

THE BULLETIN

November 2013



Editor: Judy Fleetham

Publisher: Stuart R. Watkins

Come Ride With Us & Experience the “Best Vacation Of Your Life”™



The 91st annual ride of the T.R.C.R. will explore the head waters of the Red Deer River on the eastern slopes of Canadian Rockies. Our base camp, will be located at historic “Scotch Camp” on the Red Deer River in world famous Banff National Park. This wild flower laden meadow is surrounded by towering peaks and has spectacular views in all directions. Our camp is just a short distance from the Red Deer River and offers us more riding options than we have time to do! Complete information and registration information will follow on our new website to be launched on December 15th (or earlier) We have a new website domain name too!

www.trailridevacations.com

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Tell us about your ride from last summer. Share your thoughts, pictures and questions about the T.R.C.R. We will keep you posted with the current news too!

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:



The camp is down, the horses are out for the winter and we are wrapping up a relatively good summer. The weather was certainly great; only six days of rain the entire summer!

Our thanks to B.J. Smith and his crew for good rides and great food. Also, many thanks to the eight Emcees' who gave of their time and put lots of energy into making our rides successful.

I am very excited about all the new things happening at T.R.C.R. Here is a list:

1. Vice-President Gary Sandbeck and I recently met with Parks Canada officials and we received very high praise for how the camp was operated and especially how we left the area in early September. We have been approved for the summer of 2014 and our camp will be in the Red Deer River basin, west of Sundre, Alberta. This is a wilderness area and we have not ridden there in seventeen years. The rides depart from the world famous Ya-Ha-Tinda ranch, truly one of the most spectacular ranch/mountain areas in the world. Our 5-6 hour daily rides this year include: Tyrell Creek, Divide Creek, Elkhorn Lake, and Snowpass Creek and/or perhaps a ride continuing up the valley from camp to the Red

Deer River falls. This area actually gives us more options than we have days to ride!

2. We are presently putting together a proposal to ride into the Clearwater River area of Banff National Park in the summer of 2015. We were there a few years ago, but not inside the Park.
3. Our staging area and host hotel will be the Best Western Mountainview Hotel (just opened six months ago!) in the town of Sundre, about 90 minutes northwest Calgary. From there our chartered bus would take us to our trailhead at the world-famous Ya-Ha Tinda Ranch. We will then have a leisurely 15 mile ride to camp.
4. I am extremely pleased to announce the appointment of Robert Vanderzwert as our new secretary-treasurer. This is a part time paid position and we are delighted and indebted to Robert for accepting this position and taking this enormous responsibility. Robert is a Certified Management Accountant by trade and an "I.T. guy." He attended his first ride this summer as official musician. You are a blessing Robert; thank-you!
5. The new 2104 website is in production and my

goal is to have it operational by December 15th. Robert will send you an email to confirm. The Red Deer River is a remote area. No hikers, bikers, helicopters; not even a jet stream. We expect to fill quickly so register soon! (we were 72% filled by the third week of February for the 2013 rides)

6. Our fiscal report for the summer is not good. We lost money last summer, mostly because Parks Canada restricted us to 15 riders per ride. Fortunately we have enough cash reserves to continue to operate for one more year. However, we must have full rides in the summer of 2014 if the club is going to continue to survive.

Operating the T.R.C.R. is, quite frankly, a lot of work. We do depend upon you, our club members to support us in a number of ways. Without volunteer board members and your financial and active support, the club will fold. So what can you do? Here is a list!

1. Come back this summer!!! Over 60% of our riders are repeat guests. If you come back, that is less money we need to spend on marketing.
2. Bring a friend! If everyone that attended a ride last summer would return this summer and bring a friend, we would be in great shape! Don't forget; you receive a \$50 rebate using our "refer a friend program." See our website for details.
3. Spread the word about T.R.C.R. This can include inviting people in your area for a T.R.C.R. Round-up. Get together with friends and make new ones; show your pictures and share stories of last summer. T.R.C.R. will be hosting its annual meeting and annual spring Round-up on May 10, 2014 in the Calgary area. Mark your calendar and please attend!
4. Write Parks Canada and the various politicians (see article elsewhere in this issue for names and addresses) and tell them how much you enjoy trail riding and how much you want horses to have access to the Parks.
5. Write and publish a story about T.R.C.R. in your local paper or better yet a magazine.

If we are to keep this historic institution alive, we must continue to market express our concerns to Parks Canada In our meeting with them a few weeks ago they gave Gary and I a list of proposed areas for the next seven years. They have granted us only three camps, which means we are to have rides outside of the National Parks for the remaining four years. Logically and economically this is difficult. Your support is needed. Please write a letter!

The surveys from last summer indicate that overall our rides were well received. We did have some issues, and they have been addressed. We also thank you for your many good and creative ideas. We are making a number of changes as a result of your feedback. (I personally read every survey...)

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly with questions, suggestions, or concerns. We, the Board of Directors, are here for you.

See you this summer up on the Red Deer River!

