



The Pack Rat

Newsletter of the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association Oct/Nov 2004



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President's Report...

The Annual General meeting is fast approaching on October 20 so mark it on your calendar to attend so we can meet our requirement of a quorum of fifty. All Executive positions are elected annually and a few of the Executive are stepping down so this is your opportunity to help run the Ramblers. Wally Drew is heading the nomination committee so contact him if you would like to run or you can suggest someone who would make a good candidate. Wally could also use some help running the committee. As mentioned in the last PackRat, we will be trying to have more of a team approach for some positions so we would like to set up some helper groups to share the workload.

Related to that, we had a successful Volunteer Appreciation night on September 22nd with pizza and salad for those who took out trips or served on committees. Kudos to Shirley for organizing our thank you to all those whose efforts helped

contribute to another successful year, particularly with all the special events related to the 50th anniversary.

The Coordinators had a meeting in early September with lots of good discussion about incident reporting and, as usual, group management. It was great to see the statistics for all the trips that have gone out despite less than ideal summer weather. Also, we got to see some more coordinators complete their probationary year and the approval of a couple of new coordinators. The recommended car fare remains at 5 cents/km and Jim Powers was elected as Trips Director.

As this will be my last President's report in the PackRat I would like to say thanks to all the people on the Executive and the committees who helped make my duties relatively easy. It was great to see the website evolve to become the great information asset that it has become and the purchase of the digital projector has, I think,

enhanced the regular meetings, but it is the people who make a club and working with the volunteers has been the best part of the experience.

See you on the trails!

**RMRA
at Elizabeth Parker
Hut, Lake O'Hara
August 1-8, 2004**

*A personal viewpoint from
D. Mulligan*

For the week of August 1-8, 2004, a group of 22 Ramblers and two cooks spent a week at the ACC Elizabeth Parker Hut at Lake O'Hara in Yoho National Park, BC. It was organized by Anita O., Christine G., and David M. This location is one of the best in Canada's National Parks and was chosen for this reason (and following a RMRA poll in the Summer 2003).

The week's "camp" was in conjunction with the 50th Anniversary of the Ramblers and was supported by the 50th Anniversary Committee.

From my personal standpoint, we all had a good time. We had an excellent group of Ramblers who cooperated exceptionally well and were very tolerant of the marginal basic food provided by the contracted cook and her husband assistant. This was probably the only serious blemish on a successful week, and I was so pleased that the group was able to overlook this significant drawback and enjoy themselves despite it. Many lost weight up to 5 lbs., which was not in their plans.

For the early part of the week we had excellent weather which deteriorated around Thursday with some rain and the cloud level dropped to about 10,000 feet. Never-the-less, even then the high peaks were still visible and it was not a serious deterrent to hiking the many trails. Unfortunately by the end of the week, several Ramblers had contracted a cold, which meant the week finished on a slight down note.

As anticipated, the group was of mixed ability and ambitions. Some were content with easier walks on

the lower trails where flowers were much in evidence especially towards Morning Glory Lakes. Other diehards, including myself, wanted to peak bag all week. Many had cameras which were put to good use and some digital images can be found at www.ramblers.ab.ca. A few trip reports can also be found on this site.

For me, one of the highlights was the successful climb of the 11,000 foot Mt Huber via its infamous ledges. Monday, August 2nd was a perfect day and true to Norman's advice, that if we are doing more than a scramble then we must be off route, we found the ledges to be a SC6. With good summit views it was a perfect day.

Although most of the Ramblers stayed all week, some had previous commitments and shared the week with another. Although confusing to ACC with the extra bus bookings, this went smoothly and with a duty roster all the required hut chores were completed satisfactorily. Early in the week, Norman organized a team quiz which was won by a team headed by Ginger.

Activities

Hiking, Backpacking,
Skiing, Cycling,
Climbing,
Scrambling,
Mountaineering, Educa-
tion & Awareness
Programs, Social
Functions

Meetings

Every Wednesday
evening at 7:30 p.m.

Mail

Rocky Mountain Ram-
blers Association
c/o Calgary Area Out-
door Council (CAOC)
1111 Memorial Dr NW
Calgary, AB T2N 3E4

Trip Info

282-6308 Information
Line and at Meetings

Website

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

This winning team received some small prizes supplied by ACC at Norman's request. We were also entertained by Ron Mason's reciting of the old English ditties "The Lion and Albert" and "The Return of Albert".

