

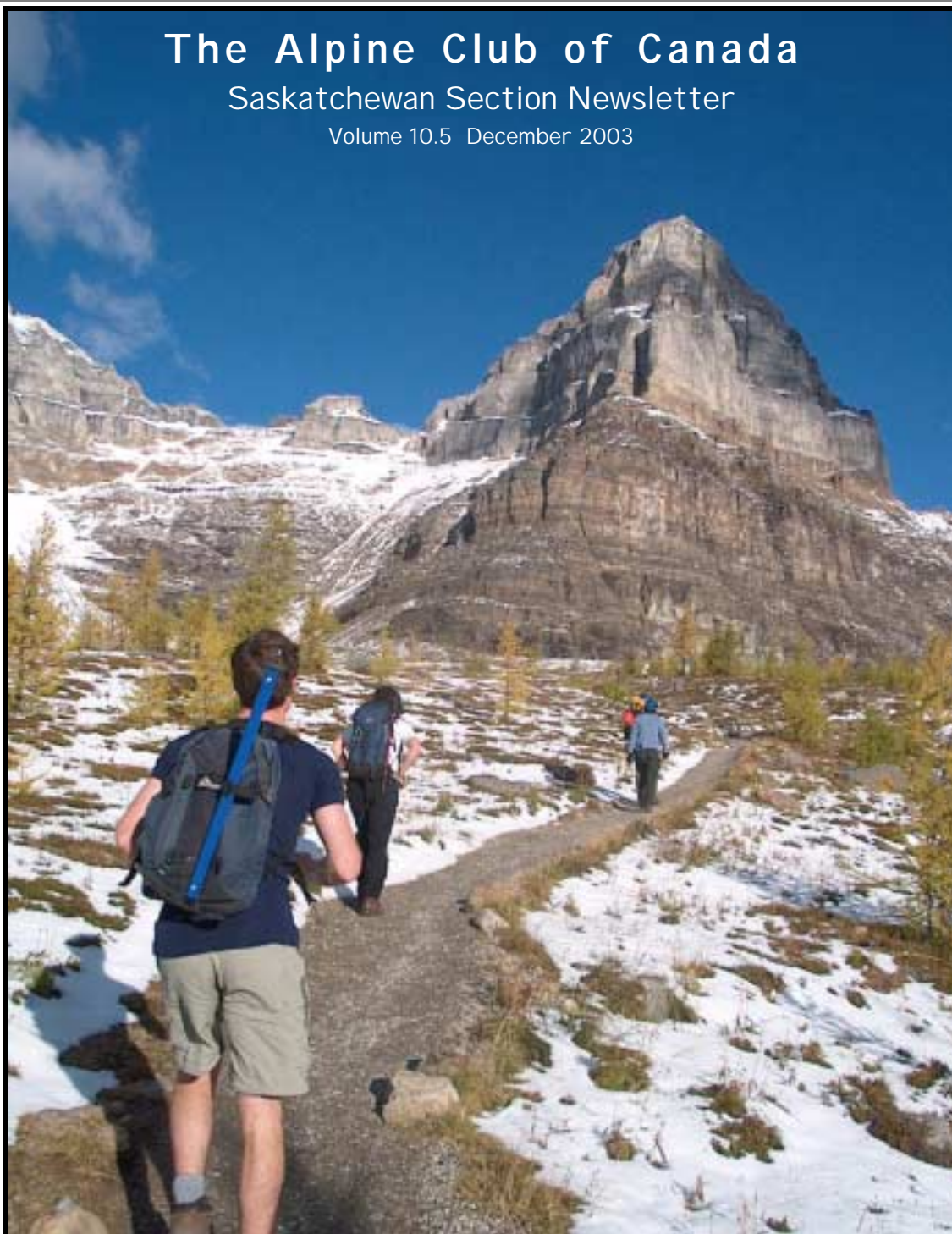


# *The Prairie Pitch*

**The Alpine Club of Canada**

Saskatchewan Section Newsletter

Volume 10.5 December 2003



## Upcoming Events and Activities

All trip participants must be members of the Alpine Club of Canada and be prepared to sign the waiver form. You may read the waiver form on our website.

