

THE BLIZZARD

THE ALPINE CLUB
OF CANADA
Rocky Mountain Section



January 2004



former Fay Hut

Yes, folks, it's that time of year again--no, I don't mean winter (although it is that, too); I mean time for another one of my wildly popular and much-anticipated National Board reports. Now, hang on a second--I see you reaching to turn the page, but I would highly recommend that you at least skim over this article, if not (preferably) read it in detail. Some fairly important matters were discussed at the last National Board meeting, and while it may not be as exciting as reading about that powder ski trip or the beta on that ice climb you've been wanting to do, I believe you owe it to yourselves as ACC members to keep abreast of and informed about what's happening in your National Club these days.

The National Board got together for its semi-annual meeting in Lake Louise on the weekend of November 1st & 2nd, 2003. The weekend actually started on the night of Friday October 31st with a reception and slide show at the Canadian Alpine Centre. As it was Halloween, several people attended the reception in costume, which made for an interesting and fun change from the usual. The slide show was presented by the Section's own Nancy Hansen, and showcased her recently-completed accomplishment of becoming the first woman to climb all 54 peaks over 11,000 feet in the Canadian Rockies. More than just a series of summit shots, the show was a very personal look at the challenges, highs, lows, trials, and triumphs Nancy faced on her way to com-

pleting her goal. The show drew high praise from those who attended, many of whom are highly-accomplished and respected mountaineers in their own right.

The Board got down to business on Saturday and spent most of the day listening to the various reports and dis-

Fall 2003 National Board Report

Ron Scholtz

cussing the more routine matters which needed to be dealt with. The meeting was followed on Saturday evening by the 14th Annual Mountain Guides Ball at the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, where, among others, Nancy Hansen was once again in the spotlight being recognized for her accomplishment. After the obligatory speeches, Nancy was presented with a commemorative gift in recognition of her feat by none other than Don Forest, the first person ever to climb all the 11,000-ers.

On Sunday the Board reconvened and spent the morning discussing the most important topic of the weekend, the 2004 National Budget. After much discussion, the budget was passed; details of the financial implications of this year's budget can be found below.

While the meeting itself is long over, my job is not, and herewith I present the highlights of the meeting:

Club Sections: Once again, all Sections presented reports which were generally positive in nature. Each Section faces its own challenges, some unique and some common to all Sections. Seeing how each Section faces its challenges is always an interesting learning experience, and one of the main goals of these Board meetings is to bring the various Section reps together to facilitate the flow of information and ideas between the various Sections which, after all, make up the heart and soul of our national mountaineering club.

Treasurer: Unfortunately, the report given by Gord Currie (Calgary) was somewhat less than positive. For fiscal year 2003, the Club projected a substantial deficit of close to \$100,000 due to significantly lower revenues and higher costs at our hut facilities, lower membership revenue, and a small loss in the Activities area. These shortfalls were due to a large number of circumstances beyond the Club's control which negatively influenced travel, tourism, and adventure-related activities in 2003, including poor ski conditions and highly-publicized avalanche deaths last winter, SARS, mad cow disease, war, extensive forest fires, and the sad loss of the Fay Hut.

On a slightly more positive note, thecontinued on page 3...

2004 Ski Camps

Fairy Meadow

April 3-10, 2004

Approx. \$900

Contact Bruce Hardardt 403-285-9730

bhardardt@shaw.ca

Although the camp is presently full, there is a waiting list being compiled.

If you would like to be on this list, please contact Bruce.

The Rocky Mountain Section Offers these Courses

Glacier Travel & Cravasse Rescue

Rock Climbing

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Avalanche Awareness

Mountaineering

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Standard Wilderness First Aid

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Ski Mountaineering

Snowshoeing

For your copy of the Bow Corridor Continuing Education Brochure visit The Town of Banff or The Town of Canmore offices or either public library.

Courses may also be viewed by following the courses link from http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/sections/rocky_mountain.html

To register for these courses contact

The Town of Banff at 762-1202.

Course coordinator Terry Duncan 678-8001

Rocky Mountain Section

Mailing Address

ACC - RMS

Box 8277

Canmore, AB

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Heritage Room & Thank You John Derick

I would like to announce to the Members of the section that the Heritage room is now completed and there is a new deck too. Special thanks to John Derrick for his high quality carpentry skills in the building of the deck. All are invited to the Clubhouse to have a look!

