

# The PackRat



Newsletter of the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association

August/September 2002



*View of Emerald Lake, photo by Keith Walker*

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The Packrat is published six times a year by the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association. We welcome comments, articles, and ideas from our members and, if content is deemed suitable, will be used as space permits. Submissions can be e-mailed to the newsletter editor at [packrat@ramblers.ab.ca](mailto:packrat@ramblers.ab.ca) or send contributions to RMRA c/o Calgary Area Outdoor Council, 1111 Memorial Drive NW, Calgary, AB T2N 3E4. Copyright 2002 by the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association.

## RMRA

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## President's Report...

By Ron Hunter

**J**ust when you think it will be a very late hiking season, a few 30 degree plus days come along to take care of the snowpack! So far, we are almost getting a repeat of last summer, bad for the farmers on the prairie, but good for outdoor activities in the mountains.

The club has been doing well for memberships. Last week, we went over 320 members which exceeds the previous high of 313 two years ago. There seems to be lots of hikes and other activities available most weeks, however if you are not finding the type of trip you like being offered, give some feedback to one of the Executives.

If you have some group management skills, are willing to take a one-day first aid course, and are reasonably competent at following trails from descriptions and maps, consider becoming a Coordinator.

The Executive meeting in June considered a few topics:

- The Incident Response Guidelines that Bob St. John had drafted were adopted, a copy is on the website. They basically cover the actions that should be taken by Coordinators, trip participants and the Executive if a serious incident occurs. Hopefully, they will never

have to be utilized.

- A set of guidelines were approved for the reporting of non-Rambler trips. The main issue is that they are clearly identified as non-Rambler trips and are reported at the meetings and on the website separately from club trips. As a service to members, non-club multi-day trips (usually out of province) may be announced by members looking for travel companions. The guidelines are available on the website or we can print off a copy for anyone who doesn't have internet access.
- A motion was passed "that members supply RMRA with their name, consisting of a first name or an initial and their last name; that members' names be used for all RMRA documents both online and hard copy, with the exception that members be given the option to substitute their first name for their name on the Public area of the website." This will avoid a lot of confusion that has come up with the "public name" previously used while ensuring that members have an option to avoid the use of their full name in any public articles.
- A motion was passed "that Coordinators be given



access to members' phone numbers and emergency contact information". In the event of an incident the Coordinator would be able to contact the appropriate party even if there was no emergency contact filled in on the trip sheet.

- A motion was passed that members be required to change their website pass-

words upon membership renewal. This is fairly basic security to help protect the privacy of the members area.

- Lastly, one idea we have been kicking around is some sort of Volunteers Appreciation event or other recognition for those who are giving time to the club such as committee volunteers,

active coordinators, etc.

If you have any ideas, let us know.

**...Happy Hiking!**



*A grouse spotted on the trail to Emerald Lake, photo by Keith Walker.*

**Quotable:**

“The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature and God. Nature brings solace in all troubles.”

**Anne Frank**

## Social Committee Report...

By Anita O'Reilly

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### Activities

Hiking, Backpacking, Skiing, Cycling, Climbing, Scrambling, and Mountaineering, Education and Awareness Programs, Social Functions

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### Meetings

Every Wednesday evening at 7:30 p.m.

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### Mail

Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association  
c/o Calgary Area Outdoor Council (CAOC)  
1111 Memorial Drive NW  
Calgary, AB T2N 3E4

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### Trip Info

282-6308 Information Line  
and at Meetings

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### Website

The Packrat is also available on the RMRA website at <http://www.ramblers.ab.ca>. If we have your email address, you will be automatically notified that an electronic copy of the Packrat is available on the website.

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It's been a busy time for the RMRA Social Committee. On June 15<sup>th</sup> three hikes ended with 25 participants meeting at Elbow Falls for a wiener roast.

July 13<sup>th</sup> was the date of our annual Stampede breakfast with 48 people participating. We would like to particularly thank Brian Westcott and Marietta Portigal for again inviting us to use their beautiful back yard and kitchen. It would have been a hot morning indeed had we not been sitting amongst mature shade trees.

A special thank you, also, to Carol and Ron Moore for the use of their truck to pick up the griddle. Many people helped to make the day go smoothly and we thank all of you who were there behind the scenes working in the kitchen, at the griddle, and transporting and setting up the equipment.

### Future Events

#### **September 20, 21 and 22**

Group Car Camping at Etherington campground. The weekend consists of two nights camping, hikes on Saturday and Sunday and a potluck dinner on Saturday night.

