

The

Pack Rat

Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association

September / October 2008



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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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I planned my big three-week holiday in Germany around bicycling the Mosel River. How long do you think it takes to go 200 km along a windy river, when there are nice people to meet along the way, pretty little towns to walk through, castles, vineyards, beirgartens...?

A good pace on the pathways in Calgary might be 25 km/hr. Does that mean I could do the Mosel in one day? I read a blog by someone who had done the route in 15 hours. Ummm, no - I did want to see some scenery along the way.

So I planned for four days. It took me two and a bit. And those two days were **wunderbar**.



Bicycling in Germany

by Sharon Wingenbach



I spent three weeks in Germany in June. I rented a bicycle, and then I bicycled along three rivers. I also used trains to take me to cities like Heidleberg, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart and Strasbourg After I returned the bicycle, I spent four days in **Munich**, and then four days in **Berlin**, renting a bicycle for a day or two in each city.

The bicycle took me where I couldn't otherwise have gone.

First, to answer the questions I get all the time...

- yes, I went alone
- no, I wasn't scared
- no, I don't know anyone there
- no, I can't speak a word of German
- no, it didn't rain a lot

Bicycling in the cities

Follow the Red Brick Road

I'm convinced that you can live well in Germany without a car. Gas is expensive, and parking is expensive. Meanwhile, buses and trains are super efficient, and can get you anywhere 24/7.

And I'm convinced there can't be very many Germans who don't own a bicycle.

For the better part of three weeks, I rode with a smile on my face - saying over and over, 'This is what real bicycling is all about.' Almost everywhere I went, in every city I visited, bicycle lanes took me anywhere I wanted to go - safely.

The lanes are clearly marked, often laid out in red brick. Sometimes the lane put me on the right side on the road, with cars on my left. Sometimes, it put me on the sidewalk, with pedestrians on my right. Such pleasant riding. Systematic. Organized. Safe.



Some cities, like Heidelberg which has a large student population, are 60 / 40 - that's **60 bicycles for every 40 cars**. Oh my gosh.

That means that, not only are there fewer cars on the road, but chances are good that the driver in the car beside you is a bicyclist too - that he understands, and he's watching out for you.

I know this is true because I saw bicyclists cross the street without shoulder checking. Oh my gosh.

Compare that to bicycling in Calgary....

When I commute to Calgary's industrial NE, I am in defensive mode. Big trucks make big turns, and they don't expect to see a little bicyclist in their way.



In Germany, I saw...

- bicycle rush hours - lots and lots of people riding to and from work, wearing their business suits, carrying briefcases or purses in their front basket.
- people just getting on their bicycle and going somewhere - no lycra, no helmets - women riding in their high-heel street shoes and short skirts
- moms and dads riding their sons and daughters to school.
- people of every size and shape on bicycles. Not all bicyclists look athletic. Trust me on this.

I also saw a man sitting on a park bench - bicycle beside him - drinking a beer. But that's another story.

I took trains often, and my bicycle was free.

In Munich, the bike shop owner suggested I ride down to the river to see why people in Munich have such a high standard of life. I found it bustling with activity along its entire length - people enjoying a summer evening swimming, sunbathing, BBQing, playing beach volley ball - and, umm, not everyone was wearing clothes. That too is another story.



In Berlin, I was directed south to The East Side Gallery, and to where the Turks live. And I saw a very different flavour of Germany.

bicycling along the rivers

He told me to go down to the river, take the ferry across the river, turn left, and then keep on going.

And then I was bicycling the Rhien. Later, I bicycled the Saar River, which lead me to the Mosel.

My son had bicycled the Mosel years ago. Now it was my turn. I was so excited.

The first day, I felt like riding hard, and so I did. Yet I still took ten hours to go 100 km. That tells you that I stopped to talk to people, walk through pretty little towns, sip a glass of Mosel wine in the afternoon. sun...and take a few hundred photos.

The second day - by 2:30 in the afternoon, I'd only gone 5 km. I met two Dutch ladies, and together, we walked up the steepest vineyard in Europe. Then we shared a bottle of wine over lunch.

I met bicyclists from all over, people who'd bicycled other rivers. Often, their panniers contained little more than a bottle of wine because a tour company was moving their suitcases to the next destination.



How do you describe a really great bicycle ride?

- safe, away from cars
- flat, easy riding
- moderate climate, sunny, not hot
- (bicyclists know the wind is never at your back, but) moderate winds
- beautiful country side, something interesting to see at every turn
- lots of people to watch, people who are maybe a lot like you
- little towns with great bakeries, beirgartens, wine stores
- castles on the tops of hills
- you can go fast or you can go slow
- you can go forever
- you can stop when your want to stop

and there'll always be room at the inn – and there'll always be a nice place to get something to eat

- and when you choose your B&B, real people share a bit of their lives with you, for a day – and then you're off on a new adventure



And that's what it was like when I bicycled the rivers in Germany. Apparently I used the word **freedom** several times in my e-mails.

