



The Prairie Pitch



The Alpine Club of Canada
SASKATCHEWAN SECTION

Events/Miscellaneous

Tuesday, January 15th, 2002, 7 pm
Best of the Banff Mountain Film Festival at the Broadway Theatre.

Tickets are now available at the Theatre or our local sponsors: The Bike Doctor, Outter Limits, Eb's Sail and Sports, Boomtown Outfitters, and Vic's Vertical Walls. Media sponsors include CKOM, C95 and Rock 102FM. The excellent selection of films being shown this year can be seen on our club website:

www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/saskatchewan

Sunday, January 6 – Grade III Ice Climbing day trip led by Mike Wild. Mike has temporarily relocated to Calgary so give him a call at (403) 230-7167 or mpwild@hotmail.com.

Sunday, January 20, 10 a.m. – Telemark Ski Clinic at Blackstrap.

This is the perfect opportunity for people to try this style of skiing for the first time. Participation by more experienced telemark skiers is also welcomed and it's an excellent opportunity to meet others with similar interests. Please contact Glen Phillips (382-2302 or glen.Phillips@sasktel.sk.ca) for more information on gear needs and logistics.

Saturday, January 26 – Follow up this experience with a **backcountry ski trip** to the mountains on with Mike Wild. The objective hasn't been set yet but Mike has lots of experience

Inside

- ① Events and Miscellaneous

- ② Racing for Adventure

- ④ There are Strange Things Done in the Midnight Sun

- ⑥ Back Country Huts & Lodges - Book Review

- ⑦ ACC National News

in the mountains and you're sure to have a good time.

Mike is also planning a 3-day ski mountaineering trip in February to the beautiful Roger's Pass area but dates haven't been finalized yet. Please let him know if you're interested.

Sunday, February 17 – Winter survival clinic at Shekinah Retreat Center, about 40 km north of

Saskatoon. Meet at noon at the Extra Foods lot at 51st Street and Warman Road. Call Pete Burgess at 242-2922 to sign up!!

February 22-24 – our annual **Chopper's Weekend** for beginning ice climbers (a climbing and social gathering similar to our May Thrasher's Weekend!!). Call Dave McCormick (384-3676 or davemcc@shaw.ca for details.

A **First Aid and CPR clinic** will also be planned for February but dates have not been set yet. Contact Ivan Hitchings at 329-4484 or hitchings.ink@sk.sympatico.ca.

Many thanks to the following section members: **Dave & Catherine McCormick, Ivan Hitchings, Tony Nadon, Shelley & Andrew McKinlay** for showing slides at recent events; **Dave & Catherine** for hosting a great Christmas Party; **Catherine McCormick and Larry Rempel** for planning some great "mountain" games for the party; **Dave**

McCormick and Nikki Hipkin for instructing a crevasse rescue session; and **Shelley & Andrew** for instructing the avalanche beacon session.

Racing for Adventure

by Shelley McKinlay

It's a long way between a rock and a flat place. Eight to ten hours to be exact. It was on the drive from a rock (Mt. Athabasca) back to the flat place (Saskatoon) in February when the idea of hosting an adventure race was born. Tony was telling us stories from some of the races he'd taken part in and Andrew and I were discussing possible fund raising ideas for the Alpine Club. We soon connected the two and a brainstorming session began.

Talking it up among friends and sponsors was our main form of advertising, along with a poster campaign. It didn't take long to be able to stop agonizing about whether or not there would be enough interest.

The 1st Annual Prairie Pitch Adventure Race was held September 22, 2001 at Blue Mountain Outdoor Adventure Centre near North Battleford. Blue Mountain is an awesome facility with biking trails (x-country ski trails in winter), a 35 foot outdoor climbing wall, a 250m zipline, a lake for swimming and, believe it or not, a whole bunch of challenging and



hilly terrain. The race included all these facets as well as trail running, bushwhacking, navigation, canoeing, and what some considered an ice bath rather than a swim.

Tony Nadon and his adventure race teammates, Anthony Tataryn, Shannon Robert, and Mike McKague had the fun of setting the race course while I looked after registering teams and collecting money. As teams joined the ranks, e-mails were flying fast and furious as the final details were being worked out. Weekly race tips were sent, and I found myself trying to field questions about the gear list and about a course I wasn't totally privy to since I was also taking part in the race!

