

The PackRat



Newsletter of the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association

December 2002 / January 2003

The Many Wonders of Utah

By Carl Potter

Deep canyons with plunging waterfalls and lush, exotic growth next to bare, sun baked rock, where ancient Anasazi ruins hide in deep alcoves, warmed by the sun in the winter and cooled by the shade in summer.

High peaks with distant views to the forest far below, with tundra flora and fauna which would not be out of place in the Arctic islands.

What do these disparate scenes have in common? They are both found in Utah, only a few hours of travel apart!

It is this strong contrast which makes Utah such a magical place and draws me back time and time again. Most Calgarians know a little about Utah. They may have rushed through the metropolis



of Salt Lake City on the freeway or even gone downtown to see the Mormon Temple and Tabernacle. They may have visited some of the most popular national parks like Zion and Bryce Canyon, yet most have never explored the vast wilderness which still spreads over the rest of the state.

In 2002, wanting to show some of these wonders to a Ramblers group, I found it impossible to choose one of the above scenes over the other, like the camel between two bales of hay. So, the only solution was to do them both! This decision required two separate trips, as the desert is best visited in a window of opportunity between winter, when it is too cold, and summer, when it is too hot. The high mountains cannot be visited at the same time, as their window of opportunity is high summer, when the deep

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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.

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President's Report...

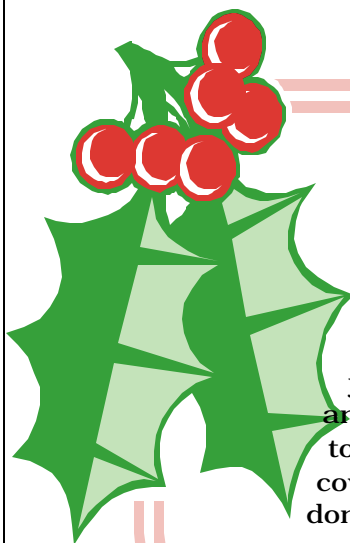
As you can see from the Executive listing on this PackRat, I will be coordinating the directors of the Club for another year. Welcome to Joyce, Bernie and Allan as new volunteers to the group.

At the Annual General Meeting, the membership decided to keep the fees at \$25 and also confirmed the Volunteer Recognition expenditure for the Awards Dinner and Dance. We have also had an Executive meeting and we have decided to go ahead with obtaining our own server for the internet site. This will improve performance and allow us to put more trips information and photos on the site and make life easier for our web maintainers.

At the meeting, we set up a couple of committees, one to look at whether we should have a sound system at Rosemont Hall (Diane Lyders-Reid) and another to plan our year 2004 activities for the Club's 50th anniversary (Anita O'Reilly). If you have ideas on either of these topics I encourage you to contact Diane and Anita.

Also, sometime soon I will be putting together a survey to get feedback from members on topics relevant to the club: trips variety, the web site, expenditure priorities, etc. Stay tuned!

Meanwhile, hope for snow for an early ski season.



**DECEMBER 18, 2002
CHRISTMAS POT LUCK
6:30 P.M.**

Please bring food contribution of six servings, your own plate, cup, cutlery and beverage. Coffee and punch to be provided. A loonie to help cover expenses and a Food Bank donation will also be appreciated.

Hope to see you all there!

from Page 1

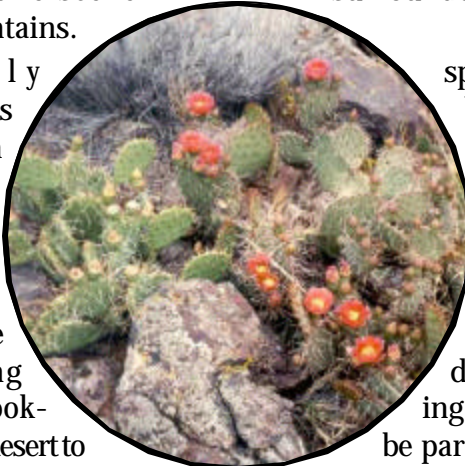
UTAH:

snows of winter are gone and fall snows have not yet come.

