



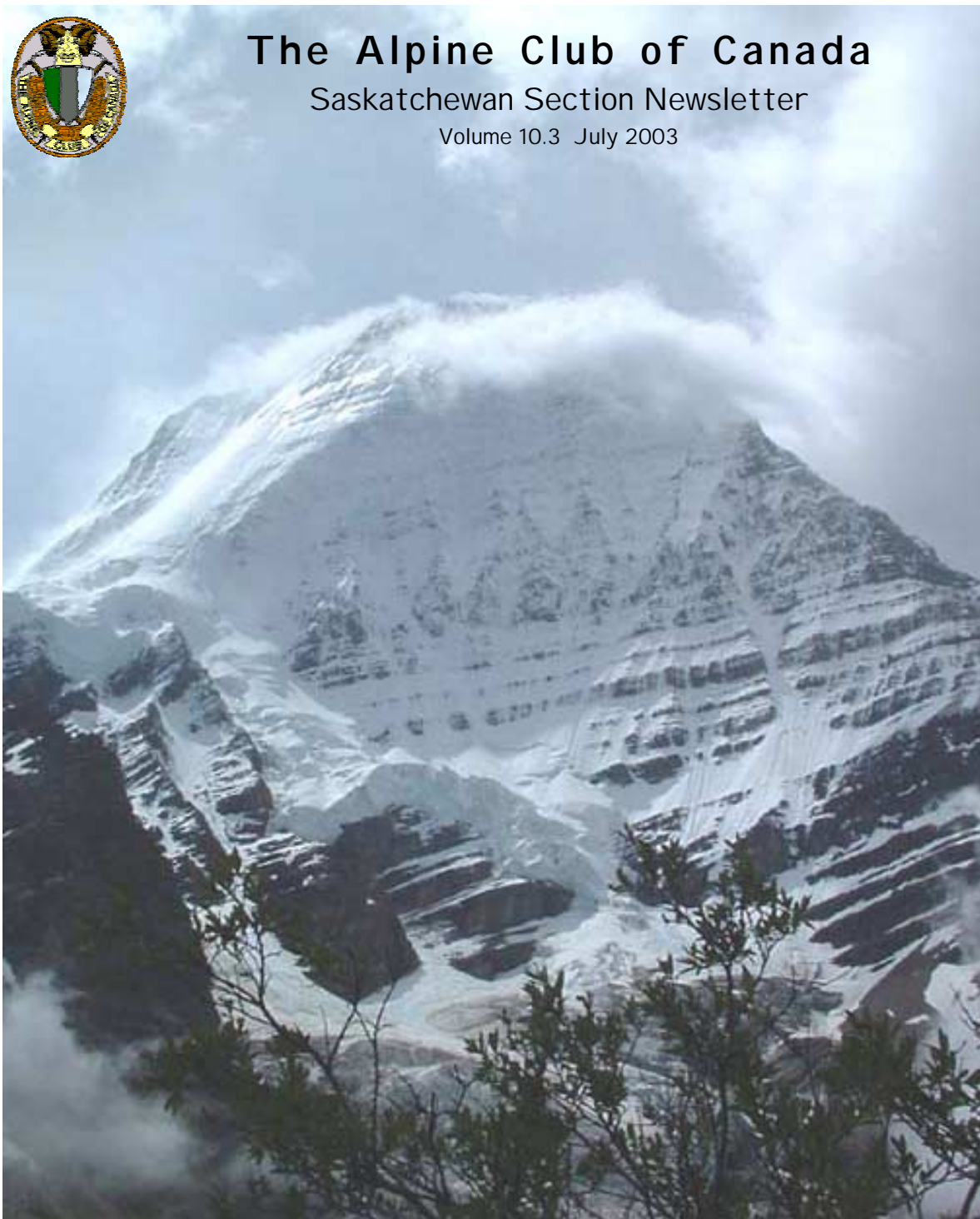
The Prairie Pitch



The Alpine Club of Canada

Saskatchewan Section Newsletter

Volume 10.3 July 2003



UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

August 1-4, 2003 – Walk the Wapta with the SK Section. Last year's trip was a great success, so we're doing it one more time. Trip leader will be Dave McCormick. For more information about the trip, see our website for pictures and a trip description. This trip is full but we will be offering the trip again in the summer of 2004. Watch our website 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 !!