We were very pleased to have 32 teams of 3 racers plus one or two support people per team in our first effort at organizing this race. We had fantastic support from local businesses including Outter Limits, Brainsport, The Bike Doctor, Frank Dunn Toyota (Dave Chartier), and Great Western Brewing Company. Sponsors also included Powerbar and Trailrunner Magazine. We had over 30 enthusiastic volunteers to help at the checkpoints along the race route, staff the climbing wall, keep a team/time chart up to date, and prepare a huge post-race barbecue meal. Everyone had a great time!

A 6 a.m. start in the dark and 100 km of fun meant there were some

pretty tired people by the end of the course. Race finish times ranged from about 7 to 11 hours. The race for 1st place was an intense one with the first two teams missing the final unstaffed checkpoint, having to return to find out the passwords and then fly back to the finish line. Considering the first place team consisted of a mountain guide (Rob Owens), a hunting guide (Mark Tataryn) and a rafting guide (Justin Tataryn), they made some amusing navigational errors, traveled an extra 34 km, and still managed to make a great comeback to win the race.

For those who missed out this year - YES, there will be a next year! September 14, 2002. The response to this race was overwhelming enthusiasm and fun for both the participants and the volunteers. Come and join the stories of challenge, endurance, teamwork, perseverance and good times!

Dr. Knot has not been around the last two issues. He's busy training up to be Santa's helper, and should be back in 2002. If you have a climbing question for Dr. Knot, email it to the editor - tori@amethist.ca - We'll see that your question gets answered.

Dr. Knot is OUT

Robert Service was right

by Ray Robertson

As winter fast approaches what better time than now to turn our thoughts to the glorious warmth of the past summers trips. But this was to be a summer trip with a difference. At the beginning of August, while others were packing their summer T's for climbs in the Rockies, we were busy packing our winter woollies for an Arctic adventure on Baffin Island. Yes, we were true blue Canadians – using our summer holidays to travel to Auyuittuq National Park to experience more cold. Or so some would think! Maybe Robert Service had it all wrong when he wrote, "the arctic trails have their secret tales, that would make your blood run cold."

With visions of Sam McGee, tundra, mountains and polar bears in mind we were pumped and ready to go. We had poured over maps, made the right contacts and had our trip planned out to the last detail. Cathy and I would leave from Regina, rendezvous with Derrick (from Prince Albert) in Ottawa, catch the next day's plane to Iqaluit, switch planes to Pangnirtung, jump into a small boat, head up the fjord and presto, we are at the trail head fresh and ready to go. Now if you're thinking this is rather anal-retentive you are most likely correct. But hey, we had a tight 12-day

schedule. We had 30 Ks to put into the trail, three days of glacier traverses and then a return to the trail head for a repeat of boats, planes and automobiles. We were so well prepared that we had even built in one extra day for bad weather. Don't want to be late getting back to those jobs do you?

Well maybe we should have taken Robert Service a little more to heart for there truly are strange things that happen in the land of the midnight sun. For example, don't expect to keep a tight schedule. Picture this in your mind – day two of our trip and we are on a First Air flight direct from Ottawa to Iqaluit. As we approach the runway for a landing I am thinking that they must have really good navigation equipment in the North since you cannot see a thing for fog. Oops – wrong conclusion. Just before the wheels touch we pull up and the pilot announces the fog is too thick and we are heading for the alternate destination – Greenland. Well all right! Greenland – that will be a new experience. We can wait out the fog there, return to Iqaluit and continue on our way. Wrong conclusion again. For three hours we sit in the plane and stare out at the glorious Greenland sunshine. Something about customs and safety keeps us inside. The conditions do not improve in Iqaluit and it's back to Ottawa. This is not what we had in mind. But we just learned rule

number one about Arctic travel – don't expect to get there or leave on the day you intended. The old hands on the plane all took it in stride, but we were nervously trying to figure out how we would accomplish all of our goals if the same thing happened again.

