



The Prairie Pitch



Alpine Club of Canada Saskatchewan Section

Events/Miscellaneous

Sunday, October 14, 1 pm –
Get prepped for the winter glacier travel season with a **crevasse rescue session** led by Dave McCormick & Nikki Hipkin! Meet at the weir parking lot at 1 p.m. sharp!

Monday, October 22, 7 pm –
Come out and show your best pics of the year at our annual **club slide show** being held in the meeting room at the Rusty Macdonald Library in the Lawson Civic Center.

Friday, November 16, 7

pm – Shelley & Andrew McKinlay will be showing slides of their spring Himalayan expedition to **Mt. Shishapangma** in Tibet.

Saturday, December 1, 6 pm – Potluck supper and annual **Christmas party** at the McCormick residence, 3310 Dieppe Street. Ho, ho, ho!!!

Saturday, December 15 – **Avalanche beacon and snow self-arrest clinic** at Blackstrap. Meet in the parking lot at Vic's Vertical Walls at 12 noon. Hopefully there's more snow than when we tried this last year!!

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We are going to try to revitalize our **club climbing nights** at Vic's Vertical Walls. Meet the first Monday of every month for climbing and a social gathering to follow!

Anyone interested in a **CPR or First Aid Course**, or need their certification updated??? If so, contact Ivan Hitchings at 329-4484 or hitchings@dlcwest.com. If there is enough interest, Ivan will make the appropriate arrangements.

Many thanks to those who led section trips and/or training sessions this summer: Scott Semple, Pete Burgess, Nikki Hipkin, Gary Wurst, Josh Wurst, Shelley McKinlay. Your commitment and dedication to the club is much appreciated!!

Don't forget! The SK Section ACC is hosting the *1st Annual Prairie Pitch Adventure Race on September 22* at Blue Mountain Outdoor Adventure Center near North Battleford. Come out and volunteer or just cheer on the teams! At press time, we have 34 teams officially registered for the race. We are extremely happy about this and

look forward to everyone having a great time!!

The Doctor is "IN"

Dear Dr. Knot:

I was recently sport climbing at our local crag, and the people climbing next to us were using the chains at the top of the climb to top rope through. I think this is a great idea, but my friends say it is unsafe. Is it unsafe?

Signed "In awe of Dr. Knot"

Dear "In awe":

It's obvious that the people climbing next to you were probably Albertans, but, to answer your question, yes it is unsafe. The chains are there to rappel from, and then only after a close inspection of the chain links, bolts and hangers. If you wish to top rope, clip a quick draw to each of the hangers, (after close inspection), clip in your rope, making sure the gates are opposed and the draws hang down to the same level. If you cannot equalize the quick draws, you can use a long sling with a sliding knot and a locking carabiner. If there are no

hangers, clip the draws or sling as close as possible to where the chain is fixed to the rock.

Every link in the chain has the potential to fail and as climbers we want to minimize that risk, Right? Right.

I might add that you should not trust left-behind slings, carabiners, quick-links or any other gear you might find at the top of a climb. If you don't know its history, don't hang your life from it.

Climb hard, climb lots, climb safe.

Dr. Knot

Yep, one short afternoon at Vic's and we were set! Well, not quite . . . we did manage to sneak out to the mountains for a warm-up and to check out the routes I wanted to do.

Our warm-up started at Heart Creek. All went well except for a fall by Nikki that resulted in a nasty (and I mean Nasty with a capital "N"!) rope burn behind her knee. She toughed it out (Ya big baby!) and continued to climb the next three days. She's hard core!

For the section trip weekend, I had in mind a couple routes on Kid Goat, which I'd done before with Andrew but I wanted to refresh my memory and give Nikki a preview of them. It was an incredibly hot and sunny day and by the time we got to the top of Keel Haul Wall (5.6) we'd guzzled almost every drop of water we had with us! The route takes a couple sharp corners on the 3rd pitch so I stopped to have Nikki re-check the route description and diagram. She

"Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, sometimes you get rained out." -- Satchel Paige (referring to baseball of course, but equally true for climbing!)