Blessings and Happy trails,

Stuart R. Watkins
President, T.R.C.R.

srwatkins@shaw.ca



THE RIDE OF THE "CRASH-TEST DUMMIES"

It was the ride that wasn't supposed to be, but was!

By Ride #1 Emcee, Stuart R. Watkins

The flooding in Alberta created quite a bit of havoc for the T.R.C.R. Kananaskis Country received the brunt of the damage which shut down our access to the Shark Mnt trail head. After some intense negotiations with "K-country" between them, ourselves, and our outfitter we received the green light for ride one to go ahead, with some minor changes. Instead of leaving from the Shark Mnt. trailhead, we started our ride right from the Smith-Dorrien highway, which gave us an extra hour of riding!

The "team title" for our group of hardy riders was "the Crash-test Dummies" and we sure did do that! When you go on the first ride, well, things can and were a bit different. As a result of the lateness (*from the flooding*) in setting up the camp by a group of seven hardy volunteers and three staff, time did not permit for the staff to scout the trails ahead of time in some cases. So, "the crash-testers" pushed ahead and we "conquered that mountain" and set the standard of hardiness and perseverance for the rest of the summer! What a great group of riders we had! Lots of beginners and lots of experienced folks who were a real help to the staff.

The weather was fantastic; not many "bugs" and not too hot or cold either. Overcast skies kept the heat down and we had just a bit of rain as we rode into camp. It was one of the best rides I can remember for just near-perfect weather. Our riders came from Vancouver Island; two from Saskatchewan, two from Nova Scotia and the rest from Alberta; several being from Calgary.

The highlight of our trip was seeing a mother grizzly

and her two cubs. We were riding on the main trail about 1/4 mile west of the Bryant Creek Warden's cabin when one of our riders (good work Jude!) spotted the bears. We stopped and watched them for about 15 minutes. They were about 300 yards away and slowly moving towards us, but they could not smell us as the wind was blowing from the east, and we were north of them, travelling east. Shortly after continuing our ride, we turned right (south) at the Warden's cabin then the wind picked up our scent and they took off! Pictures of the bears will be posted in our photo gallery on the website.



Hats off to our beginners; Cora Anderson was a first time rider! She had a great spirit and was a good sport. Hope to see you out on a ride again this summer Cora! Our "crazy gals" from Nova Scotia (Janice and Telf) were the life of the ride! You need to come back this summer and do it again! The ride won't be the same without you! Tovia from Saskatchewan won the Golden Horseshoe Award, Samantha from Vancouver the "survivor award" and Jude won

the rodeo award for hanging onto her horse when it spooked and took off! (*she looked like a pony express rider! - too funny...*)

I think if I had to have "guinea pigs" after a flood and a late and unprepared camp, I would select this group. They were hardy adventurers and never complained about the circumstances we were forced into. Good work team! See you this summer!!!

Blessings, and Happy Trails

Stuart

ASSINIBOINE/BRYANT CREEK

By Ride #7 Emcee, Joel Lipkind

Ride #7 turned out to be a really good week as a congenial group of 16 riders delighted in the superb scenery and were lucky to be blessed with great weather.

Our group included five first timers with T.R.C.R. and seven friends from the US, six of whom have ridden with T.R.C.R. several times before. Coming from as far as Texas, Florida and Washington states illustrates how much they enjoy the Canadian Rockies and the camaraderie of T.R.C.R.

“Teepee town” looked great as it always does in the Bryant Creek valley. The day ride into Assiniboine was warm and cloudless with the mountain just spectacular in front of us. I have been on at least 4 previous rides here and the camp and day into Assiniboine was as good as any I can recall. We only had one cloudy day (not cold) all week and one short bit of rain one evening. The horses behaved for the most part although there was a couple of rodeos one day and on the final ride back to the trail head. Thankfully no one was hurt seriously and all recovered to ride again. All of us were appreciative when Ted Watchuk provided impromptu discourses on the geology of the settings while on the different trails.

B.J. Smith guided us up and down the trails and helped on the entertainment side with poems and stories. Warren was an able wrangler, certainly helpful to folks that were a little nervous on their steeds. Ben, the cook, treated us to fine food and spoiled us with snacks and munchies every day when we came in from the trail. Ed and Chad safely packed our gear in and out and kept the camp and showers running.

Unfortunately we did not have a musician on our trip, but we did manage at least one attempt at singing and storytelling in the donut. Mostly, folks were content to visit, play cards and challenge each other to horseshoe contests during the evenings. We managed a small set of enjoyable skits on the final night in camp with poetic ditties of the week from Marg and Eric Shelton, a focus session led by Dave Payne, Ted Watchuk’s observations on horsemanship and poems by B.J. Smith. The Golden Horseshoe was awarded to Ted Watchuk.



The evening concluded with presentation of 1st ride certificates and ride pins, a few comments from folks and thanks to the staff on behalf of the riders by David Prasow.

Most everyone was able to stay for the wrap up dinner at Boundary Ranch to say good byes.