**January 11, 2004 (Sunday) - Avalanche Beacon training and practice session.** Corner of Spadina Cres East & Prince of Wales Ave, starting at 1 pm. Location may change depending on snow conditions. Contact Ivan Hitchings for more information.

### The Prairie Pitch

The Alpine Club of Canada  
Saskatchewan Section  
Newsletter

The Prairie Pitch is the official regular publication of the Saskatchewan Section of the Alpine Club of Canada.

Submissions for publication are welcome at any time and will be published given sufficient space and interest. Generally, given the schedule of the editor, submission deadlines are the middle of

February  
April  
June  
August  
October  
December

Publication dates are approximately the beginning of the month following.

While we make every attempt to ensure the accuracy of the material contained herein, neither the editor, the Sask Section nor the ACC can be held responsible for errors or omissions. Be aware that opinions or language contained in some articles may be viewed as offensive by some. Reader discretion is always advised !!

**January 13, 2004 - Banff Mountain Film Festival.** Starts at 7 pm at the Centennial Auditorium. More information about the Film Festival can be found on the Section's website.

**February 8, 2004 - Dawn to Dusk ski event** (8 am to 5 pm) to coincide with the Regina Loppet. There could be solo and team divisions. For more information, contact Geoff Horn at Fresh Air Experience in Regina.

**February 20-22, 2004 - Chopper's Weekend** - the Saskatchewan Section's annual beginner's ice-climbing weekend. Mark those dates on your calendar. Trip leader will be Dave McCormick. More information about the trip and about ice-climbing in general can be found on our website.

**February 29, 2004 - Winter Triathlon, Prince Albert.** Starting around 11 am. Disciplines include skiing, running & biking. Contact Geoff Horn (Fresh Air Experience in Regina) at fae@accesscomm.ca for more information.

**Mid-April - Orienteering race** organized by Mark Rosin. More details to follow.

**May 16, 2004 - Paddle Triathlon,** organized by the Saskatoon Canoe Club, Victoria Park in Saskatoon. Individual or teams of 2-4 will compete in a 1.5 km kayak or canoe, 12 km bike and 3 km run. Contact Cathy at 373-8977 for more information.

**Mid July - Urban Adventure Race in Saskatoon.** Details to follow.

**July or August, 2004 - Walk the Wapta** with the SK Section. We've run this trip for 2 years and had a great time each year. Trip leader will be Dave McCormick. For more information, contact Dave or go to our website for pictures and a trip description.

**Cover Photo** - Larch Valley, Banff National Park, September 20, 2003, during ascent of Mt Temple. Photo by Dave McCormick

## Stanley Mitchell I & the Iceline Trail

Here are our pictures from the Iceline trip we did last June 30th to July 1st. It was the best hike I've ever been on because we took my 14 year old niece, Jacquie Ehrmantraut of Regina, on her very first hike. She was a trooper! She carried her own pack (23 lbs) for all 3 days, and never complained once. The only indication that we got that she might have been a wee bit weary was at our rest stop at Twin Falls Campground. While Iain filtered water, Jacquie fell fast asleep on the rocks by the water's edge. Very sweet!

The Iceline was still a bit snowy and wet, as you can see by the photos, but the sunshine and blue sky was sublime. The weather was perfect, and the company fantastic. It will be the last trip Iain and I take as an unmarried couple, as our wedding date is July 26th. Our honeymoon will see us hiking the Rockwall on July 8th to July 12th and the Juan de Fuca from August 24th onward.

Happy Trails,

Iain Harry and Denise Ackerman  
ACC Sask. Members



Above left & right – Iceline Trail, Yoho National Park

Right – Group at Stanley Mitchell Hut, ACC. Yoho National Park



## EISENHOWER TOWER - Route Beta

If you have any designs on this climb in the future, you might just want to cut this out and stick it inside the appropriate page in Sean Dougherty's book.