QUOTE

In The Zone

By Shelley McKinlay

I hadn't climbed on real rock since last year. Due to training for a Himalayan expedition, I hadn't even climbed in the gym since December. And I was going to lead a rock climbing weekend?? Nikki was going to lead a second rope team for me. She hadn't climbed on real rock since last year. Because of her final year of Grad Studies, she hadn't even climbed in the gym since God only knows when.

misread the diagram and very happily and confidently sent me on a 5.8 route before I managed to get back on track!! Holy rope drag, Batman!!

The next day we did Twilight Zone (also 5.6) and decided this was much more straight forward to lead others on (no traverse across cheese grater type rock!!) Note: On both climbs we used the club's new "Talk About" radios which turned out to be the cat's pajamas for communicating from opposite ends of a long pitch, around corners, when the wind is blowing.

So, we were set! Two weekends later was the "Just for Girls" climbing weekend. Jessamy and I drove out on Thursday to get a head start. Friday we climbed my most favorite climb, Escargot Corner on Mt. Norquay. We raced against the clouds and rain all day and came away with only a few wet drops landing on us. This was a great climb, which we both enjoyed, but by the end of the knee-killer descent I think Jessamy was ready to kill me!! Of course, now having done this route 4 times, I couldn't wait to

gloat to Dave & Pete who have yet to find the start of it!

Nikki, Jackie & Victoria joined us the next day for Twilight Zone. Dave, having just finished camp managing a national club trip, found us in the Drake at supptime (Imagine that!) and asked if he could join us the next day for a quick trip up Wasootch Tower. Since this was a "women's weekend" he agreed to change his name to Daisy (as in "fresh as a...") and joined us on top of this very windy peak with an awesome view!

Participants: Shelley McKinlay, Nikki Hipkin, Jackie Hunchak, Jessamy Foulds, Victoria Klassen, Dave (aka Daisy) McCormick.

A Modern Tale!

A Real Fable

by Joe Turnham

As the four of us – Bob Bigalow, Karen Jacobs, Mark DeAeth and myself – stepped out of the car at Exshaw, we were greeted by a beautiful clear morning sky and a cool temperature, both an indication of

a great day ahead, and indeed that is what it turned out to be.

We travelled, at a good clip, along the valley running north from Exshaw and reached the side valley heading north-west to our objective in almost exactly an hour. This valley continued steadily upwards over boulders, parts of a trail, and, higher up, scree. After a further two hours, we reached the foot of the last scree and slabs that curved rightwards up to the summit ridge. The ridge was fun, hands-on, low-angled slabs that eventually levelled off to a short, sharp section and finally the summit itself.

By now, the day had turned out to be warm with very little wind, so we spent a relaxing hour on the summit sunbathing, eating and trying to identify surrounding peaks, which wasn't easy as none of us had observed them from this far south before, plus we didn't have Rod along with his map and compass.

With most of us starting to feel pretty mellow, it took some effort, and some stretching of muscles as well, to get going for the trip down. This turned out to

be pretty good, with the type of scree that was easy on the knees and boulders that didn't move too much and were OK to "hop" over. We reached the main valley floor and had a wash in the stream before walking back to the car.

All in all, a pleasant approach, a nice ridge and a neat summit. Times: car to side valley – 1 hr; side valley to col – 3 hrs; ridge to summit – 0.75 hrs; summit to lower end of side valley – 2.5 hrs; back to car – 1 hr. A great moderate scramble and an ideal section trip for beginners (and certain old farts!)

[Editor's note: Joe Turnham is a past member of the Sask Section from Regina who is now living in Red Deer and is a certified old fart himself!]

"When you cease to dream, you cease to live."

