

The PackRat



March/April 2006



WHAT'S

INSIDE?

A Trip Diary of French Polynesia	2
A Letter from Guatemala	6
Woman Works with Bears	9
Kananaskis Trail User's Report	11

RMRA
Executive Committee

President

Tom Flanagan
president@ramblers.ab.ca

Vice President

Ron Mason
vicepresident@ramblers.ab.ca

Treasurer

Laszlo Jamniczky
treasurer@ramblers.ab.ca

Secretary

Ron Hunter
secretary@ramblers.ab.ca

Trips Director

Jim Powers
trips@ramblers.ab.ca

Program Director

Jim Paterson
programs@ramblers.ab.ca

Social Director

Barbara Mitchell
socialdirector@ramblers.ab.ca

Membership

Dave Harding
membership@ramblers.ab.ca

Newsletter Editor

Irene Willett
packrat@ramblers.ab.ca

Past President

Ron Hunter
pastpresident@ramblers.ab.ca

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.

Copyright 2006 by the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association.

A TRIP DIARY OF FRENCH POLYNESIA

By Wally Drew

In late October of 2005, I went to the remote and unspoiled Marquesas Islands of French Polynesia on a freighter that services them... that's the closest I have come to a cruise. The one other time I sailed through the South Seas was on a troop ship on the way to the Philippines via New Guinea during WWII. The passenger freighter Aranui is much nicer. It is owned by



White coral sand beach on Takapoto island.

Compagnie Polynesienne de Transport Maritime of Papeete, Tahiti. I arranged my trip through ElderTreks. The trip was beyond my expectations. The only downside was getting to Papeete and back. I had 6.5 hours at LAX (L.A.) before the night flight that arrived Papeete at 2:30 am. Since the Aranui didn't start boarding until 3:00 pm the next day, I booked a hotel room. Papeete is just an expensive tourist trap.

When I got to Aranui's pier at 2:30 pm, was shown to my nice little cabin right away. It would

be a little crowded for two. It had a porthole with nothing in front of it, a bathroom with shower and scalding hot water, individually controlled AC and a safe. Their water comes from the Pacific Ocean by desalinization. It is treated once and again for the restaurant. The drinking water is supplied free on each deck. There is no need to bring or buy bottled water. The laundry is also done for free and

brought back to your cabin in a few hours. There are washers and dryers if you want to do it yourself.

I explored the nine decks going up and down the stairs, some inside and some outside. It was my way of getting some exercise. The Romanian built ship has many safety features and is kept very clean.

The Aranui can carry 200 passengers. Some fly to the Marquesas or Tuamotus by small plane or helicopter. About 10% were English speaking and the rest were German and French. There were separate guides, lectures, orientations, etc. for the three language groups. This was the first voyage with a German majority; usually it is French. Our small English group all got to know each other. The five other Canadians were from Vancouver and the rest were from the USA. Smoking is not permitted anywhere inside

the freighter. All rooms had smoke detectors. That was fortunate since many of the Europeans and most of the crew smoked. There was a crew of 70 – 30 to handle the freight and 40 to look after the passenger needs. The Chief Engineer was a Romanian who had supervised the construction of the Aranui.

The restaurant had big windows and pretty Polynesian servers. The fresh fruits were the best part of the cold buffet breakfasts. You could order eggs, bacon or ham at no charge. The suppers and the few lunches on board were French meals, tasty but not very healthy—too fatty and not enough veggies. I liked the fish. There was always a litre of French wine on the tables for every four persons. Everything was provided. The Aranui had a library, a fitness room and a small pool on the pool deck. It was more than adequate and without all the frills, the hordes of people or the expense of a real cruise ship.