September Long Weekend (Aug 30, 31, Sept 1) - Icefields Parkway Scrambling Weekend. Possible objectives include Sunwapta, Wilcox, Observation or Nigel, depending on conditions and the participants. Trip leader will be Jesse Invik. Contact her via e-mail (invik@softhome.com) or phone at 652-0016.

September 13, 2003 - Third Annual Prairie Pitch Adventure Race. The location is Buffalo Pound Provincial Park. More information concerning team registration and other "stuff" is available on our website.

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.

Remember – for up-to-date information on activities with the Saskatchewan Section, visit our website:

<http://www.accsask.ca>

IMPORTANT NOTE

The Saskatchewan Section needs more trip leaders and more scheduled trips and activities. If you are interested in taking a leadership course or leading a trip to one of your favourite mountain areas or activities, please contact the Activities Coordinator, Ivan Hitchings.

Cover Photo: Mt Robson from Berg Lake – Ivan Hitchings

ACC CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS WHERE WILL YOU BE (IN 2006)?

It's not often that we're around when an important person in our lives celebrates a hundredth birthday. Well, guess who's turning 100 – the Alpine Club of Canada! In 2006, the ACC will be celebrating one hundred years of mountain adventure. As ACC Sections, the backbone of the club, let's challenge ourselves to mark this important time in the history of Canada and mountain culture in North America in a special way.

The National Club has formed a Centennial Committee to generate ideas and recommend resources. Some of the national initiatives suggested to date include digitization of all volumes of the Canadian Alpine Journal, since inception; a Centennial Camp; an International Camp; hosting the Union of International Alpine Associations General Assembly; a Centennial Hut Project; a special project under the National Water, Energy and Waste committee, and SECTION INITIATIVES to celebrate the ACC Centennial.

The ACC Centennial Committee includes a Section Sub-committee, to which it looks for ideas and proposals to help celebrate the Centennial. The Section Sub-committee has representation from western, central and eastern Canada. The Centennial Sub-committee asks all Sections to consider the following:

1. What special activity or activities will our Section undertake to celebrate the 100th year of the ACC?
2. How can our celebration make a difference in our local mountaineering / outdoor community, and move forward our interests as alpinists and mountain wilderness enthusiasts?
3. When do we want our activity to occur? In 2005 (the lead-up year to the ACC Centennial), or in 2006 (the actual year of the Centennial)? Take into account that applications for funding to support activities usually need to be made in the previous year.
4. If our plans need funding, what resources can we access, and what do we need to do now to ensure we can get the resources required?

You may want to move forward with Centennial celebration planning through your Executive; or an individual in the club who wants to spearhead this; or through a mini-committee in your Section.

Whatever you do, please let us, the Centennial Sub-committee, know. We will keep everyone up to date on what all Sections are planning; 2006 should be a fun year for all! For example, here in the Vancouver Section we have talked about hosting a Summer Camp in the Tantalus Range, at our Lake Lovely Water Hut, that would be open to Sections from across

the country. A great opportunity to meet ACC members from across the country – in the Coast Mountains!

There will be some funding available from the National Club to support Section Centennial Celebrations, and we will need to receive an application from you for funding. So – start thinking and talking now. We will forward you details of how to apply for this funding before the end of the summer. Please note that there is a limited amount available through the Club; you are encouraged to seek other funding sources as well.

The Centennial is an incredible opportunity to gain visibility for your Section in your community; to attract new members and grow your club; to make progress in mountaineering objectives and skills; and just to have a lot of fun!