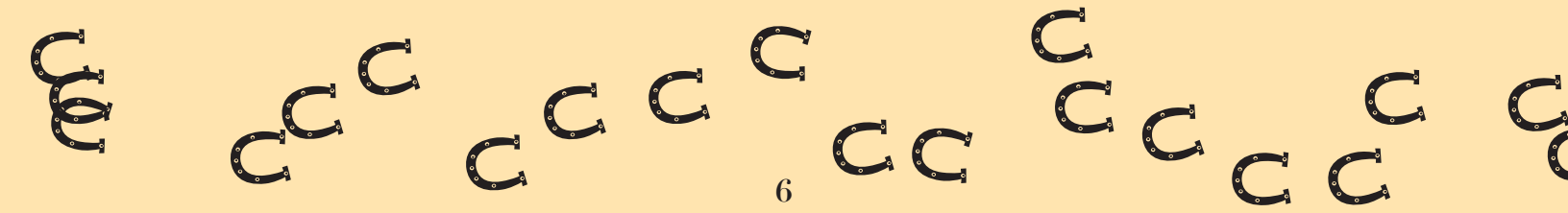
All in all, our ride was a great success. In my opinion our outfitter, Boundary Ranch, did a fine job, the camp setup was pretty and well laid out, the weather cooperated, the scenery was as good as billed and everyone got along. And to top it off, the host also had a good time.

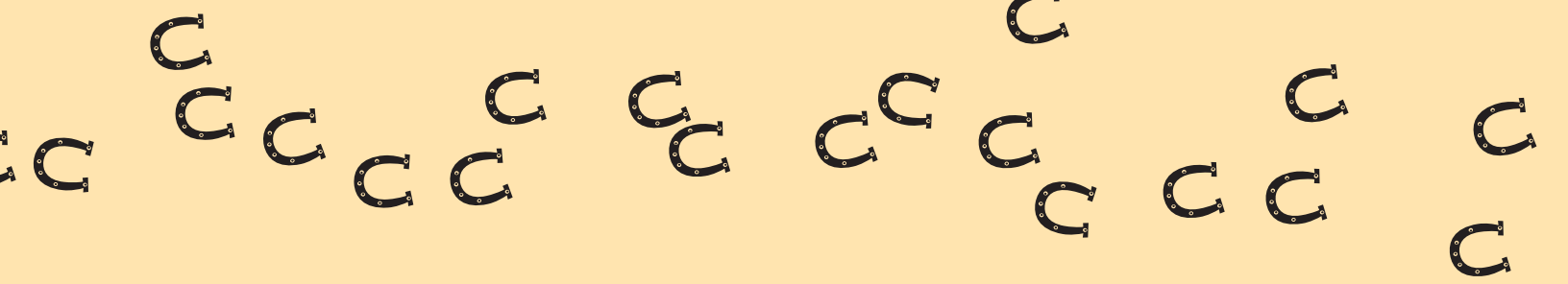


**WE NEED
YOUR VOICE
TO BE HEARD!**

An appeal from our club President

Our club president and vice president attended a two-hour meeting with Parks Canada officials in late September. One of our major stumbling blocks was changed. Last summer we were restricted to fifteen riders per ride. Considering our sales margin is only \$240 per rider, that few number of riders makes it difficult for our organization to survive. *(We actually lost money last summer)*. We are pleased to announce that that ceiling of fifteen has been raised to twenty-seven. I know some of our club members would like to see smaller rides, but financially we simply cannot operate on less than twenty. We are looking at some long-term capital expenditures *(a new kitchen tent, donut tent, and of course teepee's over overtime)* and the money needs to come from our bank account.





1) The National Parks act clearly states that the Parks are for, “the enjoyment of the people...” The National Parks are not wildlife reserves or wildlife sanctuaries; they are for the use and enjoyment of the people of our great country and our international visitors. This does not mean that protection is not an issue. We the Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies have been ardent environmental stewards of this our valuable resource called, “National Parks.” The way we operate our camps today is a, “night and day improvement” over our (*and everyone else’s*) treatment of the environment 40 years ago. We have been subject to stringent environmental policies and procedures with respect to our camps. Not only have we fully accepted those conditions but agree with them ourselves. We received a “clean bill of health” from Parks just a few weeks ago in regards to our camp at Bryant Creek this past summer. However, we are now finding that Parks Canada environmental and wildlife policies are overriding the ability of people to use the park.

2) The five Western Mountain National Park’s are a major economic stimulus for the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta and of course the federal government as well. In Alberta, 25% of the 5% Provincial hotel tax is generated from the three mountain National Parks as well as Kananaskis country. Our riders pay airline taxes, G.S.T., hotel tax; and pay for meals, transportation, and accommodation not to mention the cost of the rides themselves.