French Polynesia has five groups of islands. Papeete, Tahiti in the Society Islands is the largest town and capitol of French Polynesia. The Aranui services the remote Marquesas 16 times per year. There is one stop in the Tuamotu Islands each way. We left Papeete late evening and reached Takapoto Island the next evening, and we drifted off Takapoto for the night...too deep to anchor. The Tuamotus are atolls; ring of land around a lagoon rising only 1-2 m above sea level. As with

nearly all the islands, freight and passengers went ashore in “whale boats” like large open dories for 40 people. Some freight that Aranui carried also went on the barge. At the bottom of the steep steps down the side of Aranui the boats bounced up and down in the waves. The strong Polynesian crewmen grabbed our arms to haul us in or out. Some less agile people were picked up and lifted in or out. Those guys were super strong with thick muscular arms and legs. Once I watched them unload big metal fuel drums.



Atuona village on Hiva Oa island.

One man tossed a drum to the next about 5 m away. The last man tossed it up to the top of a stack above his head.

The whale boats took us to the village. From there we had the option of walking or boating through the lagoon to our beach. Shore excursions could be as active or leisurely as you wanted. We always divided into two groups: hikers and non hikers. It was a hot 2.5 km to our beach. We swam before our lunch by the lagoon there. Often the locals played music and sang.

There I measured the highest temperature of the whole trip 33°C. It was just 30°C back at the village on the ocean side.

We returned to the ship in mid-afternoon and headed north for the Marquesas. There we enjoyed one of many pretty sunsets followed by brilliant stars and planets. Venus was near the crescent moon and Mars actually looked red.

All the next day and next night we sailed north to the remote Marquesas. The bow stabilizer on the Aranui gave it a smooth and gentle ride through the waves; however, some got seasick anyway; maybe it was from drinking too much the night before. While at sea we viewed slides about the Marquesas by an anthropologist as well as other orientations. We went on tours of the bridge, engine room, kitchen and food storage areas. We could walk unto the bridge any time and view the navigation system.

The six inhabited Marquesa Islands have a total population of fewer than 9,000. Our first island was UA Pou. Like all of the Marquesa Islands, it is the most rugged, mountainous and volcanic island composed mainly of basalt. Its volcanic plug, Oavi, rises over 1200 m. The island is only 10x15 km. The rugged islands are mostly forested and green. The villages are in coves or bays, often partially submerged calderas. Beaches are few.

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,
Website, 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.

Hakahau was one of the few villages where we were actually able to dock. As was often the case, we had good Polynesian buffet ashore. They were the best and most interesting meals. We went ashore every day for various activities and free time in the Marquesas while the freighter was being unloaded and loaded. We never saw any other tourists on these unspoiled islands. Their dialect is more like Hawaiian than Tahitian.

and showers; except at higher elevations. Mostly, it was quite hot and humid except on the Aranui where it was quite comfortable with breezes and temperatures from 22°C to 29°C night and day.

On Hiva Oa, I walked up to Belvedere, down to Atuona and up to Gauguin's and Brel's graves. Our hikes were on dirt roads on fairly good paths so I just took runners instead of boots.



Bamboo Graves - Marquesas

Polynesians from New Zealand to Hawaii can understand each other.

We visited all six inhabited islands and most of the villages. The Aranui is their life line. Our next island was Nuku Hiva, the largest and most populous with 2700 people. We docked at Taiohae, the largest town (pop. 2,000) and capitol of the Marquesas. Even small villages had a mayor and town office. We went by 4WD to a good belvedere viewpoint at 730 m elevation. On top of the caldera rim, we had a buffet lunch in showers and 23°C. Some days, we had variable amounts of clouds, sun

Fatu Hiva is where Thor Hyerdahl sailed to and honeymooned on Kon Tiki. In spite of that, Polynesian ancestors came from SE Asia, not S. America. The island has only 600 people. There we had our long hike (16 km) with 670 m. elevation gain. We left Omoa mid-morning to hike up the dirt road to an elevation of 640 m. I was glad for the clouds. It was 21°C— the lowest temperature of the trip. After lunch, it was a more leisurely walk on down to Hanavave where whale boats took us to the Aranui. We stayed anchored there the first half of the night so the crew could fish

by dropping long lines over the side. We could see many fish attracted by the ship's lights. At other times, crew members would play musical instruments and sing on the decks.