**ROUTE UP:** Stay high up on Dougherty's "exposed ridge" of the Dragon's Back all the way to the "flat top". (We got sucked in into going down a deep notch here.) The rest of the route up is pretty well as the book – with the rib/prow on the left-hand side of the scree bowl being definitely the best way up The Tower (There are other slings etc. to the right that could lead you off route).

**ROUTE DOWN:** Quite vague in my opinion. This is my accurate description of the way we tackled the down route: 30m rap off of top of route; scramble down 20m or so, then another 30m rap to a point where you can walk down a bit to the top of the prow. Do not rap down the prow the way you climbed up, but look at the top for a two bolt station that will lead you left (facing out left), down a narrow gully into the top end of the scree bowl. Two raps will bring you into it. Then you have a short scramble down the bowl and around left corner to rap station and then 3 x 20m raps down the face to base of the main tower. Scramble (or 2 x raps here), back along the top of the Dragon's Back and down the final chimney to Goat Plateau. Most of the rap stations are double bolted, but bring a few long slings for those that are not. One 60m rope is O.K. Note: If you are really strong down-climbing 5.4 – 5.5 unroped, you may be able to do away with some raps on the down route, it's up to you.

Joe Turnham.

## Book Review

By Larry Rempel

*Canadian Mountaineering Anthology: Stories from 100 years on the edge*, edited by Bruce Fairley. Publisher: Lone Pine Adventure. 396 pages plus a glossary and climb rating scale. \$16.95

This book contains 63 excerpts from books and articles written by Canadian mountaineers. The first 6 articles deal with pioneering climbs and climbing anecdotes. They describe a different time in Canadian mountaineering when early climbers shot marmots for stew, smoked a cigarette to refresh themselves after a stiff climb and recommended pork and

beans as the most sustaining breakfast (oatmeal is for the sedentary).

Phillip Abbot, after climbing in 1895 with C.S. Thompson and Professor Fay, wrote the account of the first ascent of Mount Hector included in Section 1. In Section 3 (Accidents) his death, climbing Mount Lefroy in 1896, is described rather unemotionally by Thompson.

The section on the Alpine Club contains some interesting information about A.O. Wheeler. He fought in the Riel Rebellion and ran the club outings with a strict hand, even deciding what proper distance women had to be from camp before they could take off their skirts and wear knickers (trousers). His article about Glacier House contains interesting anecdotes such as the tourists who asked if the CPR had put the glacier there for publicity reasons and his lengthy discussion of the wonderful woman who ran the hotel.

Conrad Kain's article describes how hard they worked during the week to set up a mountaineering camp in the Lake O'Hara area. On Sunday, his day of 'rest' he hiked up to Lake Oesa, scrambled the Abbot Pass, summited Mount Lefroy and returned to camp. He had quite a constitution.

Most of the articles are more modern and cover a wide range of topics ranging from first ascents of mountains, long traverses, and big wall climbs to recipes for baking bread and a discussion on the best ways to drop food out of an airplane.

The final article "Coming Down" is by Sharon Wood, the first North American woman to climb Mt. Everest. She compares the drama of the climb and descent - at one point their propane containers spent the night leaking into the tent and when she lit the stove it started her clothes on fire - to the reality of her rusty Pinto and life after Everest. It provides a good balance to the ideas in the rest of the book.

The Canadian Mountaineering Anthology provides a personal look at mountaineering through the eyes of its participants. The strength of the book is the way that their personalities are reflected in their writing. With 63 articles covering about 400 pages of fairly fine print the book does not lend itself to a single reading, but is one to browse through at suitable occasions, perhaps while traveling to the mountains to be a participant in this great adventure.

**Remember, for the latest information about our Section, check out our website at:**

**<http://www.AlpineClubofCanada.ca/Saskatchewan>**

## Banff Mountain Film Festival

Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2004 – 7:00 PM

Centennial Auditorium, Saskatoon

Local Sponsors' Tradeshow starts at 6:00 PM

Ticket prices: \$14 in advance (until Monday, Jan 12<sup>th</sup>)  
\$16 at the door.