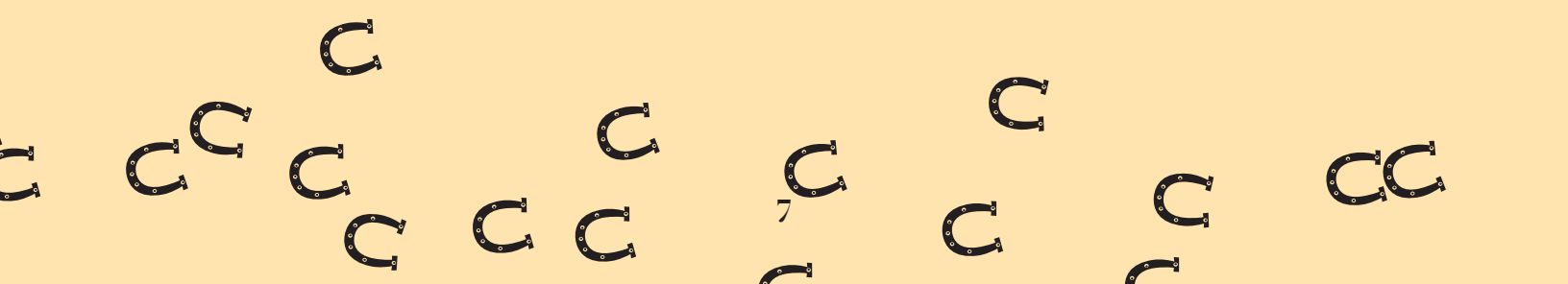
3) One of the issues of Parks Canada has about our rides is the “wear and tear” of our horses on the land. Our argument is simply this: if Parks

Canada would take some of the user fees they collect (*we gave them over \$6,000 last summer*) and apply that to trail maintenance then the problem would be solved. If tourists are going to patronize these Parks and stimulate our economy, then the government needs to provide adequate services. For us, that means good trail maintenance. Secondly, it is horses and in fact our organization itself with our long history, that has opened the National Parks to tourism in Alberta and the economic development of our province.

4) There are three non-for-profit organizations that have been “grandfathered” by Parks Canada to continue to operate in the National Parks because of their long history in association with the parts. They are: The Alpine club of Canada, The Skyline Hikers of the Canadian Rockies, (*our sister organization*) and The Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies. However year-by-year these three organizations continue to have more restrictions forced upon them. Parks is here to serve the people, not the other way around!

Your Board of Directors will be continuing to put pressure on the government bureaucrats as well politicians. However we very much need your help.

In speaking with the executive assistant of the Member of Parliament for the constituency of Wildrose (*ie. Banff*) it has been suggested to us that writing a hard copy letter as opposed to an email will get more and better attention. Additionally we have been provided with a list of who we should write to. What your Board of Directors, are asking (*begging*) you to do is write to the following government representatives and politicians telling them the following:



- 1) That you were a guest on a trail ride in 2013 (*or any other previous year*) and thoroughly enjoyed yourself. Further you regard this as an important part of your summer vacation plans.
- 2) That you fully support the use of horses in the National Parks and that you are very much against the elimination of horses for tourism.
- 3) Please remind these government officials in your letter that The Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies bring tens of thousands of dollars into the Alberta and Canadian economies every year.
- 4) Please remind these government officials that the National Parks act is very clear and states that, “the Parks are for the enjoyment of the people.” Further state that the T.R.C.R. has as an excellent reputation for environmental stewardship and very much supports these measures. However, National Parks are not wildlife sanctuaries, and the people of this country and our international visitors have a right to see the backcountry of the National parks.
- 5) Please conclude your letter by asking the government to expand the number of campsites the T.R.C.R. can use in Banff National Park.

The Honourable Leona Aglukkag
Minister of the Environment
Room 458 Confederation Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

The Honourable Colin Carrie
Parliamentary Secretary to the
Minister of the Environment
Room 410, Justice Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons,
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

The Honourable Maxine Bernier
Minister of State (Small Business / Tourism /
Agriculture)
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Mr. Alan Latourelle
Parks Canada C.E.O.
Office of the Chief Executive Officer
25 Eddy
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0M5

Please send your letters to the following people:

Mr. Glenn Kubian
Lake Louise Yoho Kootenay Field Unit
Parks Canada Agency
P.O. Box 220
Radium, B.C. V0A 1M0

The Honourable Blake Richards, MP
Room 602, Justice Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Mr. Dave McDonough
Superintendent, Banff National Park
Box 900
Banff, Alberta T1L 1K2

For our Canadian club members, please write your local Member of Parliament as well.

We realize that we are asking for some of your time and effort to write hard copies (as opposed to emails) and that our list of letters to be written is long. However, we cannot appeal to you greater; if we do not act, we will be out of the Parks and out of business in five years or more.

WE MUST ACT NOW! PLEASE WRITE TODAY and help to save the T.R.C.R. from extinction!

Thank-you.



CAN YOU JOIN OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS?

Ah yes, the advent of modern technology....