Tahuata is the smallest inhabited island with a population of 600. After an early morning walk around Viatahu, we sailed to Hapatoni, a village of 80 people. Little kids sang and danced to music played by women during our bar-be-que lunch followed by a walk up to a viewpoint.

On the way back to the boat landing, a little girl showed me an ulcerous sore on her arm and indicated she wanted a bandage on it. These little places don't have a clinic. There is a doctor on board the Aranui. On this voyage, there was a woman surgeon from Paris.

Back at Hiva Oa, we visited two little villages mainly for archeological sites called meae with their tiki, human-like figures, carved from stone to represent ancestors. We saw many such on the islands.

Got out on the deck by 5:30 am to see the Manouver in the narrow entrance to Vaipae Bay. The Aranui had to make a 180° turn around in a cliff-walled channel barely wider than the length of the ship. Whale boats took crew to the cliffs where they secured ropes to stone pylons on narrow ledges to tie Aranui crosswise for the day. Both ends were within 20 m of the cliffs. Whale boats could go under the ropes to take us to Vaipae. We walked through botanical gardens with wild trees and 100

kinds of citrus in adjacent orchard. We saw many feral goats and some horses. This low and dry island has grass for them and they outnumber the 600 people.

After that we revisited Niku Hiva and Oa Pou but different villages for more hikes, more archeological sites and more buffet lunches. A Polynesian favourite of mine was cru, thinly sliced marinated raw fish—much tastier than it sounds. In the 44 voyages to the Marquesas, the Aranui crew had seen a total of three other ships!

We had a day at sea before stopping at Fakarava in the Tuamotus. There was a big enough break in the land ring that we could go into the lagoon and anchor. We had our final swim in 27°C water. The swimming is not very good because of too much coral and the danger of cutting feet. You really need reef shoes. It's better for snorkeling.

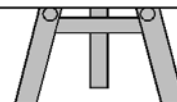
Polynesians like to tattoo their bodies, especially the men. Some of the crew had most of their bodies and heads covered by tattoos.

I had three days before my flight home so I flew to Moorea from Tahiti. It is less touristy and expensive. There, I had a beach front cabin. On the last day I took a half day island tour.

There are few mosquitos and no malaria in French Polynesia (no Visa, too).

Welcome New Members

Shemin Ferwandes
Tara Garratt
Alicja Derkacz
Alastair Watermeyer



"Mountains
cannot be
surmounted
except by winding
paths."

Johann W. Von Goethe

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.

A letter from Dawn Jones in Guatemala to the Ramblers

I am in Guatemala, in the Highlands, staying in a small village called Panajachel. It is right on Lake Atitlan with two huge volcanoes looming over it. Guatemala is a country of volcanoes and some of them are active. The lake was formed from the magma of active volcanoes some 65,000 years ago, putting such a heavy weight on the land that the land sunk and the lake bed was formed.

It is a large lake of mas o menos 900 square miles. The whole scene of the lake and the low mountains (hills) and volcanoes to the lake level, is beautiful, especially in the early morning. The lake itself, however, is polluted as a result of people washing their clothes, bathing themselves, putting all their garbage in the lake. The Internet offers information about dangerous parasites.

Several people have asked me details of how and why I came to be in Guatemala. Well, several years ago I began to study Spanish and felt the need of immersion experiences. I have stayed with local families in the area of Lago Atitlan for three, two-month sessions now. I come alone, unsponsored, and find my schools and accommodation on the Internet. Living in Guatemala is the cheapest of all the Central American countries. It is also the most dangerous and to find all about that, one needs to

search for the information on the Internet, or to ask a travel agent for the latest Advisory. The situation here has deteriorated considerably since the occurrence of Hurricane Stan which targeted this area. The poor people are now even poorer with the incidence of crime and violence much increased in the Lago Atitlan area. In addition, 19 of the country's most dangerous prisoners have escaped



from prison and only three have been recaptured. If you intend to visit here, you must stay up to date about the danger situation. Because you asked what training one needs to teach here, and that is part of what I do in addition to studying classes for four hours daily, I will tell you.