Bruce Hardardt
Chairman of the Clubhouse Committee



Cliff Hansen's backyard photo in Exshaw



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Treasurer did put forth a proposal to try to publish some form of annual report next year, to allow members to see for themselves where and how their membership dollars are being spent. Gord Currie also announced that serious efforts are under way to organize a major fund-raising initiative in order to further diversify our revenue sources.

This leads into the subject of the 2004 National Budget. Due to a number of factors which are outlined in the following paragraphs, the 2004 budget included a proposal to raise membership fees by an average of \$7.00. This provided for the most hotly-debated issue of the entire meeting. While recognizing that fee increases are never popular, the Board also listened to the arguments and issues presented by the National Executive in recommending this fee increase, and in the end the budget, including the fee increase, was approved. The following summary, provided by ACC President David Toole, outlines the reasons the Board felt the fee increase was necessary:

"Throughout at least the past 10 years, the annual cost of Nationally provided services to and on behalf of members and sections has exceeded the annual National membership fees collected. [For a list of the services currently provided by National to and on behalf of members and sections, please contact me - Ron].

"The annual gap between the cost of such services and National membership fee revenues has progressively widened over that 10-year period (especially over the past 4-5 years), on both an absolute as well as a "per member" basis. The reason for the widening gap has been that certain costs (like liability insurance, Board/Executive Committee meeting and travel costs, office technology expenses and staff costs) have risen at a higher pace than the Board-approved increases in National membership fees.

"Over that same period, the revenues from ACC hut overnights have been increasingly utilized to "cross-subsidize" this gap between member/section services costs and fees. This cross-subsidy has allowed the Club to keep its National membership fees artificially low a fact most members have probably not been aware of.

"The Facilities area of the Club (which is responsible for the huts) has pointed out that this cross-subsidization has resulted in some huts not being maintained to an adequate level and that, if allowed to continue, this will begin to negatively affect the huts ability to continue generating the income that makes the cross-subsidization possible in the first place. In order to address and correct this, the Facilities portfolio now needs to retain more of its hut overnights revenue for much-needed hut repairs and maintenance.

"As a result of this, there is less cross-subsidization money available in 2004 than in past years. To make up for the decrease in available cross-subsidization dollars, the Board has agreed to an average \$7 per year per membership increase in National fees. This was done only after examining and reducing National costs wherever possible, while still ensuring ACC National has sufficient resources to carry out its mandate as Canada's national mountaineering organization.

"At this point, it is difficult to say what might be in store in the way of possible National membership fees increases in 2005 and beyond. Part of the difficulty in being precise on the topic is the difficulty in predicting what revenues the Club can expect in future years, especially from its primary revenue generator the huts. This is because, as we have seen in 2003, expected hut revenues can be negatively affected by weather and other events beyond the Club's control. However, the Board has made it clear that certain principles should continue to guide how the Club handles its national finances. Those principles are:

- National budgets should be based on fiscal prudence and responsibility.
- Part of exercising such responsibility is to not budget for a National operating loss in any one year (unless there are clear and compelling reasons for doing so on an "exception" basis).
- The cross-subsidization of National funds from Facilities to member/section services should continue, but only to the extent that Facilities can provide such funds beyond what it needs to maintain the huts and their ability to generate needed revenues on an ongoing, sustained basis.
- The National level of the Club should be continually seeking out opportunities for

increasing its revenues and decreasing its costs.

- National membership fees should only be increased when it is necessary and after all other reasonable avenues to raise funds have been examined." [End of David Toole's summary]

Continuing on the topic of financial matters, this would probably be as good a time as any to bring up the subject of the Club's liability insurance. The Board was informed at the meeting that the Club could expect a "substantial increase" in its liability insurance premiums, and the 2004 budget made allowances for such an increase. As it turns out, the allowances made were far from enough; no one could anticipate that the premium would, in fact, triple in cost--an increase of nearly \$10 per membership. While the premium has been paid and the Club's liability insurance remains in effect, the Executive and Board are actively exploring avenues to reduce or possibly eliminate liability insurance premiums in the future. Options currently under consideration include reducing the amount of liability insurance coverage in order to reduce the premiums; investigating other "external insurance" possibilities, e.g. other liability insurance providers, or possibly cooperating with one or more other similar organizations to achieve some "economy of scale" benefits in the purchase of liability insurance; and examining the concept of "self-insurance". Each of these options presents its own set of challenges and benefits, and no definite decisions have yet been reached. Stay tuned to this space for further updates.

