

Snow Walkers Gazette

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Inside this issue:

Saskatchewan Toe Trip	2
Day Trips/ Snow Reports	3
Mountain Trips	3
Tour Leader Courses	4
Birki Report	5
Fryatt Hut Trip	6
+55 Winter Games Results	7

Message from the President

It's been great skiing on the Heritage/Bower trails during the last couple of weeks. Strangely, I've had the trails all to myself over the last three times. Seems like nobody skis between 11 and 12 PM in the evening. Very odd... Every time I go on the



trails I'm so grateful for the volunteer work that Mark Meunier and company do to keep the tracks in great shape. Thank you!

March is the "iffy" month for skiing around here. I'm grateful for the warm weather and greater hours of sunshine but wouldn't it be nice to get just one more dump of snow? Knowing Alberta weather, the probability of this happening is pretty good. Anyhow, enjoy the rest of the season... and while you're skiing think of the wonderful opportunities you could have as a member of the executive for the Parkland Cross Country Ski Club. Great people to work with, good grazing at exec. meetings, and the work load is not huge. Go for the gusto, start off by running for President! See you at the meeting!

Parkland Ski Club General Meeting
Tuesday, March 8, 2005
Kerry Wood Nature Center

Dates to Remember

- Spruce View Ski Trails Day Trip on March 6 (see page 3 for details)
- Deadline for registering for Mt Castleguard trip (see page 4 for details)
- TL Weekend registration deadline is March 18
- Annual General Meeting at the Pioneer Lodge is on April 12



Parkland Ski Club Executive for 2004-2005

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Vice President:		
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The Saskatchewan Toe Trip by Ann Broadberry

*“After a certain age, if you
don't wale up aching in
every joint, you are
probably dead “
Prof. Lipstand*

The Sask Toe Trip was on the 12th and 13th of February this year, and it was a blast! On the attendance list were Marilyn, Terry Ferster and his son Graham, Frank, Brian Sam, Dave Rideout and his daughter Andrea, Carol, Brian, Andy, his girlfriend Shannon, Tophie, Ann, and her boyfriend Tony. A very good turnout, especially of newcomers! Graham, Terry, Andrea, Shannon and Tony had not skied to Sask Toe before, and in some cases, had not skied ever, so this day was bound to be an adventure! The trip started off with a clear blue sky, beautiful mountain views and high spirits. We struggled first up the big hill, crossed the avalanche slope safely once again thanks to Brian Davies, and made our way across the flats towards the moraines. Lunch was a fast and cold affair, nestled in the crook of a moraine, so we were all happy to start moving again. We decided to make our way to the ice wall, rather than aim for the actual Toe, which is getting farther and farther away every year. What a good choice! Tophie, Brian Sam and Graham found an ice cave that extended back hundreds of yards! A bunch of us scrambled around inside, taking in the glowing blue ice, the dipping and weaving path, and little stream patterns all the while army crawling on our bellies and getting covered in glacial silt.

It was past three by the time we started back to the vehicles so some of us ended up crossing the creek in the dark. Half the group managed to blast down that hill in record time (apparently Tophie and Brian Sam made it in 2 minutes...) to get to the cars just before nightfall. Tophie and I didn't feel smug about this for too long because Carol and Brian were 45 minutes behind us with the car keys! It was a cold wait. The five first-timers did wonderfully, skied like pros, didn't complain about their many pains, and kept up good spirits (at least

Ski Club Day Trips and Ski Trail Report

Day Trips

Call Pam at 342-2206 if you have a day trip you want to lead. We could use a few more day tours this year as long as the snow stays this good.

Please phone the trip leader in case the trip is cancelled due to poor snow conditions.

March 6, 2005 Spruce View Trails Leader Patrick Gleason call 227-1164

These are scenic track set trails near the lovely Raven River. Join our purple President Patrick as he loses himself out there as well as everybody else.