I took an intense ESL course in Calgary that was 40 hours in one week. That will open doors for employment or for future volunteering.

So back to more about Guatemala. A Guatemalan is called a Guatemalteco. The Spanish language is truly beautiful and is spoken in addition to 25 Maya (non) dialects in the Maya area.

ecos are Maya (indigenous) but where I spend my time, it is closer to 100%. There are three cultures that make up Guatemala, the Maya, Ladinos (mixed blood with whiter skin), and the Garifunos (blacks from the NE area near Belize). Many Maya think of the Ladinos as the enemy and that they, along with the USA and the military government, were responsible for the thousands of Mayas who were killed, raped, tortured, during the 30-year war that was centered here in the Highlands. It ended about ten years ago. Tourists who visit here, as in other third world countries, see only what the locals feel they want to show and what the local cultures think tourists want to hear. You well travelled Ramblers will know that I am sure. To get a feel for what really is going on in a country one must become one with the locals.

When visiting as a tourist, for example, you will seldom hear of the danger. You may not hear either about the war. The war has been over for ten years but the memory of it is still uppermost in the minds of the Maya. This is due mostly to the fact that almost every family will tell about a missing family member, one who disappeared in the War, and whose body has never been found.

Even today I was reminded of the fact that killer groups from the War are living close by, and with amnesty being given to them, so they walk the streets



completely free. The War story goes something like this, and I have heard it so many times, seen movies of it, that I believe the stories. The USA (and the CIA) were giving a corrupt military government in Guatemala, and their supporters, the Ladinos (rich), large amounts of money for the land of the Maya. The land was being used for mining and logging of trees. The US fruit company was also involved.

The Maya were, and still are, a peaceful people caught in the middle. They needed their lands to grow coffee and sugar and pineapple, bananos (yes an o). A group of Guerillas, (gone now but noone knows where) that were made up of Ladinos supportive of the Maya, a few other people, etc. began to fight the Government and the US trained soldiers of the military government.

First the soldiers killed, tortured, and attacked the Maya because that group thought that the Maya were aiding the soldiers. Then the Guerillas also attacked the Maya because they thought that the Maya were aiding the soldiers. A peace pact was signed ten years ago, but the country still is uneasy about the US and the current reforma-

tion oriented government—a government similar to that in the Dominican Republic. I hope that all of this does not bore you, but really, one cannot think about Central America and visiting here and even the political effects for us of what goes on here, with-

out understanding about the war. Incidentally, they consider both the US and Canadians who come here, Gringos.

I read the local paper and today there was an article about how we are coming here now to help but that to really help we should have been here before (in the war days or right after I guess).

China increasingly is being respected and has made tremendous inroads into the economy here. Cuba, which incidently, attempted an invasion of Guatemala in 1960, is respected and even seen as a friendly haven. Castro allows free education, but for only those Guatemaltecos who want to train as doctors.

Another aspect of what makes these Latin countries tick, is that of religion. The center of each small village is the beautiful opulant Catholic church. The Maya are very concerned that their own gods (especially Maximon) and mystical beliefs, their beliefs of origin of life being from the energy of the solar system, and all life forces being present in living things, especially trees and etc. (Ceiba in particular,) be fostered and kept alive in their families. Their is a move to get the Maya calendar

put to use in schools. The Catholic Church allows for all the Maya beliefs, along with its own.

One example of this meld concerns the making of bombs by the Maya and the loud sounds that occur when they fire them off. They are aimed straight up and are set off to celebrate the Roman Catholic festivals and saints. Santo Francisco, here in Panajachel, is one saint but at the same time they are set off for Maya gods, birthdays, graduations, etc. It is a fearsome experience for visitors until we find out from some willing Maya, what the bombing is all about.

The seasons here are interesting. It is summer from November until the end of April and winter from May to the end of October. There is no mention of Fall and Spring. Our summer is the rainy season here and our winter is the dry season.