Secretary: Rod Plasman reports that the proposed schedule of website enhancements (online transactions, membership purchasing /renewals, facilities bookings) has unfortunately had to be pushed back due to a current lack of resources. The proposed enhancements are simply too complex to be effected by volunteers, the current National Office staff is overworked and in no position to implement these enhancements anytime soon, and the Club's current financial environment simply will not support the hiring of additional information technology staff at present. However, the IT requirements of the Club remain a high priority and will be acted upon as soon as our resources allow us to do so.

Facilities: Several items of note came out of ...continued on page 4...

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Carl Hannigan's Facilities report. First and foremost is the future of the Fay Hut, which, as everyone is now aware, was tragically destroyed by a forest fire on August 1, 2003. Given the historical and geographical significance of the hut, the National Executive presented a resolution that the Club would like to rebuild the Fay Hut if and when the Clubs resources and Parks Canada allow us to do so. It will first be up to Parks Canada to decide if and when the Club would be allowed to rebuild; a committee would then be struck to investigate the process of rebuilding the hut and to muster the considerable financial and volunteer resources needed to do so. One piece of good news is that the Club has been approached by an anonymous donor who is interested in contributing a substantial sum of money toward the rebuilding of Fay Hut.

Potential locations continue to be scouted for the proposed Centennial Hut. Efforts are currently being concentrated on BC Parks and several potential locations are on the list for investigation.

The ACC's stewardship of the Kokanee Glacier Cabin has been running smoothly. Anyone interested in entering the lottery for an exclusive week's booking in the 2004/05 winter season is asked to submit their application by May 1, 2004.

Last, but certainly not least, some needed improvements were completed at the Bow Hut this August by Malcolm Talbot and his dedicated team of volunteers. The sleeping quarters were renovated, removing the dividing walls to improve air circulation and installing a small wood-burning stove for heat. The connecting corridor was insulated and now has heat ducted in from the common room. The outhouse and fly-out system were also upgraded during this project.

Activities: Cam Roe (Calgary) reported that the Mountain Adventures program had an interesting summer, but despite the widespread forest fires and area closures, all summer camps went with a minimum of headaches.

The 2004 General Mountaineering Camp will be held at Icefall Brook. After many years of being involved in the GMCs, Brad

Harrison will be reducing his involvement next summer to the role of "Outfitter", meaning he will be on hand to set up and tear down the camp but will limit his involvement in other aspects of the GMC. This is part of a planned transition and is not anticipated to cause any undue concerns. Space at the GMCs always fills up quickly, so if you're planning on attending this year, be sure to book early.

Services: The report from Dave Zemrau (Edmonton) contained a couple of items of note. The first is that the UIAA Safety Commission meeting held in Canmore last June was a great success, with all participants commenting favourably on the local arrangements. This bodes well for the Club's hosting of the UIAA General Assemblies Annual meeting in Banff in 2006.

Second, it was announced that Murray Toft has stepped down as the Chair of the ACC Safety Committee after 16 years of dedicated service. Murray's experience as both an educator and mountain guide has enabled him to provide significant contributions to the Club over that time. Murray is replaced by Dave McCormick of the Saskatchewan Section, and we welcome Dave to this important role.

Mountain Culture: The most significant announcement in Bob Sandford's report was that Jane Gooch's book on the art of Lake O'Hara was nearing completion, with only a minor amount of additional fund-raising needed. The book was scheduled to come off the presses in late November, in time for the Christmas season, and it has indeed done so. One of the best in a long series of recent publications by the Alpine Club, the book is now available for purchase at \$24.95 to members (non-member price \$29.95).

Access/Environment: Peter Muir (Manitoba) continues to coordinate the reports received from all Sections across the country on the particular access and environmental issues they each face. One item of importance which Peter stressed is that each Section ensure they have a representative on the National Access and Environment Coordinating Committee to ensure the Section receives the appropriate information and to review and catalogue any resources the Section may have on access and environ-

mental issues. Many of you may not know yet that the Rocky Mountain Section's Access & Environment Chair, Arian Spiteri, has since moved on to Prince George to continue furthering her education; consequently, the position of A/E Chair is once again vacant. Anyone with a passion for access and environmental issues is urged to consider volunteering for this highly important role; contact any member of the Section Executive for more information.