Thus, it came to pass that we went down twice, in two different groups of five, first in May and then again, in July.

One benefit of a Spring trip to Utah is bringing the spring season forward. Calgary's winter was dragging on endlessly, producing major snowstorms in May, and when we set out on the Victoria Day weekend, Spring still had not arrived. There were no leaves on the trees until we reached Idaho, but on our first day, taking advantage of the long daylight, we took an evening hike to a high viewpoint in Montana, where to our delight we counted numerous wildflower species, our first flowers of the year. By our second day we were enjoying what would be full summer at home, on Antelope Island in the Great Salt Lake. The salt-encrusted beach with calm lake water was an eerie scene surrounded by desert and mountains.

Normally on the desert is with bright green and flowers, but as we headed the Wasatch mountains into the Rafael Desert, we a devastating left the desert look- people expect a desert to brown with swirling dust storms. We slipped into Colorado and camped at a beautiful state park on the Colorado River at Fruita, where we enjoyed the luxury of dining at a funky steakhouse to celebrate our declared holiday Coordinator's birthday.



springtime beautiful shrubs this year, through Moun-San discovered drought had ing like what be parched and

Our first major hike was Monument Canyon, which cuts through the Incompaghre Plateau in Colorado National Monument. It was cold on top of the plateau and so windy you had to hang on to the Window Rock's viewpoint fencing for dear life. As we could actually see this natural hole from our campsite, we elected to stay down in the valley again and revisit the funky steakhouse.

This park is little known and a real gem. The park road climbs the wall of the plateau via numerous switchbacks and tunnels and is carved out of the cliffs, promising stupendous views to passengers and white knuckles to drivers. The hike was fabulous, exactly what we were dreaming of when plan-

<p>Activities Hiking, Backpacking, Skiing, Cycling, Climbing, Scrambling, and Mountaineering, Education and Awareness Programs, Social Functions</p>
<p>Meetings Every Wednesday evening at 7:30 p.m.</p>
<p>Mail Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association c/o Calgary Area Outdoor Council (CAOC) 1111 Memorial Drive NW Calgary, AB T2N 3E4</p>
<p>Trip Info 282-6308 Information Line and at Meetings</p>
<p>Website The Packrat is also available on the RMRA website at http://www.ramblers.ab.ca If we have your e-mail address, you will be automatically notified that an electronic copy of the Packrat is available on the website.</p>



Annual Awards Dinner and Dance

I would like to extend a special thanks to Barbara Fischer, Barb Mitchell, Marietta Portigal, and Linda Eastwood for the work they did in the preparation for this function as well as their support throughout the year on the Social Committee.

Bob St. John also deserves a big thank you for organizing and preparing the much sought after new 'Rammys'.

Thanks to the following individuals and businesses who donated draw and door prizes:

*Frank's Hair Design
Hallmark Store, Glenmore
Landing*

Sandra's Esthetics

Doug Gossen

Wally Drew

Ron Hunter

Yolande De Visser

Colleen Taylor

Anita O'Reilly

ning the trip. The trail switchbacks down the wall into a deep canyon, where the sheltering walls gave us a beautiful warm day. Here, we saw our first little snake and lizards as we gloried in the pink and red rock formations of fantastical shapes. Standing along in the canyon is a 700-foot high Independence Monument, where with binoculars, we vicariously thrilled with the young mountain climbers who were just bagging the summit.

The next day, we followed one of the most beautiful scenic drives imaginable through the Colorado canyon country, where you could almost count the traffic on your fingers, gradually climbing into the San Juan mountains and the ski resort town of Telluride. We were impressed by this very pleasing and pricey development that was quite lively even in this off season. It was full spring there, with lush new aspen leaves extending almost to the 10,000 foot summit of Lizard Head Pass.