The school year just started last week after a 2-1/2 month break. The children go to school from 7:30 to 12:30. Education is free and compulsory by age 6. There are public and private schools. I am teaching in a private school run by the Evangelico Church. It is having a powerful new influence here and is building schools, churches and new homes. The Catholics say that they are Christian and the Evangelicos are not and the Evangelicos say that they are the Christians and the Catholics are not. Then there are Mormons and other groups here.

There is also a two-tiered health care system, with the public system being free. There is no medicine here however. I

asked a group of Canadian doctors why they are here and they said that the public system only gives advice and can do no more because they have no medicines. The doctors also told me that they had some road blocks put in their way when they proposed coming here. The government would not let them bring a gift of medicines. The doctors said also, that they were asked not to bring clothes into the country for the people because that ruined the clothes-making part of their economy.

Indeed everyone looks healthy and well clothed. Of course the Maya make their own clothes and wear their traditional costumes. In addition, although they do not drink milk or use milk products, their diet is very healthy. The daily use of frijoles, at more than one meal adds calcium. They eat no fat. It really is true that the babies are weaned from the breast to coffee in a bottle.

I am always speaking about Maya customs. The people are small boned, of normal weight, never seem to have grey hair, no baldness and now smile at me a lot. The other day two mothers and a teacher kissed me! Teachers are held in great respect. My wonderful and informed Spanish teacher, a university graduate, often talks to me about situations here, and in the outside world. He does it in Spanish so that is practice time for me.

Today he talked about the problem here when well meaning groups come here to build and to help. He said that the people have to be involved when such groups come and that the

people must be shown how to do things, how to use new equipment and so on. He was definite about the importance of organizations from first world countries giving machinery but showing the Maya how to use and look after that machinery, so that the Maya can compete in the world economy. He even talked about NAFTA, and said that it is destroying Guatemala. Not bad for a Maya lad to be thinking global. I'm afraid that my knowledge of NAFTA wasn't very great, except that the US doesn't follow the rules set out in it.

There are a lot of tuk tuks here and today I used one. They are the taxis. My teacher took me on the back of his motorcycle to another school where he is teaching English. Many children are not happy learning English, especially the younger ones. Yesterday, in a grade 2 class of 30 kids, when I entered the room I was greeted by 30 small children thumping their desks and chanting something in Spanish over and over. I didn't think that it was a pleasant welcome, and sure enough it was not. My teacher said that it is common behavior when the students want to show displeasure about something, and I guess it was of having to take English (but they were so young!).

Most people will either walk or ride bicycles, and it is amazing to see how many people can be transported on one bicycle. About taking pictures here...it is not done, and so there will be none accompanying this letter. The reason is that the locals,

especially the adults, fear the Gringos will steal their children to take home and raise, or use their body parts. Ten percent of children disappear each year. Taking pictures is thought to be used to target certain children who will then disappear. I see potential pictures that I would love to take, but resist the urge. The colorfully clad little girls and the Maya ladies tempt me especially. They have such perfect posture as they carry their big loads on their heads. It is not unusual to see men carrying huge loads on their bent over backs, using tump lines (forehead straps). One day I saw a huge refrigerator being delivered to some 'rico' no doubt. How it even got here is a mystery.

The cotton fabric in clothes is made here and the outfits are sewn here also. There is much bright color and many interesting patterns. There are bright fabrics rolled around the hair sort of like crowns. Each village has a pattern and color that was used by the Spaniards to identify the location of people and that still is a custom that is followed. The costumes consist of long skirts, covered with aprons and short sleeved blouses.

Dress here is very modest and not much skin is shown. I wear long pants, long sleeved tops and my cycle vest. I have one locally made long skirt that comes to my ankles and that I wear to teach.

My name here is Aurora, pronounced A oo or a. It is a

(CONT'D ON PAGE 10)

WOMAN WORKS TO KEEP BEARS, HUMANS ALIVE

By Michael Jamison

Missoulian October 17, 2005

WEST GLACIER, Mont. — Carrie Hunt leaves the horse-whispering to other, more prosaic folk. It's far more exciting and satisfying, she said, to practice bear-shouting.