Finally I want to thank RMRA for supporting this week, which was originated by Christine, and also to all the participants for making it so successful. If you feel that this should be a yearly function, then talk to the executive and/or Anita or David. No promises.

In attendance were: Anita O., David M., Greg D., Jim B., Ron M., Micheline B., Photini P., Robert, Danielle T., Denis L., Ginger B., Gerald S., Alda S., Ghulam J., Norman A., Sarah C., Karen B., Ken P., Sim G., Nicholas C., Jim P., Barbara F., Peter F., Doug K., Ellen W. and cook Lea-Anne C. with spouse Carter C.



Annual Awards Dinner & Dance

Our social event of the year will take place on Friday, October 29 at the Calgary Winter Club. There will be a cash bar starting at 6:00 PM with the dinner and awards at 7:00 PM followed by dancing at around 8:30 PM. The buffet dinner will consist of ham and chicken as the entree selections. If you need a vegetarian option, please let Shirley know well ahead of time.

Marianne and Tom Flanagan have kindly agreed to shepherd us through our annual line dance session.

Tickets are \$35 and will be available at the club meetings from September 15 until October 20. To order tickets for pick-up at the door, please send a cheque (payable to the RMRA) to Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association, Attn. Social Director, c/o Calgary Area Outdoor Council, 1111 Memorial Drive NW, Calgary, AB T2N 3E4.

If you have something you would like to donate as a door prize, please contact Shirley at 249-0859.

Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument



Exactly 200 years ago, Captains Lewis and Clark and their Corps of Discovery toiled mightily to ascend the Missouri River to its source in the mountains of Montana, their men pulling heavily loaded flat boats up the 3.5 mile an hour current, up to their armpits in cold water, fighting over slippery rocks.

There is one part of the river which today has changed very little since their journey—the Wild and Scenic section between Fort Benton and James Kipp landing. For 150 river

miles, modern parties boat through a land of amazing beauty and solitude. Meriwether Lewis best described the magical White Cliffs area in one of his detailed journal entries on May 31, 1805: ***“As we passed on it seemed as if those scenes of visionary enchantment would never have an end.”***

President Bill Clinton declared this 150-mile long corridor as the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument in 2001, on the 225th anniversary of American independence.

Naturally, with new protected status and appearing prominently on new maps of Montana, the river is attracting more interest than ever, especially on this Bicentennial of Lewis and Clark’s journey.

A group of up to 10 Ramblers will join the spirit of discovery next August for an eight-day float down 130 miles of the river. Being rather softer than Lewis and Clark’s men, we will only trace their return route down the river, and will enjoy the services of one of the several outfitters who service the river. We will, however, revel in the history, not only of the Corps of Discovery, but the early fur trade and the short-lived steamboat era, during which many lives were lost when boats foundered on shoals and rapids, or in fights with the native inhabitants.

This era was critical in the early history of Calgary, as all the supplies needed by the new North West Mounted Police and Fort Calgary moved by bull team overland on the Whoop-Up Trail from Fort Benton to Calgary. Fort Benton today is a sleepy town with a

wealth of historic interest, including the beautifully restored Grand Union Hotel, oldest hotel in Montana. The historic waterfront is a far cry today from the wild and lawless early days, and we can enjoy statues of Lewis and Clark and Sacajawea, their Indian guide, restored keelboat, and interpretive centre for the national monument.

The river trip is easy class 1 paddling, similar to the Red Deer River, and is suitable for novice canoeists. No equipment is necessary, other than sleeping bag and mattress. We simply drive up to the dock, and jump in the canoe. The outfitter will provide all equipment, including a super comfortable camp with double size tents (i.e. 4-man for a couple or 2-man for a single), tables, chairs, kitchen, dishes, cutlery, shade awning and portable toilet system for nights other than developed campsites. All fresh gourmet food and drinks will be kept cold in sealed coolers and re-supplied at the half way mark.

We will have a much easier life than Lewis and Clark and their men, but

will be just as impressed by the stunning scenery of the White Rocks, Hole in the Wall, and the Badlands.