#### **October 25**

Annual Dinner and Dance at the Calgary Winter Club. Tickets purchased by October 9 will be \$30. After that tickets will be \$35 per person.

#### **December 18**

Christmas Potluck Dinner at the Rosemont Community Center.

Don't forget to submit your form for nominations of members in various categories to me **by October 16** [social@ramblers.ab.ca](mailto:social@ramblers.ab.ca). You can get more information from the June/July Packrat on the website.

***Wishing a happy summer and happy hiking.***

### Deadline for next PackRat

September 25, 2002



Calling all aspiring Rambler writers. Articles with photographs about hiking, backpacking, skiing and world-wide adventures are needed for future newsletters. Submissions can be emailed to the editor at [packrat@ramblers.ab.ca](mailto:packrat@ramblers.ab.ca)

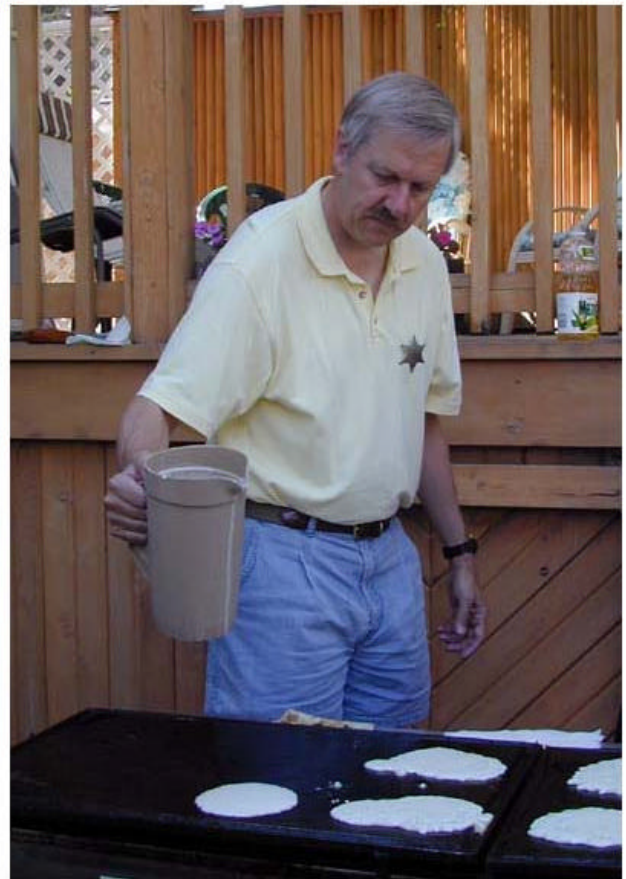


## Ramblers Enjoy Stampede Breakfast

By 9.30 a.m. Brian and Marietta's attractively landscaped back garden was filled with hungry Ramblers lining up for pancakes, sausages, fresh rhubarb from Wally's garden plus all the rest of the fixings.

Over forty ramblers and several guests gathered under a hot July sun for the annual stampede breakfast. A former Rambler, Dee O'Brien now living in B.C., was a welcome visitor. Diane Reid's cousins from New Zealand also enjoyed the event and even a recent hip replacement couldn't keep Phil Spalding away.

Anita O'Reilly's volunteers kept the food coming so a special thanks to all those hard working pancake flippers as well as to our hosts.



*Photos by Diane Lyders-Reid*

## In Memory of Ruth Kirk Thurston Honorary RMRA Life Member

On July 11, 2002, Ruth succumbed to cancer.

She was among the earliest members of the Rocky Mountain Ramblers. Even though we all knew each other quite well in the closely knit group that the club was in the early days when it was small, few suspected that she and Tom were going together. The publicity-shy couple snuck off to White Rock, BC to get married on April 1, 1961. Ruth was active in hiking, backpacking and skiing with the Ramblers.

She served on the Ramblers executive and organized fun games for club parties. An excellent gardener and cook, she enjoyed having people over for healthful meals based on her fresh vegetables. The club owned a large supply of outdoor equipment

including tents, stoves and ski racks. The equipment needed constant repair and storage.

Ruth and Tom were awarded honorary life memberships in 1968 for faithfully undertaking this task.

Ruth knew how to make do with simple things. I remember on one Skogan Pass ski tour, she had her lunch wrapped in newspaper to keep it warm. In later years, Ruth did her hiking with one of Calgary's senior groups.

Our heartfelt sympathies go out to her husband, Tom, who now must fend for himself.

