

This Name can be your first name only, your last name only, a fake name, or no name. The default is your full name.

To set up a Public Name, go into the website, call up your personal member information and insert the name you want. If you don't have Internet access, just ask one of the executive and they will gladly make the change for you. ❖

## General Information Guide - Just Off The Press

*By D. Reimer*

Last year the old Rambler Manual was split into 3 parts. The first 2 were published as the Outdoor Activities Guide and the Trips Listings (combining summer and winter trips under one cover).

Part 3, the General Information Guide, is available at last.

What's in it? Information on:

History

Goals, Bylaws, Rules

Committees of the Club

Outdoor Topics (e.g. Ticks, UV and You, Lightning)

Here's how you get your copy

1. Read it (and copy it if you want) from the web-site
2. Pick up a copy at a meeting
3. Have a friend pick up a copy at the meeting
4. If all these fail, phone and have a copy mailed out. (As it is 40 pages long, the executive hopes you don't opt for this last, as postage is expensive). ❖

## RMRA Executive Committee 2000 / 2001

President	D. Reimer	225-2499 (H)		<a href="mailto:president@ramblers.ab.ca">president@ramblers.ab.ca</a>
Vice President	Danielle Tardif	210-2501 (H)	294-6688 (W)	<a href="mailto:vicepresident@ramblers.ab.ca">vicepresident@ramblers.ab.ca</a>
Trips Director	Alistair Des Moulins	283-9943 (H)		<a href="mailto:trips@ramblers.ab.ca">trips@ramblers.ab.ca</a>
Treasurer	Ron Hunter	229-3394 (H)	319-7378 (W)	<a href="mailto:treasurer@ramblers.ab.ca">treasurer@ramblers.ab.ca</a>
Membership	J. Schneider			<a href="mailto:membership@ramblers.ab.ca">membership@ramblers.ab.ca</a>
Secretary	D. Mulligan			<a href="mailto:secretary@ramblers.ab.ca">secretary@ramblers.ab.ca</a>
Social Director	Barbara Fischer	286-0015 (H)		<a href="mailto:social@ramblers.ab.ca">social@ramblers.ab.ca</a>
Programs Director	Carl Potter	281-8040 (H)	281-9068 (W)	<a href="mailto:programs@ramblers.ab.ca">programs@ramblers.ab.ca</a>
Newsletter Editor	Denis Longu�p�e	210-2501 (H)	735-1352 (W)	<a href="mailto:packrat@ramblers.ab.ca">packrat@ramblers.ab.ca</a>

If we have your e-mail address, you will automatically receive an electronic copy of The Packrat in PDF format.

Acrobat Reader 4.0 or above is recommended for best results. If you don't have the latest version, you can

download it for free from Adobe's website at: <http://www.adobe.com> Click on



The Packrat is also available on the RMRA website at: <http://ramblers.ab.ca>

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

Printed By:



**MAIL BOXES ETC.**

**Brad Lamarche**

Box 45, 2000 Airport Road TEL: (403) 250-7001  
Calgary, Alberta T2E 6W5 FAX: (403) 250-7002

E-mail: [mbe271@servicesu.com](mailto:mbe271@servicesu.com)

An Independently Owned and Operated Franchise