

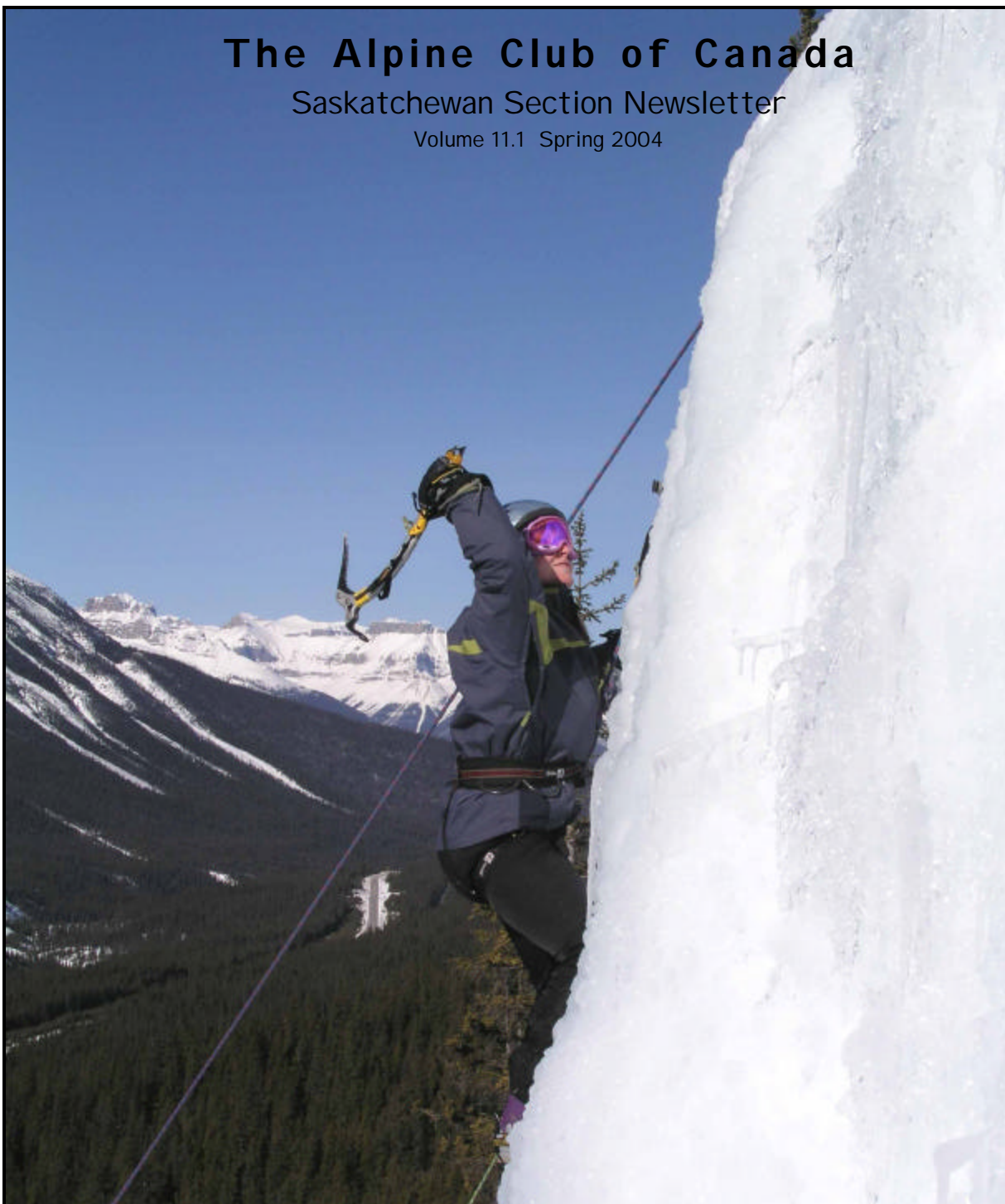


# *The Prairie Pitch*

**The Alpine Club of Canada**

Saskatchewan Section Newsletter

Volume 11.1 Spring 2004



## Upcoming Events and Activities

**April 17-18, 2004** - Orienteering race organized by Mark Rosin. Check our website for more details.

**April 30, 2004** - Best of the Banff Mountain Film Festival - Regina, at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum Theatre. More information is on our website. Contact Mike Wild in Regina for other details.