**A big
warm
welcome
to our
new
members**

Grace Björkman

Gord Paynter

Roy Piper

Michal Bachar

Peter Gillingham

Margaret (Peggy) Gillingham

Mel Lomenda

Francine Swanson

Janice D'Eath

Happy trails to you!



So...What's YOUR Story?

I bet you've got a story to tell. Is it a hike, a holiday, some crazy adventure that stands out? Thinking of it gives you goose bumps? Every detail is vivid, as if it happened yesterday?

Wanna tell your Rambler friends? Then do it. Ramblers are an active lot. We'd love to hear YOUR story.

Take a moment and write something down - you can edit it later. Can't organize your thoughts enough to get it to make sense? I can help. Give me a call.

The Packrat is your venue for your adventure

Activities

Hiking
Backpacking
Cross-Country Skiing
Downhill Skiing
Snowshoeing
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
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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.



Eight Glasses of Water a Day

by Dr. Marnie Fothergill
August 2008 - Calgary AB

Should that be our goal? The simple answer - no. Yet despite extensive research, this nutritional dogma just won't go away.

This myth likely originated from a 1945 study that found we need 2 liters of water a day (about eight glasses). This research noted that most of that water comes from the food we eat, but people seem to overlook that part of the study.

Food contains a lot of water. Fruits and veggies are 75-90 percent water and meat is 50-70 percent. That means that we get a large portion of our daily water requirements without drinking anything. In fact, studies have shown that people who don't drink water can be well hydrated just from the food and other beverages that they consume.

Coffee - another myth. Coffee hydrates as well as water does.

If you are at your ideal body weight and your beverage choices are healthy, then drinking water on a regular basis is probably not necessary.

But when we sweat, and then get thirsty, water is definitely the best choice. It is quickly absorbed. Sport drinks like Gatorade, contain salts that are not necessary unless activity is intense and lasts over an hour. And drinks that are full of sugar and fat are the leading culprits in the western world's obesity epidemic. Consider...

- fluids don't relieve hunger as well as solid foods
- fruit has more nutrients than its juice
- thirst is often mis-interpreted as hunger. So if you're hungry while you watch TV at night, try drinking a glass of water first.

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

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

Griz at Grizzly Col

by Wally Drew

Some of us Ramblers also hike with Skrastins Outdoor Club by bus on Fridays. On July 25, we went to Highwood pass. I was asked to lead the A or so-called “fast group” to Grizzly Col and Ridge. We ended up with four of us including Barb Fischer of Ramblers and Monika Jayoussi and Geoff.

After a quick lunch on the highest North end of Grizzly Ridge, it was time to start back. At Grizzly Col, two young men who’d come up told us they’d seen a grizzly near our trail junction down in the valley below. So, when we got down to timberline, we stayed in a close group.

As sweeper, I was at the rear of our column. As we passed a dense thicket of small trees on our left, I remarked to Monika, who was just in front of me, that there could be a grizzly in there and we wouldn’t see it. Evidently there was. A minute or so later, Barb called that there was a bear behind us.

I don’t know if it was woman’s intuition that

prompted her to look back. Sure enough, there was a grizzly 10-20 m behind me, following us. I said we should continue our steady pace. To panic and run would be a bad move. It could entice an animal to attack.

Geoff went up the slope on our right to take a picture. **I called to Geoff to get off the slope** as bears like to retreat uphill. I guess my voice startled the griz because it went up that slope and into the trees. That gave me a chance to get my bear spray into my hand.



That wasn’t the end of the additional sweeper of our group. Griz came out of the end of the trees and ambled toward us, not so close now. It never showed any aggressive tendencies. **It was a nice bear.**

We lost sight of it as we went down over a pitch. When we got down to the tarn, we decided it was time for a drink stop. As we got our packs off, we saw Griz quite a ways back but ambling down the trail toward us at a faster pace than we walk. So we shouldered our packs and went on down. No more bear but we stayed together with bear spray in my hand all the way to the bus.

We don’t know if Griz was curious, just wanted to go where we were going, smelled food in our packs or just liked us. **These are the bear facts of the tale.**

COMFORTABLE HIKING HOLIDAYS

Looking for an alternative to the typical beach holiday or cruise?

You already love to hike, so why not come challenge yourself on a Comfortable Hiking Holiday! Small group sizes, virtually all-inclusive packages & personalized service are just some of the perks. Experience all the beauty & culture of a country while enjoying the heart-healthy benefits of hiking. And since we stay in comfortable hotels and inns, we promise you will **hike an adventure & rest in comfort**. To receive our new 2009 Hiking Calendar, e-mail or call us with your address & we will add you to our guest list.