Since 1961 when the T.R.C.R. became a non-profit society we have operated in the city of Calgary, Alberta. Our mailing box address is there, and as well, most of our Board members live in the greater Calgary area. However, we can now have anyone from any location be on our Board via the use of Skype! Our sister organization the Skyline Hikers has one board member from Ontario who "attends" every meeting without leaving the comfort of their own home! If they can do this, so can we!! LOL

The T.R.C.R. needs members who have a passion for seeing that we continue to operate our club as we have for the last 52 years. Our meetings are two hours or less, once a month, usually the 3rd or 4th Monday evening starting a 7:30 pm MST. We can make arrangements for you to participate and of course there will be an expectation that you would be the chairman of one or more committees. Any volunteer administrative experience is an asset. There is work to do.....

If we are going to keep this organization alive, we need some help. Will you join us? Send your inquiries to the President, Stuart R. Watkins. Email: srwatkins@shaw.ca

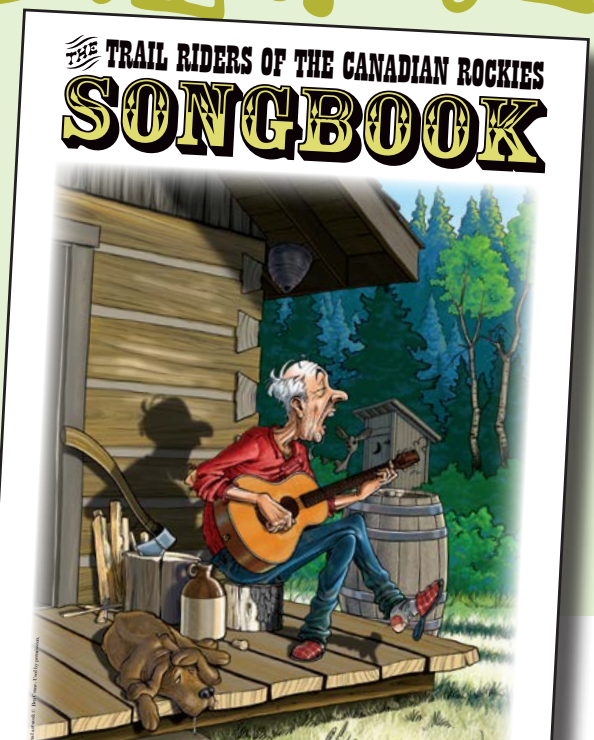


CALLING ALL MUSICIANS AND PROSPECTIVE EMCEE'S!

Ideally we like to have an official musician on every ride. Historically this has been an accordionist and/or fiddle player which is our first choice, and we will accept guitar players as well. Any additional skills in entertaining the riders is welcome too.

We need an Emcee for every ride. There is not a lot of "work" to do, but there is quite a bit of responsibility. We publish an "Emcee's handbook" and the position is open to anyone that has attended one or more rides. It is helpful to have some administrative skills and of course you need to be a "people person" and be well versed in the history of the T.R.C.R. and our polices and procedures that are clearly written in the handbook.

Musicians and Emcees' pay the full price of the ride in advance like every other rider. After the ride is completed, Emcees receive a \$500 rebate and Musicians \$1000. For further information and any questions, please contact our President, Stuart R. Watkins. srwatkins@shaw.ca



BOARD MEMBER FEATURE: STUART WATKINS

Each newsletter will feature two of our board members. This month's articles are about our President Stuart Watkins, and our new board member, Judy Fleetham.

To say that Stuart Watkins was “born into the T.R.C.R.” is an understatement. His father, the late Howard C. Watkins of Calgary started with the T.R.C.R. in the mid 1950's. In 1962 when the Canadian Pacific Railway decided to no longer sponsor the rides for economic reasons, Howard spearheaded a mission to save the trail ride. Along with three other Calgaryans he decided to form the Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies as a non-profit society as it exists today. Howard was the first President of the Club as a non-profit for the first two years of its existence and was President again in 1973 on the occasion of the Fiftieth anniversary.

Stuart's older two brothers both started trail riding with their dad in the 60's. Stuart's first ride at the tender age of twelve was in 1968 in the Johnson Creek area. His older brother Donald had been a musician on the rides and Stuart, with the anticipation of receiving a free ride and payment (as they did in those days) started music lessons on the accordion in grade seven. Three years later with the help of his music teacher, Dennis Orr, he began playing on the rides. By the time he was sixteen he was official musician on four rides, and three the following summer. (Dennis became T.R.C.R. President twice in the 1970's)

With his father as President and/or Executive Director for thirteen years, Stuart was in an opportune position to “grow up” fully entrenched in the trail riders. In 1977, he applied to work as an employee for Ron Warner who was the trail riders outfitter for thirty-five years. That summer the rides were held at Bryant Creek, followed by the Palliser Pass area the following summer, and his last summer working as a guide was the Panther River area. Needless to say, having attended over twenty rides as a guest and another twenty-four as staff has given him an incredible experience and wealth of knowledge about the workings of the T.R.C.R.

After a long sabbatical of getting married, having three children, and buying, selling and operating numerous businesses, (in Banff for twenty years) Stuart returned to trail riding about five years ago,

and to the T.R.C.R. two years ago. Much to his surprise, he was told that the T.R.C.R. are at risk of folding. Just as this idea did not sit well with his father some 50 years ago, it did not sit well with Stuart either! Of his three children his youngest daughter Janessa has followed in her dad's footsteps and very much enjoys trail riding. With such a long history and emotional attachment, it was inevitable that Stuart would return to the T.R.C.R. and contribute his skills to the Board of Directors to try and keep the organization going.