To fill out a two-week holiday period, we will also climb Old Scraggy Peak, the highest point in the Little Rocky Mountains, the first of the "island" mountain ranges of Montana discovered by Lewis and Clark, and visit Giant Springs in Great Falls, which is a Lewis and Clark interpretive centre, as well as Ulm Pishkun, a native buffalo jump comparable with Alberta's Head-Smashed-In.

Visit the website to learn more about this area: www.mt.blm.gov/lldo/um/index.html

Cost of the trip, including the outfitted canoe trip and gas for the trip, will be about \$900. There are still three positions open. Call the coordinator, Carl Potter, at 281-8040.

**Deadline
for next PackRat
November 26, 2004**

News from Kananaskis Trail Users Association

by Dorothy-Ann Reimer

KTUA is gearing up to make a presentation to the Calgary Caucus of MLAs, set for late October. In a maximum time of 10 minutes, **KTUA** will try to describe the deterioration that's occurred in K Country and show the advantages of increased sustainable funding by the province.

September 22 saw another meeting between **KTUA** and K Country people – part of **KTUA**'s efforts to act as liaison between our hiking clubs and K Country. What follows are highlights of what was covered.

Canmore Nordic Centre

Lots of changes there as you may have read in the Press. \$3.5M this year and \$13M next year, all because Foothills Nordic Ski Club got the nod to host the 2005 XC Ski World Cup here. CNC will even get new track setting equipment and the rest of K Country will get to use its castoffs-hurray.

Snowshoe Enthusiasts

K Country is working to set aside more trails for snowshoers plus build a parallel trail to Chester Lake. This was a real controversy last winter between skiers and snowshoers.

West Bragg Ski Trails

Hopefully we'll get some good dumps of snow in West Bragg. The West Bragg volunteers (mainly Bragg Creek residents), assisted by Don Gardner, are gearing up to help with the track setting program this year.

East K Country Trails Threatened

I'm concerned about these areas. Spray Lake Sawmills has the FMA for this region and, at this time, it is not clear what trails might be affected. The area includes some of our favourite trails; Powderface, Cox Hill, Prairie Mountain, Jumping Pound, Sibbald Flats (where a lot of cutting has been done in past years), and a host of others.

A small group met with Don Cockerton (K Country) to work on issues to be

addressed but, as far as I can tell, no specific areas or trails were talked about.

Volunteer Trail Work

As of September 29, eight volunteers put in 1913.5 hours work on trails. One more trail day is planned for October and some people will be working to "brush" the ski trails to get them ready for winter grooming.

To those Ramblers who went out and helped, a million thanks.

Theft in K Country

The gang that was breaking in to about 30 cars a month have finally been caught by the RCMP. However, don't get complacent because there are still one or two break-ins a month so be-ware.

Annual New & Used Ski Sale

This year's sale, **October 22-25** at the Max Bell Centre, promises to have more emphasis on XC skiing. K Country will also be there to sell XC ski passes and hand out information pamphlets.

Our Province, Our Future

The Alberta Government is conducting an on-line survey to gather Albertans' input on how we should spend the province's budget surplus. Please respond to this survey. It takes about 3 minutes to fill out.

The web site is www.finance.gov.ab.ca/surveys/itsyourfuture.html

42nd Annual New & Used Ski Sale October 22-25, 2004

Max Bell Centre
Memorial Dr. & Barlow
Tr. SE.

For more information:
www.skisale.ca or phone
(403)282-4122

Sponsors:

Calgary Ski Club
Canadian Ski Patrol System
(Calgary)
Lake Louise Ski Club

Ski Passes for XC K Country trails will be available on site. This year sale promoters promise there will be more emphasis on XC skiing and even, maybe, snowshoeing.

WATERCOLOUR SHOWINGS

*You are invited to attend
an exhibition/sale of my watercolour paintings
at the following venues:*

Husky Christmas Craft Fair
mid-November 2004 (contact me for the dates)
707-8 Ave SW
11 AM – 2 PM



Calgary Waldorf School Christmas Faire
Saturday, November 20, 2004
515 Cougar Ridge Drive SW
10 AM – 5 PM

This event has wonderful artisans and great homemade food!

**For further information, please call Annette Le Faive 286-8588
amlefaive@shaw.ca**

Viewing by appointment also possible.

Basic XC-SKI CLINICS

The annual Rambler member x-c ski clinic for Beginners or Refreshers will be held as follows:

Friday, December 3
7:30-9:00 pm at Dawn's house, 1402-Crescent Rd. NW. No equipment is necessary. Bring pen and paper.

