

The

Pack Rat

Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association

May / June 2008



A Day's Work

for Philip, Rosanne, Maria, Marianna, John, Susan and Douglas
at Cirque Ridge and the nearby teleslopes

WHAT'S

INSIDE?



- 2 Meet Our Leader
- 3 Guns and Poison - our wolves
- 5 Wednesday Night Programs
- 5 Walk This Way
- 6 Comfortable Hiking Holidays
- 8 book review - Grizzly Heart
- 9 Heros - River Cleanup



**RMRA
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

President

Tom Flanagan

Vice President

Carl Von Mirbach

Treasurer

Laszlo Jamniczky

Secretary

Nancy Earle

Trips Director

Ron Hunter

Program Director

Brenda Everitt

Social Director

Barb Mitchell

Membership Director

Dorothy-Ann Reimer

Newsletter Editor

Sharon Wingenbach

Past President

Allan Mathies

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.

Copyright 2008 by the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association.

A Silly Little Story

Sharon Wingenbach

When I was out for a run a few weeks ago, I crossed the Langeman Bridge and just missed the light at Memorial Drive. So I ran straight to a lamp pole and leaned into it to do a stretch.

Two men and a woman, reeking of alcohol, were standing at the corner. One said he'd like to race me across Memorial Drive. Sure, I said, but I have to push this pole over first. They laughed, and then there were four of us on the corner, leaning against the pole.

When the light turned green, the racer and I stepped off the curb, but the poor guy fell flat on his face. I helped him up, and we were off again. We ran, not fast but together, for two blocks before he gave up.

Waiting for his friends, he told me a bit of his story. As a young boy, his dad beat his mom, so his mom would take him into the back room and beat him.

As a young man, he became a runner. He'd run long distances - 20 miles some days. Once in his teens, on a really tough day, he took off running and he didn't stop for about 40 miles.

Then at age 15, a friend gave him his first taste of alcohol.

At that moment, he stepped forward and gave me a hug. "That's what the alcohol felt like," he said. "I drink a lot less now than I used to. I'm going to write a book some day."

His friends caught up to us so I said good-bye, and ran home, feeling incredibly...lucky.

So...sometimes we travel far and wide and we meet remarkable people - and sometimes, we don't have to go very far at all.

Where ever you are, remember that you have a lot to be grateful.

Like...spring.

Meet... Tom Flanagan

President and Fearless Leader of the Rocky Mountain Ramblers, out for a spring hike

- university professor
- political scientist
- author
- line dancer
- fashionable hiker



Guns and Poison - Culling Wolves To Save Another Species

Alberta is running two wolf culling projects - one is going on now and one is postponed until next year, perhaps as a result of some public opposition.

Hinton – Little Smoky caribou herd (about 50 animals)

The Alberta government recovery plan for the endangered woodland caribou includes culling wolves. This plan has been in progress for the last three years, and will continue. The wolves are poisoned - and in the process, so are other species such as raptors.

One of the Alberta Government's recent caribou recovery plans indicates that culling wolves does not recover an endangered herd.

The ultimate cause of decreased numbers of caribou is loss of habitat as a result of:

- 🌲 logging of old-growth forests
- 🏭 industrial activity in the foothills.

The caribou's diet is largely dependent on ground and tree lichen. It takes 80-150 years for a tree to produce lichen, so the continued logging of old-growth forests is a large contributor to the caribou's decline.

Caribou typically avoid coming within 100 meters of roads. This includes

cutlines.¹ A moratorium on further industrial development in the land needed by the caribou must be enforced.

We need to deal with the root of the issue, not a short-term, convenient approach.

Rocky Mountain House

The Alberta government has endorsed an experiment by the University of Alberta to kill wolves in order to increase the population of elk and deer for hunters. The Red Deer Advocate states that wolves are being blamed for the decline in ungulate populations.

The kill will target four wolf packs in the Nordegg area, reducing their numbers by shooting and by sterilizing the animals.

Current information from the AWA (Alberta Wilderness Association) is that the cull is cancelled until next year due to public outcry against

these actions. (Will some wolves be sterilized this year??)

We could ask ourselves why wolves are being killed to provide improved sport for humans and for



the financial gain of the government and a few outfitters. What is the long-term consequence of such action? What other factors in our ecosystem are being altered? What about the wolves – can they speak for themselves?

Government and society are still acting from old habits regarding wolves. There is an outdated set of simplistic assumptions about the dynamics between wolves and grazing animals. There is also a more hidden pattern of demonizing certain predators - wolves in particular, which is a throwback to many old fairy tales.

Without a more rational and systemic treatment of our ecosystems, we are doomed to continually revisit the law of unintended consequences. Predators such as wolves, play a vital part in maintaining a balanced system. Hunting for sport does not properly replace the role of wolves.