Please send your ideas, questions, etc. to:

Fern Hietkamp – email: fern_hietkamp@hotmail.com
(ACC Centennial Committee; Vancouver Section National Rep)

Or to your regional representative on the Centennial Sub-committee:
Dave McCormick – e-mail: davemcc@shaw.ca (Saskatchewan Section National Rep)



Silhouettes on Mt Baldy – Scrambled Thrashers Weekend, May 2003

TRESPASSING AT ACC BACKCOUNTRY HUTS

As all members are aware, the ACC maintains, at considerable cost, a network of backcountry huts. An on-going problem has been the problem of people using the huts without reserving or paying for their stay. The implications, financial and otherwise, are obvious. The following article was written by Carl Hannigan, VP Facilities for the ACC:



Trespassing at the ACC's backcountry facilities is a problem that the Club has been dealing with since we began operating huts in the 1920's. It is difficult to fully assess the extent of the problem, but when it does happen, it interferes with the experience of the legitimate hut users by causing overcrowding and bad feelings between user groups when trespassers are identified. It also causes hut fees to increase, since an insufficient number of hut users are paying for the expenses associated with operating these remote facilities. Basically, hut trespassing is unfair to all those who follow the rules.

As a result, in addition to our regular practice of encouraging members to act as voluntary custodians, we are taking the following new steps to eliminate hut trespassing (also known as "theft"):

- We are encouraging members to "take ownership" of the huts and assist in policing and giving support to custodians.
- All hut users will be given a receipt or reservation number at the time of booking. They will be told that they must bring this information with them to the hut. If a hut visitor does not have a reservation number and cannot pay on-site, the custodian will turn the person away from the hut (assuming it is safe to do so).
- If the hut is at capacity, custodians will request that trespassers leave the hut provided that there is no potential danger to them in doing so.

Custodians will receive advice as to how to perform these duties in a non-confrontational manner.

[Editor's note: There you have it. Comments or questions should be forwarded to the editor: davemcc@shaw.ca]

REFLECTIONS

By Dave McCormick

I've been reading the 2003 Canadian Alpine Journal which arrived just a couple of weeks ago. For those of you who haven't perused its pages, I'd highly recommend it. This record of Canadian alpine exploits contains, among other things, a lot of humor. There have been quite a few moments in the past week or so where I've been lying there chortling while my partner looks at me wondering what I'm on now. Any of you who have thrashed for hours up impenetrable valleys, been scared witless on a climb or some other near miss or felt the exhilaration of the views from your summit will find something to enjoy in this publication.

One article made a brief reference to an epic on Grillmair Chimney many years ago. It took me back to a May weekend several years ago when Allan Janzen, Nick Dotchin and I decided to do that climb. It was one of those perfect Alberta days. Once we did the heart-pumping hike to the base of Yam and got all the gear ready it was probably 9 a.m. or so. Plenty of time to do this easy climb and get down the back side of Yam in time for beer in Canmore.

The climbing went well for several hours. It's a fairly easy climb, probably rated at no more than 5.6. Perhaps half-way up the climb we noticed that fog had started to roll in and it was getting decidedly cooler. We climbed on, believing that the top was in sight. Then it started to snow. With hands getting colder by the minute and the risk of the rock getting slippery, we made the decision to bail.

Unfortunately, the route on Grillmair kind of wanders a bit and doesn't present a really straight rappel to the bottom. The descent took hours. Having 3 climbers made the whole operation longer than it should have, but it had the positive benefit of giving us 2 ropes so we were able to make full 50 meter raps.

Generally, we'd throw the ropes down, send Allan down to find the next rap anchor and then Nick & I would follow. On the descent, we found pitons and various cord and sling anchors that we were able to use. I think all we had to leave behind of our own was about half of an old sling of mine.

Meanwhile, the snow continued and the ropes were getting wet. If you've ever rapped on a thoroughly soaked rope, you'll know what I'm getting at here. As the rope passed through the ATC, a little fountain of water squirted out at waist level, soaking our lower bodies. As a final kick at us on the last rap, the mountain decided to refuse to let go of the rope. No matter how much we pulled and flipped, the rope just would not come down. Allan was getting ready to prussik back up the rope to free it when one final, giant flip of the rope got

it free.

By the time we reached the bottom of the route, it was nearly 6 p.m., there were several inches of snow on the ground and we were soaked and tired. I can remember sitting in the Drake an hour or two later with a very large platter of nachos and beer in a sort of stunned silence. So much for our little epic.

