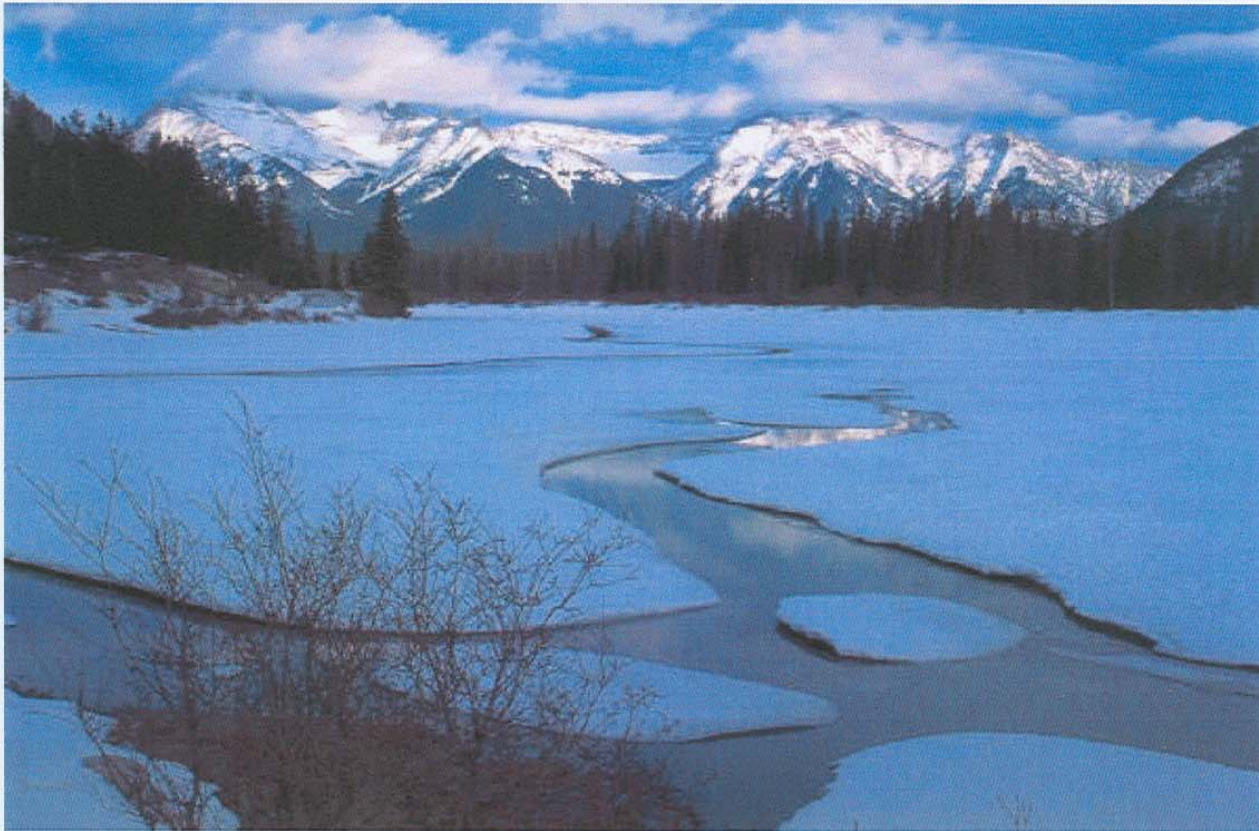


The PackRat



January/February 2006

May your New Year be filled with many and happy adventures!



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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.

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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Avalanche & First Aid Courses

THIS IS A SUMMARY OF courses available in and around the city. The list is not exhaustive but includes most of the best courses. It is a requirement for coordinators to have at least a standard first aid certificate. For coordinating trips into potential avalanche areas, they must have taken an approved avalanche course.

It is also strongly recommended that anyone venturing into avalanche areas should take a relevant course in order to be familiar with equipment and conditions. Note that a transceiver does not make you safe, it is a last resort once an avalanche has happened.