We spent the next day marvelling at the Anasazi ruins, some of which were beautifully restored. We left the crowd to hike the Petroglyphs trail, where the hiker is likely to experience a tingling sense of deja vue while observing centuries old paintings on the pink walls, surrounded by the sights, sound and smells of the canyon. Little changed from the time the natives made the rock art. The park campsite was on top of the plateau and very cold, a sharp contrast with the mild conditions in the canyons.

Our next stop was Hovenweep National Monument, a very little visited park in Utah near the four corners. Despite the fact it was the Memorial Day long weekend, there was hardly anyone there. Our campsite was right on the edge of the small canyon which contains numerous Anasazi ruins, complete with view of mountain landmarks Sleeping Ute in Colorado and Ship Rock in New Mexico. Many have described Hovenweep as "the most spiritual place I have ever been," and we all agreed.

We could not possibly muster enough superlatives to describe our next two hikes. The circle through White Canyon and Armstrong Canyon and the three bridges of Natural Bridges National Monument was astounding, including fantastic slick rock canyons, wooden ladders down the cliffs, ponds reflecting the lush green cottonwoods and pink rock walls, Anasazi ruins and the three stupendous bridges and sightings of snake tracks in the sandy trail. The hike through Kane Gulch into Grand Bulch was again one of stunning beauty and contrast including an aspen stranded far below the high plateaus above, a remnant of the ice age and Anasazi ruins left with many artifacts and tools laying around for us to

enjoy. How few places are there so remote and special that those who enter can be trusted not to pillage these treasures?

Finally, we began our five-day backpack to the Dark Canyon. It is often described as Utah's wildest and deepest canyon. Wild it was, and beautiful beyond words. Starting high on the Elk Ridge plateau amid aspen and Douglas fir, we slowly dropped deeper and deeper into the bowels of the earth. At the first camp, at the Ponderosa pine level, the reality of desert backpacking really struck home. The only three people we met were retreating. One girl had to abandon her trip due to stove failure, and two men were down checking on water supply for an upcoming trip. We had to hike a mile up Cherry Canyon to draw a bucket of water from a shallow, scummy pond. After vigorous boiling and filtering, the water still resembled a urine sample, so we cooked with it and used the water we carried in for drinking. We had pared down our weight in other areas to carry four or five litres of water each. We knew the area has bears so we hung our food.

The next morning we followed fresh bear tracks in the sand for a mile. That night we had a dripping spring for water, and sent one of our the best scrambler up the cliff to collect it. A large party of 10 came through in the night, lost souls who had attempted to go down the canyon and were utterly defeated by a long dry stretch. Trusting our large water supply, we carried on. At this altitude it was really heating up, and we started to adjust to the desert, taking a long siesta in the scanty shade of a juniper. At the end of a very long hike the long anticipated running stream of lower Dark Canyon appeared, suddenly adding a lush, Vietnam-like jungle of willow and tamarisk, a Middle Eastern import that has taken over the Southwest. From here we had the constant sound of the running stream in addition to the braying sound of frogs. Daytime temperatures were now 35°, with warm nights only dropping to 25°. We practiced summer desert survival, frequently swimming in deep water holes and playing on rock water slides. Hiking after total immersion in all your clothes keeps your body temperature in a reasonable range. (Don't try this in the Rockies!)

Our camp at Young's Canyon, with its 20m waterfall plunging into Dark Canyon, has to be the most beautiful and magical campsite I have ever experienced. On our last day, we had to leave the ideal surroundings of the canyon floor to hike up to the plateau via a 30-degree slope of huge boulders and sand, with the temperature heading for 42°. With our water almost gone, what a welcome sight to see Joyce carrying water under her umbrella and informing us she had a cooler full of drinks and lunch at the trailhead!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**A multi-media
presentation
on Utah
will be made
at the regular
Wednesday night
meeting
February 5, 2003
with Carl Potter
and two of the
participants
who were on
the RMRA
backpacking and
hiking trips
in 2002.**



Quotable:

*“Duct tape is like
the Force.
It has a light
side and a dark
side, and it
holds the
universe
together”.*

Source Unknown

Come July, another group of five headed for the High Uintas Wilderness for another five-day backpack. We started off from the trailhead at 9,000 feet elevation, and spent the entire time above 11,000 feet. At this elevation, it is hard to keep in mind that this is actually Utah. It could just as well be Yukon, as the scenery is alpine and subalpine. The continued drought forced us to change our planned circle trip to a partially different circle, as a massive forest fire had closed the area of our planned trailhead. In fact, a small fire was extinguished near our cars during the hike.

