



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE TRAIL RIDERS OF THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

THE BULLETIN

January 2018

EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Stuart R. Watkins

THE RIDES OF 2018

This summer we will have five, six-day trail rides in the Castle Provincial Park and Wildlands in south-western Alberta. We rode there in 2006 with Dee Barrus and his family. We have discontinued having shorter rides as many people who booked them, later regretted not going on a six-day ride! We will be returning to a traditional style wilderness base camp which will be located just north of the border of Waterton Lakes National Park on Mill Creek.

Inside this newsletter, be sure to read 'What's New in 2018,' a wonderful story about 'Soapy Smith' (one of our previous staff); pictures and stories from the rides of 2017; and TRCR 'gossip' in our 'Road Apples' column. Our 2018 website has all the details about our Mill Creek rides so click here to see our exciting line-up of rides! <http://trailridevacations.com/>

2018 ABBREVIATED ITINERARY:

- Depart the Acclaim Hotel near the airport in Calgary by bus with a stop at The Bar U Ranch, a Canadian Historic Site. <http://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/ab/baru>. We were there two years ago and it was VERY popular with our guests and we have had many requests to return. After a two hour tour and a hearty lunch, our bus will take us to the trailhead located south-west of Pincher Creek. We will have a safety talk by the guides and then a short ride into "Teepee Town."

- During the next five days we will have some spectacular rides to the Hanging Valley, Whitney Creek, Gladstone Falls, Castle Valley, Blue Lake and the spectacular Spionkop Ridge. On each ride we will evaluate each guest's riding ability, the

weather, and who is a repeat rider and who is not. Each day and each trip will then be customized so that each person is in the best position to see new country but, of course, based upon safety and weather.

- Each day we will return to our base camp on Mill Creek for the usual standard fare of great food and fellowship. (Note: This is a wilderness camp and there will be no daily shuttles.) We will ride from camp each day and the horses and staff will stay in camp each night, (ie our 'traditional format'.)
- Our evening Doughnut entertainment will be at the same high-caliber you experienced last year as our musicians and emcees are returning again this summer.

We have some incredible adventures planned for you this summer! This is truly a summer you will not want to miss. We are not holding space for our membership so bookings will be on a "first come first serve" basis. We strongly suggest that you complete your registrations as soon as possible as bookings are already up significantly over last year. Click here to see availability: <http://trailridevacations.com/ride-availability/>

Don't forget that members receive a \$400⁰⁰ discount and the U.S./Canadian exchange is very favourable at around 25%.

January 4 - Last Minute News!
We added ride 6. Check the website for details.

Letter From the President

In November, I attended the *Canada West Marketplace Convention* in Victoria, BC. The three-day convention consisted of attending meetings sponsored by *Travel Alberta* and having ten minute 'speed dating' appointments with tour operators. This was my second year at this conference and I am now starting to see some 'fruit of our labours.' We are connected with *Kanata BC*, a tour Company that specializes in unique outdoor adventures like ours. In addition, we are connected with *SK Touristik GmbH*, a German tour operator that had one of their staff join us last summer on ride 5 for a 'bird's eye view' of what the TRCR is all about.

Our goal this summer is to fill 5 rides. The TRCR has had to undergo some changes in recent years in order to be competitive in today's transitional and aggressive tourism market. This summer, we will return to our wilderness camp format with some improvements based upon your suggestions. We must constantly improve our product, and those improvement suggestions have come largely from you, our membership. The surveys that were completed by attending members last summer were a real help to the Board and we have listened to your comments. Thank-you.

Before the end of January, the *Western Horseman Magazine* will publish a story written by Christine Hamilton, the Senior Editor, about her ride with us last summer. With a readership nearing half a million, I expect that we are going to be full very soon. We do not hold space, so get booked now! You can always cancel later if need be.

We rely on you our membership to help our five Board members keep this historic club (95 years young!) in operation. We continue to preserve this history as we feel that the TRCR is an important part of our western Canadian cowboy culture; one that should continue. Would you help us by:

1. Writing letters to *Parks Canada*
2. Emailing your pictures for the Townsend Trophy competition.
3. Posting on the *TRCR Facebook* account.
4. Telling your friends about *TRCR*; bring one with you next summer! (and receive a \$100 discount)
5. Having a *TRCR* Round-up in your area; invite friends over, show pictures, talk about the good times you have had on previous rides.
6. Writing a story and publishing it in your local newspaper or any magazine.
7. Completing a *Trip Advisor* review if you have not already done so.

See you on the trails in 2018.

Stuart



WE NEED YOUR VOICE!



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

What your Board of Directors are asking 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 2015 (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. As well as increasing the number of riders per day.