THE REAL CUBA

November 16 to 28, 2008

Forget the resorts and come see the real Cuba! It is only by walking its country side & 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.



THAILAND OASIS

February 8 to 22, 2009

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 19 to May 2, 2009

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 10 to 23, 2009

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 shade of ancient olive groves. We promise - you will never tire of the deep, deep blue of the sea that surrounds you. Opa!

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

The Tale of the Beaverfoot Traverse

by Christine Grotefeld

Rick Collier planned and researched this trip a few months earlier, and then posted it as an “Old Goats Trip”. But the snow was late so he delayed the trip until July 5. This is a dry ridge so it was important that we have patches of snow to ensure a source of water.

The Beaverfoot Range is half an hour’s drive past Field, south on the Beaverfoot Road. This area is little visited and this valley has little development except for logging roads and the Beaverfoot Lodge.

Rick, Jonathan S. and I started out from Calgary in two 4wd trucks. (Actually, the roads were quite good, but the large trucks certainly made driving easier.) We intended to go S to N, descending Fraser Creek, and then ascending Hatch Creek and Harrogate Pass trail, which, as it turns out, we were unable to find.

We left one vehicle up the Fraser Creek Road, which turned out to be on a slope above Beaverfoot Lodge rather than up the creek. We expected to be back in six days (dream on).

We drove towards Hatch Creek. However, a washout prevented us from driving further, so we parked the vehicle and headed up the ridge with heavy packs (actually, the food was heavy). We made camp at 6pm in a glade where we found eye glasses, a camera, a journal and a map, and we speculated as to what had happened. I also found an ancient frying pan which we left. We decided to carry the lighter, newer items, and bury them in the cairn on top of Castle Mountain.

Sunday, after a short morning walk, Rick spent a couple of hours looking for Harrogate Pass, while Jonathan and I carried on along the ridge. After a short rain storm, the sun came out.

The ridge was open and wide, and we could see the summits we were going to scramble up. To the west was the Columbia River and to the East was the Washmawapta Glacier and Helmet, Buttress, etc.

From this distance, the ridge looked easier to climb than it turned out to be. Traversing South to North meant that we could see open ridges and meadows, but the north side had steep gullies of loose rock which took longer to descend, especially with heavy

packs. The goats, though, had made a wonderful trail which we used. We camped on a wide rocky ledge. At night, the pikas came out and ransacked everything. They scurried over the tents, around them and under them – noisy little squeakers.

Monday, we reached a high point which had what looked like a black space ship on it. We traveled on, and then Rick and Jonathon ascended a short peak while I sat in a meadow and guarded their packs from the pikas. Most of the summits had some sort of register (jam jar with a note) and cairns. All of the entries were dated 1988 or 1993 - nothing later.

The descents became more difficult and often there was a series of cols (not recorded on the metric maps.) Monday, we camped on a ridge.

Tuesday, we pressed on, and that night, we found a treasure of a meadow with a healthy stream and an abundance of wildflowers and larches. We ended up spending two nights there.

Wednesday, it was a treat to climb without a heavy pack. We wanted to see which tower peak is the highest, (the second one by 12’ at 8092). I stopped at the first one and had a snooze in the sun, and then I climbed Coral 8123’ with Rick while Jonathon returned to camp. While Rick and I were on the ridge, a thunderstorm moved in so we really had to move.

Thursday, we descended 3000ft in 3.2 km – it was 5 hours of BC bushwacking in the rain. The bushes were dense, wet and scratchy. The dead logs were slippery and underfoot was muddy. My pack and my boots seemed to get heavier and heavier with the rain. Finally, we reached an old logging road and thankfully walked along it until it joined the Beaverfoot road. A truck gave us a lift 4 km to the turnoff where and then we walked the last 3 km to the other truck. This road seemed endless. It was wonderful to get in the truck, and then turn the heat on full blast.

This ridge is definitely remote, and gives you a real sense of wilderness. The difficult access means that it does not get many visitors (hunters perhaps but not many climbers).

We learned that the items we found belonged to Kevin, Rick’s contact in Golden, who had given him a lot of information about the conditions in the Beaverfoot. Thanks, Rick, Jonathan and Kevin for making this trip possible.

Coming Events

Plan to join us Oct 29 for the annual dinner and dance

Details later on the website.

Sept 13 - K-country - calling all trail care volunteers - please help

Details on the website.

Oct 22 - AGM - please come - Wednesday 7:30 at Rosemont Community Centre

Oct 29 - Join Tony Forster for a Trip Down Memory Lane

Come out and enjoy some laughs as Tony shows his movies of the Rambler's GOOD OLD DAYS.
Wednesday 7:30 at Rosemont Community Centre

The Ramblers 2008

Annual Stampede Breakfast

was held on Saturday July 12,
and a good time was had by all.

