

Newsletter of the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association

October / November 2002

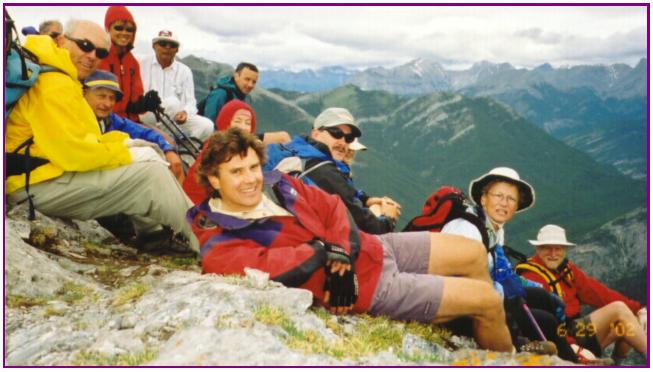


PHOTO CREDIT GARY LUZNY

A happy group of Ramblers on the summit of Mt. Baldy in July 2002

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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 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 2001- 2002 Executive

#### **President**

Ron Hunter president@ramblers.ab.ca

#### Vice President

Keith Walker vicepresident@ramblers.ab.ca

#### **Treasurer**

Doug Gossen Treasurer@ramblers.ab.ca

#### **Secretary**

D. Mulligan secretary@ramblers.ab.ca

### **Trips Director**

Bob St. John trips@ramblers.ab.ca

#### **Program Director**

Carl Potter programs@ramblers.ab.ca

### **Social Director**

Anita O'Reilly

#### Membership

Diane Lyders-Reid membership@ramblers.ab.ca

#### Newsletter Editor

Irene Willett packrat@ramblers.ab.ca

#### **Past President**

Dorothy-Ann Reimer pastpresident@ramblers.ab.ca

# President's Report...

By Ron Hunter

t seems like this summer we've had a bit of everything: quite hot in July, then I personally experienced the sight of snow on the trees at Healy Pass on the August long weekend... variety is the spice of life? Someone was telling me the Farmers Almanac is predicting a warm winter, so maybe we will be hiking into December again.

The Executive took time out in August to have a meeting and a couple of motions were passed. The first states "In recognition of the volunteer efforts on behalf of the RMRA, that the Executive, the Committee Chairs, Web Person and any member receiving special awards such as those determined by the Coordinators Council, be fully subsidized for the Annual Awards Dinner and Dance. Also that any active committee member, e.g. Social, Safety, Coordinators and any Coordinator who has taken out a trip in the past year and any other volunteer at the Executive's discretion, be given a 50% subsidy to the Annual Awards Dinner & Dance". A number of other clubs recognize their volunteers through some sort of event and the Executive felt that the Awards Dinner & Dance was an appropriate and cost effective means for the Ramblers to say thank you to the volunteers who make this club work effectively by donating their time and effort.

The other motion was to propose at the AGM that the fees for next year be reduced to \$20. Elsewhere in the PackRat is a budget which outlines that maintaining the current club size of about 340 paying members will result in a situation close to break even. We will also maintain the cash account at an historically high level, so there is a reserve if membership declined or there was an unexpected expense. There is no doubt the fees are reasonable at their current \$25 level but at this time, there does not seem to be a strong reason to collect excess funds for our non-profit organization when all our expenses look to be covered.

Which leads me to encourage you to attend the Annual General Meeting if you would like to air your views on the subject. It is also the opportunity for the members to select the new Executive for the coming year. Wally Drew is heading up the nominating committee so please get in touch with him if you would like to help him seek out candidates, or if you would be interested in an Executive position. The General Information Guide, which is available on the website in the Members Area under "Printable Forms & Documents", gives an idea of the duties involved for each of the positions.

See you on the trails!

The Packrat

# Social Committee Report...

By Anita O'Reilly

# ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER & DANCE

**Date:** October 25, 2002 **Place:** Calgary Winter C

Calgary Winter Club 4611 – 14 Street NW

**Time:** Cocktails at 6:00

Dinner at 7:00 Dance at 9:00

**Price:** \$30 per person on or

**before** October 16 \$35 **after** October 16

Please Note: "In recognition of the volunteer efforts on behalf of the RMRA: that executive, the committee chairs, web person and any member receiving special awards such as those determined by the coordinators' council be fully subsidized for the annual dinner and dance. Also that any active committee member and any coordinator who has taken out a trip in the past year and any other volunteer at the executive's discretion, be given a 50% subsidy to the annual dinner and dance."