The route we took was probably better anyway, as the descent route gave us superb views back to King’s Peak, highest in Utah at 13,500 feet and our top destination. On the way up we actually saw a moose grazing in a moose meadow, and surprised some deer that bounded from behind boulders. After many years of hiking in the Rockies, I still love the thrill of hiking long distances through absolutely new territory, and standing atop a lofty summit with views stretching to the horizon for 360°, all totally new and not a sign of the hand of man (alas, except the ubiquitous contrails in the sky). Thus, the attraction to hike in mountains which are like the Rockies, but not the Rockies.

Our first campsite was beside a mirror of a pond beautifully reflecting the Red Castle, where we gazed at the moon and talked into the night. Our next two nights were spent at 11,500 feet at the base of King’s Peak, far above the treeline on a sparkling stream through the tundra. From the literature, we were expecting daily thunderstorms and mosquitoes. Luckily the bugs were only in the valley on the first day, but the storms were indeed regular. We bagged the peak early in the day and spent the next few hours resting in our tents while the thunder echoed off the cliffs and the rain poured. It rained at some point every day, until, of course the day we left, when it was clear for a change. Our last camp was at Henry’s Fork Lake, a gorgeous treeline site.

We ate like kings on these trips, or at least so it seemed. It was basically a Ramblers Pot Luck every day, with every participant adding his or her own culinary touch.

To round out the trip, some of us climbed Bald Mountain and Mount Nebo, both just under 12,000 feet with wonderful views, and drove some more national forest Scenic Byways.

Back home in Calgary, of course, the first thing on my mind was...planning my next trip to the Southwest.

Website Issues

By Bob St.John

Trip Reports

All members can now submit trip reports to the website. Use the 'Submit a Trip Report' facility in the Members' area to submit a new report, and the 'Edit a Trip Report' facility to make changes to an existing report, or to delete it. In addition to the report, you may need to supply the number of participants on the trip. You are encouraged to read the online 'Help: Submit a Trip Report' if you are new to this procedure. Coordinators may still wish to submit their own reports, but they now have the option of asking a volunteer to do so in the same way a volunteer is asked to present a report at meetings.

An important aspect in writing reports is to respect the privacy preferences of members in how their name is presented if you choose to mention them. Some members wish only their first names used. This is indicated on both the printed and the online membership list. If in doubt use their first name only. No other personal information such as phone numbers, addresses, etc. should be mentioned without the express consent of that member.

Photos can enhance a report's appeal to a great extent. At the moment there are two options for storing photos:

- 1) on your own website, or
- 2) on the RMRA site.

Currently, only Keith and I have the ability to upload your photos to the RMRA site – email them to one of us and we can generally get them up in a day or two. It is on our wish list to improve this procedure in the future. Getting our own server is one step in attaining that goal.

RMRA Server

The Executive approved a plan to host the RMRA site on our own server. The advantages of this are:

- ◆ Faster database response – Telus at times has been dog-slow.
- ◆ Virtually unlimited and inexpensive storage for Packrats and photos, etc.
- ◆ Proprietary applications – we will have control over installing applications we wish to use.

Our plan is to have our server up sometime in December.

Erroneous Personal Information

Whenever members change phone numbers, addresses, or email addresses it would help if they reflected this on the website by using the 'Update Your Personal Info' facility. In particular about 20% of all members' email addresses are rejected either from typo errors or from being out-of-date. This creates **considerable** extra work for those volunteers responsible for the occasional batch emails made to members from time to time. Please check your online information and correct any errors. Thanks.