**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.

### 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 end of

February  
May  
September  
November

Publication dates will be near the end 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 !!

**May 22-24, 2004** - Thrashers' Weekend - our annual beginners' rock climbing weekend. This is the trip for new climbers and for anyone else wanting to get in some early-season rock with a fun group. We will also offer "Scrambled Thrashers" which will feature scrambles of some peaks in the Bow Valley and Kananaskis Valley area. We have the Porcupine Creek Group Camping site reserved for us which is really close to where we will be climbing. Trip Leaders for the climbing will be Ivan & Kathy Hitchings (329-4484); leader for the scrambles will be Dave McCormick (384-3676). Watch for more information.

**June 26, 2004** - Bike & Scramble - Our annual trek to the Little Elbow area west of Calgary to bike some distance down a mountain trail and scramble some interesting peak. We did Banded Peak in 2002, Mt Glasgow in 2003 and this year we're looking at Romulus, or Remus or perhaps Cougar Mountain. Contact Dave McCormick for more details.

**July 17, 2004** - Urban Adventure Race in Saskatoon. Details to follow.

**July 16, 17, 18, 19, 2004** - Walk the Wapta with the SK Section. Trip leader Dave McCormick. For more information, contact Dave or see our website for pictures and a trip description. Note that this trip is full now but there is a waiting list. Contact Dave for details.

**August 2004** - Date TBA. Mt Athabasca. Trip leader Jesse Invik

**Labour Day Weekend** - Scrambles with Jesse Invik.

**September 18, 2004** - Our Annual Prairie Pitch Adventure Race, this year at Greenwater Lake Provincial Park, 250 kms northeast of Saskatoon and 280 kms north of Regina. Greenwater differs from the previous locations with the vast forest in the area, this alone will be more exciting with not being able to see the landscape from the top of hills, and which way to go to the next CP. Watch for more details and check our website for more information.

Cover Photo - Sandra Zdunich climbing at Balfour Wall, SK Section Beginners' Ice-climbing weekend, February 21, 2004.

## The Christmas "Peak-Bagging" Season

The two climbers staggered drunkenly, arm in arm, towards the summit. Not this time because of any excesses of the night before at the pub nor from the effects of altitude, but from the hurricane force winds blowing in off the Irish Sea, which threatened to blow them off the summit they were struggling towards. It was another day of "peak bagging" on the Isle of Man.



Imagine spending Christmas break where the temperature struggles to dip below +5C even at night and where a myriad of trails wind their way along coastal cliffs and up shady glens, where snow doesn't seem to exist, where ice-climbing is impossible. Right in the middle of the Irish Sea is the Crown Protectorate of the Isle of Man, a short 30-minute plane flight from Liverpool or Manchester or slightly longer from London. It's a small island, barely 40 km long and perhaps no more than 20 km wide with narrow, winding lanes bordered by endless

stone walls, dotted with stone churches and inhabited by fewer than 75,000 people. A year-long teaching exchange by Catherine and a visit over the holidays by Dave and you have the ingredients for lots of hiking and quick ascents of the Island's "peaks".

By Rockies standards (heck, by Prairie standards!), the Isle of Man barely pokes up above sea level. The highest "peak" is Snaefell (2015 ft), which actually had a centimetre or two of snow on its summit the day we did it. It even has an electric railway that runs to the summit but fortunately we didn't have that temptation offered to us as we were well outside the "tourist" season. From that peak one can see the extremities of the entire island with water all around as well as Ireland, Scotland and the Lakes District in England. When we decided to take advantage of a couple of relatively clear days to bag a few summits, we just didn't however factor in the force of the wind as it roared in off the Irish Sea. Nevertheless, we made it to the top of South Barrule (1500 ft) and another hill close by called Cronk ny Arrey Laa (Night Watchman's Hill) one day and Snaefell the day after (happily in calm





weather!). We were able to make each ascent in about 20 minutes only taking that long because of the battle trying to remain relatively upright in the wind. As usual, there was a brief time on the summit to get the official photo. No chance of a camera perched on the tripod that day; any cameras needed to remain gripped tightly in mitt-enclosed hands. Goretex was pulled tightly around heads and necks. We probably wore more clothing for these summit bids than you would usually wear for a trek up Athabasca!!