A memorial service will be held in late August after their minister gets back.

*Submitted by Wally Drew*

## 21 Things Not To Forget On A Day Hike...and Why

*by Norm Zurawski*

**H**iking is an adventure. Anyone who's gone on a 5 or 10 hour day hike knows as much. While on these day long excursions, you can expect any number of things to happen. In order to better prepare for the various things that one might encounter on the trail, I have composed a list of 21 things that I always consider bringing when I go on a day hike. While I may not use very many of them, I'm usually glad I brought what I did. No, I was never a boy scout as a youth. One thing I've learned over the years is that there's an easy way to learn things and a hard way. Since I have pretty much gone for the "hard way" approach in nearly every one of these cases, I hope that I can pass some of these lessons on to you the easy way.

**1. Backpack and rain cover.** Well, this one is obvious. At least the backpack part of it is. It's fairly unlikely that you'd go hiking without a backpack. But a rain cover? Most people think that if it's raining, there's no sense in ever leaving the house. But one thing that I've found is that rainy days are the best way get accustomed to the inevitable rain you will encounter on longer hikes. Thus, you might just want to get a

### PACKRAT ADVERTISING RATES

The Club offers advertising space in **PackRat** and the following rates apply:

Quarter Page	\$10
Half Page	\$20
Full Page	\$40

Payment **MUST** be received prior to publication.

rain coat for that day hiking pack as well.

**2. Food.** In general, it's a good idea to have some food on hand when you go day hiking. Even if you only plan on going for a 2 hour hike, you never know when you're going to become interested in some side trail and end up tooling around in the woods for 5 hours. It happens. So you should always have food on hand for when your stomach begins to go on strike. I always bring along a sandwich for my lunch and some fruit for a quick energy burst, with oranges being the best candidate for that job. Also, I like to have 3 powerbars with me when I start as well as having eaten one before I began the hike. They are an invaluable source of calories and are good to have if you run across another hungry hiker on the trail with no food. And let's not forget gorp (9 out of 10 hikers agree).

**3. Boots.** Well, this one is a gimmie, right? One rule of thumb to remember when choosing those boots, however, is that every pound of boot is like adding 5 pounds to your back. It's funny how the body works like that. You put too much stress on one part of it and another complains. Books could be written on choosing your boots. Read some of them before you proceed. Of course, after having said that, there are many trails that can be hiked with a pair of sneakers. Don't go out and spend

the money on boots if you don't need to.

**4. Gaiters.** Again, this goes along with the rain cover for your day pack. If you want to get used to the rain, well, this goes without saying. What these accomplish for you is they prevent water from running down your legs and into the tops of your boots. After you spend all that time waterproofing your boots, you don't want to be foiled by forgetting to seal that big hole where your legs go in. Many hikers use these even on sunny summer days to prevent sweat and morning dew from getting into their boots.

**5. Socks (2 pair).** Socks are obvious. What isn't so obvious is what kinds of socks. Having an outer wool sock and an inner polypropylene sock combination to drain the moisture from your feet is a valuable practice that every hiker should get in the habit of doing. Your local hiking store will be able to tell you what socks are available to do the trick. My preference is a fitted sock liner as opposed to a loose fitting one and any of several types of wool socks with reinforced padding on the heel and ball of the foot for the outer shell. Bringing an additional pair of each is also something that is more than cautious, but one of those better safe than sorry situations.

**6. Liquids.** Now let's assume you use the "We don't need no stinking backpack"

method of hiking. Well that's fine. But if you do, do yourself and the park rangers a favor and bring liquids. Water is the most common to bring, but anything that "replenishes" the body will do just fine. And I'm not talking about coffee here. One of my favorite drinks is to mix about one part water with one part orange juice. This way, you have a nice constant sugar supply with each drink of water.

**7. Foot repair.** Ankle brace. Foot repair. Moleskin is the best for this. If you have Moleskin, bring it. If not, buy it. Moleskin is the best friend to the feet of the hiker. Learning to use it the right way also helps. Read the directions carefully as to understand that you have to cut a hole if a blister has already formed. This way, it allows the blister to breathe and your foot to heal better. Other foot repair items that you might want to bring along include gauze, tape, Band-Aids, Neosporin, and ace bandages, or at least something to wrap your ankle in if you happen to twist it. A million people have said it a million times, what's one more? Feet are the most important things to hiking. Once the feet go, so does the hike.

**8. An extra few pack straps.** Now this little tidbit is one that I classify as "being a friendly hiker" territory. There's really no reason to have extra straps when going on a day hike with just a small pack.