Often, the result after just a few years is an ecosystem that is severely at-risk or in full disaster.

In speaking with AWA, it seemed evident that the government needs



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 Hall
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.

to look at the real issue of habitat loss, and put more focus on the management of the natural habitat and ecosystem. When an individual species is “managed” (that is, systemically destroyed), the whole ecosystem is thrown out of its natural balance. As wildlife is managed in Alberta as a “public resource”, we should all have a say in this is done. It is time to have that say and to be heard. (herd?)

Refer to the Ramblers website for links to this issue including supporting documents regarding impacts of past human manipulations on our ecosystems.

The government needs to be encouraged to look at the bigger picture of habitat loss in these tough issues. We urge you to write, call or fax your MLA, the Premier, and the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development to express your concerns. Be specific and tell them what you want them to do!

Include your home address and request a reply to your letter.

You may also wish to contact **Dr. Evelyn Merrill** of the Biological Sciences department, U. of Alberta who is responsible for this project. The address of this department is CW223 Biological Sciences Building, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, T6G 2E9

To contact/find your MLA

http://www.assembly.ab.ca/net/index.aspx?p=mla_home&number=&by

The Hon. Ed Stelmach Premier of Alberta Room 307, Legislature Building 10800 – 97th Avenue Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6 Phone: (780) 427-2251 Fax: (780) 427-1349 E-Mail: Premier@gov.ab.ca	Honourable Ted Morton Minister of Sustainable Resource Development 420 Legislature Building 10800 97 Avenue Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6 Phone: (780) 415-4815 Fax: (780) 415-4818 Email: foothills.rockyview@assembly.ab.ca
--	--

¹ White, Marion and White, Robin “Wild Alberta at the Crossroads”

Note: This is a beautifully written book by a Calgary couple as a plea to Albertans to act on the protection of our special places. Available at the Calgary Public Library, call number 508.7123 WHI (Annette)

*A collaborative effort by Annette Le Faive, Dorothy-Ann Reimer,
and Dan Senour*

From what I've read, U of A and the provincial government are in favor of experiment while the federal government and most environmental groups are against it. An excellent website is CPAWS (Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society Northern Alberta). Visit www.cpaws-edmonton.org and click on **Campaigns**. CPAWS is distributing printed postcards that you can conveniently mail to the Minister of the Environment in Ottawa. They are advocating saving the boreal forest habitat because **when the caribou is in danger, we are too.**

Rambler Wednesday Night Programs

Check the calendar on the Ramblers website for updates. Here's what we've got lined up so far...

- 7:30 pm, before the regular meeting
- Rosemont Community Centre, 10 St NW and Confederation Park

May 7

James Haston

a presentation on Aconcagua

Aconcagua is the highest peak in both the Western and Southern hemispheres. One of the Seven Summits, it is located in the Andes mountain range in Argentina, 15 km from Chile.

May 14

Philip Creery

photos of Glacier Park, Montana, centered on the Logan Pass area - few goats, flowers, hikes....

June 18

Ben Gadd

presentation on his new books: *The Canadian Hiker's and Backpacker's Handbook* and *Canadian Rockies Geology Road Tours*

I once asked my Canmore friend a question and got the answer, 'Don't you have a Gadd?' My friend explained that everyone who lives in Canmore has a Gadd. He was referring to Ben Gadd's **Handbook of the Canadian Rockies** - 'the authentic all-in-one guide.' This monster book is a whopping 831 pages of information about absolutely everything that has ever lived, appeared or happened in the Rockies.

'I had one other idea in mind when I began this project. (His first idea was advice after 27 years of exploring these mountains) People who know the value of something are inclined to cherish and protect it.'

June 25

Dave Birrell

find out all about the PeakFinder.com website

- comprehensive information about each of the 1560 mountains in the Canadian Rockies
- what's on the website (lots!) and how it's evolved

Walk This Way

Of all the ways to stay fit, walking (and hiking) is the easiest, safest, and cheapest. Walking at 3.5 miles an hour on flat terrain burns about 300 calories per hour.

Here's how to get more out of your walking workouts and to vary your routine:

- **Walk briskly for at least half an hour every day**, or one hour four times a week.
- **Walk as much as possible.** Skip elevators and escalators and take the stairs. Leave the car at home if you can.
- **Use a pedometer.** Aim for 3,000 steps a day, and then work up to 10,000 (7-8 kms).
- **If you want to go faster**, instead of taking longer steps, take faster steps.
- **Swing your arms.** You'll burn 5-10% more calories.
- **Add some interval training.** Speed up for a minute or two every five minutes. Or alternate one fast mile with two slower miles.
- **Choose varied terrains.** Walk on grass or gravel to burn more calories.
- **Walk up and down hills** to build stamina and burn more calories.
- **Use walking poles** to enhance your upper-body workout.
- **Use hand weights, but carefully.** You'll burn more calories, but your motion may be altered. Ankle weights are not recommended.
- **Try walking backwards.** Even at a slow pace, it provides fairly intense training. Be careful - if possible, work out with a forward-walking partner.
- **Choose the right shoes.** Avoid stiff-soled shoes that don't bend. "Walking shoes" have flexible soles and stiff backs to prevent side-to-side motion.