March– April The “Lake Series.” Join Bob J. and Don for the ever popular “Lake Series”. If the conditions are right we ski the perimeter of Sylvan Lake, Pine Lake, and sometimes part of Gull Lake. The best way to do it is with skate skis or classical skis without wax. The conditions can often be very fast and this can be an enjoyable tour (or not). Contact Bob at 346-8775 or Don at 343-2937 to find out what dates we expect to go and how much this will hurt.

Snow Report


Heritage Ranch Excellent as usual. Classical tracks from Bower Ponds to Heritage Ranch. Other trails follow the river and there are loops around the lake and open pasture. Try the cinnamon buns at the Ranch coffee shop.

Red Deer College. Track set as of Feb 24. Approximately 80% of the college trails are excellent with some short hard pack sections that should pose few problems.

River Bend Superb ski conditions. All trails including some new ones on the golf course have been packed and tracked. Cost is \$4→25 / day but finally it is worth it.

Jarvis Bay. Usually good snow due to the lake. Trails are tracked but often walked on. A nice change from the trails in Red Deer and only a 20 min drive away.

Crimson Lake. Crimson Lake got a big dump of snow that enabled staff to track set the whole 10 km around the lake. The track is excellent except in a few places on the west side that may have melted out in this warm weather. Tracks are also made throughout the campground.



“Do you realize that in about 40 years, we’ll have thousands of old ladies running around with tattoos?”

Prof. Lipstand



2005 Mountain Tour Schedule

Our most excellent tour Chairperson Claude suggests you sign up for tours early in the New Year as they are filling up fast. For more details on the tours offered this winter check the web site at www.parklandxcskiclub.ab.ca

- **Nigel / Poboktan Traverse (March 11-13)** Contact Don Wales at 343-2937. This is a long ski traverse involving winter camping and is therefore classified as advanced. The first night is in the Beauty Creek Hostel at a cost of \$13.00. (12 skiers)
- **Mt Castleguard (March 24-27)** Contact Brian Sam at (403) 286-9396 This advanced trip involves glacier travel and either snow caving or winter camping. The first night is in Beauty Creek Hostel at a cost of \$13.00/ night.
- **Tour Leaders and Executive Appreciation Trip (April 1-3)** at Saskatchewan River Crossing This is an intermediate trip depending on who is going. The trip is open to 12 tour leaders and executive with the remaining spots available to members who have executive aspirations (or not)

Tour Leader Level I Certification by Brian Davies

*“What hair color do they
put on the driver’s licence
of bald men ?
Prof. Lipstand*

The much anticipated Tour Leader I course is on with a significant number of candidates expressing interest.. The following courses will be run this year followed by more courses and the practical mountain tour next year. You don’t have to be a candidate to take these courses. Contact **Brian Davies** for more information at 227-4409

- **Map and Compass**, This course provides you with the basics needed to use a compass and read a topographical map
- **GPS** An introductory course on the use and value of a Global Positioning Unit in the backcountry
- **Introductory Avalanche Course**
- **Avalanche Transceiver Level I and II** Level I is usually done in one evening in town while Level II is often done in the mountains. This is a very valuable skill to practice and perfect each year no matter what your experience level is.
- **Winter Camping** , Usually takes place in the mountains and teaches you how to build a snow shelter (usually a group snow cave) You will have an opportunity to find out how comfortable it is to sleep in a snow cave.

Photos in this issue:

Page 1 Pulks pulled pitifully up Fryatt Cr Valley

Page 7 The view north from Deception Pass on the way into Skoki

Page 8 Ice Wall at the Sask. Glacier Toe by Terry Ferster

The Birki by Nod Selaw



Once a year the sleek, lykra clad, latte sipping racers like to irate the heck out of the tick infested, granola crunching, yogurt slurping, knicker wearing tourers by reporting the race results from the Birki so here we go again