Joining the board in September 2012, Stuart was put in the position of marketing director, handling the outfitter contract, and designing a new songbook. At the annual meeting in May 2013, it was announced that four board members would be resigning after five years of dedicated service. That left Stuart and Gary Sandbeck to keep the club running for the summer until more members joined the board in September 2013. During the summer he was appointed interim President and since then has been elected President by the new Board of Directors.

When I asked Stuart about his dedication and commitment to the T.R.C.R. he responded with this:

“I do not know of an event in my life that is given me more good memories and more pleasure than the trail ride. I've made a great deal of friends, seen some incredible country, and now I see history repeating itself as I trail ride in the summer with my daughter. The Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies is a highly unique organization with a long and colourful history: We have the best product in the world; the Rocky Mountains of Canada. I'm a very proud Canadian and more so, a proud Albertan, and there's nothing that gives me more pleasure than to show off my beloved Rocky Mountains to the world. The legacy of my father and myself is not something I want to see lost. What organization do you know of that has a 60% return rate? There are dozens of people that have been on twenty, thirty and a few like me over forty rides. What keeps people coming back? There is no experience in life like the trail ride and I will do everything I can to keep it going for as long as I can.”

BOARD MEMBER FEATURE: JUDY FLEETHAM

I am a Calgary gal, grew up camping and hiking in the mountains. I live and work in the city and haven't ridden horses a lot but have recently got the bug again.

My history with the Trail Riders goes way back.....in fact, all the way back to May, 2013! I saw the full page article in the Calgary Herald that month and when I read that they were going to Mount Assiniboine, I was on the phone making reservations that day. Mount Assiniboine is my favourite special place that I have been to many times but not on horseback. The trip was fantastic and I was hooked. Then I learned some of the history of the TRCR and realized that this non-profit organization was really special, with a very long and colourful past exploring our beautiful Rockies. Being somewhat of a shutterbug and loving the mountains, I was excited to join the board and help with awarding the Townsend Trophy for the best photos on the rides.

The more I learn about the Trail Riders, the more I want to help keep this culture alive so that many others for years to come will be able to enjoy the romance of the Rockies on horseback.



WANT TO HAVE A FUN FEW DAYS IN THE BUSH?

As part of our contract with our outfitter, we are required to send four-six volunteers in late June to set-up the T.R.C.R. camp and then again over the Labour day weekend to tear the camp down. We offer a free helicopter ride, accommodation, meals, fun and silliness with a great team of people, lots of hard work, and...no pay. Working in camp under the direction of our Vice-President Gary Sandbeck, is a great job and Gary is a "dream boss" to work for. He never gets in the flap and works very well with people.

Come and join us!! Contact Gary for more information. gsandbeck@gmail.com

GOT SOME GREAT PICTURES?

New this year on our website is a place for you to post your pictures from last summer. This has nothing to do with the Townsend Trophy photo competition. (see an article elsewhere in this newsletter for details about the competition) This gallery is an opportunity for you our riders to tell us more about your ride last summer.

Send your pictures to srwatkins@shaw.ca and then check the new website under "Photo Gallery."



“THE GRIZZLY”

By Judy Fleetham



The day started crisp and clear and after we were full with oatmeal, bacon, sausages, pancakes, eggs, juice and coffee, we mounted our horses and headed east along Bryant Meadow, aiming to get to Marvel Lake.

Our trail led us through the trees along the north side of the meadow and offered views of Mt. McCautley in glorious sunshine. Our happy group was having a great ride, relaxed, talking, and even whistling.

We had been riding about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour when movement half way across the meadow near the creek caught my eye. I tried to figure out what it was and said to the riders around me, “There’s an animal in the meadow”. We looked through the trees and then someone said, “It’s a bear”, so we all stopped, and then, “It’s a grizzly!”. The cameras came out and as we watched, there was more movement. “She has a cub...no, two cubs!”. We were thrilled. We watched as the bears foraged towards us and then veered west in the direction of camp. I must say, it is quite a challenge trying to get good photos from a long way off atop an impatient Lenny. The horses weren’t anxious and either didn’t see the bears or were not concerned.

As we continued our ride, I asked BJ, our guide, about this. He said that the horses knew the bears were there and the mother grizzly knew we were there and it didn’t cause alarm with either.

When we’re in the mountains, we are in bear country and bears usually avoid people in the wild. Stuart Watkins, our Emcee, said in all of his years trail riding, this was the first time he had seen a grizzly with cubs. I consider myself very lucky to have seen a bear, especially a grizzly bear with cubs, at a safe distance. That was definitely a highlight of the trail ride for me.



“BREATHTAKING MOUNTAIN SCENERY”

By Ride #6 Emcee Ben Bury

This was my fourth ride into this area and I was just as awed by its beauty this time as in the past.

