

The PackRat

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION

November / December 2007



WHAT'S INSIDE?



Table of Contents

- 2 Message from the Editor
- 3 More on K Country
- 5 Annual Dinner and Dance
- 5 Shopping Night at MEC
- 8 Bear Hair
- 8 Annual Christmas Potluck



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The Packrat is published six times a year by the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association. We welcome articles, comments and ideas from our members, and if content is deemed suitable and space permits, we will use it.

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

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Message from the Editor

Irene Willet sat in the Packrat editor's chair for six long and glorious years. Through 42 issues, she collected articles, sorted through photographs and scrounged around for anything to fill those annoying little left-over spaces.

Thank you, Irene, for the hours and hours you gave the Packrat. You've earned your new-found free time. Enjoy it, and see you on the trails.

Now it's my turn.

Being editor of the Ramblers' newsletter will be a big new adventure for me. I started by reading a little book called **Newsletters for Dummies**. Page One suggests we determine why we have a newsletter at all. Here's my take on this:

Why do we bother to have a newsletter?

* It is a vehicle for members to share their adventures.

And we have some very adventurous members who travel the world - not always (though sometimes) in the lap of luxury.

* It is a vehicle to inform members of events that are happening in the club and in the community.

We Ramblers care deeply about the world we hike and ski in - especially the prairies, the foothills and the mountains around Calgary

And we love our potlucks.

This is your newsletter

Help us make this newsletter something we are all happy to receive. Let us know what you think and what you want.

What do you like reading about most?

What parts do you read first?

Can you recommend other newsletters you enjoy?

It takes more than an editor to make a good newsletter.

Happy hiking.

*Sharon Wingenbach
Editor*

There are two other kinds of packrats - this is one:



More on K Country

The Trail Users Group met with K country staff on Sept 26. I won't be able to attend the next meeting.

If anyone wants to go to the next meeting on Wednesday November 14, call Linda Vaxvick at 239-9434 for details.

These are some of the issues we discussed:

More Money

As you've probably heard (see **Discussion** on our website), the Minister of Parks, Hector Gondreau, announced added capital maintenance funding of \$12.4 M for K Country, mostly for water and sewer with some going to trails.

Equally important is the new policy that allows projects that are started but not completed in one year to have funding for the next year as well.

Toilets

The extra funding will buy 52 replacement toilets, 24 of which will be the new ODOUR-FREE toilets. Cost: \$80,000 for a four-holer, \$60,000 for a two-holer.

Cattle-guards

A new concern for bicyclists and hikers is the lack of metal strips across the new cattle-guards. K Country will follow up as this is a safety issue.

Vandalism / Security

Vandalism continues to be a problem.

* People destroy or steal signs. They break up tables and toilet doors for fire wood. One weekend, a group at Pocaterra Hut hauled picnic tables up onto the roof.

* The number of thefts from parked vehicles goes up and down - a gang operating in K Country is caught but one year later, they are back, breaking into cars again. K Country is field-testing a **Green Crime Program** to fight vandalism. If it is successful, this will probably include a hot line for tips.

Sheep / Blue Rock Management Plan

The Sheep / Blue Rock Management Plan is still waiting for resolution on Native issues. The largest issue with the Native bands is hunting rights, although they appear to be satisfied with restrictions on sheep.

K Country thinks it may be necessary to take the plan to the minister soon, with clauses that allow for settling Native issues at a later date.

Gorge Creek Road Closure

No comment from K Country - the road remains closed.

After the meeting, I happened to meet the Minister, Hector Gondreau, at Allen Bill Pond. This was the same day he made the announcement about additional funding. He was polite and friendly, and acknowledged that he has received letters on these issues. I offered to take him on a hike up **Volcano** Ridge the following day but he claimed that he had other commitments.

cont'd on Page 4



**Next deadline for articles to the Packrat
December 24, 2007**

Activities

Hiking
Backpacking
Cross-Country Skiing
Downhill Skiing
Cycling
Climbing
Scrambling
Mountaineering
Camping
Education and Awareness Programs
Socials

Meetings

Every Wednesday evening at 7:30
Rosemont Community Centre
10 St NW at Confederation Park

Contact Us

Rocky Mountain Ramblers
Association
c/o Calgary Area Outdoor Council
(CAOC)
1111 Memorial Dr NW
Calgary, AB T2N 3E4

Trip Info

The Information Line at 282-6308,
our website and weekly meetings

Website

www.ramblers.ab.ca

If we have your e-mail address,
we will automatically notify you when
an electronic copy of the Packrat
is on the website.

cont'd from Page 3

Lynx Ski Trail Re-route

A possible re-route to avoid
the steep hill on this trail is
being looked at. A more
detailed review will be done
in November.