"Basically, what I've done over the past 10 years is pilot a program where we teach bears and teach people how to live in the same areas without conflict," she said.

Her business, the Wind River Bear Institute, recently relocated from Utah to Florence, Mont., putting Hunt within a day's drive of the Lower 48's last remaining grizzly bear populations. It's a move that's allowed her to respond quickly to bear problems, including grain spills in the railroad corridor near Essex.

And now that she's in the neighborhood, Hunt and her methods are expanding out of people's backyards and into the backcountry, with precedent-setting work deep in Glacier National Park.

"What we're doing now has never been done before," Hunt said. "What we're doing is the only program of its kind in the entire world."

Hunt is traveling like a missionary into grizzly country, bringing with her lessons for the bears in how to get along with human hikers. This summer, students included a sow and two cubs—bears that, until

Hunt's lessons, didn't mind much hanging out with humans.

"The goal," she said, "was to teach the bears to prefer to do the right thing." The real goal, which goes back decades, has been to stop killing bears.

"I've been a bear biologist for almost 30 years now," Hunt said. "Pretty early on, I got tired of seeing bears die because they got into trouble with humans."

In 1982, after years working in Yellowstone National Park and along Montana's Rocky Mountain Front, Hunt finally decided to tackle the problem. She had moved to Missoula and was working on her master's degree, when she started thinking about nonlethal methods to teach bears 'no'.

Her first efforts included the use of pepper spray. But spray only goes so far, and for a tool to be truly effective it needed a longer reach.

Soon, Hunt was partnered with Wyoming Fish and Game officials, performing tests of rubber bullets on wild bears.

"No one knew what would happen," she said. Would the bears turn and run? Would they charge?

Turns out, the rubber bullets worked great, effectively stinging bears into retreat. But they too were limited in range. Her work, of course, had taken her into hunting camps and across big ranches, where she started to notice a pattern. Outfitters and

landowners with dogs didn't have near the bear problems as those without.

Dogs, she realized, would give her the required range, "and I went looking for the breed. It was then that I discovered Karelian bear dogs."

Brown bear hunters in Finland swore by their Karelians, which unlike hounds wouldn't tree a bear. Instead, they worked grizzlies the way cow dogs work cattle.

Over the past decade, Hunt and her Wind River Bear Institute have worked bears using trained dogs to remarkable success.

"In 10 years of work, with 200 to 300 bear actions a year, working from Japan to Canada and throughout the Rockies, we have never had a bear dog hurt or a person hurt or a bear hurt," she said.

The trick, she said, is to distinguish between "aversive conditioning" and "bear shepherding."

Aversive conditioning, she said, uses negative reinforcement to harass bears away from people places — essentially to teach fear of people.

Bear shepherding, she said, involves sophisticated bear behavior modification, "cuing them in very precise ways." Essentially, it teaches good habits, teaches a bear it can leave at any time and it can choose natural cover over garbage cans.

The program involves lots of learning – by the bears, the public, the bear managers and especially by the Wind River staff. Its success was evident enough that this summer managers at Glacier Park decided to try taking it straight into the bear’s lair.

For years, a female grizzly has stomped around Oldman Lake like she owned the place. At first, she learned she didn’t have to move away from the trail when hikers came by. Later, she learned hikers would give way when she wanted the trail to herself.

Finally, she learned to lumber boldly into remote backcountry campgrounds, cubs in tow, to “Hoover up” any crumbs left behind.

But she never stole any food, never charged, never acted in any way aggressively. And she was productive, keeping up a regular brood of cubs and bolstering the grizzly population. Problem was, those cubs were learning all the wrong lessons.

In July, park management invited Wind River to come in and assess the situation. It was not without precedent. Hunt started working with the park in 1997, when she and her Karelians moved 13 black bears from alongside Glacier’s Camas Road.

In 1998, they pushed a grizzly off the boardwalk at Logan Pass in just five days, and the bear never had to be trapped, never caused another day’s trouble. In 2000, she successfully taught a food-conditioned grizzly to steer clear of front-

country camps on the park’s eastern side “and that bear never came back.”