**Tickets are available from our Local Sponsors and  
the Centennial Auditorium**

A special price for all ACC members is \$10 with ACC membership card or member number.  
Contact Andrew Mckinlay at [andrew@axonsoft.com](mailto:andrew@axonsoft.com) to reserve your special member ticket.

The Film Festival will also stop in Regina, April 30, 2004 at the Saskatchewan Museum.  
Watch for more information in the coming weeks.

**Thanks to Our Local Sponsors:**





Planet S  
2004 Film Festival Media Sponsor

## Abbot Hut

By Larry Rempel

I'd wanted to visit the Abbot Hut for a number of years because of its location, design and interesting history. A few free days after the Berg Lake hike gave Norma and I the perfect opportunity.

The trip begins at the Yoho National Park information center in Field. Access to the Lake O'Hara area is restricted. The reservable camp sites are usually fully booked. If you want a chance at the unreserved ones you can come at 9:00 in the morning to try to book one for the night of the following day. We chose to book one night at the hut and pay the assorted bus, backcountry pass and hut fees, a total of \$60 for the one night stay.

The trip starts at a parking lot about 7 kilometers east of the Kicking Horse Camp Ground and about 12 kilometers east of Field. The bus leaves at 8:30 and 10:30 each day. We chose the later bus.



There was a broad spectrum of people waiting for the bus. Some came with ice axes and climbing equipment, while others had luggage with roller wheels and Rockport shoes. The later group was bound for the Lake O'Hara Lodge. One energetic couple had biked in from Lake Louise that morning. Another man in a large white cowboy hat and matching shirt was a painter. He rode up with a large metal case containing paints and canvases and an easel which he set up in a prominent place and discussed the painting he was working on with people walking by.

Transportation was provided by two well used school busses. A Parks Canada worker checks your name off a list and packs

and luggage are thrown in through the back door. A park warden is also present to sit and watch everything. Before each bus leaves the park warden stands at the front of the bus and lectures the riders about how to walk on a path, etc.

The road is an old logging road maintained just well enough for the busses. Our bus was full and struggled up the steeper hills. The driver would stop in the middle of a hill, grind down into first gear and roar up the rest of the way. Once he commented fairly loudly, "Boy you guys must have had a big breakfast." The over heating buzzer started going off near the end of the trip; we didn't stop or slow down.

At the end of the run the bus stops first at the campground where campers are met by the parks worker and warden for a talk on how to use the campground. Although a map is apparently included with the bus ride, they hadn't brought any along.

The next stop is at the warden's cabin, where we got off. The last stop is about a hundred yards ahead at the Lake O'Hara Lodge.

The hike begins at the warden cabin, turns left around the lake for about 1/2 km where it branches off onto the Lake Oesa Trail for about 3 km. At Lake Oesa there is a short jog up the Huber Ledges Alpine Route Trail before branching off to the right on the Abbot Hut Trail.

The Abbot Hut Trail has been marked by blue squares painted on the rocks and cairns along parts of the way. The first part of the trail travels diagonally across a scree slope and then switch backs along a ridge to a large moraine. When we descended the moraine we found that snow still covered much of the trail and route finding became problematic. There had been a lot of snow or rain that year. The result was that footing was quite difficult in the scree and surprisingly large rocks started moving in front, between and behind us. We spent a few hours struggling up the scree slope and were relieved and happy to see the hut at the top.

The hut itself is a snug, solid structure with propane cooking stoves and lights and a large wood stove for warmth. The views are interesting and Mount Lefroy is right at hand for anyone wanting to climb some more. Water is obtained by melting snow. There is a phone in the hut for safety reasons.

We were lucky to be joined by a family from Banff that was staying there the same night we were. They had brought equipment and planned to summit Lefroy the next day but decided that the climb up had drained enough energy. They went down at about the same time we did the next day.