Please note, we have been told that a letter (the old kind on paper with a stamp!) will get far more attention than an email. It can be the same letter to each person. Thanks!

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

Ms. Sheila Louey

Manager, Integrated Land Use Planning & Policy
Banff Field Unit
Box 900
Banff, Alberta T1L 1K2

Mr. Dave McDonough

Superintendent, Banff National Park
Box 900
Banff, Alberta T1L 1K2
Mr. Alan Latourelle

Parks Canada C.E.O.

Office of the Chief Executive Officer
25 Eddy Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0M5

The Honourable Blake Richards, MP

Room 602, Justice Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

The Honourable Catherine McKenna

Minister of the Environment and Climate Change
Room 458 Confederation Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau

Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons,
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

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

Thank-you.

WE NEED your voice!

Note to foreign members: Please do not think that your voice does not count since you are not a Canadian citizen! On the contrary, as a person bringing foreign currency into our economy, your voice is very much heard in Banff and Ottawa!



WHAT'S NEW FOR 2018

After each ride, club members are asked to complete a survey about their experiences over the past week, rating all of the events: food, horses, rides, camp, etc. Each survey is received by our club President who compiles and presents the information to the Board of Directors in the fall. Those comments are ALL taken seriously and the Board listens very carefully. Thank-you to everyone who contributed and we have heard you loud and clear. Here are the results of those surveys and listed below you will see the actions that your Board, working on your behalf, has taken to address them.

SURVEY RESULTS:

a) The Good stuff:

Very high marks and wonderful comments about our outfitter. Dee and Josh, are the best! People were very grateful for all the personal service and hospitality. Attention to detail, guest comfort and safety was noted by everyone.

The food was rated very high with not a single complaint all summer! Thank-you Ashley and staff. The breakfasts were amazing; the variety of options for lunches were noticed. Dinner was hot and enjoyed by all and the desserts were a hit (especially the Saskatoon pie!) Everyone commented on the meal service being great!

Our new Emcees/Musicians (Brad and Larry) were a big hit. Also, the music with Dennis Orr was great and transportation worked well too.

We made numerous improvements to the camp including: new cots with hangers; new tent flies, more separating of tents and teepees, clotheslines, a bear fence, etc. All were noted and appreciated.

b) Improvements are needed in these areas: (which we plan to do)

1. we are going to 'BBQ to order' the steaks.
2. new chairs.
3. separate wash tents for cowgirls and cowboys.
4. two additional 4-man tents.
5. more upgrades as cash flow permits.

If anyone has further comments to make regarding the above, please email the President at the TRCR email address.

From reading "The Rides of 2018" on page one you will see that we are returning to our traditional wilderness camp format. For those of you that have only been riding with us in Waterton, you will now experience the TRCR "the way it is supposed to be..." Join us for a truly wilderness experience.

WHAT'S NEW IN MARKETING

WHAT'S NEW IN MARKETING?

For 95 years, our best form of advertising has been word of mouth. That still applies today so please, continue to spread the word.

OUR 2018 MARKETING PLAN

1. Strong Coffee Marketing, an Edmonton based social media company specializing in tourism, has been retained to conduct diagnostic Google Analytics work on our website to determine how we are and are not, getting our bookings. In addition, they will be launching several campaigns using Facebook and Instagram so please, do search for these and "like it;" add them to your own social media groups and help get the word out! This will start in January.

2. We are continuing our website listings on:

- a) The Cowboy Trail: <http://www.thecowboytrail.com>
- b) Equitrekking: <http://www.equitrekking.com>
- c) Hidden Trails: <http://www.hiddentrails.com>
- d) American Round-up: <http://www.americanroundup.com/canada/Alberta>.
- e) High Pointe Equestrian Tours: <https://highpointetours.com>
- f) Anderson Vacations: <http://andersonvacations.ca>
- g) The Meeting Place North America
- h) Canada à la Carte: <https://www.canadaalacarte.com/>
- i) Travel Alberta: <https://www.travelalberta.com/ca/>

(Note: all of these listings are at no charge)

3. Travel Alberta has the TRCR listed on their website and they are working with tour operators to "spread the word" about us. There is also a story about us on the "horse page" of the Travel Alberta website. <https://www.travelalberta.com/ca/things-to-do/summer-outdoor-activities/horseback-riding/> Travel Alberta has six other international sites (all translated into their respective languages) and we are on those as well.

4. There have been many upgrades to our website:

- a) we hired a new graphic designer who has a whole new concept for our site which is much improved!

b) one new video added to our amazing collection of testimonies

c) new 'slider pictures' on the home page

5. With the decline in the price of oil, the Canadian dollar has fallen to its lowest in 20 years. This is a real bargain for our U.S. members.