Many of the articles in the CAJ record experiences far more exciting than our little episode, but I guess we all have our own level of excitement. The CAJ is one of the benefits of membership in the ACC although you do have to pay a bit extra for it. Read it; it's worth it and you'll enjoy it.



Mountain art by Kieran Ramaswami

SIX VENTURE TO BERG LAKE

By Catherine McCormick



Six backpackers completed the Sask Section trip to Berg Lake from July 2 - 5th. Participants included Larry and Norma Rempel, Ivan and Kathy Hitchings, Dave McCormick and Catherine McCormick (trip leader). We began hiking in the early afternoon of July 2nd in a light rain. This was Norma's first backpacking trip so the rain didn't seem like an auspicious beginning! We took rests at Kinney Lake and got to the Whitehorn

campsite (at km 11) to spend the night. It rained fairly steadily that evening but we were fortunate to have a break in the rain during tent pitching!



The next day we completed the last 10 km to Berg Lake. Once again, the mist and fog were thick, and we missed most of the views in the Valley of 1000 Waterfalls. Completing the short hike to Emperor Falls (one of the most impressive falls in the area) was hardly worth it - even 10 m from the falls we could hardly see them! As we approached Berg Lake the fog and mist began to lift and the awesome face of Robson exposed itself in its entirety! It was a wonderful greeting to our new camp area, especially after missing so much of the scenery.



After setting up camp at Berg Lake we all took advantage of the Hargreaves Shelter to cook a hot lunch and dry out some of the equipment (tent flies!). In the afternoon, the mountains in the area were visible

most of the time, with a mix of sun and cloud. Norma, Larry and Catherine hiked to Toboggan Falls, a short hike about 20 minutes from the shelter. Ivan and Dave went off to explore the Robson Glacier and the possibility of scrambling Rearguard Mountain.

Friday, our hiking time was set for 9 a.m. unless it was raining. It was misting and Norma and Larry took advantage of the sleep-in time. Ivan, Kathy, Dave and Cath headed up to Snowbird Pass. Robson acted as a great barrier to the clouds. We had pretty good views to one side, but unfortunately, Robson did not show itself and we were unable to see the



Kain route up the ridge to the summit. However, we hiked in good, cool conditions to Snowbird Meadows and enjoyed lunch with a really aggressive marmot. I actually got to enjoy lunch; Ivan and Kathy were pestered by the marmot because they had a rather large lunch bag! The ascent to the pass was not attempted this time because the views looked “socked in”. Dave and Ivan went off scrambling near a small peak close by while Kathy and I began our descent. We decided to return via the lower Robson Glacier which Dave

led us over. I would highly recommend the hike to Snowbird Pass if you are ever in the area - it is a good trail and affords really fine views, even on an “iffy” day like we had! After returning to the area near Berg Lake we began to experience the rain once again!

Saturday was hike out day and we were up early - the views of Robson were once again fantastic. There were plenty of great sights to see through the Valley of Waterfalls and Emperor Falls was awesome in its power! The hike out took us about 5 hours to complete, with an additional hour spent at Kinney Lake enjoying a hot lunch.

As always, the hiking experience was a mixed one. We could have had better weather but we did get to see the sights over the 4 days. We had cool weather, but there were no mosquitoes and all of us are at the age where we enjoy hiking in cool conditions! Thanks to Ivan for all his photographic work; way to go to Norma for handling her first backpack with such aplomb! The card playing was fun - Kathy was the champion in “golf” and we enjoyed meeting lots of other hikers who respected the environment and the lifestyle of people who adore the outdoors! If you haven’t been to Berg Lake - GO THERE - it is one of the premier hikes of the Canadian Rockies!