The bear she found at Oldman Lake was, in her words, “flexible and soft and subordinate and easy around people.”

The challenge would be to keep her that way. The last thing Hunt wanted was a bear that wasn’t aggressive to suddenly get jittery and see people as a problem requiring force.

The commitment to save the grizzly, she said, “was an incredibly proactive thing for the park to do. They pulled together all the resources they had to try to save her, to do this properly and to give her a chance.”

With two Wind River staffers, two park rangers and three Karelians, Hunt took to the woods, set up camp and waited. The idea, she said, was to act like hikers and campers — who were shut out of the area at the height of the summer season for the work to begin.

When the dogs scented the grizzly, they barked her off the trail. She took cover in the campground, and Hunt pushed her out with shouts and exploding “cracker shells.”

Earlier, rangers had put a radio collar on the bear, so they were able to track her – all the way over the ridge and into the next drainage.

“She really took off and at that point, yeah, I thought she probably was a very good candidate for conditioning,” Hunt said.

Dressed in “civilian” hiking clothes, they “did what hikers

do,” except with trained dogs and lots of shouting. Eventually, they pulled the dogs out, and relied only on shouting.

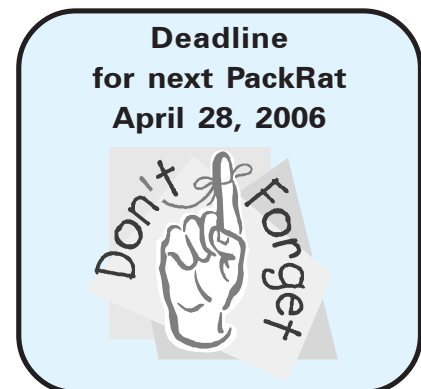
Every time the bear retreated, the stress stopped, a positive reinforcement for making a good decision. The rubber bullets were never fired.

The work is not yet complete, she said, “but we already know that this bear knows it shouldn’t approach campgrounds. It’s working, and she’s starting to understand.”

As for the park, officials there are still waiting to see how things turn out. Whether the park backs another such attempt with another such bear remains to be seen.

If her work in the backcountry succeeds, Hunt said, in 20 years her methods will be commonplace. Should that come to pass, she said, Glacier will deserve much of the credit.

“In all my work in national parks, I’ve never seen a park commit like this,” she said. They’ve been pioneers with us. They knew that this was this bear’s last chance, and they did it right.”



common name here and means dawn. The students call me Senora Aurora which is a bit of a mouthful for the little kids. I love them and teaching small children is a new experience for me.

Today there were 30, five-year olds in a one-hour class to learn English. They could not read or write, so I had a long session where we sang, "*If You're Happy and You know It Clap Your Hands*". Classes have to be taught in Spanish and then the English follows. Talk about a challenge!

When a Gringo tries to speak Spanish and has had no conversation classes, only a dictionary for example, the locals cannot understand because our pronunciation, even syllabic emphasis is not correct. Hopefully in future, more of our schools in Canada will introduce Spanish to our children in an early grade.

In conclusion, I miss the crosscountry skiing and our nice walks in Calgary. Doing trips with Ramblers is always a stimulating experience.

Visiting Guatemala is an adventure if you seek out the Maya area and if you want to experience a third world country. Of course you can, as with most other areas of the world, experience those other areas of the world in first world hotels and with tour groups. The Lonely Planet guide is my bible when I travel and can recommend it highly. See you in April!

Con afecto, Dawn

By D. Reimer

The latest of our joint meetings of K Country Recreation users with K Country staff fell on a very snowy February 22. Following are highlights of this meeting.

Sheep Valley Study

Bridget Couban, the U of C grad student who did the study of designated trails in the Sheep last summer, showed us her preliminary report. She mapped bad spots and graded the trails (1 to 4 with 1=no work needed and 4=bad enough to need re-route).