*University of California, Berkley
Wellness Letter*

COMFORTABLE HIKING HOLIDAYS

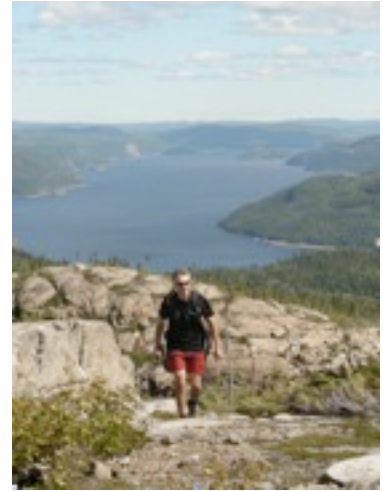
Hike an adventure. Rest in comfort.

Come hike with us to...

SAGUENAY FJORD

August 16 to 24, 2008

Discover the beauty in your own backyard with our 1-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.



TUSCANY

September 13 to 27, 2008

Mouth-watering gelatos, world-famous wines, gastronomic feasts, passionate locals and some of the most picturesque hiking in the world await you on this 2-week adventure in glorious Tuscany. Join us as we hike the region famous for its vineyards, olive groves and renaissance architecture. Get a taste of *La Dolce Vita*.

HISTORICAL TURKEY

October 19 to 30, 2008

Hike in Cappadocia with its secret frescoed churches, underground cities and volcanic tuff sculpted into fairy chimneys. Visit ancient ruins on the Aegean side, shop the bazaars of Istanbul and take a history lesson through time. Steeped in tradition and a masterpiece of nature, Turkey will impress you.



THE REAL CUBA

November 16 to 28, 2008

Forget the resorts and come see the real Cuba! It is only by walking its countryside & meeting its people will you get any real understanding of its culture. Hike through jungle-like forests, picturesque colonial towns & sugar cane fields. Explore the Viñales Valley, swim in the San Juan River pools & have lunch on a coffee plantation. Get a true feel for what Cuba is really all about – culturally, scenically and historically, and have yourself an experience you will talk about for years to come.

COMFORTABLE HIKING HOLIDAYS

416) 445-2628

info@letshike.com www.letshike.com

Spam E-mail for a Low Travel Article Issue

A guy who lives at Round Lake (50 miles South of Yorkton), saw a ball bouncing around kind of strangely in the lake and went to investigate.

It turned out to be a flathead catfish who had obviously tried to swallow a basketball which became stuck in its mouth!!

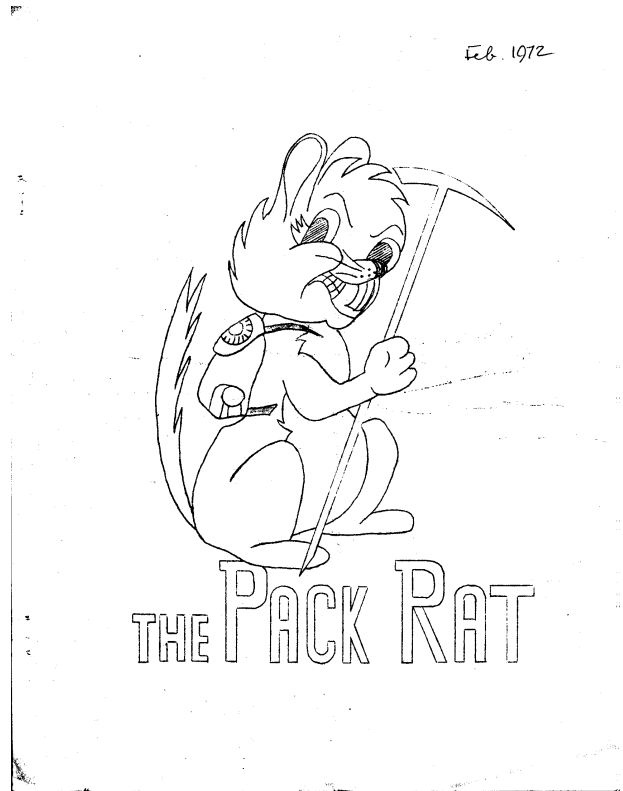
The fish was totally exhausted from trying to dive, but unable to because the ball would always bring him back up to the surface.