-- Malcolm Forbes

QUOTE

Trip Reports and Other Stories

***Thrasher's Weekend
by Shannon & Marco-Brawley-Tremblay (Prince Albert)***

Last May, we attended our

first Alpine Club event, The Thrasher's Weekend. We discovered that if you drive 8 ½ hours to go on vacation you can still spend the May long weekend in *blizzard*-like conditions. We started the Thrasher's Weekend with a traditional pit stop at MEC. AH!! MEC, what a wonderful place. Heading out of Calgary towards Seebe campground we discovered that there is no 1X sign from the Trans Canada highway. But not to worry, a nice gentlemen from the gas station further down the road told us where to go. Upon arriving at the campground, we were greeted warmly and advised of a cougar warning. We set up our tent and met some of the other members.

Saturday was quite a day. It started out rainy and windy, so we hiked 'til noon with hopes that the afternoon would provide better weather for climbing. We climbed briefly in the early afternoon until the snow put an end to the day. We warmed up in The Drake, and then braved light hail as we went for ice cream before going back to sleep in our tents.

Sunday morning was cold but

clear skies brought spirits up. "Today's the Day!" We spent the entire day climbing. We started off friction climbing. Later in the day we had the opportunity to climb a lay back affectionately known to the Saskatchewan section as Pete's Crack. We finished the day with supper at The Drake and crawled into our tents for another night. Sunday had been a beautiful perfect day, a total success.

Our many thanks to Ivan, Cathy, Kim, Alex who educated, entertained and kept us safe. We had a blast!!! We'll be back to "Thrash" again next year.

Learn to Trad Weekend

August 11-12, 2001

By Victoria Klassen

The best way to gain confidence and skill in trad climbing is to get out to the rock, place some cams and nuts and hang on them for a while. Oh yes, and make sure to get Pete Burgess as a teacher.

Five Sask. Section climbers met at Yamnuska for a weekend in August to learn the art of placing passive gear and leave the bolted routes behind. Sask.

Section chair Peter Burgess led the trip, assisted for one day by National Rep Dave McCormick. We were observed by an affable Minnesota biker/musician who, after seeing the Friendliest ACC Section in action, has asked where he can sign up for "our little cult."

We spent a hot, sunny Saturday at Yamnuska bluffs learning to recognize the best placements for nuts, camalots, hexes, and tricams. We set up opposing nuts for the first placement (to avoid the dreaded "zipper effect") and practiced tying a clove hitch one-handed (got that one down yet Cathy? I'm not sure I do). We set up hanging belays using three well-placed pieces for an anchor, using the so-called "Burgess death triangle".

Of course Saturday night's session was held at the Drake. Cathy and Ivan, Alix and Kim, Dave and Catherine, Pete and Victoria got to tell all the old stories again to Jon, the American. It's great having a fresh audience! We said goodbye to Dave and Catherine who headed further West for some

hiking adventures.

Sunday we (Pete, Victoria, Ivan, Cathy, Alix and Kim) headed to Wasootch Canyon to climb a route. We used a top-rope and tied in to both ends, and "led" a nice 5.7 crack. The day was over too quickly before we had to jump in the car and head back to Saskatoon. Correction: Alix and Kim are now in Calgary, lucky devils!

Thanks Pete, for being a patient, fun and knowledgeable teacher. Tentative plans for next year involve holding Learn to Trad closer to the beginning of rock climbing season.

Field of Dreams (Mountains of Mystery)
by Catherine McCormick

This summer I was able to complete 4 objectives which had been a small part of my dreams over several years. The first was into Berg Lake at Mount Robson Provincial Park in B.C. I had seen this hike described in Robinson and Patton's *Trail Guide* at least 20 years ago and it always had great appeal. With small kids and various other

agendas it hadn't really fit into any summer plans. This summer, beginning July 2nd, I began the hike!! We started from the parking lot after checking in at the Information Bureau and obtaining back country camp sites,