She also interviewed 50 user groups for opinions (some of us were in 1 of the groups). 33 of these groups were equestrian, only 11 were hikers, an imbalance she thinks may have happened because horse riders take quite awhile to leave the trail-head while hikers can disappear much faster (interviews were done late afternoon).

Bridget's study confirms what we have said for some time; some trails are in very bad condition, mainly because they lie in valley bottoms (e.g. Death Valley). The worst she mapped was Wolf Creek-Phone Line loop. Last June's rains made some trails worse but most of what she saw, except for washed out bridges and some trenching, was already there.

K Country agrees that the most serious problem affecting these trails is bad drainage.

Gorge Creek Road

This will re-open but the middle section will be permanently closed. There will be access to Gorge Creek trailhead from the south and to Ware Creek Day Use area from the north. When it opens is still unknown.

Snowshoe Trails

A new 5 km trail is opened from the Sawmill trailhead. It will use some of the Red and Yellow/Green trails and one leg will follow close to James Walker creek. Last year's marked trails continue to be well used.

Barrier Lake staff report around ½ of requests for info now come from snowshoers. They were also surprised to discover that a lot of the users (maybe most) were well under 50.

Bow Valley Trails

Work done over the past two years on Bow Corridor trails will continue. New trails in Canmore area are generally bike trails or bike-hike trails. A Steering Committee has formed to coordinate the activity here so that plans made by one authority (e.g. Bighorn Munic.) won't conflict with another's plans (e.g. Parks Canada or Canmore).

The Banff-Canmore bike commuter trail is one project planned to go ahead with a starter \$30,000 grant to investigate how to build it. The group will also look at intelligent

transportation systems and park & ride facilities.

Winter Program

After a delayed start, track setting has been going very well. There is concern about dogs on Mt. Shark trails and it is possible that they will soon be banned when the region becomes a Provincial Park.

Canmore Nordic Centre

Last year’s unfinished work will continue until completed. Word is that the revamping of trails has been excellent, particularly the ‘Banff’ trail which is now the best trail for beginner skiers in K Country.

Management Plans

Peter Lougheed/Spray Valley plan expected to be signed in March.

Sheep/Blue Rock Draft Plan, on the other hand, has run into snags because there is dispute between SRD (forestry) and K Country over who manages what. Another month or 2 is needed to sort this out. SRD has always managed the cattle usage while KC looks after most of the rest – which may have impact on what effect public input may have on this plan.

2006/7 Program

Great news. K Country believe (fingers crossed) they have 5 to 8 years commitment of capital funding. They have a

fairly ambitious program for 2006; refurbishing some sites (includes Allen Bill pond), repairing the boat launches, upgrading a few trails (Mt. Indefatigable, Fullerton loop are 2), a few new toilets plus a fancy one at Tombstone Lake. They will continue to use volunteer efforts as well, coordinated by Friends of Kananaskis.

Closing Trails

It is important to keep track of the possibility of trails being closed. Staff biologists seem to want to keep everyone out of various regions (except cattle) so we need to stay alert to this.

Next meeting will be May. If you want more info on any of the above stuff, give me a call.



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

March 07	Ian Dyson (Head of Environmental Management, Alberta Environment) "Shifting Reality: Perceptions of the Environment"		
March 21	Anthony Russell (Professor of Biology, University of Calgary) "In Search of a Natural Classification: The Tree of Life Bears the Fruit of Systematic (R)evolution(s)"		
April 04	Elizabeth Wilman (Professor of Economics, University of Calgary) "Environmental Economics Perspectives"		
April 18	Petra von Morstein (Professor of Philosophy Emerita, University of Calgary) "The Fellowship of Immanuel Kant: How his three Critiques can affect our lives now."		
Meetings	7:30 pm sharp, at the Scandinavian Centre, 739-20 Avenue NW		
Membership	Annual: \$30.00	1 Jan to 31 Aug: \$15	
Entrance Fee	Members & 1st Visits: \$3.00	Students & Seniors: \$5	Non-Members: \$7
Contacts & Info	www.ApeironSociety.org	Laszlo @ 252-7332	