The Packrat

The Senility Prayer

Grant me
the senility to forget
the people
I never liked
anyway, the good
fortune to run
into the ones I do,
and the eyesight
to tell the
difference.



Don't forget to
renew your mem-
bership before year
end. The expiry
date is November
30. The membership
fee for 2002-2003
is \$25.

A Survival Kit for Every Day Living

Items needed:

- 1) Toothpick
- 2) Rubber Band
- 3) Band Aid
- 4) Pencil
- 5) Eraser
- 6) Chewing Gum
- 7) Mint
- 8) Candy Kiss
- 9) Tea Bag

WHY???

TOOTH PICK: to remind you to pick out the good qualities in others.

RUBBER BAND: to remind you to be flexible; things might not always go the way you want, but it will work out.

BAND AID: to remind you to heal hurt feelings, yours or someone else's.

PENCIL: to remind you to list your blessings everyday.

ERASER: to remind you that everyone makes mistakes and that's OK.

CHEWING GUM: to remind you to stick with it and you can accomplish anything.

MINT: to remind you that you are worth a mint.

CANDY KISS: to remind you that everyone needs a kiss or a hug everyday.

TEA BAG: to remind you to relax daily and reflect on all the positive things in your life. A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one.

RMRA Honours a Rambler

By John Schleinich

On Wednesday, October 29, 2002 the Ramblers gave me a plaque in recognition for leading a great number of trips during the past fiscal year. It wasn't just an ordinary plaque giving statistics of my trips. The club thanked me for an "outstanding" outdoors' performance during that year. Well one could debate the accuracy of this statement, but I liked it. As a matter of fact I like it quite a bit. Years from now when all the dust has steeled (mainly over me), my Grandchildren will read it and say: in 2001 and 2002 our Grandfather was 78 years old and if he performed at an old age outstanding outdoors work for a prestigious club such as the Ramblers, what did he accomplish in his younger years.

You'll probably have the impression, reading the last paragraph, that I am an inflated, selfish braggart. That is not quite so. Basically, I am fairly humble and shy away from any type of praise or publicity, but I was touched and surprised by such Rambler's recognition. For me this plaque was much more significant than any reward I could have bought myself, if so desired. The recognition of the Executive and the Coordinators cannot be bought, nor did any unwilling member have to donate their membership fee toward my gift. In fact, I received much more than I actually donated.

Never have I led a trip I didn't want to go on myself. In my "gang-ho" years I didn't always call a trip for the company of a nice bunch of people, but very often because I needed help on either difficult, or to me, new trips. Now, however, I call my trips most often because there is nothing else on the board I am able to go on and don't want to go by myself.

In my advanced years, I am not front-page material any longer but even now drifting back (towards the obituaries), I still like the outdoors. Now I have to look up to see the peaks. Fortunately in my observations and life-experiences, I came to a realization that the high mountains are not the crown of God's creation, it is the human being. I need the company of good people more than climbing up high. And, that is exactly what the Ramblers have been giving me in the past and still are. Since I received so much, I can give too.

The recognition plaque was not necessary but greatly appreciated. Thank you all, thank you very much.

Hiking & Scrambling in the Austrian Alps

Advertisement by Helmut Microys

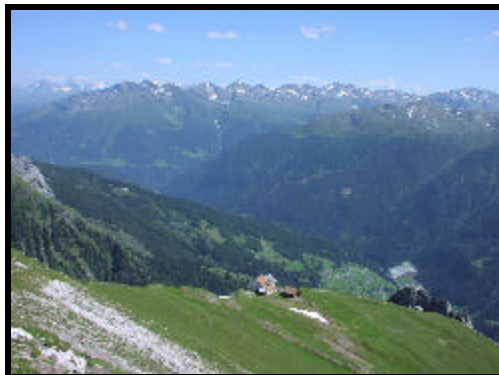
There are two trips offered in 2003 for the keen hiker/scrambler mountain connoisseur, great scenery, light packs, cozy places to stay and excellent food and drink.