Other than the fun of bagging the three highest points on this small island, the main attraction for us was hiking the beautiful coastal trails. The Raad ny Foillan (The Way of the Gull) is the main coastal trail, running 95 miles (yes, they still use miles here) around the periphery of the Is-

land. Other trails run through small valleys and across the many sheep pastures, over quaint stiles and through little gates as you make your way along.

The Isle of Man, according to legend, was formed when an Irish King scooped up a large hunk of earth to fling at the invading Scottish King.

Oh yes, and the local ales, O’Kells and Bushy’s, needed to be sampled at convenient pubs after these excursions.

The other preoccupation during the break was picture-taking. You can’t imagine all the stone walls and how they are simply everywhere. I have some difficulty comprehending the amount of time needed by the number of people to build them. Beautiful old stone churches, cemeteries with gravestones going back into the early 1800s and the remains of an old fort near the town of Peel and stone towers here and there.

We can’t claim to have bagged any “Munroe’s” (a Scottish term for any peak over 3000 ft), but the highest points on this tiny island have been won in the face of short-lived adversity, trails have been walked and local ales have been sampled. And fun like that is what it’s all about!!

## Keep Jumbo Wild



In a remote valley in the heart of the Columbia Mountains 50 kilometres from the nearest community and accessible only in summer by rough logging roads, Phedias Project Management is aggressively pursuing a course to open a four season ski resort on the Jumbo and Commander Glaciers. Currently the home of grizzly bears, wolverine, and mountain goats and favoured by mountaineers for its superb alpine climbing, the Jumbo Glacier Resort

will cover six times the land area of the nearest community (Invermere) and will house 6500 tourist beds including over 1300 privately owned condominiums. Gondolas, chair lifts and T-bars will be installed on both the Jumbo and Commander Glaciers to allow year round skiing – a dubious economic prospect at best - while prime wildlife and mountaineering terrain is destroyed.

Road construction alone is expected to cost the taxpayer up to \$2 million/km while additional road maintenance and avalanche control costs could cost up to \$450,000/year. Impacts on wildlife will likely be significant due to habitat destruction and yet another road corridor through scarce wintering grounds.

For 13 years, local and national opposition to Jumbo Glacier Resort has stalled the project, but with a pro-development Liberal government and the passage of Bill 75 –essentially streamlining development in wilderness areas – the threat to this pristine valley is stronger than ever.

We need you to write, email or call the following people to register your opposition to the Jumbo Valley Resort and to call for a public hearing on the proposed development. Go to [www.wildcanada.net/jumbowild/faxengine.asp](http://www.wildcanada.net/jumbowild/faxengine.asp) to instantly send an email registering your opposition to the project or send your own individual letter to the following people:

- 1 Premier Gordon Campbell: [premier@gov.bc.ca](mailto:premier@gov.bc.ca), PO Box 9041 STN Provincial Government, Victoria, BC, V8W 9E1, 250-387-2160
- 2 Honourable George Abbott, Minister of Sustainable Resource Management: [george.abbott.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:george.abbott.mla@leg.bc.ca), PO Box 9054, STN Provincial Government, Victoria. BC, V8W 9E2, 250 356-9076

- 3 Mr. Martyn Glassman, Senior Planner, Environmental Assessment Office, [Martyn.Glassman@gems4.gov.bc.ca](mailto:Martyn.Glassman@gems4.gov.bc.ca), PO Box 9426 STN Provincial Government, BC, V8W 9V1, 250 387-2206
- 4 Sandy Santori, Minister of State for Resort Development, [sandy.santori.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:sandy.santori.mla@leg.bc.ca), Parliament Buildings, Victoria, BC, V8V 1X4, 250 953-4246

More information on the project is available from:

[www.jumboglacierresort.com](http://www.jumboglacierresort.com)  
[www.wildcanada.net](http://www.wildcanada.net)  
[www.jumbowild.com/index.html](http://www.jumbowild.com/index.html)

More information about this issue can be found on the Sask Section's Website. There is a link to the appropriate page from the "activities" page.  
[Http://www.AlpineClubofCanada.ca/saskatchewan](http://www.AlpineClubofCanada.ca/saskatchewan)

## Vertical Ice? Not in Saskatchewan!

For a weekend each February, the Saskatchewan Section organizes a beginners' ice-climbing trip to the mountains to give people a chance to try this exciting sport in a (relatively) safe environment.

