

The PackRat

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION

MARCH/APRIL 2007



PHOTO CREDIT: TRAVIS JACOBS

A typical street in Antigua. There are always horse-drawn carriages available for a nice tour of the city, taking you past many of the ruins and market areas.

WHAT'S INSIDE?



Ski for Light	2
K-Country Trail Info	5
Wearing Hijab	6

**RMRA
Executive Committee**

President
Tom Flanagan

Vice President
Anita O'Reilly

Treasurer
Laszlo Jamniczky

Secretary
Linda Eastwood

Trips Director
Ron Hunter

Program Director
Jim Paterson

Social Director
Barbara Mitchell

Membership
Dorothy-Ann Reimer

Newsletter Editor
Irene Willett

Past President
Allan Mathies

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.

E-mail 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 2007 by the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association.

SKI FOR LIGHT

by Ron M.

Can you imagine skiing down the trail on a beautiful cold sunny day, but you cannot see where you are going!

This was the situation for about 40 blind skiers staying at William Watson Lodge for one week in February. The occasion was the annual ski event held by Ski For Light, an organisation to give opportunities to blind skiers.

The skiers had various degrees of blindness, most were totally blind and others had varying levels of disability. Each skier was assigned a sighted guide for the week and the guide's duties included helping the skiers to and from their cabins and serving them the buffet meals in addition to guiding on the trails. Once the skiers were in their familiar cabins they were surprisingly autonomous.

The real challenges started out on the trails, for both the skier and the guide. In previous years I had guided a totally blind skier who could ski faster than me. We eventually developed an excellent rapport and he was able to ski down Whisky Jack and Elk Pass. However this took quite a lot of effort to develop the instructions he needed for every turn, climb and descent in detail. Try and imagine descending Whisky Jack blindfold!

This year, I was guiding a young man who was partially blind and a total beginner – a different kind of challenge.

However, he was reasonably fit and motivated and by the end of the week he was going well. It did take some time however to develop a rapport and to coordinate his needs with my instructions, which were sometimes less than helpful. "Get up!, get out of the snow bank! - **SLOW DOWN!**"

Everyone was motivated by the races held at the end of the week. These were held on the camp roads at Elkwood specially tracked for the occasion by the much appreciated Kananaskis staff. There were races of 10km, 5km, and 2.5km with also three classes of blindness. This meant most skiers could win some kind of medal and the competition was fierce. The guides skied with the skiers urging them on, but they didn't count in the results and didn't get medals.

Saturday night was the big night when the medals were awarded and this was followed by a dance where there were lots of participants. There were also other social events most nights: An auction, quiz night, talent night, the organisation's AGM and always parties going on in the individual cabins.

Ski for Light holds events every year – next year it will be in Vernon on Olympic class trails and in 2009 it will be held in Kananaskis again. I would recommend this week to anyone, it is challenging but extremely satisfying. Something completely different!



**“Where there is love
there is life.”**

— MAHATMA GANDHI

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.

CAPTURE CORFU - MAY 6 TO 19, 2007

Water so blue you'd swear they had painted the bottom of the ocean & literally thousands of olive trees... **that is Corfu!** Come hike with us through olive and lemon groves, up to the abandoned fortress of Angelocastro and along the remote northern coastline. Feast with us on Greek cuisine, relax by the shores of the Ionian Sea and enjoy ouzo with the locals. *Opa!*

EXPERIENCE ICELAND - JULY 2 TO 13, 2007

Iceland is the land of the midnight sun! Trek on volcanic terrain, marvel at the view atop Iceland's *Grand Canyon*, stand the edge of the most powerful waterfall in all Europe, & relax in the soothing thermal waters of the Blue Lagoon. From Reykjavik all the way up to the northern fishing village of Husavik, days are packed full of awesome sights and experiences. *This is a once-in-a-lifetime adventure!*

DISCOVER SLOVENIJA - JULY 30 TO AUGUST 11, 2007

Discover the fairy-tale setting of Slovenija with its Julian Alps, medieval castles, baroque churches and Dragon Bridge. Hike behind the thundering Slap Pericnik waterfall and through Vintgar Gorge gushing with white water. Trek up the impressive Mt. Triglav and around the glacier-fed Lake Bohinj. *Discover unspoiled Slovenija.*

LA BELLE SAGUENAY - AUGUST 25 TO SEPT 2, 2007

Hike along the second longest fjord in North America! Explore three of Quebec's most celebrated parks - all in the Saguenay-Lac Saint-Jean region. Highlights include superb hiking trails, whale-watching on a zodiac in Tadoussac, a Quebecois dinner on a family farm and even a little free time to sightsee in Quebec City. Our hotel is nestled on the hillside overlooking the tranquil Baie des Ha! Ha! and offers some of the best in French cuisine.