Tickets can be purchased at the regular Wednesday evening meetings or by phoning Anita O'Reilly. Donations for door and draw prizes will be gratefully accepted. Please call Anita for pick up.

#### **CHRISTMAS POT LUCK**

Date: December 18, 2002

**Place:** Rosemont

Community Hall

**Time:** 6:00 PM

Please bring 6-8 servings of a dish of your choice, your own cutlery, plate and cup, a beverage. \$2 per person to offset costs and a food bank donation would also be appreciated. Coffee and non-alcoholic punch will be provided.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Social Committee: Linda Eastwood, Barb Mitchell, Barb Fischer and Marietta Portigal. Many others stepped in to help when needed and I extend a great big **thank you** to you as well!

### **XC Clinic**

by Dawn Jones

I will not be offering the extensive indoor clinic and outdoor lesson. Instead, this will be called as a Rambler outing. We will have an introductory lesson in town with some talk during the lesson and over a coffee somewhere. I will attempt to show/talk, about the following:

- \* Waxing
- \* Equipment
- \* XC Etiquette
- \* Clothing/Food
- \* Survival
- \* XC Technique

There will be no charge. Rent skis for this day. Remember that no-wax skis have limited use for the type of trips that you will take with Ramblers.

"Courage means being able to do what you have to do despite fear."

- Rudy Giuliani, former New York mayor

# **Gap Mountain**

by Ron Mason

#### **Activities**

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

### Meetings

Every Wednesday evening at 7:30 p.m.

#### 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

#### 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.

n my unashamed pursuit of the peaks in Alan Kane's book of scrambles, I chose my latest objective, Gap Mountain, below Highwood Pass, on the east side of the road.

Five other intrepid Ramblers joined me at the start and we left at about 9:00 in cloudy weather and slight rain. We followed a faint trail through the bushes and were soon kicking steps up the side of a shalely gully. The greyhounds gradually pulled ahead and reached the col between Elpoca and Gap Mountain about 20 minutes ahead of the slowpokes.

Here we took a break and realized the weather had improved, but it was still cloudy and not too hot. We had already climbed two-thirds of the height gain but the steep limestone face loomed above us.

Alan Kane's description of the route is somewhat intimidating, describing the crux as an "exposed traverse, crossing downsloping rock above a deep, steep gully....a fall would be deadly".

With some trepidation, we approached this faux pas not far above the col. I think we were all relieved to get across, but although exposed, it was a bit of an anticlimax. We could now be reasonably confident that we would face nothing worse, but of course, there was lots of rubble to negotiate.

At this point, 75-year old Herb decided he would like some protection so we roped together using a short (15 m) rope and spent the rest of the climb, both up and down, attached by this umbilicus. Using the rope slowed us down but gave us confidence. We arrived on the summit about 40 minutes behind the first greyhounds.

We spent a long time on the summit in the sun trying to name all the surrounding peaks: Elpoca very close, Tyrwhitt, Joffre and friends, King George, Indefatigable and other peaks round to Commonwealth, Bogart and Sparrowhawk and on to the impressive peaks of the Opal Range.

The descent was where the cohesiveness of the group appeared. Roped together, Herb and I were inevitably slower and yet all the greyhounds slowed down and clustered at every difficult step. We were a team of six and we stuck together until the last pitch before the col. I was so impressed by this behaviour—everyone ready to help if it was needed. This is the reason why I think this was my best Rambler's trip ever. Everyone, fast or slow, stayed together to protect the group. Below the col, it was a glorious scree run raising clouds of black cool dust.

A great finish to a great day with a great gang! The long expected thunderstorm broke ten minutes later. Thank you, everyone!

## The Bruce Trail with the Mountain Wanderers a.k.a. T.O.B.s

by Dorothy-Ann Reimer TOB-in-training

agerly looking forward to a week of hiking on the Bruce Peninsula section of Ontario's Bruce Trail, I bought a copy of the Bruce Trail Reference book. As I flipped through the pages, I stopped at the Preventive Health Measures sections.

Insect Bites and Sumburn – ok, I can handle that.