But having a few of these may save someone else's back in a pinch. More than once have I been able to help a fellow hiker by having an extra one on me. Not a necessary piece of equipment, but what's a few more ounces among friends?

**9. Rain jacket.** The rain jacket is only necessary if you know it's going to rain, right? Well sure. This is one thing I've learned from hiking over the years. Another thing I've learned is that you never know when it's going to rain. So bring it if you'll be out for a full day. Chances are, if it's sunny when you start, it'll be sunny when it rains. But you never do know.

**10. Fleece jacket.** A fleece jacket is a nice thing to have when you begin your hike in the wee hours of the nascent sunlight or you hike into the colder hours of dusk. For as much as you sweat out on a hike, there will almost always be a place and time for a jacket. Especially when it gets rainy out.

**11. Watch.** It's nice to know what time it is. Keeping an eye on how long it took to get somewhere is a good way to know how long it will take to get back. Seems pretty obvious, right? Well take it from me, things seem to slip your mind when you hike sometimes. Remember what I said about learning the hard way?

**12. Maps and compass.** Having maps is a good way to get to know the terrain you're

on in addition to giving you an indication of what is to come and what you've accomplished. Planning your day hike can be the most important way to guarantee a good day. Neglecting to do so can have adverse effects. Trust me on this one. Let's just say that 15 mile hikes shouldn't be started at 4:00 in the afternoon. But as they say, what doesn't kill you only makes you stronger. Another nice little tidbit to have is a compass to go along with your map. While not absolutely necessary if you're following a well marked trail, it never hurts to have.

**13. Knife.** A knife is a valuable thing for three reasons. A knife is an essential piece of any hiker's assembly of gear. If you pick up one of nature's own hiking sticks, a knife gives you a way to better shape it to your hands while you take a breather on the side of the trail. Finally, you never know when you're going to run into Crocodile Dundee on the trail. So having a knife can benefit you in many ways.

**14. Pen and paper.** Very few aspiring poets and writers have begun writing in nature without paper and something to write with. Don't make that mistake.

**15. String.** String is one of those things that you will always have a use for. String is the equivalent of having duct tape at home. If you don't have duct tape at home, go buy some. And while you're there, you might as well pick up

some string as well. Several years ago, when the sole of my boot fell off in the middle of a field in Pennsylvania, it was a chord of string that got me through it.

**16. Garbage bag.** This one's easy. Pack it in, pack it out. And while you're there pick up any trash that other's have left behind. If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.

**17. Rubber bands.** Rubber bands seem to be distant cousins to string in the fact that they come in handy so damn often. There's always the need to be bundling things together when you hike and there is no replacement for rubber bands. Keeping a handful strewn about the bottom of your backpack is a good way to ensure that you have some.

**18. Reading material.** This is one thing that I feel that I should mention because so many people like to prop themselves up against a tree in the middle of their hike and read. Having said that, very rarely do I bring something to read with me when I go hiking. Several years ago, when I hiked the Appalachian Trail in Pennsylvania, I brought three books with me. I may have read half of one. I was so immersed with the maps and the trail guides that I brought along, I had no desire to pick up a work of fiction. The same can be said for day hikes. Whenever I have the desire to read, I open up my map or



trail guide and read the little tidbits that it has to offer. Failing this, I just look at the trees.

**19. Aspirin.** This is a no brainer. While it may be noble to “grin and bear it,” the fact remains that when your knee starts to hurt every time you step on a rock, you want aspirin.

**20. Flashlight.** Yes indeed. No matter how much you plan, no matter how well you know your local hiking trail, or no matter how closely you keep track of time, once in a while things will sidetrack you and the sun will do it’s daily disappearing act sooner than you intended. In the event that this happens, a small flashlight will come in more handy than you could have imagined. While a flashlight is no excuse for staying out later than you should, if the problem does arise, you will be prepared.

**21. Clothes to wear back home.** Once the day is over and you stumble back to your car after six hours of hiking and sweating up a storm, it’s always a good idea to have a fresh change of clothes with you so you don’t go stinking up your car for the next two weeks. Another option is to cover your seat with a big towel. While the former is preferable, if all you have is a towel, then so be it.

One question you might ask is, “Why bother with so much crap?” Well, aside from being quite prepared while on

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the trail, it’s never going to hurt to get used to having a pack on your back while you hike.