Knowledge of First Aid is also recommended for anyone venturing into the wilderness, not only coordinators. Some financial help may be available from the Association.

City of Calgary

www.calgary.ca/recreation
or call 311

Standard First Aid: Various locations – 16 hours. \$122.10.

Wilderness and Remote First Aid: March 7-16
4 classes + 2 full days. \$294

University of Calgary

www.calgaryrecreationcentre.ca
or 403.220.5038

Wilderness First Aid Remote Responder: 24 hours, March 21, 23 and March 25, 26 – 24 hours. \$225.

Introduction to Avalanche Safety: Held most weeks through to April 8. Some dates

are already booked up. 12 hours. \$125.

Yamnuska

www.yamnuska.com
or 403.678.4164

Introductory recreational avalanche course CAA certified – 16 hours

Calgary:

January 7-8, January 28-29,
February 25-26, March 11-12

Canmore:

January 21-22, February 11-12,
March 4-5. \$125

Emergency First Aid:

8 hours – \$80

Standard First Aid:

16 hours – \$115

Rocky Mountain Adventure Medicine

www.adventuremed.ca
403.949.2632

This company has offered to do a short first aid demonstration at a Wednesday evening meeting, probably on February 1 or 8. If we have enough members interested in a course they can tailor one exclusively for us.

Back Country Emergencies:

12 hours - \$95

Remote Responder:

3 days – \$225

Emergency First Aid:

8 hours – \$75

Standard First Aid:

16 hours – \$105

Emergency Outdoor Workshop: 12 hours – \$95

There are other organizations that do emergency and standard first aid courses but these are not specific to our outdoor activities. Some of these are:

Oakland Educational Services
Health Education Inc.
St Johns Ambulance

Exploring Mount McKinley in Denali

by Bernie Fritz

I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY in June 2005 to travel to Alaska and have a closeup view of the big mountain. Mount McKinley (Denali) is the highest mountain in North America. It is part of the Alaska range that stretches about 1,000 km in an east-west direction across south central Alaska. Denali's northern location and great height gives it the coldest average temperature of any mountain on earth with the exception of Antarctic peaks.

The climbing season is from April through July. I arrived at Anchorage around midnight. During the drive from the airport to the bed and breakfast, the upper part of McKinley came into view. Even though it was approximately 200 miles north, it was an unforgettable sight.

The next morning I hooked up with a Commercial Guiding Company plus four other clients and we traveled to the village of Talkeetna, about a 2-1/2 hour drive north. After checking in with Denali Park Service, and the Talkeetna Air Taxi, we were ready to fly to the glacier at about 3:00 PM. The flight to the lower glacier took about 30 minutes. It was exciting. The bush pilots are very experienced and skillful. We flew through

“One Shot Gap”, meaning you need to fly between two mountains at the right altitude. The pilot only gets one shot at it.

We landed at the Base Camp



Denali with East Kahiltna Peak

of McKinley, set up our camp and stayed there for four days. From this location you see Mt. Hunter in front (14,500 ft.), Mt. Foraker (17,300 ft.) to the right and behind is Mt. McKinley (20,400 ft.). There were maybe seven or eight other parties at the camp. They were from all around the world...all after Mt. McKinley, except us. Our purpose was to observe, learn, train, and enjoy the experience.

After four days, we moved our camp up the glacier, and from that location we did some neat things. We traveled on snow shoes, carried about 40 lbs. on our backs and pulled about 30 lbs. on our sleds. We reached the top Kaliltna Dome Ridgeililtna at about 12,000 ft. This was as far as we went. The weather was

clear and the views were great.

The crevasses are immense—maybe the size of an apartment building and very deep. We were on the Kahiltna Glacier and its depth might be 2,000 to 3,000 ft. deep. They really don't know exactly. The Ruth Glacier in the same area is estimated to be 3,800 ft. deep. That's a lot of ice. The climbers were all attempting the mountain by the West Buttress route, which is the normal route up. However, once you reach 14,200 ft. the climbing gets more difficult. You need to climb the head wall...a 2,000 foot slope of 40° to 50°. Actually you have to

climb it twice because you need to carry all your supplies up and you can't do that in one trip. You leave your snow shoes and sleds at the camp (14,200 ft.) and put on your crampons. When you get up the head wall there is an exposed ridge up, another 1,000 ft. and then you set up your advance camp. The summit from here takes about 8 to 9 hours and maybe 5 or 6 hours to come back down to the high camp.