In the 55km (this really hurts) race Kit Richmond, son of Lianna and Dave Richmond (former members) was second in a time of 2hr 39 min. Graham Vanderwater son of bouncing Bob Vanderwater skied in 3 hr 36 min, Dr. Bill Young (contemporary of Donnie W and Bobbie J) 3:41, Bobby V. 3 hr 43, Don Wales sucking eggs at a dismal 4hr 1 min, Dave Richmond (Dad of Kit) at 4:06 (after spending 15 min or so patching up a blister on the course.. The blister was on his foot not the course) and club member Andy Lamb 4 hr 10 min. A note about Andy. While Bobby J. and I have been strutting around crowing about our paltry 10 and 11 birki races Andy has quietly skied all 19 of them. Talk about an iron man. We take our hats (toques) off to you, Andy Congratulations And here is another remarkable story. Karen Pawloff, daughter of Dick and Connie skied the 55 km race in 5 hr. 04 min and had hardly been on skis all year. Wow !

In the 31 km race won in the men's category in a time of 1 hr 26 min , Jem Morrison, son of Judy was 1 hr 55min, Joe Turnham former disgruntled club member now living in Cochrane was 2:27 and dangerous Dick Pawloff at 3 hr 50 min. Now here is one more remarkable story. Robert Stevens finished at 5 hr 27 min. Robert is blind and he and his guide, Judy Morrison had just come from the Ski for Light in the Kananaskis. Robert opted to ski the hilly and sometimes challenging Birki course instead of a 5 km at Ski For Light on Saturday. Coincidentally, Judy's time was also 5 hr 27 min which is always nice to see when you can't see. Congratulations to you both

*“Why do croutons come in airtight packages? Aren't they just stale bread to begin with ?
Mrs.. Lipstand*

Wanted to Buy or For Sale

- **Margrit DeGraff** is looking for a size 10 or 10 1/2 **leather ski boot** for a three pin binding Call her at 782-2193
- **Missing a purple ORTOVOX F2 avalanche transceiver.** It has #26 written on it and was loaned out during the “Road Show” at the end of January. Please check your gear to see if it got caught up. Otherwise the Trip Leader bless his soul will have to spring for it Contact Don at 343-2937 or Claude at 342-2069
- **Missing A rusted old Mazda MPV** with 454,000 km on the odometer. And a Hexapod licence plate stolen from the driveway in front of my house. Call Don at 343-2937 Who would have thunk it.



Alberta Parklanders Revive Ancient Pulking Skills

I recently visited Red Deer, Alberta, to see old friends and to explore more of the backcountry of the Canadian Rockies in winter. I fulfilled all of these goals and was granted an unexpected bonus: witnessing the revival of an old and traditional mode of transportation.

Unknown to me, Red Deer is one of the few places in the world where the ancient art of pulking is still re-enacted. And it is the Parklands Ski Club, whom I accompanied on one of their scheduled tours, that is at the forefront of this revival. They were kind enough to demonstrate this ancient art on the sometimes precipitous trails and snow slopes that lead to the Fryatt hut in the wilds of Jasper National Park.

There is uncertainty over the true origins of pulking. Some anthropologists claim that it must have started when the earth was a lot flatter. Others suggest that it is an Inuit practice initiated by a mass escape of sled dogs. But most experts agree with my wise friend Professor Lipstand that cave drawings in Scandinavia showing fur-clad men dragging slain mammoths through the snow using ropes and small trees to be the earliest recording of this practice. It is also known that early settlers in the Canadian prairies constructed sleds to transport goods in winter and that every spring festival included competitions between teams of muscular snowshoers trying to pull the heaviest load up the steepest slope.

The word *pulk* is probably an adaptation from the latin *pulcher*, meaning girl or beauty, signifying that ancient aficionados considered this spectacle to be one of poetic grace. This inspires the more recent practioners to further their efforts to turn their own stumbling attempts into something closer to beauty in motion.

The Red Deer enthusiasts have not been content with the pulk's traditional role on level ground but have defied gravity and the laws of physics by pulling loaded pulks both up and down mountain trails. Local sociologists believe that we may be witnessing the emergence of a new subspecies: Homo Pulkis, with special tolerance for mobility frustrations.