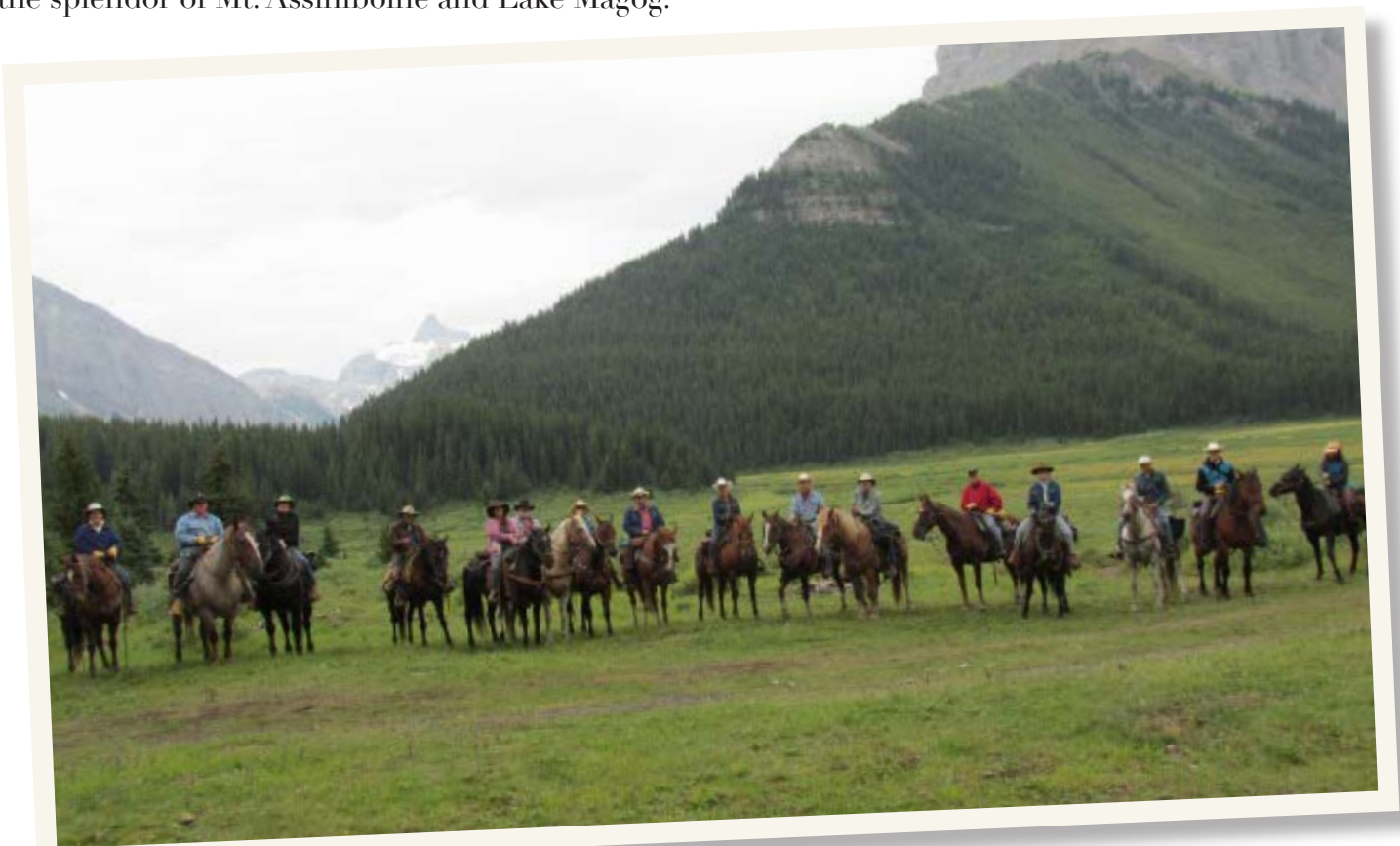
Our group of relatively experienced trail riders enjoyed the ride into “Teepee town” where we were met by Camp Cook Ben. After settling into our teepees and/or tents we were treated to a delicious steak dinner.

The next day, during our ride into Mt. Assiniboine, we were treated to a super bonus. We watched a young grizzly bear stalk a doe across the valley from where our group stopped for lunch. The doe probably had a hidden fawn in the area and did an excellent job of diverting the bear’s attention away from it. After about an hour, the bear got discouraged and left the area, but not before we took some outstanding pictures of this event. We were then able to hike into the Lodge and enjoy the splendor of Mt. Assiniboine and Lake Magog.

The next day, our ride to Allenby Pass again provided breath-taking mountain scenery, and again we were treated to a bonus as we watched a Rocky Mountain goat lazily nibbling on lichen half way up the side of Og Mountain. That evening, B.J. Smith, our Head Guide, presented a short “clinic” on horse training, using his personal horse as the example. It was impressive to observe how his horse responded to properly placed pressure signals.

Our evenings went quickly taken up by sing-alongs, “true” story telling and especially the funny cowboy poetry by B.J.