The next day I am happy to report that everything did go as planned. By late that evening we found ourselves being dropped off by boat at the trailhead to Akshayuk Pass. In Pangnirtung we had gone over the mandatory orientation with the folks at the park headquarters, paid all of our fees, hired a boat and learned about the latest conditions. The community goes out of their way to assist all the climbers and hikers that show up, but what we learned about the trail conditions did not make us too happy. Believe it or not, they were in the middle of a heat wave and the run off from the icefields was making the stream crossings very treacherous. For some reason 'streams' just doesn't capture the right image – try raging torrents instead. In fact, as we would later find out, a party of 5 had very nearly drowned trying to cross one of these 'streams' on our intended route. I guess that portion of the trip was out. No matter, we could still hike in to Summit Lake, about 30km, and do a traverse around Mount Asgard. We would just have to come back the same way. It looked like Robert Service was right on when he said strange things

happen, but I don't think he was referring to a heat wave.

The hike in was to say the least, awe inspiring. This is a rugged, raw and wild landscape of mountains and glaciers. Rock falls were huge and common. Probably one of the most awesome sights was Mount Thor and it's one-kilometre-uninterrupted cliff face, the longest in the world. Long an attraction to rock climbers from around the world, there was no activity taking place this time as we camped at its base. But something was wrong, this was day two of the hike in and we were only at Mt.Thor, 10 km short of our destination. While the hiking is relatively easy the stream crossings are not. We had learned that there really are "secrets that would make your blood run cold" – the water. Forging torrential thigh high glacial melt water streams has a tendency to slow you down. Caution was the operative word, but we all made it and managed to warm up our body parts before all sensation was lost. By the end of day two on the trail it had finally dawned on us that we had carried our southern mentalities with us and it was time to go with the flow and just relax. Once we had adopted this approach it was much easier to enjoy what the Arctic had to offer – how many times are you going to get a heat wave on Baffin Island? May as well enjoy it while you can. And by now we had also learned that getting up at 4 A.M. is much easier

when the sun is already shining and you know that the water levels will be lower.

By day four Derrick and I were doing our traverse to Mount Asgard's flat-topped twin towers. The approach was typical Arctic though. It was as if the boulders on the moraine approaches were in constant motion, along with our hearts, as we skipped from one to the other. On a beautifully sunny day we basked in the warmth of Caribou Glacier as we approached Mount Asgard. Our intended traverse route down Turner Glacier would not be possible since it would lead us into some really nasty runoff waters. Remember the people who almost drowned? Who needs it? The views from the glacier were spectacular and I had had enough stream crossings to satisfy me. Just to show you how much we had adapted we even took three days to hike out the 30 kilometres: enjoying good weather and bad along way, noting with reverence the memorial plaque for a hiker who had died of hypothermia.

Auyuittuq National Park is a trip worth doing, certainly worth the rather high cost. Are strange things done in the midnight sun? – yes indeed. Throw off those southern attitudes and enjoy the magnificence of this Arctic environment.

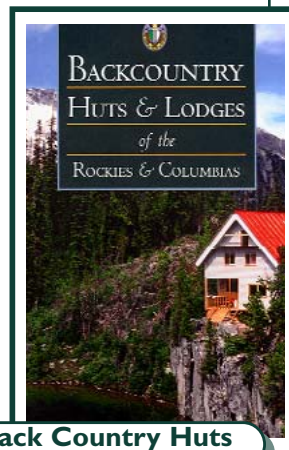
Back Country Huts & Lodges

by Dave McCormick

Book Review: Backcountry Huts & Lodges of the Rockies and Columbias by Jim Scott. Johnson Gorman Publishers, Calgary. \$24.95.

This is the newest, most comprehensive reference for all those huts, cabins, lodges and shelters hiding away in the mountains. It covers everything, from the primitive to the palatial.

This new book probably eliminates the need for the ACC to publish its own Huts Book and, indeed, the ACC endorses this book on the flyleaf. This book doesn't provide quite the same level of information on the ACC huts as did the Club's earlier publication, but it does provide a picture and describe each facility, explains how to get there, what the surrounding area is like (whether you need to equip yourself for glacier travel, for instance) and what the cost is. For the GPS user, full UTM coordinates are given along with the applicable datum and map refer-



Back Country Huts

For anyone looking for any type of accommodation in the general region of the Rockies or the Columbias, this is the book to get.