Summer Work Done

Several trails had work done.
This includes:

- * re-routing, draining and
resurfacing of some of Curly
Sands / 9999 trails.
- * re-routing near the cliffy
part of Prairie Creek.
- * re-routing (and building a
new bridge) the last ½ km of
Rummel Lake trail to the north
side of the creek (avoids the
avalanche slope).

Next Summer Work

Up-grades, re-routes, etc.
are planned for 2008 for Ha
Ling (maybe), Death Valley
(hoorah!), 3-Point Creek /
North Fork, 9999 and Tom
Snow trails...to mention just
a few. More details to come
in November.

Canmore Nordic Centre

Almost all of the work should
have been completed by the
end of October. Trail profiles
are being prepared, with
excellent separation between
recreation and competition.

There are some very good
beginner loops. The Group
suggested that winter usage
could be increased by doing
a link to a web-cam to show
conditions there.

Sawmill Ski Trails

This is the best area for snow
but K Country is still unable to
provide equipment and staff to
trackset it. I asked that a cost
estimate be prepared on what
it would take to get track-
setting done there on a
regular basis.

Snowshoe Trails

K Country will be signing a
route up to and over Elk Pass,
mostly along the powerline. It
is an ongoing problem to
manage snowshoe vs ski
needs, especially for groups
such as the seniors.

Dorothy-Ann

Welcome New Members

Bernhard Rosner
Gilles Longval
Colleen Griffin
Alan Sitter
Daine Montgomery
Alan Williams

**The most terrifying thing
about the universe
is not that it's hostile.
but that it's indifferent.**

Annual Dinner and Dance

The **Annual Dinner and Dance** was held at the Calgary Winter Club on Friday, October 26. 46 Ramblers turned out for an evening of food and dance.

It's always interesting to spend an evening with Ramblers when they are wearing clothes they didn't buy at MEC.

And every year, our line dancing gets better...

Thanks to all of you who supported this event.

And a special thanks to the following companies for their generous donations for door prizes:

Campers Village

* \$50 gift certificate

GemTrek

* map

Mountain Equipment Co-op

* two small backpacks

The Norseman

* ski bag, water bottles and four sets of ski straps

Sport Swap

* two lift tickets for Nakiska, Fernie or Lake Louise

See you next year.

RMRA Shopping Night at Mountain Equipment Coop

Sunday, December 2
6:00 - 8:00

Here's a great opportunity to purchase gear for your winter activities or to do some Christmas shopping.

On Sunday, December 2, 2007, from 6:00-8:00 pm, Mountain Equipment Coop is opening its doors exclusively to members of the Rocky Mountain Ramblers and immediate family.

During this time, Ramblers will receive a 10% discount and be eligible for door prizes.

Please let us know if you plan to attend by completing the survey on the Ramblers' website by November 28.

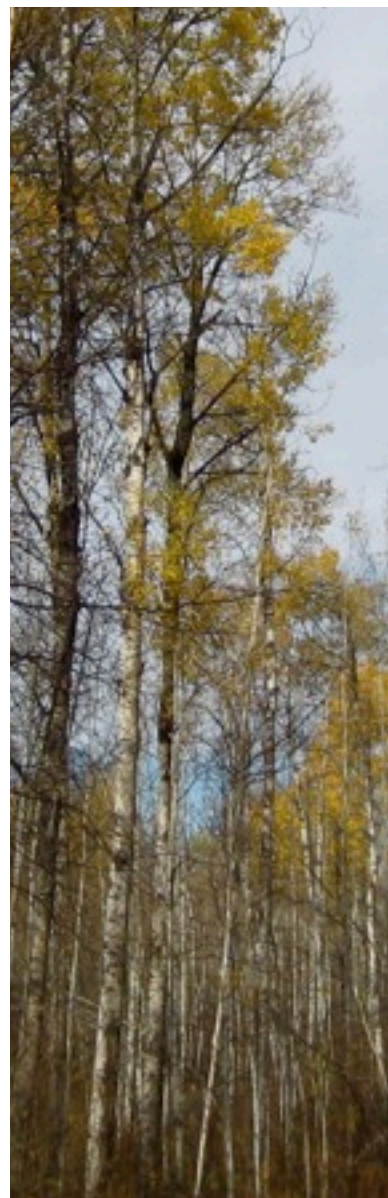
Remember – your Ramblers membership expires

November 30.