We left at 9:00 the next morning, starting a bit gingerly down the loose scree. After about an hour we got to firm snow that could be stepped in without sinking too deeply or sliding in and made good time to the moraine. Periods of rain and hail did not seem to affect the snow very much. The rest of the trip involved following the trail back to Lake Oesa and then to Lake O'Hara where we had lunch and checked out the Lake O'Hara Lodge. It's great but quite expensive.

The bus leaves the area at 4:30, 5:30 and 6:30. Only one bus comes at a time. It had rained quite hard in the afternoon and a fairly large group of people were waiting for the first bus. The parks lady knew the family that we had been hiking with and offered us a ride down the road in the back of her parks truck. We accepted and bounced down the logging road in the back of a pickup. It's an interesting way to see the route.



We left with mixed feelings. The scramble to the hut was frankly difficult. Mountain weather is by its nature unpredictable and the nature of a hike or climb can change quite a bit from year to year. We'll certainly be talking about the trip for some time and do not regret taking it. The Lake O'Hara region is beautiful. The trails are well worth hiking and serious climbers can find many challenging and historic routes in the area. Check out the Elizabeth Parker Hut if you wish to stay there.

- The "Swiss Ledges" not far from Lake Oesa on the way to Abbot Pass (photo by Dave McCormick)

## In the News

One of Saskatoon's native climbing aces, Nels Rosaasen, is getting mega press coverage in the climbing magazines lately! Both Climbing magazine and most recently Gripped magazine have run articles on him. Gripped featured him as "North America's Strongest Boulderer!"

Don Forest, the first person to scale all of the 11,000 ft+ peaks in the Canadian Rockies, died late in November while out x-country skiing not far from Calgary. He was 83.

## Banff Mountain Film Festival – Film Profiles

### **Sister Extreme** 2003 PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD WINNER

(Canada, 2003, 30 minutes)

Directors/Producers: Glen Crawford, Brad Wroblewski

Production Co.: Glen Crawford Production Services

"Spinal Tap with Crampons"! This satirical mockumentary features Rex Van Fuego Schmidt and Jeff Z. as they attempt the first ascent of the notorious west face of the Middle Sister in the Canadian Rockies. During this "out there" climb, Rex and Jeff shed light on the mystery surrounding the tragic disappearance of legendary Dutch alpinist Rexal Van Fuego Schmidt. With commentary by renowned climbers Barry Blanchard, Will Gadd, and Pat Morrow, *Sister Extreme's* humour and local connection made it People's Choice at the Banff Festival.

### **Front Range Freaks: Biscuit**

(USA, 2003, 3 minutes)

Director/Producer: Peter Mortimer With encouragement from owner Tom, Biscuit — a small dog with an appetite for big climbs — makes her way up difficult and committing rock faces.

### **Parahawking**

(UK, 2003, 45 minutes)

Directors/Producers: Graham Saunders-Griffiths, Scott Mason, Adam Hill

Nestled in the heart of Nepal's foothills and set against the backdrop of the majestic Himalayas, the city of Pokhara has played host to the evolution of a remarkable story. Adam Hill and Rajesh Bomjan, owners of Sunrise Paragliding, meet Scott Mason, a falconer from England, and in a charming twist of fate their passions become entwined. Together they train birds of prey to fly with paragliders.

For a complete list of the tour films, visit the Banff Centre's website or the website of the Saskatchewan Section.

## ACC National News

All members should have read about the National Board meeting held in Lake Louise last November. All the information about the meeting is on our Section's website, including a report on the upcoming membership fee increases.

These fee increases will be coming into effect January 1, 2004, so members might want to consider renewing their membership before that time. All memberships can be arranged on the ACC's website: <http://www.AlpineClubofCanada.ca>

A recent concern has been the ACC's Liability Insurance. The premiums for this insurance have essentially gone through the roof in the past month or so. For the coming year, the ACC will have to pay nearly \$60,000 more for insurance than it paid last year. Needless to say, alternative measures are being considered. It's not very reassuring to know that every organization offering outdoor adventure activities is facing the same situation. We will keep you informed about any new developments. Please check our website for all the news and notice of upcoming activities.

Dave McCormick, National Board Representative



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