EDITH CAVELL MEADOWS

By Catherine McCormick

I've been to Jasper many times and even worked there during one summer many years ago but I never got to Mt Edith Cavell. This year, Dave and I went after completing the Berg Lake trek. It is amazing! I've never liked the mountains at Jasper nearly as much as those near Lake Louise and the Icefields, but Edith Cavell is a wonderful exception. To get there, follow the highway signs a few km south of Jasper. The trip in by car will take about 45 minutes - the road is full of potholes and it is twisty and slow. Once there, take the hike to the lake or travel to the meadows. The meadows trail had a voluntary closure on it, but



we dressed for snow and mud and hiked into the area. It isn't long before one is as high as the Angel Glacier on Edith Cavell and the hiker has excellent views of the mountain. It is one trail where you get up close and personal with the mountain you are observing. I almost feel that I never have to do the mountaineering route, it feels like you are climbing it! The meadows didn't have much to offer for flowers in early July but the trail goes fairly high and in good weather some ridge walks nearby are in order. The trail guide says that you ascend 370m but I felt that it was much more to the actual trail summit. I may be wrong. The ridges aren't too many more metres beyond the trail summit; they could be achieved in under 30 minutes.

A thrill for us was to see two people reaching the summit around 11:00 a.m. - just as skies cleared over Edith

Cavell. It was fun to watch the last few metres of their climb - there was lots of snow on the ridge so they may have had a pretty good slog up to the peak. Alan Kane rates the west ridge of Edith Cavell as a moderate scramble (the east ridge is a mountaineering route rated at 5.3). If you don't feel up to either of those, hike into Cavell Meadows - you will have an interesting, unusual and awe-inspiring hike. Choose to go in late July or early August and the alpine flowers should be putting on a fabulous show!

THRASHERS WEEKEND 2003

By Darcie Sahar

It was snowing. It was sunny. It was snowing again two days later. But the weather didn't dampen the fun we had on the Thrasher's weekend. This year we stayed at Willow Rock Campground as Yam Meadows was no longer available for public use. *[editor's note: see article in last Prairie Pitch for details]* There was lots of camping space as the Banff area received snow on Thursday decreasing the long weekend enthusiasm (for "normal" folk!)



Saturday was a wonderful, sunny day. We headed out to Wasootch Creek to do some top anchor climbing. In our group of 26 climbers, 5 or 6 beginners had never climbed before. Shelley, Andrew, and Kim set up about 6 top rope climbs on one rock face. This rock was quite porous which allowed you to climb like Spider-man pressing your toes into the rock. What a neat experience! As a vertically-challenged climber that struggles to reach the holds in wall climbing, this was a great rock face to start on. Shelley and Andrew set up two crack climbs that were a little more difficult. Squishing your feet and hands into the crack was the only way up as this rock surface was much smoother. Lastly, Kim and Shelley set up a lay-back climb. The technique of pressing your hands against the two sides of the crack, leaning back and supporting your weight with your arms/shoulders then walking

your feet up real close to your hands, took some time to learn. It also took some upper body strength and coordination. This may have explained why it took some encouragement to keep our youngest climber Meryn (9 years old) working at it. The warm sunny day allowed time for climbing, snacking, visiting, and even a siesta for the two teenage girls (Jocelyn and Kyla) that needed a break from climbing.

Saturday night we were off to Canmore for our "supper out" only to drive back to the campground in a snowstorm that lasted until the next morning. After breakfast in the camp kitchen, we got some lessons from Shelley, Andrew, and Kim on setting up ropes on

existing anchors. Lunch was moved to a warmer location, the ACC Clubhouse in Canmore. We finished the day off with a hike on Cougar Trail in Canmore.

Monday was sunny again. (Note: This is always the case on the last day of the long weekend.) We set up at Wasootch Creek again and managed to get in a few more climbs before heading back to our flatlands and climbing walls. Kudos to Ivan and Kathy for making sure everyone was having a great climbing experience. Thanks also to Shelley, Andrew, Kim, Ben, and others I may have forgotten. I realized as a beginner, the weekend would not be possible without your time and patience.

NEXT PRAIRIE PITCH DEADLINE - SEPTEMBER 15TH, 2003

The next edition of The Prairie Pitch will be coming out in September. Many of you will be out and active during the summer. Stories, photos, route descriptions, are all welcome. Please send to the editor, Dave McCormick – davemcc@shaw.ca



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