Don't forget to renew so you can attend this event.



If you received this newsletter in the mail, and you prefer to receive it online instead, send an e-mail to the editor. About 85% of Ramblers receive the Packrat online. (It saves trees....)



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.

The Coming Crisis - Alberta at Risk

Monday November 26, 2007

7:00 – 8:00 pm,

Mount Royal College, Rm Y-224 (4825 Mount Royal Gate SW)

ELIZABETH MAY

Leader of the Federal Green Party of Canada

will address how our use of fossil fuels threatens the future through destabilized climate, water shortage and social dislocation..... and how to reverse these trends.

Moderators will be

Duane Bratt, Ph.D., Department of Policy Studies
Mount Royal College

and

Lori Williams, Department of Policy Studies,
Mount Royal College

This will be followed by a Meet & Greet in Rm Y-216 from 8:00 to 8:30.



Comfortable Hiking Holidays

2008 HIKING CALENDAR

Get our new 2008 Hiking Calendar! E-mail or call with your address we'll gladly add you to our guest list. You'll also receive our e-newsletter "Let's Hike".



RESERVE NOW FOR 2008!

THAILAND

February 16 to March 1, 2008

Countless new experiences await you in Thailand – hike through tribal villages, visit incredible floating markets & Buddhist temples, bathe elephants and taste an abundance of fresh & flavourful foods. Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai & the River Kwai - all part of this incredible journey.

Andalucía, SPAIN

April 13 to 26, 2008

The Spanish passion for living is deliciously contagious! Hike the picturesque Andalucía region with its "white villages" nestled in the mountains and bottomless gorges where vultures nest. Experience the history of the Alhambra Palace & let Ronda charm you.

CORFU, GREECE

May 11 to 24, 2008

This Greek island is the perfect combination of European flare and tranquil sea-side living. Hike to the heavens to visit holy monasteries and trek in the shade of ancient olive groves. We promise - you will never tire of the deep, deep blue of the sea that surrounds you. Opa!

FRANCE

May 31 to June 14, 2008

Hike with us in SW France from the medieval town of Sarlat. The honey-coloured stone of the 1000 year-old buildings, gas lighting and complete lack of overhead wires make it a photographer's paradise. Included in our hikes are guided tours of chateaux, visits to magnificent sculptured gardens, a leisurely boat ride on the Dordogne and winery tours, of course!

ICELAND

July 14 to 25, 2008

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

SAGUENAY FJORD

August 16 to 24, 2008

Discover the beauty in your own backyard with our one-week hiking holiday to La Belle Province. Voted one of the 10 best national parks for wildlife by Explore Magazine, the Saguenay-Lac Saint-Jean region offers superb hiking trails along the fjord, whale-watching, and a feast of French Canadian culture.



THE APEIRON SOCIETY FOR THE PRACTICE OF PHILOSOPHY

This is the Society's 21st 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: "Civilization: Prospects and Perils"

PROGRAM FOR THE FALL OF 2007

November 13	John Heintz (Professor Emerita U of C, Department of Philosophy) "Organ donation should it be brain death or heart and circulatory death".		
November 27	Eric Donovan (U of C Department of Physics and Astronomy - "Science has no Morals"		
December 11	Hugo Meynell (Cambridge academic and author) - "Dear Professor Dawkins: Religion and Rationality"		
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	

Bear Hair for Science

On an October hike to Healy Pass (coordinator Cornelis Koliijn), we noticed a large tree that had a few feet of barbed wire attached.

Trees all over Banff National Park have had barbed wire nailed to them. Bears can use these to rub themselves.

Then scientists periodically gather the clumps of hair left behind and do DNA analysis.

This is part of a three-year study to identify the bears in the park and determine bear population genders and their relatedness (mother-son...).

Until just two years ago, researchers had to rely on sightings and on finding animal tracks. Now, at some structured crossings over the Trans-Canada Highway, motion- and heat- cameras have been setup.

Bear **fur** consists of two types of **hair** - the underfur and the outer guard hairs.

Annual Christmas Potluck Dinner

Wednesday, December 12
7:30 pm at Rosemont CC

- bring enough food for 8
- bring a plate, cup, cutlery
- bring a beverage

The Ramblers will supply a turkey and a ham.

Pre-register

Space is limited. Check the Calendar on our website.