After all, the more you like hiking, the more you’re going to want to do it for extended periods of time. And then, all those times you walked for hours with smaller weights on your back might prepare you just a little bit for what’s to come when you pack your bags to the gills for that week long trip.

Besides, the feeling you do get when something you have helps another hiker is one that carries with you for an entire day. Thinking before you go is the best way to ensure you’ll have a nice hike. As in life, it’s always the little things that make or break your time spent in the woods.



Hopefully, I’ve been able to help with a few of the little things.

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*From the wonderful locale of New Jersey, Norm Zurawski (normZurawski@yahoo.com) is a part time hiker, biker, walker, writer, and lover of things.*

## Grandkids Say the Darndest Things



*Submitted by Ken Park*

The following are quotes taken from the science exams of 11 year olds.

*“When you breathe, you inspire. When you do not breathe, you expire.”*

*“H<sub>2</sub>O is hot water and CO<sub>2</sub> is cold water.”*

**“Water is composed of two gins: Oxygen and Hydrogin. Oxygen is pure gin. Hydrogin is gin and water.”**

**“Dew is formed on leaves when the sun shines down on them and makes them perspire.”**

**“Mushrooms always grow in damp places and so they look like umbrellas.”**

**“Germinate: to become a naturalized German.”**

**“Litre: a nest of young puppies.”**

**“Momentum: what you give a person when they are going away.”**

**“Planet: a body of Earth surrounded by sky.”**

**“Rhubarb: a kind of celery gone bloodshot.”**

**“To keep milk from turning sour: keep it in the cow.”**

**“A fossil: is an extinct animal. The older it is, the more extinct it is.”**



## FRENCH TOAST MIX

Carry this mix in your pack until you have some sliced bread that is going stale, then make this easy breakfast.

Combine in gallon plastic zipper bag:

- 1/3 cup powdered egg
- 2 tbsps. dry milk powder
- 1 tsp butter buds
- 1/2 tsp. sugar
- 1/8 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp. nutmeg
- 1/8 tsp. salt

Carry separately:

4 regular-sized slices of whole wheat or other firm bread

Clarified butter or oil for frying

**At camp:** Add 1/2 cup cold water to egg mixture in bag. Seal bag, leaving about half-full of air. Bunch up the top of the bag, and shake vigorously to blend the egg mixture with the water; if there are lumps, knead the bag to smooth out.

Place two slices of bread in the bag side-by-side. Place two more slices on top of the first two. Re-seal the bag, and gently rotate the bag, separating the bread pieces to allow the egg mixture to get between the slices, until all pieces have been coated with egg mixture. Let the bag stand, turning occasionally, until the bread slices have

absorbed all of the egg mixture, about 5 minutes.

Heat frying pan or griddle over medium heat; grease with clarified butter. Cook the French toast slices until golden brown; turn and cook second side.

### Health Notes

*Submitted by Irene Willett*

The following is part of a series of articles taken from the University of California, Berkeley newsletter to inform RMRA members about nutrition, prevention and self-care.

#### **Does this fat help your brain?**

Lecithin is a special kind of fat called a phospholipid, which contains the nutrient choline. Many foods contain lecithin, but the best sources are egg yolks, liver, peanuts, wheat germ, cauliflower, milk, and soybeans. It's also added to foods such as ice cream, chocolate, and margarine to help provide texture.

What makes lecithin interesting is its choline. Our bodies use choline to maintain cell membranes, transmit nerve impulses, process cholesterol, and perform other tasks. The body makes choline, but it's now known that people have to consume some of it to stay healthy—that is, it's an "essential" nutrient.

Promoters claim that lecithin/choline supplements help prevent memory loss, Alzheimer's disease, depression, and various psychiatric disorders; lower blood cholesterol; and even cure liver disease, cancer, and AIDS. Though there are theories about how lecithin/choline may help against some of these disorders, the clinical evidence is weak or nonexistent.

Choline is essential for brain development in the fetus, and rats given prenatal choline supplements have better memory as they age than other rats. There's some evidence that humans who consume lots of choline very early in life may indeed be more intelligent and retain their mental abilities as they age. But no one knows whether consuming choline later in life has any effect.

Lecithin may help lower blood cholesterol, in part because it's composed of polyunsaturated fatty acids. But studies have yielded inconsistent results. And any such effect would be small.

Even if lecithin supplements were beneficial, those sold today contain widely variable amounts. You would have to consume enormous amounts of lecithin to get the health benefits, if any. High doses can cause nausea, bloating, and diarrhea.

You don't need supplements of lecithin or choline. A balanced diet will supply enough choline.