**Poison Ivy** - Oh, Oh! **Rattlesnakes** - Good grief!!

### Bears !!!

The next evening I listened to a CBC interview with a doctor at Owen Sound. He said, "There have been an unusually high number of snake bite cases this season." He then adds, "The anti-venin serum we use is very expensive - \$900/vial and 18 vials are used over two days of injections." Is this for real? He left us with the cheerful statement that "we only have enough for two more cases".

What to do? With fingers crossed, I took out the extra shorts and put in the long pants, changed the light boots for higher, heavier ones, and set off to join the

Mountain Wanderers for the week of August 24-30.

The Bruce Trail, over 800 km long, with an additional 300+ km of side trails, follows Southern Ontario's Niagara Escarpment. Beginning at Queenston on the Niagara River near Niagara-on-the-Lake, it traverses changing landscapes to its northern terminus at Tobermory. The Peninsula section, 158 km on the Bruce Peninsula between Georgian Bay and Lake Huron, is considered the most challenging though, by Rambler standards, the walking is quite easy.

From our base at Miller Lake, about 30 km south of Tobermory, we were well placed to sample this final Trail segment. In all we did about 65 km of the Trail, another 10 km on a side trail and a lazy 3-4 km meander day on Flowerpot Island.

Our first walk, a short one, led along the scarp above Mallory Beach Rd. where we found high humidity, intermittent views across Colpoy's Bay, and masses of poison ivy. No Massasauga Rattlers, though.

"At last the scarp lay ahead, reached via a steep steel staircase."

A bit further north for day 2 was Sydney Bay Bluffs. This starts from the popular

Cape Croker campground and follows camp roads to the beach then swings along a 900 m boardwalk built through a swampy area by Chippewas on Nawash—not exactly stressful hiking. At last the scarp lay ahead, reached via a steep steel staircase. From there it was a little up, a little down, a little up, a little down - a pattern repeated on every walk we did along the erosional surface of the limestone scarp. Again, sunshine, humidity, views, but very little poison ivy.

Day 3 was the 'must-do' section from Cyprus Lake campground (Bruce Peninsula National Park) to Tobermory and the terminus Cairn. Hot, humid, often wonderfully scenic, it took us more than 7 hours to do the 20 km. Of course, that included time for a cooling dunk in the water at Little cove.

At last, the CAIRN!
Two young fellows who'd just completed the same stretch agreed to take our pictures.
They unabashedly admitted to taking barely four hours, but then, they didn't stop for a swim.

Our day on the Barrow Bay side trail was the most satisfying. Strong winds raised waves in dramatic spray along Georgian Bay's boulder beaches. Sunny, warm but no longer humid. A delightful visit from a vividly green praying mantis, attracted by a red shirt, posing for photos, was a highlight.

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The beaches on Georgian Bay are mainly pebble or boulder and hard to walk on. By contrast, the Lake Huron side has many sandy shores, where one can wade ½ km before reaching swimming depth.

The remaining days were equally enjoyable with no bugs, lots of sunshine and low humidity, **no** Massasauga rattlers, **no** bears, and **only** the occasional Poison Ivy.

So...who are the Mountain Wanderers (a.k.a. the TOBs)? Some Ramblers know about them (one was with me on this trip) but for the rest, here's a bit of history. Nine or 10 years ago a woman in Ontario wrote a letter in Explore magazine asking if there were any other middle-aged women who would like to do some hiking. A former Rambler was one of those to reply along with one from Medicine Hat...and that was the beginning.

Today, the mail list varies between 40 and 60 names of women from all across Canada. Each year, 10 to 20 get together in a different locale to hike for one week. They have been to Lake Louise, Thunder Bay, Waterton, Newfoundland, to name a few.

And, TOBs? Early on, someone nicknamed them the Tough Old Birds and the name stuck.

# Ramblers Go On a " AA" Tour

by Anita O'Reilly

n August 2, after 8 months of planning, making reservations, creating itineraries and budgets, Barb, Peter, Carol, Linda and Anita met in Jasper and boarded the Via Rail 'Skeena' to start our **ALASKA AD-VENTURE**. A very relaxing choice of transportation to Prince Rupert enhanced by an



overnight stop offered us the opportunity to enjoy the entire train trip in daylight.