The summit day is very long and difficult—thin air, deep snow and most often bad weather. We heard and saw numerous avalanches. A hanging glacier broke loose from Mount Hunter and smashed down causing the biggest avalanche our guides have ever seen.

Activities

Hiking, Backpacking,
Skiing, Cycling,
Climbing,
Scrambling,
Mountaineering, Education
& 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 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 ad-
dress, you will be auto-
matically notified that an
electronic copy of the
Packrat is on the website.



Mount Foraker



When we returned to
Talkeetna, the Park officials said
that almost 600 people had so
far tried it this season and the
success rate was 46%.

Many parties get turned back
by severe storms, white out, etc.
Many others underestimate the
climb and do not prepare prop-
erly, either physically or men-
tally.

We were on the glacier for ten
days. To do the summit may
take about 18 to 21 days. For me
it was a great adventure and a
wonderful experience. If you get
an opportunity to do it...go for
it. Yes, I would like to return and
try for the top. Maybe, if I stay
healthy. As Abraham Lincoln
said "I will prepare and some
day my chance may come".

Mount Hunter



Kananaskis Trail Users Info

Report by D. Reimer

THE FOLLOWING ARE NOTES

taken at the latest meeting between K Country and the Trail Users held on November 24, 2005. I've bolded a few things that I think are of higher importance.

Sheep Valley

Bridget Couban, who did a survey of trails in the region last summer, will be asked to report to our next meeting.

The terrible condition of many trails in this area was discussed. K-Country did not seem to have any idea about what the cause is or how to fix it. We hope that Couban's report will give some direction.

The Gorge Creek road is expected to be closed permanently.

I objected to this as there are several popular trails leading off this road. It may be necessary for users to complain directly to both Minister Mar and to Transport Alberta in order to get it repaired and opened. The road is a public road and Transport Alberta is responsible for it.

Snowshoe Trails

K Country to continue the trails set up last year and looking at adding a 5 km loop from Sawmill trailhead. Trail maps are on their website and info is available at the Info Centres and in Kananaskis Village. A sign is to be posted at Chester Lake advising snowshoers to use the snowshoe trail, not the ski trail.

Management Plans

Peter Lougheed/Spray Valley final plan still awaits Minister Mar's signature. Sheep Valley/Bluerock Draft plan is due January, 2006.

The public will then have two months to react. RMRA will probably wish to put in a response. Watch our club's Discussion section for more info as it becomes available.

Trail Use Surveys

K Country has very poor statistics on usage other than what are collected from campgrounds, not even traffic count surveys. KTUA has suggested that the users' clubs might be able to work through CAOC to get funding to do some decent surveys. K Country was interested and agreed with the value but said the clubs would have to pursue idea on their own.

Trail Care Work

Friends of Kananaskis reported that they had more volunteers than ever and were pleased with the turnout. Mountain bikers, absent in past years, are now helping as well (probably thanks to the efforts of former Rambler, Bob Scott).

Fortress

While RCR has accepted the deal with the group planning on operating Fortress, K Country has not had any notification and the road remains closed. The road is a contentious issue as its maintenance is the responsibility

of the resort operator (and the operator has not been doing the work). RCR wanted Transport Alberta to take it over but has been refused.

The new operators want a 4-season operation but the lease allows only a ski resort. Any change would require public input.

Bolton Creek Trading Post

Several skiers have asked about the opening of this place. The facility has always been privately operated. A new operator took over April 1/05 and did very well last summer.

It is unlikely that it will open in the winter.

West Bragg

The Bragg Creek volunteer group is again planning on helping with the winter program (should there ever be enough snow).