The guy tried numerous times to get the ball out, but was unsuccessful. He finally had his wife cut the ball in order to deflate it and release the hungry catfish.

You probably wouldn't have believed this, if you hadn't seen the following pictures.



(I love this part...) >>>>>



1972

PACK RAT ADVERTISING RATES

The Club offers advertising space in Pack Rat and the following rates apply:

Quarter Page	\$10
Half Page	\$20
Full Page	\$40

Payment **MUST** be received prior to publication

Be kinder than necessary
'cause everyone you meet is
fighting some kind of battle.

book review...
by *Laszlo Jamniczky*

Grizzly Heart

**Charlie Russell
and Maureen Enns**
(available at the Public Library)

A recent PBS documentary of some of Charlie Russell's work with bears in Kamchatka is perhaps a suitable reminder of this interesting work, published in 2002.

Charlie Russell sincerely believes that bears and humans can coexist in peace and without fear, provided certain basics are followed. To prove this, Charlie sets up camp in Kamchatka, Russia and for several years struggles with Russian bureaucracy while he and Maureen manage to raise and photograph a number of brown bear cubs orphaned by hunters.

The story is replete with funny twists and turns sourced not only from Charlie's furry friends but also from the Russian authorities. The story undoubtedly presents a case for coexistence being possible and portrays a man who is truly very fond of his bear children and does his best to be a good mother to them. After many adventures, Charlie is successful in his objective, up to a certain point. He gets into trouble with Russians poaching in the nearby nature reserve and with one thing and another, his adventures eventually draw to a close.

Although some segments of the biological community have criticized Charlie quite viciously

for what they deem to be a totally unscientific and very dangerous approach to bears, his experience does stand as an illustration of what is possible in a place where bears have not yet had much contact with humans that may have distorted their natural behaviour.

All in all a very heartwarming and uplifting read in terms what the hopes and optimism of one man can accomplish even when faced with apparently insurmountable odds and obstacles.

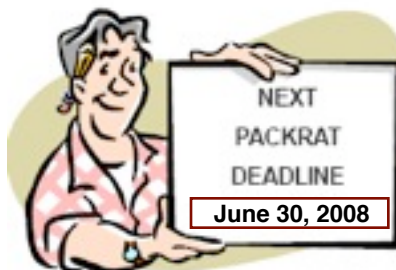
book suggestion...
from *Del Lavallee*

Park Prisoners

Bill Waiser
(available at the Public Library)

This is the fascinating story of the labour camps that existed in western Canada's national parks between 1915 and 1946.

Thousands of men spent months, even years, toiling in harsh conditions, to improve services for the growing number of visitors who came by car.



A big warm welcome to our new members

Mavis Igelsrud

Elaine Cherot

Emery Cherot

Ollie Coull

James Haston

Happy trails to you!

Thank you Kathy Brisco!

In the last issue of the Packrat, I asked for someone to take responsibility of printing and distributing the Packrat every two months.

Karen has offered to do that.
Yeh Kathy!

Need a Little Inspiration?

I met a woman in the change room after she'd come back from her noon hour run. She said that whenever she doesn't feel like going for her regular run, she takes all her clothes off and looks in a mirror. When I chuckled, she said, 'I'm serious. It works.'

HEROS in Calgary's Annual River CleanUp

Once again, the weather smiled on us for clean-up the river day. After a tasty pancake breakfast (FREE) at the nearby Stu Peppard arena (where we came close but not close enough to win a prize) we grouped above the Weaselhead north area for orientation.



Because of increased drug use and possible homeless camps this info session gets longer every year. At last we set off in teams of 2 or 3, bright yellow garbage bags in hand, to ferret out what we could find.

Anne and Heidi found the remains of one camp, Wally and Ghulam found an inflatable (no longer floating) at the far west end of our assigned area.

All but 3 of us gathered at the bridge for lunch and to compare notes. Then the city truck came by to collect our bags and the driver (also a volunteer) kindly took our picture.

No, that's not all the garbage we found - the other 3 worked the top area and left another 5 or 6 bags up there.



In all, 1600 volunteers gave up a couple of hours Sunday morning to scour the banks of the Bow River, the Elbow River and Nose Creek. They collected approximately 7000 kg of trash in 3400 big yellow bags. Trash along our banks is an eyesore, and is potentially deadly to Calgary wildlife.

Medals to all: Wally, Ghulam, Heidi, Anne, Narayan, James, Ron, Tony, Michel, Rita, Chris and coordinator/p/s Dorothy-Ann



If you received this newsletter in the mail, but instead you prefer to receive it online, send an e-mail to the editor. About 85% of Ramblers receive the PackRat online only.

Online, you can see all the brilliant colors in the photos, and you save trees....

packrat@ramblers.ab.ca