etc. The 11 km hike into Whitehorn campsite was wonderful. The trail follows the Robson River for the first 5 km and then skirts around Kinney Lake, a naturally formed lake on the Robson River. The views of Mt. Robson are not good, but I always love a hike which follows water. We left the river for the next 3 km and had a small amount of uphill work to do before arriving

at our first camp. We got up early the next morning because we knew the forecast was good and had some major elevation gain to complete before the heat of the day got started. The next 8 km of hiking to Berg Lake was the nearly finest backpacking I have ever done!! The hiker travels through the Valley of the Thousand Waterfalls and it is truly awesome! I highly

recommend this hike to anyone who enjoys views of water. In my opinion, the nicest campsite is found at Emperor Falls, located on the Robson River just as it begins to hurry down the mountain to the highway below. We stayed at Marmot Campsite, located at Berg Lake, a small campground with views of both the Mist and Berg Glaciers. The main campground at Berg Lake (2 km further on the trail) is larger, with a shelter, etc. and is also very nice. Other campsites are found at Rearguard (a further 2 km) and Robson Pass (another 2 km). All campgrounds on this trail are in excellent condition and very well-maintained. They have an outdoor "kitchen" with a bucket for carrying water, a plastic dish pan and an obvious place for disposal of grey water.

The next day found us tracking up to the Mumm Basin above Berg Lake where we were afforded some wonderful views of Mt. Robson. Of course this summer being what it was, our weather was perfect! We did a circuit past the Mumm Basin to Hargreaves Lake where Dave did a short hike to the toe of the

"No one gets out of the game of life alive. You either die in the bleachers or on the field. So, you might as well come out on the field, and go for it!"

QUOTE

Hargreaves Glacier. The next day we had our only hour of inclement weather and we even had the ponchos on for 15 minutes. We found the trip out easy (19 km) and managed it in under 5 hours. A very worthwhile backpacking trip - or a day trip if you're willing to do 40 km in one day. I did meet one fellow in running shoes, carrying a Safeway bag with some food, no water and no extra clothing, doing the day trip!

My second "dream" trip was to visit the site of Dave and Scott's bear attack of 1994. We left from Johnson's Canyon with Joe and Pat Turnham, en route to Fish Creek at Lake Louise. After we left the Inkpots, we were in for a tortuous time with the mosquitoes! The first day of hiking was quite boring - through the bottom of a valley with very few views. Not being able to stop because of the bugs did not allow for pleasant conversation, etc. We camped on the shores of Johnson Creek and that evening did a short hike up to a beautiful lake. Mercifully, the first two hours of the day were bug-free, so we were up early and on the

trail once again. Pulsatilla Pass is very nice (wind kept the bugs away!) and a very, very steep hike down the other side and some route-finding got us to Wildflower Creek for the second bug-infested evening. Day 3 also afforded us some interesting route-finding, but once we got to the top of the pass, it was a well-traveled trail. I saw the "bear site" on the shores of Baker Lake, and once we ascended to the pass just below Deception Pass, we were bug-free!! The wind was wonderful and the day very hot. This hike out down the road introduced me to the joys of backpacking in sandals, something I will do whenever possible.

My other two "dreams" came in the form of mountains which I have always loved; I had set my sights on a "millennium project" of climbing an 11,000 ft. peak. Well, I managed to get up both Mt. Temple (with a lot of help from a rope and Dave!) and Mt. Athabasca. I was really intrigued by Athabasca when I attempted to get up it last year with some other Sask Section members. On that trip we were stormed off about 1

hour from the summit. This year, we got up early and climbed to the toe of the glacier where we hummed and hawed about continuing. The weather looked like it would be okay, but the valley so full of smoke we knew the views would be limited. I really wanted to accomplish this climb so off we went!! The wonderful thing about a snowfield is that it is much easier to come down than a scree slope and that makes Athabasca much easier on the body than Temple. I was pretty pleased with my accomplishments in these fields of ice, snow and dreams!!