Our first day on the "blue canoe" (Alaska Marine Highway ferry) was comparable to a Caribbean cruise as the weather and views were perfect from our deck chairs. The course from Prince Rupert to Sitka took us through the exciting Wrangell Narrows. Only 300 feet wide in spots this channel challenges the captains of the ferries to change course 46 times in a 22-mile stretch. Tides are an integral factor as the ferry needs 19 feet of water to float and at low tide.

the water level may recede to as low as 24 feet. For navigational purposes the entire route is lit up like a Christmas tree at night. We enjoyed sightings of humped back whales, Dall's porpoises, and dolphins while travelling on the ferry. Interpretive programs by Tongas Forest employees informed us of the marine life, geography, and history. We were also introduced to points of interest and history prior to arrival at each

port. Our first port of call was Sitka, the capital of Alaska when it was under Russian rule. Rough seas kept us from reaching St. Lazario Island on a wildlife tour causing us to miss our only opportunity to see Puffins. The disappointment

was soon overcome by our observation of a bald eagle flying to its nest exhibiting an eaglet peering out. Seals, sea lions, Sitka deer, and a large group of sea otters playing in the kelp kept us thoroughly entertained.

From Sitka we ferried on to Skagway arriving at 9 PM. The following morning was occupied with repacking our packs, making lunches for the trail, and picking up permits and train tickets. Just after noon we arrived at the trailhead of the Chilkoot Trail. From historic Skagway we hiked this outdoor museum

for four days. A beautiful trail through rain forest led us to Canyon City campground for our first night. We were very grateful for the cooking shelters available at most campgrounds on the Chilkoot Trail.

As our second day would be an easy hike to Sheep Camp, we spent the morning walking to and around the remains of Canyon City. A feeling of time of the gold rush for which a toll was charged. We had no snow and no stairs — just a 45 degree climb up a mass of huge boulders. The trail followed the remains of metal cable from tramways used to haul supplies the prospectors were required to have in their possession by the NWMP. That first glimpse of the Canadian flag plus the amazing summit views we

gold rush building still standing in Bennett today. By the time we arrived at the White Pass and Yukon Railway station in Bennett everyone was thoroughly soaked and cold. The WP&YR narrow gauge train ride to Skagway presented a pleasant finale to this part of our trip. Peter and Barb departed the train in Fraser to continue on to Whitehorse.



PHOTO CREDIT ANITA O'REILLY

Reaching the summit and wishing the tram was functional..



PHOTO CREDIT ANITA O'REILLY

The view from the summit

"hiking with ghosts" permeates the atmosphere. Nervous Rangers with rifles shot firecrackers to discourage a bear roaming about Sheep Camp eating blueberries. Apparently he continued up the trail as we encountered him again the next day. We were up at 6 AM on day three for an early start hiking over the Chilkoot Pass. Past the "scales", a place where packers would re-weigh their loads and charge higher rates for the final climb up to the summit, we encountered the "Golden Stairs". This ascent to the summit had steps carved out of the snow at the

were gifted with rejuvenated us for the additional three hours to Happy Camp. We experienced rain all night and a cold, windy and rainy start the next morning. By noon things had improved and we enjoyed a stop at Lindeman City where we could find an abundance of artifacts.

Our final campground, Bare Loon Lake, had no shelter but was truly peaceful and beautiful complete with its resident loon. On our final day, we had the rare opportunity of seeing the inside of the historic St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, the only

Another day and a half was spent in Skagway enjoying the history, the fish and chips and the beer – then onto the ferry to Juneau. We felt very lucky to watch a mother bear catching salmon to feed her two cubs at a salmon spawning observation platform near the Mendenhall glacier. A full day tour through Stephens Passage to Tracy Arm fjord turned out to be an amazing highlight of our trip. The south Sawyer glacier practically performed for us by calving iceberg after iceberg. A mesmerizing visual and sound production!

From Juneau we continued by ferry to Petersburg, a Scandinavian fishing village and then to Wrangell in an 836 Bonanza plane. Although the flight was only 15 minutes, we viewed the LeConte Glacier and the mud flats of the Stikine River at low tide.

Our final leg on the ferry

returned us to Prince Rupert, which had no trouble living up to it's rainy reputation. Using public transportation we were able to go to the North Pacific Cannery - a fish cannery museum at Port Edward. It was well worth spending the better part of a day.

We continued our trip

home on the "Skeena". 24 days later we ran into our first and only snag of the trip when a rockslide closed the highway south of Jasper and we had to return to Calgary via Edmonton.

This was a "AAA" Amazing Alaskan Adventure for me!