This is an indoor clinic discussing what to buy, what to pack, waxing, ski techniques, ski etiquette and more.

Sunday, December 5
10:30 am Confederation Golf Course, 3204 Collingwood Dr. NW. Bring equipment, layered clothes, a light lunch.

This is a beginner lesson that can also be used as a refresher. It will last about 3 hours.

Sunday, December 12
10:30 am at a city golf course, possibly Shaganappi. Bow Trail and 26 St. SW. This is a follow up to the first outdoor class and will be a time to practice gliding.

going up and down hills and more.

Sunday, December 19

9:00 am at Shouldice. This will be a novice trip open to all Ramblers with the focus being on those who have just taken the clinic. It may be in the mountains or in Calgary.

Phone Dawn Jones at 289-2271, Press 1 to leave a message and that will assure you of a registered spot. You will not be contacted by Dawn. Just appear on the 3rd of December.

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.

Email submissions to the newsletter editor at packrat@ramblers.ab.ca or forward contributions to RMRA, c/o Calgary Area Outdoor Council, 1111 Memorial Drive NW, Calgary, AB T2N 3E4.

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Taking TURNS

A few tips for negotiating tricky turns on cross-country skis.

by Keith Nicol



Downhills are an essential part of nordic skiing and usually bring out one of two emotions in cross-country skiers: fear, if the downhill is too steep or twisting for a person's ability; or exhilaration if the skier knows they can handle the slope with confidence.

One technique for changing direction on hills is called the step turn and can be used in a variety of conditions from trail situations on light touring equipment, to hard-to-negotiate snow conditions on telemark skis. And although the basic step turn is relatively easy for beginners to master, the high speed step turn requires balance, coordination, and a delicate feel for the snow that only practice brings.

Basics

You are skiing an easy trail early in the winter. You

come down a small hill and right in the middle of the track is an exposed stump. There's no time to snow plow, so what do you do? Instinctively, you step your skis away from the stump—you've done a step turn.

A step turn starts with the skier in an alpine stance. That is, feet are side by side, hip width apart, and equally weighted. You should be slightly flexed at the ankles, knees, and hips with arms held forward and shoulder-width apart. To step turn, simply transfer weight to your outside ski, lift and slightly angle the inside ski. Simultaneously move hands and arms in the new direction and step onto the inside ski. Next, bring the outside ski parallel to the inside ski and return to the alpine stance. If you need to change direction faster, take several small steps—as many as required to make the turn.

As Skill Improves

As your skill improves, try to flex more at the ankles, knees and hips, and project your arms and body into the direction with each step. To help get your torso positioned correctly, turn your head and look in the new direction of travel. As gliding speed increases, take faster steps not wider ones.

If you find that you are skidding when step turning, practise the 'flex-extend-step' exercise. While standing still, flex the outside leg, transferring all your body weight to it. Then extend and jump onto the inside ski. When this manoeuvre is combined with the 'circle skate' (where skiers simply step turn quickly in a circle), most skiers quickly pick up this more advanced technique. It also helps to practise on an open slope and then adapt the high speed step turn to those twisty trails. The advantage of this turn is that, unlike a snow plow or a skidded turn, you can exit the turn faster than you went into it.

Keith Nicol is coordinator of CANSI instructor courses in the Atlantic provinces.



Ski Improvement Tours

Here's an opportunity to get some **FREE** input on your ski technique from a former professional XC ski instructor. Ken has Level 2 CANSI certification and national coaching credentials in both theory and practical. The format is a regular day trip but with ski tips from the coordinator as we ski. There will

be two categories: trip coordinator sessions and regular member sessions.

Trip Coordinator Session - December 04, 2004

General Member Session - December 11, 2004

The trips are subject to weather and snow conditions and group size is limited to six skiers per session. To register call Ken Park at 244-6809. **IMPORTANT:** The tours are intended for fit skiers who have taken a recent previous ski course or who have recent active ski experience.

Waxing TIPS

At the elite level where hundredths of a second may win a race, waxing can be a frustrating arcane art, but recreational skiers don't require such precision. The trick for classical skis, where both kick and glide are considerations, is to apply enough of the right wax in the right place (kick wax under the foot to give that momentary friction needed to push off; glide wax on the tips and tails where the ski

takes your weight in the glide phase). Heating improves bonding between a P-Tex base and waxes, which contain not only paraffin but silicon, graphite, teflon and other ingredients.