ACC National News

by Dave McCormick

The fall ACC Board meeting was held last October 20-21 in Lake Louise. Aside from having to sit inside for a day and a half, these meetings are actually pretty interesting: not exactly high drama, but often some spirited discussion. After all, there are 17 sections represented from Montreal to Vancouver Island, and lots of differing points of view. Here are a few highlights from the meeting.

The Friday evening featured a slide show of the 11,000 ft peaks that Glen Boles has climbed. You may have seen his pencil and ink drawings of various peaks. This fellow has an encyclopedic knowledge of the mountains and he's been a busy lad over the past 40 years or so. Ummm - there was wine, cheese and other snacks as well. Especially appreciated after scrambling Mt Kidd South Peak that afternoon in the howling wind and snow!

The new budget was approved, which included a modest membership fee increase. The increase ranges from \$1 to \$3. The good news for

Saskatchewan Section members is that we are going to lower our Section's fees to absorb the increase. Membership has its privileges!

A new Awards Committee will be setting the criteria for two ACC new awards. At present, there are only three, the very prestigious AO Wheeler Legacy Award, the Silver Rope for Leadership Award and the Distinguished Service Award. The new committee is also composed of several members from across the country, a departure from past practice. This should give good representation. The new awards and the revised criteria should be approved within a few weeks. For matters such as this, the Board will vote via e-mail, making decisions possible for time-sensitive matters between the regularly scheduled Board meetings.

The ACC has also endorsed a new "Huts" book. It's a new publication called Backcountry Huts & Lodges of the Rockies and the Columbias. A review appears elsewhere in this issue. The most interesting thing is that the ACC didn't have to pay anything for this one - it's written and published independently and includes ACC huts as well as all the other forms of backcountry accommodation available in these areas.

Renovations to the Clubhouse in Canmore continue into phase 2, which

Newsletter changes:

As of next issue, subscribers will no longer receive a paper copy of The Prairie Pitch unless they specifically ask for one. The "default" method of delivering it to you will be by sending you an email link to the PDF version on our web site. If you want paper, let us know!

includes changes to the lobby and reception area, a gallery and a drying room. Once the gallery is completed, Sections will be asked to provide items for display.

The year 2002 is the International Year of the Mountain. We have their logo and a link to the website from the Sask Section site. The

question is - does anyone have any ideas about how to celebrate this special year? Special projects?

Although it's a few years away, take notice that 2006 is the ACC's centenary. Plans are already underway, in a limited way. Funds are being allocated. Ideas are being solicited. I've noticed that 2005 is Saskatchewan's centennial and further that Mt Saskatchewan (in the Yukon) hasn't been climbed yet (?).

Those were pretty much the highlights. I even had time to go for a short hike Saturday afternoon before darkness fell. Cheers!



The Alpine Club of Canada
SASKATCHEWAN SECTION

1722 Alexandria Avenue
Saskatoon SK S7K 3C5
242-0707, fax 249-5054

www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/saskatchewan

Chair: Peter Burgess (242-2922) – pandgburgess@hotmail.com

National Rep: Dave McCormick (384-3676) – dhmccormick@shaw.ca

Treasurer: Nikki Hipkin (373-7355) – nikkih2@home.com

Newsletter: Tori (Victoria) Klassen (522-5104) – tori@accesscomm.ca

Activities Co-ordinator: Shelley McKinlay (242-0707) – shelley@axonsoft.com

Secretary: Clarissa Snyder (374-3234) – climbey@hotmail.com

Public Relations: Deanna Miller (652-5105) – deanna@cyancorp.com

Memberships: Andrew McKinlay (242-0707) – mckinlay@suneido.com

Archivist: Catherine McCormick (384-3676) – cgmccormick@shaw.ca

Members at Large: Saskatoon:

Martha Guy – (933-9823) – martha.guy@ec.gc.ca

Dan Kallstrom- (931-2962) – dankallstrom@bigfoot.com

Allan Janzen – (956-3460) – ajanzen@home.com

Gary Kolar – g.kolar@sk.sympatico.ca

Ivan Hitchings – (329-4484) – hitchings.ink@sk.sympatico.ca