SAVOUR TUSCANY - SEPTEMBER 15 TO 19, 2007

Mouth-watering gelatos, world-famous vino, gastronomic feasts, passionate locals and some of the most picturesque hiking in the world await you on this two-week adventure in glorious Tuscany. Join us as we hike the region famous for its vineyards, olive groves and renaissance architecture. You will be captivated by the scenery and charmed by the towns and villages that can only be best appreciated on foot! You will truly get a taste of *La Dolce Vita!*

Comfortable Hiking Holidays

(416) 445-2628
info@letshike.com
www.letshike.com





THE APEIRON SOCIETY FOR THE PRACTICE OF PHILOSOPHY

This is the Society's 20th year of philosophical seminars and discussions.
All who are interested in the practice of philosophy
in everyday life are welcome.

This year's theme is: "Freedom and Identity"

March 13	Heather Jamniczky (Dept. of Biology, U of C) "The ape in the mirror: human and animal 'selves'".		
March 27	Jeremy Fantl (Professor of Philosophy, U of C) - TBA		
April 10	Panel Discussion - " Socratic Dialogue"		
April 24	Petra von Morstein (Professor Emerita U of C, Philosophical Counsellor) "Faces of autonomy in thought and action".		
Meetings	7:30 pm sharp, at the Scandinavian Centre, 739-20 Avenue NW		
Membership	Annual: \$30	1 Jan to 31 Aug: \$15	
Entrance Fee	Members & 1st Visits: \$3	Students & Seniors: \$5	Non-Members: \$7
Contacts & Info	www.ApeironSociety.org	Laszlo @ 252-7332	

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.

FOR RENT

Apartment available July 1.
2 bedroom, basement suite,
across street from SAIT.
All utilities. Rent: \$800-900
monthly (not set yet).

Contact Dawn @
sseojsm2@yahoo.ca

RMR Member

*Welcome
New Members*

*Karen Almquist
Ben Silverberg
Cindy L. Heselton
Victoria Cox
Veronique Le Saux*

• • • •

*Welcome
Back*

*Reg Fryling
Lynda Turner*

• • • •



More K-Country Trail Info

by D. Reimer

New Minister

Community Development appears split in 2: Sustainable Resources (Forestry) under Ted Morton and Tourism, Parks, Recreation & Culture under Hector Goudreau. Minister Goudreau's mandate from the Premier was "develop a plan for Provincial Parks and Recreation Areas to accommodate population growth and improve quality of life opportunities".

Note that when the new Cabinet was announced, the Ministers were listed in "order of precedence". Hector Goudreau's name was last, two behind Ted Morton. Does this indicate the priority level Parks has in government values?

The following information is from the last K Country – Trail Users Meeting, December 20, 2006.

Flood Damage Repairs

\$2 million spent so far, \$.5 million of it for trails. Some work left until 2007.

November Storm Damage

Some clean-up work done and more expected for late winter. Claim was made for disaster funds.

Rummel Lake Trail

This trail is now a Designated Trail (means K Country's responsible for maintenance). New route to bypass avalanche-prone areas is marked. Other re-routes

are also possible. Planning for a new parking lot which may be .5km south of road junction. Deadfall removal in cut blocks to widen trail to facilitate skiing was proposed but K Country not receptive.

Sheep/BlueRock Draft Management Plan

K Country finalizing plan to send to Minister. KC refuses to tell us if they are recommending opening more of Gorge Creek Road. They keep saying "it is up to the Minister". This sounds like they are submitting the plan WITH the complete closure still in place.

Banff – Canmore Commuter Corridor

This Corridor is planned for non-motorized use (including equestrians). It is one of the projects the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) committee is working on. Trail statistics: 3 m wide, paved, estimated cost \$11M. Location will be outside the highway fencing which accounts for the high cost. Environmental assessment still to come, maybe in April or May, 2007. It will become part of the Trans-Canada Trail.

Nordic Centre

The Centre is on the approved list for 2007 World Cup. Day Lodge construction ongoing and expected to be completed September '07.

Tracksetting Sawmill Trails

We ask repeatedly for this as this is where the snow is a guarantee but K Country will only do this area when there's no

snow at Ribbon (and sometimes also PLPP). We keep trying.