First, the base should be prepped (scraped, flattened, rilled, etc.). For classical skis, iron a glider wax into tips and tails for swift running, let them cool, and scrape off excess. Finally, apply kick zone wax, accord-

ing to local snow types and temperatures. Crayon on a layer and iron it in. If the wax isn't gripping, add a thicker layer or a longer layer, or leave the wax rough. If you still slip, add a thin layer of the next warmer wax. If snow is building up on your bases, first make sure you are sliding rather than lifting your skis. Still a build-up? Simply scrape the snow off, or scrape the old wax off and re wax with a colder wax.

For skating skis, glide is the only concern. Wax the entire surface and iron it on (not too much heat!), cool skis, then use a plastic scraper to remove excess. You want to end up with a very thin, smooth layer of wax on your base.

Kick waxes are either "hard" canned wax for new, cold snow or glue-like "klisters" in tubes for older, warmer snow. Waxes are colour-coded, with warmer colours (reds and yellows) for higher temperatures and colder colours (greens, blues and purples) for chillier days. Each wax has a temperature range listed on the container.

Waxless skis require minimal maintenance (but do apply glide wax on tips and tails). They are popular in areas with rapidly changing conditions, performing best in wet snow around freezing. Properly waxed skis are far faster, however. All skis need occasional cleaning.

Three tips: use a wax bench (a fixed or portable work bench) rather than waxing on the kitchen counter, where you'll leave scrapings all around; if you wax indoors, let skis cool outdoors to avoid ice build-up on the base; and if you're skiing in a new region, get local advice on wax brands and colours.

*Explore Magazine
Dec/Jan 94/95 Issue*

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.



Give a Hoot for the Burrowing Owl

Once plentiful in Western Canada, the burrowing owl is now one of the most endangered birds in the region. Their decline started in the 1980s and accelerated in the 1990s.

Contrary to the meaning of its scientific name, "little digger," burrowing owls rarely dig their own burrows. Instead they use abandoned burrows for resting, nesting, and storing food. Habitat loss is one factor attributing to the burrowing owls decline.

Less than 24 per cent of Canada's original prairie habitat exists today. This reduces hunting and nesting territories resulting in low birth and high death rates. Another factor contributing to their decline is the use of pesticides.

While burrowing owls may not be the targeted species for these chemicals, they often end up receiving lethal amounts. Work is

ASSINIBOINE SKI TRIP

FLY IN – SKI OUT
FEBRUARY 23 - 27, 2005
4 NIGHTS, 5 DAYS



This is one of the most beautiful places that you can imagine to ski. Intermediate to advanced skiers can enjoy great touring terrain ranging from flat to wide open gentle hills to steep slopes plus superb telemarking. People come from all over the globe to be here.

The rustic, cozy and warm, Naiset log cabins will be our home for the five days. We'll take in our own food, gear and supplies (max. 40 lb/person). If

there's enough light maybe a moonlight ski will be in order. Full moon on February 23.

Our gear will be flown out (approx. \$2.00/lb) so we can ski out with only a day pack, stopping at Bryant Creek hut for lunch. Minimum six and maximum 12 skiers. Plan

ahead now! Avalanche gear will be required.

COST: \$215 approx. (incl. helicopter & lodging)

DEPOSIT: \$50 A.S.A.P.

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: January 7, 2005

COORDINATOR: Ken Park
244-6809

underway to change the plight of the burrowing owl.

For more information visit www.hww.ca.

DID YOU KNOW...that the three most difficult things to say are:

"I love you",
"Sorry" and
"Help me".

1/2 cup brown sugar
2/3 cup peanut butter
1/2 cup corn syrup (clear)
1/3 cup butter
2 tsp. vanilla

Mix melted butter, sugar, corn syrup, peanut butter and vanilla. Now add your dry ingredients.

Granola Bars

3 cups oats
1/4 sliced almonds
1/4 cup wheat germ
1/2 cup chocolate chips
1/2 cup raisins
1/2 cup coconut (semisweet)
1/4 cup sesame seeds

Heat oven at 350 and bake for 15 to 20 minutes.