PHOTO CREDIT ANITA O'REILLY



# Another Way to Go!

by Dawn Jones

ach summer when the Ramblers are out con quering new trails, I am on my bike, somewhere down below probably, speeding my bike along the highways.

Last summer, it was approximately 500 km doing the back roads of PEI. I never did share with the wonders of PEI, the ocean smells and sounds, the fields of potatoes and other vegetables, Anne of Green The Packrat

Gables, Catherine MacKinnon, a Don Messer review, a ceilagh, the wonderful B&B's and some of Canada's best golf and so much more. Oh, and visiting Wendy's old home. Such a help Wendy Stewart was in planning the PEI trip.

About this summer...the cycle trip was a 702 km journey from Calgary to Kelowna. Please read on for the positives of such a trip.

Firstly, when you ride the Trans Canada, you have a safe wide shoulder, at least it is safer than riding in Calgary or local roads. The motorists and even truckers were most courteous, seeming to recognize the existence of the cyclist as a legitimate user of the road.

Some trip data for the cyclist to consider: distance each day looked like this, kilometers are approximate.

8

103 Calgary to Canmore

80 Canmore to Lake Louise

80 Lake Louise to Golden

70 Golden to Rogers Pass

70 Rogers Pass to Revelstoke

70 Revelstoke to Sicamous

35 Sicamous to Salmon Arm

55 Salmon Arm to Vernon

55 Vernon to Kelowna

#### Other data...

\* Average speed 15-17 km p/hr

\* Weather: warm and hot, no wind

\* Dilute juice to drink, lots of it.

\* Simple carbohydrate foods.

\* Liquid meal replacement.

\* Evening meal: restaurant

\* Accommodation: motels

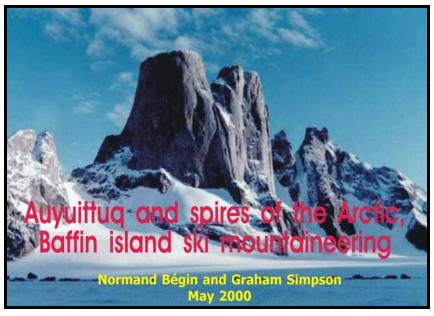
\* No flats or breakdowns.

Such a time it was! Each day was a new adventure, which began with being part of the alpine glow in the mountains and then the delight of being part of the sunrise, the breathtaking scenery, the flowers and their odors along the roadside, the many small side hikes, all the car driven people interested in such a trip being attempted even, and other cyclists wanting to share ideas. Ducks and deer.

And at the end of each day feeling exhilarated for a day well spent. And, the best was meeting my very proud daughter at the end of the trip. She, with a reporter and camera assistant, just waiting to write about the "Mom who rode from Calgary to see her daughter".

# **Upcoming Program...**

### October 30, 2002



In May 2000, Graham Simpson and Normand Bégin spent nine days skiing in the Auyuittuq National Park on the Cumberland Peninsula of Baffin Island.

They circum-navigated around granite spires on glaciers flow down from the Penny Ice Cap. With incredible weather and 24 hours of daylight, it was a special adventure to enjoy the unique freedom and remoteness offered by that area, as a gem for late spring ski mountaineering in the Arctic.

# Deadline for next PackRat November 27, 2002



Calling all aspiring Rambler writers.
Articles with photographs about hiking, backpacking, skiing and worldwide adventures are needed for future newsletters. Submissions can be emailed to the editor at packrat@ramblers.ab.ca

### **Health Notes**

submitted by Maria Nemethy

In a recent television program, Dr. Edward Fujimoto, manager of the Wellness Program at the Castle Hospital talked about how bad dioxins are for us. He said that we should not be heating our food in the microwave using plastic containers. This applies to foods that contain fat.

He said that the combination of fat, high heat and plastics releases dioxins into the food and ultimately into the cells of the body. Dioxins are carcinogens and highly toxic to the cells of our bodies. Instead, he recommends using glass, Corning Ware, or ceramic containers for heating food. You get the same results without the dioxins. So such things as TV dinners, instant meals and soups, etc., should be removed from the container and heated in something else. Paper isn't bad but you don't know what is in the paper. It is safer to use tempered glass, Corning Ware, etc.

He said we might

remember when some of the fast food restaurants moved away from the foam containers to paper. The dioxin problem is one of the reasons. Saran wrap placed over foods as they are nuked, with the high heat, actually drips poisonous toxins into the food. Use paper towel instead.