Petro-Canada is drilling a well 2 or 3 km from the West Bragg parking lot so the road will be unusable for skiing (hiking still possible). If the well is successful, there may be more wells and K Country will have to find a better place for the trail. This is the sort of problem that may arise more often in east K Country because it is designated multi-use.

New & Used Ski Sale

The sale, held in October was a financial success. However, XC ski participation was still very

poor. XC ski shops agreed to participate but all, except Campers Village, backed out at the last minute. Cheers to Campers Village. Even K Country, who'd agreed to put in a display, failed to show; some of our users were annoyed, reminding K Country that they'd had a year to get organized but had failed to come through. They assured the group that next year they'd do better.

Finally, Space Age Toilets

Report on The Space age toilet (see Sept/Oct Packrat), better known as the Phoenix Composting Toilet, installed at Elbow Lake, was presented.

Results: expensive (up to \$50,000 to install), needs lots of maintenance, and users are putting other garbage in them.

They *are* better looking, ventilate well, have good lighting and **human waste can safely be disposed into the surrounding environment.** The report doesn't recommend them for back-country use but could install them at places like Forks campground, Rawson, Rummel and Chester lakes. Tombstone Lake campground is also a possibility.

Next Meeting: February 22 or 23, 2006. If you've got stuff you want me to bring up, call or e-mail me or post it on the website.



To all you OWLS (Older Wiser Laughin' Souls) some wisdom from grandpa to start your year right.

OAW...Old (pardon me) Age Wisdom

Whether a man winds up with a nest egg, or a goose egg, depends a lot on the kind of chick he marries.

Trouble in marriage often starts when a man gets so busy earnin' his salt that he forgets his sugar.

Too many couples marry for better, or for worse, but not for good.

When a man marries a woman, they become one; but the trouble starts! when they try to decide which one.

If a man has enough horse sense to treat his wife like a thoroughbred, she will never turn into an old nag.

On anniversaries, the wise husband always forgets the past - but never the present.

A foolish husband says to his wife, "Honey, you stick to the washin', ironin', cookin' and scrubbin'. No wife of mine is gonna work."

Many girls like to marry a military man - he can cook, sew, and make beds and is in good health, and he's already used to taking orders.

Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start brag-

ging about it.

Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me, I want people to know "why" I look this way. I've traveled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved.

How old would you be if you didn't know how old you are?

You know you are getting old, when everything either dries up or leaks.

Old age is when former classmates are so gray and wrinkled and bald, they don't recognize you.

Welcome New Members

Gert

Mel

Billy & Jeanne Docherty

Jack Buck

David Ladouceur

Mary-Lyn Duncalfe

Ben D. Wards

Melissa

Brian Pelz

Shirley

Pat McLinnis

Eric Grossman

Helen Wright

Renate. L

Julie Deans

Cathy

Andrew

Louise



THE APEIRON SOCIETY FOR THE PRACTICE OF PHILOSOPHY

This is the Society's 19th year of philosophical seminars and discussion. All who are interested in the practice of philosophy in everyday life are welcome.

This year's theme is: **"Questions of Nature and Philosophy"**
Program for the Winter of 2006

January 10	Margaret Osler (Professor of History, U of C) <i>"What is nature? Historical Perspectives"</i>		
January 24	Panel and Philosophy Café <i>"A review of Spirituality"</i>		
February 7	Pamela Banting (Department of English, U of C) <i>"Magic is afoot: Hoof Marks, Paw Prints and the Problem of Writing Wildly"</i>		
February 21	Peter Toohey (Professor of Greek and Roman Studies, U of C) <i>"Rufus of Ephesus on Depression"</i>		
March 7	TBA		
March 21	Anthony Russell (Professor of Biology, University of Calgary) <i>"In Search of a Natural Classification: The Tree of Life Bears the Fruit of Systematic (R)evolution(s)"</i>		
April 4	Elizabeth Wilman (Professor of Economics, University of Calgary) <i>"Environmental Economics Perspectives"</i>		
April 18	Petra von Morstein (Professor of Philosophy Emerita, University of Calgary) - "TBA"		
Meetings	7:30 pm sharp, at the Scandinavian Centre, 739-20 Ave. N.W.		
Membership	Annual membership: \$30	1 January to 31 August: \$15	
Entrance fee	Members & First Visits: \$3	Students & Seniors: \$5.00	Non-members: \$7.00
Contacts & Info	www.ApeironSociety.org		Laszlo @ 252-7332

Nahanni Forever!