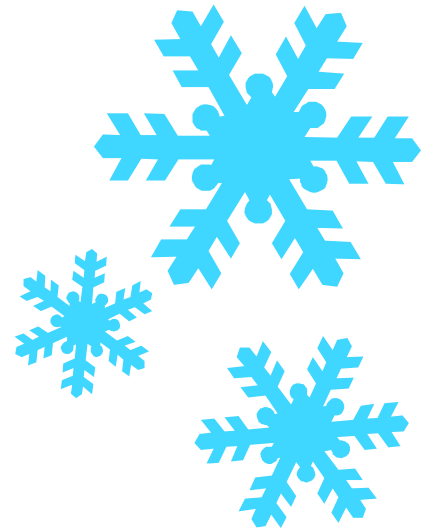
K Country Logging Plans

Spray Lake Sawmills is developing plans to cut in the Jumping Pound and Waiporou areas in conjunction with K Country's request to fight the mountain pine beetle. SLS will host a series of Open Houses to show the Public where and how it will log.

Post-Meeting Info

Spray Lake held its Open House on Feb. 1. It looks as if there will be some cutting near the 70-Buck off-trail area this year. Next year it will be cutting in the area west of the Bar C (NW of Waiporou) which may affect some of our off-trail hikes there as well.

Next Meeting: March 21/07. If you have any issues you want raised, e-mail me at reimerda@evoco.com



Wearing Hijab

by Dorothy-Ann Reimer

Having traveled in a few countries where the dominant religion is Islam, I thought I might share some personal experiences on the various forms of covering or *privacy* as the word *hijab* sometimes translates...all from one female tourist's point-of-view.

First country was Pakistan. We women on the tour wore slacks or long skirts, long-sleeved shirts or tunics, socks (even in sandals) and a light scarf over our hair. Women we saw wore *shakwar kamisas*, beautiful tunics over pantaloon-shaped pants. All wore filmy scarves over their heads.

A very few women we saw in Pakistan wore *burqas*, heavy roomy cloaks that covered them, top to toe. Only the shoes peeked out. The face was covered by a cross-hatched part of the head gear and I wondered if they could see anything at all. At least there were those open bits in the mask, unlike Saudi women who must wear an almost opaque face covering.

Next stop was Iran with a stricter dress code. It was 1996 so restrictions of the early '90s had eased a bit and we saw women wearing long trench-coats with bits of hair showing on their heads. Here I wore a *chador*, a long cloak-like garment with a hood and a flip-down translucent cloth to cover the face. The cloak was billowy and black and passed the censors.

Chador good points: If you put the face cover down, no one could tell your expression or if you were staring at them. You could carry things under the cloak safely – no one would dare try to grab your camera from under that *chador*. You didn't have to *do* your hair, your clothes underneath could be as sloppy or inelegant as you liked.



Chador bad points: They inhibited the way I walked, slowed me down. The face covering made it more difficult to see clearly. When we were camping, cooking over a flame was decidedly more hazardous. And if you had to use the biffy down the hall in the middle of the night, you had to put the thing on before you left your hotel room.

With a sigh of relief, we entered Turkey. In villages we still dressed modestly but once we reached the Mediterranean areas, shorts and T-shirts were the order of the day. We even encountered women on some beaches going topless.

On to Syria. More restrictive than Turkey. Syrian women

wore head scarves and long tunic-like dresses over their other clothes. We (tourists) were back into slacks or long skirts, long-sleeved shirts and our head coverings.

Jordan seemed much freer and, at least in the more touristy areas, we could wear shorts again.

My last country, Egypt, is the

most recent country I visited and, again, modesty was recommended. Cairene women wore slacks and tunics with matching headscarves but out in the desert villages women were often in *burqas*. For us, in the touristy areas, we could wear long shorts and modest T-shirts or blouses. In the villages we added a headscarf.

A word about scarves to cover the head and hair– they are the trickiest things to wear. I often felt I was strangling myself and when the scarf wasn't slipping backwards off my hair, it was falling over my eyes.

When we are tempted to condemn the wearing of *hijab*, we should first look at our own recent past. Not so long ago, women *had* to wear a hat to church, weddings, funerals. They *had* to wear gloves, a girdle, dress and stockings to work. Those who didn't were considered scandalous. There are other religious groups in Canada who *must* wear certain dress (e.g. Hutterites, Mennonites). Just be glad we live in a community where we women have a certain amount of freedom to dress much as we choose.