With the great weather, excellent trail conditions, scrumptious food, and the wonderful friends to share it with, Ride #6 was one of the best trail rides I’ve experienced with T.R.C.R.





THE TOWNSEND TROPHY

Hopefully everyone who rode with the Trail Riders this summer heard that the Townsend Trophy will be awarded for the best photos, in the spring of 2014.

The history of this trophy goes back to the very first trail ride in 1923, not long after the first national parks were created. It was possible for tourists to venture out as real explorers since there was so much uncharted wilderness. A guided pack trip of 14 trail riders, which included: Reginald Townsend, editor of Country Life in America magazine; Mrs. Townsend, H.B. Clow, President of Rand McNally Map makers; R. H. Palenske, a well known Chicago artist; (who created our TRCR pins) Dr. J. Murray Gibbon, General Publicity agent of the Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.); H. Armstrong Roberts; and Byron Harmon, official photographer of the Alpine Club of Canada. They rode along the Kootenay River to Tumbling Glacier at the head of Wolverine Pass. Then a blizzard hammered Wolverine Plateau, confining the riders to their tents for 3 days. While they were hunkered down, they had an idea to create a Trail Riding organization in the Rockies. In less than a year, the Order of the Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies was born. Although Reginald Townsend had been stranded on that ride, it did not deter him from returning many times in subsequent years. During those early years, he was the official photographer for the T.R.C.R. In 1929, he donated the Townsend Trophy to be awarded annually to the best amateur photograph taken on the trail. Winners received an engraved plaque and their name was engraved on the trophy. This tradition continues today.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN EXPERT TO ENTER!!

The photograph should epitomize Trail Riding, including elements that are distinctly representative of the T.R.C.R. (horses, riders, teepee town, campfires, etc.) and can be colour or back-and-white. The winner and runner-up are guaranteed a page in the current T.R.C.R. calendar and will receive a replica trophy for first prize and a plaque for second place. All entries become property of the T.R.C.R. for our calendar, albums or advertising. The photographs will be judged by the Calgary Amateur Photography club and the winners announced at the spring Round-up in May.

Details to follow in our March newsletter!

INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT VANDERZWEERDE

Q. What is your background?

I'm originally from Amsterdam but I don't remember much of it as my parents moved here when I was only 3. I grew up in the Niagara Peninsula and lived/worked most of my life in Ontario (Waterloo, Ottawa, and Toronto). My wife Karen and I have been coming to the Rocky Mountains since 1982 and we always planned to retire here. We moved here permanently in 2007 when Karen found a job she's always wanted to do ... forensic investigation. We have homes in both Canmore and Calgary.

I'm a computer consultant and have worked all over the world on large custom computer applications. For example, I worked at the World Bank one summer building a financial system and I'm responsible for the system that distributes weather information from Environment Canada to people like airline pilots. I stopped working on large scale projects like these about 10 years ago (my last big project was a \$256M outsourcing contract) and now I work part-time on web-based productivity solutions, like websites.

Q. How did you get involved with the Trail Riders?

To balance my high-tech computer world, I spend a lot of time outdoors on things like canoeing and hiking trips, trying to get out once a year for at least a week or more. For example, I've canoed over 3,000 miles through Northern Ontario. I'm also a long time music lover and am now assistant teacher at Mount Royal University in "campfire" guitar. I'm a classical guitar student as well and perform in a small ensemble.

It was through my guitar teacher that I heard about a request for campfire musicians for the Trail Riders. I knew about the Trail Riders as I'm a Skyline Hiker, the sister organization started by Canadian Pacific in 1933. I've been on several backcountry camp/hikes and am a musician with the Skyline Hikers. I

responded to the request for musicians and, before you knew it, Stuart contacted me and I was booked as the musician for Ride 8 this year with the Trail Riders.

Q. Have you ever ridden before?

Now, I've never been a horse before so I was a bit worried. I was warned that I would be sore all over. After my first ride, I felt fine and wondered what all the fuss was about. Then I figured it out -- I'm a race walker (I do half marathons) and the movements and muscles are identical to those used for riding. What a relief. In fact, for any first time riders, I suggest trying some race walking classes as preparation.

Q. What did you enjoy the most about the ride?

I enjoyed the overall experience of being away from it all with a great group of other riders, including the helpful camp/ride staff. Not having to cook or do any of the heavy work in the backcountry was a bonus too. I have great memories, and photos, of the trip.

Q. What inspired you to work with the TRCR Board?

I'm usually active in the organizations I join. It allows me a chance to give back and share what I enjoy. For example, after two years with Skyline Hikers, there was a call for volunteers and I applied. I figured I'd be the webmaster but they chose me to be the Treasurer instead (I'm also a Certified Management Accountant). That's why I'm also an assistant guitar teacher at the Conservatory and camp musician for both Skyline Hikers and Trail Riders so I can share with others. Also, by teaching, I'm continually learning new things. So it was only natural that I get involved with Trail Riders and now I'm the Secretary/Treasurer/Registrar.