National Office: As expected, the National Office staff has seen a turnover in more than 50% of the office positions since May 2003. Bruce Keith reports that, despite the challenges of turnover and high workloads, the staff continue to do an admirable job in successfully coping with the growing diversity and volume of work needed to maintain existing and expected services as well as new and evolving operational and management requirements.

Centennial Committee: Plans for events to celebrate the Club's 100th anniversary in 2006 are moving ahead at the National level. At the same time, many sections are now beginning to come up with their own plans and ideas for ways in which to mark this very important anniversary. Dr. Robert Gall has kindly volunteered to act as Centennial Events Coordinator for the Rocky Mountain Section; anyone with any ideas on what events the Section could potentially host or become involved in is asked to contact Robert or any member of the Section Executive.

To all those who have continued to read this far, a hearty "thank you" for keeping yourself informed as to what your Club is up to and what challenges we face as we continue to look toward the future. A lot of information has been presented here, unfortunately not all of it positive, but all of it, I believe, necessary in order to keep you, the membership, informed not only about what is happening, but also why things are happening and what additional changes may be coming.

Until my next report in Spring, have yourselves a safe and happy winter!



Monthly Section Meeting

Held

The first Tuesday of the month & 2nd Tuesday in January
(there are no meetings in July & August)

At 7:00 p.m.

At the ACC Clubhouse in the Guides Room.

These meetings keep members informed of Section activities and future plans. They also allow members to share their experiences in a social setting.

All members and guests are welcome.

Rocky Mountain Section Mission Statement

To provide Rocky Mountain Section members and potential members the opportunity to learn about and participate in alpine and mountaineering related activities in as safe a manner as possible while supporting the goals of the National Alpine Club of Canada.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Elected Executive:

Past Chair	Les Punshon		403-678-4330
Chair	David Moe	dmoe@telusplanet.net	403-678-6501
Vice-Chair	Bogdan Buziak		403-688-7474
Secretary	Danelle Sully	djsully@telusplanet.net	403-609-9909
Treasurer	Steve Fedyna	steve.fedyna@sap.com	403-678-1969
RMS/ACC Rep	Ron Scholtz	rscholtz@telusplanet.net	403-609-0432

Appointed Sub-Committees (Chairpersons):

Trips	Rod Plasman	rod.plasman@town.banff.ab.ca	403-678-4313
	Ray Norman	raycelia@telus.net	403-609-0337
Access/Enviro	Arian Spiteri	eenies@hotmail.com	403-762-3259

Appointed Special Tasks (Coordinators)

Blizzard	Ruthie Oltmann	ruthieo@telusplanet.net	403-673-3832
Community Courses	Terry Duncan	tduncan@telusplanet.net	403-678-8001
Leader Courses	Jackie Clark	jackiesteve@monarch.net	403-678-1969
Ropes (Trip Leaders)	Nancy Hansen	nhansen@telusplanet.net	403-678-4900
Web Site	David Moe	dmoe@telusplanet.net	403-678-6501
Blizzard Stuffers	Gary Brown	gary.brown@telusplanet.net	403-678-1920
Photo Contest	Val Sullivan	valerie_sullivan@expertcanmore.net	403-678-4313

Members at Large:

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	Celia Norman	raycelia@telus.net	403-609-0337
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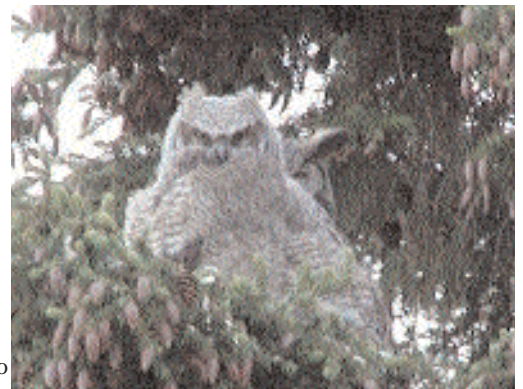
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Cliff Hansen photo



Happy New Year

from your gamboling
Editor & Mount Logan

*"It's been a pleasure doing the *Blizzard* for the last 15 years"*

Now if you had sent me an article you wouldn't have to look at my pretty face on this page!