The first is the ever-popular round trip through the Allgäuer Alps from July 6th to July 20th, 2003. The outing starts and ends in Oberstdorf, Germany, just at the entrance into the Austrian Kleine Walsertal (Little Walser Valley).

The second is a repeat of the traverse of the Lechtaler Alps, a complete mountain range (they are a little smaller than in the US), from July 20th to August 3rd, 2003. This trip starts and ends in Feldkirch, Austria, an ancient little town, just across from Liechtenstein.

The mountains in these areas are of medium height, offer numerous trails and a conveniently located hut system. Many of the peaks can be reached by trails or by relatively easy scrambles. At this time of the year, there will be an abundance of wildflowers and the huts (except for sunny weekends) are generally not crowded.

The cost for each of the two-week trip is CAD 2,400 including all expenses, transportation by train, bus and cable car, transportation from/to Zürich airport, to/from Oberstdorf or Feldkirch, all meals, all stays at hotels, inns and huts. It also includes membership in the Austrian Alpine Club, which provides liability and rescue insurance as well as emergency transportation back to Canada, should it be required. Not included are airfare, personal equipment, cancellation insurance, alcoholic beverages and soft drinks. A physician will accompany the group. All you have to do is show up at the Zürich airport, and we take care of the rest.



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PACKRAT ADVERTISING RATES

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

Quarter Page \$10

Half Page \$20

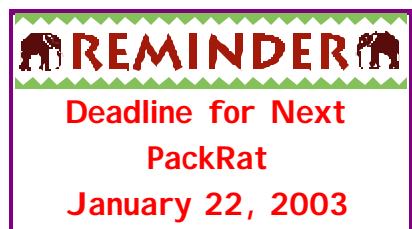
Full Page \$40

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

***Do YOU have
something
to SELL
or are you looking
to BUY?***

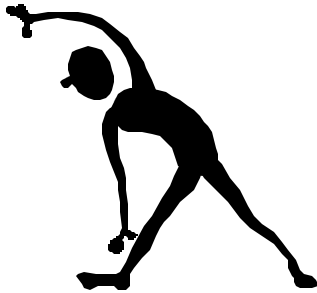
***Then place your
free AD in the next
PackRat issue.***

***E-mail the
newsletter editor
at
packrat@ramblers.ab.ca***



Health Notes

Submitted by Dawn Jones



A. STRETCHING IS STILL an important part of your fitness routine. The controversies over whether stretching should be done, if it is still to be done, what type and when it should be done, have been going on for years. Some studies do not agree, but the majority have shown that dynamic or moving stretches are best done at the beginning of an athletic event, or indeed may not be necessary if one wishes to use a slow version of the activity being done, and this slow activity carried out for ten minutes or so.

However, at the end of the athletic event, held (static) stretches, such as I showed you last year after a meeting, still are very important to minimize discomfort after any event. Using stretches, of the held or static variety are still part of a daily fitness routine, for the flexibility and other health benefits given.



B. LATELY THERE HAS been some Press given to a product called acrylamide. It is found naturally in many foods, and has a use in laboratories. It is a very dangerous substance, a carcinogen, so dangerous that the WHO (World Health Organization) has seen fit to put out warnings about it. The warnings took the form of “stay away from baked products and those fried”. This has resulted in some people giving up bread, muffins, rolls, cereals, etc. Acrylamide levels are increased when carbohydrate products are prepared at high temperatures such as deep fat frying. The bottom line is that one needs to avoid only those foods that are deep fat fried, crispy cereals, crisp snack foods. The latest warning that came out in a scientific journal specifically warned that one must not avoid whole grain bread, cereals and other products. There will be much more said about this in the future and more research done. I will watch for this information in the science journals and pass it on.



C. A TREND HAS BEGUN in the lite or low calorie food industry to sweeten with mannitol, malitol and sorbitol. Read labels. It is not unusual for these substances, especially when found together or taken in large amounts to give gas, cramps, diarrhea.