A CPAWS Event

Thursday, January 19th, 2006

John Dutton Theatre, W.R. Castell Central Library

Doors at 7:00 pm, Show at 7:30 pm

Special Guests: Dr. John Weaver, Neil Hartling, Leela Gilday and Harvey Locke. People attending this evening of dramatic images and fascinating scientific and cultural insights will be eligible to win a trip down the spectacular South Nahanni River.

Tickets (\$10) Now on Sale at MEC (830 – 10th Ave SW) & CPAWS Office (1202 Centre Street SE)

(Tickets will be available at the door if the event has not sold out!)

With thanks to: The Royal Canadian Geographic Society, Mountain Equipment Co-op, Nahanni River Adventures

DEADLINE
for next PackRat
February 24, 2006



Travel Stories Wanted!

Got an interesting, amusing or unusual adventure story to share with the members?

If you would like to have your story featured in the next PackRat, then email me at packrat@ramblers.ab.ca.

Rucksacks

by D. Mulligan

THIS ARTICLE IS SLIGHTLY

modified from a reply to my sister in England asking for advice regarding a rucksack (backpack in Canadian) for a tourist trip to China. Maybe Ramblers will find it useful. Naturally it is **my** opinion. (My sister ignored it and used a suitcase with wheels).

There are at least as many opinions about the “best” rucksack, as there are rucksacks. However consider the following points in order of importance:

1. **Comfort and fit.** You will not use it unless it is comfortable
2. **Size.** It must be big enough for its intended use. < 60 liters
3. **Accessories.** Zippers, detachable pockets, etc. None or some.
4. **Price.** < Can \$ 250.00.

DISCUSSION:

1. Comfort and fit

This is the most important. It **must** fit if you are going to carry it for more than 30 minutes. A good waist belt and shaped shoulder straps are important. Back length is also important and some manufacturers make packs especially for women who have shorter backs and wider hips than men. A good shop will help you adjust the pack to fit and let you walk around for some minutes with weight (40 lbs, 18 kg) in it.

2. Size

Most women cannot carry more than 40 lbs which will fit in a 60

litre pack. Much bigger and you just won't lift it. Smaller, and you may end up with stuff outside, which is okay, but more liable to catching on things and being stolen. So, I suggest 45-65 litres.

3. Accessories

This is the area of most discussion. I prefer a sack with few accessories and zippers. Any



extras add weight, zippers break. The only person that agrees with me is Alistaire and we both use packs for long hikes and backpacks which is not your use. Some packs have a detachable top pocket which can double as a fanny pack. Can be useful but adds weight. A side pocket is useful (for water bottle etc).

Some packs are designed to convert to a holdall with a zippered surround that will encompass all the flapping straps. They are not as comfortable to carry but could be worth

considering as loose straps send airlines, buses crazy. This pack/holdall might suit you best for traveling with the ability to carry for a few kms when necessary.

The pack itself should weigh less than 5 lbs (2.2 kg). Cordura is the toughest fabric but also the heaviest. No pack is waterproof – line with an orange plastic garbage bag.

4. Price

More money is not necessarily better. You are probably paying for the name, accessories, and quality but in what order. Karrimor is a good British brand. Macpac is from New Zealand, Lowe from USA, Arc'teryx from Canada. In Canada, you can get a reasonable backpack for around Can\$220.00. But, if you find a pack that fits and has the options you want, don't worry about the price. You won't use it unless it fits.

A good discussion of the above issues can be found at www.mec.ca – a leading Canadian outdoor store.

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.