How Do Toxic Chemicals Find Residence in Your Body? These chemicals are introduced into your everyday life, in a variety of ways, depending largely on where you live. They are in the air you breathe, the food you eat, water, buildings, pesticides, and consumer products.

They are the byproducts of industrial practices such as the incineration of municipal, medical, and industrial waste; chlorine-bleaching processes for paper; pesticide production; metal smelting methods; and the manufacture of other household and industrial chemicals.

Plastics contain xenoestrogens which can have devastating effects on your body's estrogen receptors. Plastic containers, plastic food wrap, plastic soda bottles, and other plastics such as styrofoam and vinyl products, can release toxins into your food merely by the fact that the plastic has touched the food, or by microwaving in containers that have not been produced to withstand the extreme heat of a microwave oven. Never reuse butter or margarine containers, or containers that other foods such as nondairy whipped toppings come in to microwave foodsthese containers were not manu-factured to withstand the high heats of microwaving. Microwaving these containers causes a chemical breakdown and releases toxic chemicals into your food.

Of course not everyone responds the same way to each of these chemicals.

Various factors play a key role in determining who will be adversely affected, and who will suffer no consequences from exposure to chemical toxins. These factors include your age, gender, where you live, and your general state of health.

# Free X-C Ski Improvement Clinic/Tour for Trip Coordinators

Here's a great opportunity to brush up your ski technique and acquire some new knowledge and ideas. The best part is the lessons are free.

This winter the sessions are being offered specifically to coordinators as part of an effort to give back to coordinators for the great job that they do for our members.

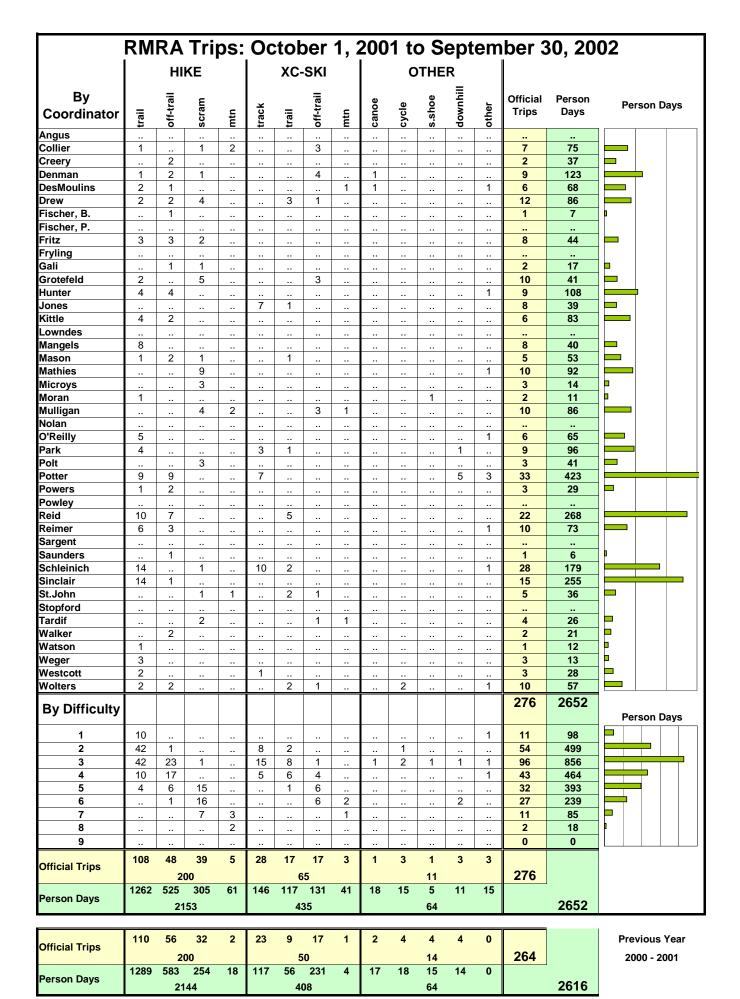
If you have areas of your ski technique you'd like to



improve, then come on out and give it a try.

The instructor will be Ken Park who has CANSI Level 2 certification and Level I National coaching credentials. Session No. 1 will be on December 7 weather and snow conditions permitting and Session No. 2 will go early in the New Year.

Call Ken 244-6809 for more information.



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