February 20 – 21 were the dates of this year's trip, when climbers congregated at Castle Mountain Hostel for the opportunity to get up early on a winter morning, drive over an hour and stand around next to frozen waterfalls and play with sharp weapons. Gotta love it!

Friday, climbers went to 2 O'Clock Falls, which is on the David Thompson Highway, east of Saskatchewan River Crossing. Saturday, the setting changed to Balfour Wall on Mt Murchinson, just south of Sk River Crossing. This year, the weather was quite fine, Saturday especially, with bright blue skies, warm sun and great views. Over 25 climbers attended and lots of fun was had by all. For more pictures, visit the Saskatchewan Section's website and go to "Gallery".

## Abbot Pass – Mt Lefroy Circuit

Late last July, several SK Section members made a quick trip up to Abbot Pass from Lake O'Hara. Not so unusual, but after the trip up and part of a day exploring the upper parts of Mt Victoria, the group headed down along the flanks of Mt Lefroy, along the exciting Fuhrmann Ledges and down to The Plain of the Six Glaciers and out to Lake Louise.

Trip participants were Dave McCormick (trip leader), Ivan & Kathy Hitchings, Bob Hawboldt and Bette Boechler, Debbie Harksen and Kobus Stassen.

For those who haven't been, the trip up to Abbot Pass is well worth the grunt, and it IS very steep and loose. Fortunately, recent trail work has improved the situation somewhat, but it hasn't been able to do away with the elevation gain! The hut is one of the oldest in the ACC's system, a fine old stone structure with a great view in all directions. Even the biffy has a great view down to Lake Oesa! The flanks of Mt Victoria make for a great place to practice short-roping and scrambling. With appropriate equipment (crampons, ice axe, etc), the summit of Victoria wouldn't be too much to consider during the "rest day" at the hut. The descent to Lake Louise used to go through what is known as the "Death Trap", but with changes in the glacier, much wider crevasses and the ever-present threat of ice from the overhanging Victoria Glacier, it's not recommended these days. The preferred route is an interesting descent along the flanks of Mt Lefroy, along a large ledge system high above the valley below and finally a long scree descent and slog back through extensive glacial rubble to the Plain of the Six Glaciers trail and out to Lake Louise.



One of the participants (Dave) had been down this route just a few days earlier and was heard to say that he didn't think he'd come this way for a couple of years!!

More pictures of the quick trip can be found on the SK Section's website. Go to the "Gallery" page and find the link from there.

## The Willmore Wilderness



If any readers are interested in a guided wilderness experience hiking or on horseback, information has been received about just such a trip this coming July. A special guest on this trip will be Ben Gadd and his partner Cia. For more information about this trip, follow a link from the SK Section's website and contact the trip organizers. Note that this trip is NOT a Section or an ACC trip but is offered by Wild Rose Outfitting. The Willmore Wilderness is located on the northern boundary of Jasper National Park.

## ACC National News

The ACC continues to be plagued by budget problems, largely related to quite incredible increases in liability insurance premiums. Originally, the ACC had budgeted for a premium of \$38,000 (based on the advice of their insurance broker). Within a week, that premium had been set somewhere in excess of \$90,000. The executive reduced the coverage to \$1 million from \$2 million, reducing the premium to \$70,000. That and other issues have kept the National Office busy in recent months. The next National Board meeting will be in Canmore on May 15/16. I'm sure there will be lots of discussion about this matter.

## Sask Section Executive Meeting Notes

The Saskatchewan Section Executive met on March 21 at the usual venue. An extensive agenda kept discussion going for over 2 hours, even with Shelley's firm hand on the ceremonial ice axe to keep rowdy members in line. It was noted that each section might be asked to pay an insurance premium "surcharge" to help alleviate the problem noted above. Section membership has risen slightly to around 90. The Film Festival last January and the upcoming showing in Regina (April 30) were discussed extensively. There was also some discussion about the proposed expedition in May 2005 to Mt Saskatchewan. For more information, visit our website at [www.accsask.ca](http://www.accsask.ca).

**The next edition of The Prairie Pitch should come out in June. Submissions always welcomed.**



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