It was these special characteristics that I had the privilege of witnessing on the route to Fryatt hut. It is my belief that the Red Deer subspecies are accelerating their separate development by performing special exercises which include grossly overloading their pulks with liquid consumables and unnecessary hardware.

As in native North American tribes, the Homo Pulkis groups perform secret ceremonies before each outing. I have reason to suspect that the strange chants were not just to avoid avalanches but to grant them magical powers over the physical world and human kinesiology. For example, some avid pulkers believed that friction beneath their skis would allow them to pull a 25-kg weight up a 15-degree slope without the help of skins or rope and pulleys.

*"If 4 out of 5 people
SUFFER from diarrhea,
does that mean that one
enjoys it?"*
Prof. Lipstand

My visit to the Canadian Rockies not only refreshed my memories of the stark grandeur of those mountains, but it showed how ancient practices are being kept alive in this age of digital gizmos. I shall also follow with interest the evolution of the dedicated subspecies that I met and I wonder if they will be better suited to survive in the future world of tectonic upheavals.

David Malcolm, Kirkland , Washington, February 27th, 2005

Editors Note Prof. Malcolm is a graduate of the same School of Every-man-for-Himself as the highly respected Prof. Lipstand Despite the pulks and copious amounts of fermented angiosperm ovaries the trip was great. The nine of us skied some fairly challenging terrain under the very capable leadership of Brian Sam. It was great to see Mikey Spencer out too and he hasn't missed a step even after not skiing for 7 months. The hut was comfortable, the snow powdery and the company exceptional. The trip in is quite enjoyable with the possible exception of the 1,000 foot headwall that one must walk up and down unless you are a purist like Mike and skied down the thing. The hut is located at the lip of the hanging valley. Check the photos in the web site for more pictures. This trip also included some spelunking to justify humping in those ice axes, ropes, crampons and ice screws. We will have to do this again sometime now that Fay Hut is gone.

More Racing News

This just in. I have just received the results of the **Fossil Winter Games** opps **the Wrinklelee Games** opps, I mean the **Chronologically Challenged Winter Games** , no I mean the **Old Geezers Games** (gulp Mark asked me not to write this) actually the **55+ Winter Games** in Edmonton over the last week. And here are the results. Zone 4 (that's us) kicked butt. Topping the list was our own Ruby Meunier with 3 gold and one silver medal, her speedster husband Mark with 3 bronze medals in the 70+ group, Pam Ralston with 2 golds and 1 silver in the 55-59 category and City Councilor Larry Pimm with 3 silver and 1 bronze in the 60-65 category



“Ever wonder about those people who spend \$2.00 a piece on those little bottles of Evian water? Try spelling Evian backwards:

NAIVE”

Prof. Lipstand



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*The mission of the
Parkland Ski Club is to
burn our pulks.. I mean
to enjoy, enhance,
facilitate, and promote
cross country skiing.*

right until the final creek crossing, which was a frustrating climb for some). The major problems were related to gear, for example I know that Tony will never ski in the backcountry on skinny little skis again!

I think we were all very excited after the long ski about getting back to the hostel for some PDM goodies! We gorged ourselves on shrimp, chips, veggies and salmon dip, then a huge main course of pork roast, broccoli and cheese sauce, chili and casserole. I'm getting uncomfortably hungry just writing about all this great food so I'll have to stop. After-dinner entertainment was outstanding this year. Tophie and Brian Davies on guitar, Carol on mandolin, and Andy on Banjo and harmonica made for some beautiful sounds. Everyone sang along as



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best they could, in my case a little flat and a lot loud. The sauna that night was hot and many of us were sweaty enough to try a dip in the creek. For some reason Graham was the biggest advocator of this activity, he just couldn't wait to take that swim. Come to think of it, Graham was very enthusiastic all weekend long, pushing himself hard, and celebrating even harder. Good for you Graham, it's good to see some young, impressionable blood.

Sunday was a quiet day, Brian Sam and Andrea skied, but the rest of us had a leisurely morning and got home early. Thanks to Carol and Brian for leading and to all the others who helped as well.