Other hikes Dave and I did which we'd really recommend are the Whaleback, -Twin Falls circuit, which we completed with Ivan and Kathy Hitchings, and our daughter Andrea. That was our Canada Day Teahouse Toddle, but unfortunately, the teahouse was NOT open to visitors at that time, only guests. Dave and I also revisited Eva Lake in Mt. Revelstoke National Park and finally walked into Jade Lakes on another perfect, hot, mountain day. The wildflower meadows are incredible and the

hiker goes by hundreds of meadows on the route. It was fun to think back to doing this 30 years ago and thinking that it was pretty difficult – Interesting how some years can change your perspective!! Onward and Upward!

Introduction to Trad Climbing
by Ivan Hitchings

The weekend of Aug.10-11 turned out to be a bit of a family weekend. Peter Burgess had offered to do training on placing protection and building anchors for people who are interested in learning to lead climbs. This was intended as a beginner course and it was not the intention to jump out and start leading routes up the north face of, well anything. [*Editor's note: this course was actually on the south face of Yam bluffs!!*]

Kim and Alix Hitchings (Calgary) and Victoria Klassen (Regina) signed up; as the result of a forest fire on the Upper Kananaskis Lake, a backpacking trip Kathy and I had planned was canceled so we joined as well. Dave and Catherine McCormick joined us for Saturday.

Peter is a great instructor; for our first day of lead training we didn't wear our rock shoes once. As a matter of fact, we didn't get anymore than two feet off the ground. First we had a short but very interesting history of the development of protection for

climbing. Then we reviewed each piece - nuts, cams, Tri-cams, Hexs and how they are best used. We learned about setting an opposing piece for our first anchor. Each participant got a rack with some gear on it and we practised placing what we had, later switching racks and practising some more. Making mistakes this close to terra firma is a positive learning experience that prevents one from making the same mistake later and further off the deck, which could prove to be a negative learning experience.

We each took a turn at constructing a hanging belay. Three points of anchor, with an opposing anchor all equalized, balanced and three feet up. What a way to start.

Rob Owens happened by with a group he was working with. He seemed very impressed with our work and with Pete's instructing. He also understood why three people would be hanging from a rock face in a hanging belay only three feet up, but the group of scouts he was with and who knew nothing about climbing thought we were out of our minds.

Pete did a great job in the two days he had our undivided attention. He instilled in us the need for safety, the need for being careful, for placing anchors and protection carefully and correctly. He also taught us that we're not ready to be striking out on multipitch climbs on our own, placing our own protection and expecting to live through it. What we need now is lots of practice starting with some easy routes and following people who do know how to place gear.

It was a great two days. Thanks Peter.

***ACC National News
by Dave McCormick***

Members should be aware that changes have been made to Section trip bookings at the Elizabeth Parker hut at Lake O'Hara. Members have been sent an e-mail with the details and the policy can be read on our website.

The next National Board meeting will be in Lake Louise in mid-October. A recent report from the current ACC President, David Toole, notes that the ACC is in very good financial condition. In the past 5 years, national level revenues have more than doubled to about \$1.5 million and membership has grown by about 30%.

It appears that the National Office will propose a modest membership fee increase at the upcoming Board meeting. Probably in the range of \$3. They note that the last membership fee increase was in July of 1996 and that so far, facilities revenue has been able to cover the difference between membership fee revenue (about \$19) and membership servicing costs (about \$41). They'd like to

narrow that gap a bit.

Finally, a reminder to all members that the website is being updated regularly; pictures for it and newsletter articles are always welcomed. In the next issue, we will be posting nominations for the Section Executive positions. Any members interested in serving on the executive for the coming year, in any capacity, should contact Peter Burgess,

Shelley McKinlay or any other Executive member.

A reminder – the Section has gear available to members to rent at very reasonable rates. Contact Shelley for information.

**DEADLINE for articles for the next issue
of the newsletter — October 15, 2001**



The Alpine Club of Canada
SASKATCHEWAN SECTION

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