6. The senior Editor of Western Horseman Magazine, Christine Hamilton joined ride 2 last summer for three nights and two days. She took over 500 pictures in 48 hours and was, needless to say, 'blown away' with our beloved Rockies, our horses, staff, food and entertainment. Expect to see a feature story in the February 2018 issue. We expect the February issue to be on sale around January 20th, and you can usually find it at any major magazine stand. Go and buy a copy and tell your friends!

7. Our President's trip to the Canada West Marketplace convention in Victoria BC last November was a very successful event. Stuart met with over twenty-one representatives of various local, national, and international tour companies. The response was very positive, but as he has been reminded by Travel Alberta (who sponsored the event), "these things take time." New contacts included three tour companies from The Netherlands; one from Belgium and one from Switzerland - all with a very positive response.

8. "The Cowboy Trail" <http://www.thecowboytrail.com> and "Experience the Cowboys Trails" <http://www.experiencemountainparks.com/experience-cowboy-trail/> gives us more hits to our website than anything else that we have accomplished in the area of marketing. Therefore, we are continuing our \$200 listing with them and will be purchasing an ad with a complementarily story about the TRCR in the "Experience the Cowboys Trails" printed magazine and web version as well. Combined, these two sites have several million hits a year and we are prominently listed on both. (Note: the editor of "Experience the Cowboys Trail", Mr. Bob Harris, has kindly offered to re-print our TRCR Bulletin story about Wilf Carter and how he started his career on the TRCR in the summer edition of "Experience the Cowboys Trails." Thanks Bob!)



ROAD APPLES, LOOSE CINCHES & TEEPEE TALK

WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT VOLUNTEERS...

In addition to our volunteer Board of Directors of Stuart Watkins, Gary Sandbeck, Jude Fleetham, Al Atimichuck and Jim Bradbury, we have a few people 'behind the scenes' that help us with various jobs over the winter and/or during the summer:

- Thank-you Ted Watchuck for transporting our equipment to and from camp every summer.
- Thank-you Joel Lipkind for storing our equipment all winter long in Calgary at no charge.
- Thank-you Jeanne Barsanti for writing two stories about the TRCR and having them both published. The article has already brought us 15 registrations!
- Thank-you Rick Godderis for keeping the club going in the 1990s and for just being there when we need you.
- Thank-you Renee Delorme for not one, but two stories about the TRCR that have both been published.
- Thank-you Donna Fellers for stories published and for getting June and Scott Jansen to join us!
- Thank-you June and Scott Jansen for your wonderful You-tube testimonies that have inspired many others.

THE CREW FOR 2018

Our crew of Emcees/Musicians are booked for the summer! Stuart Watkins, Dennis Orr and Brad Bischoff will all be back. Join us again for our evenings of campfire songs, silly songs, poems, jokes, cowboy poetry (hopefully Doral and his grandson Dillon can join us again), square dancing, skits and nonsense.

NEW TRCR RECORD ESTABLISHED IN 2017!

Dennis Orr has been on over 100 rides if you include his years as staff. It all began in 1971 when one of his music students (Stuart Watkins) took him on his first trail ride; the rest is history...Dennis has been President of the club twice, (1975 and 1976) and worked as a guide, packer, Emcee, musician – everything except cook! In 1994, the TRCR did not have enough bookings to meet our minimum requirement with our outfitter Ron Warner. Dennis proposed that the TRCR lease the horses and equipment and Dennis became our head guide and 'outfitter' for the summer, thus saving the club from extinction. In total, he has either attended as a guest (including Emcee/musician) or worked as a staff member on over 100 trail rides with the TRCR. A club record! A musician never retires, so Dennis keeps active and is still performing professionally, composing music and hosting Scottish Dance clubs.

We are extremely grateful to Dennis for his past years of hard work and dedication to the TRCR.

Without him, and the dedication of others like Rick Godderis, Howard Watkins, Sol Lipkind, Bunny Robinson, Lois Laycraft and many others, the TRCR would have folded in 1961 (and a few times since then too!) when the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) dropped their sponsorship of the club.

In recognition of Dennis's long-term association and his 44th ride last summer as a club member, our President Stuart Watkins, presented Dennis with his 40th ride belt buckle. Dennis now joins the "elite club" of now five TRCR members that have obtained 40 rides or more. (Howard Watkins, Bunny Robinson, "Brownie" Aikman and Victor Langdon).

Thank-you Dennis for helping to keep the club alive and we look forward to seeing you again this summer!

Happy Trails!



THE TOWNSEND TROPHY



The Townsend Trophy, inscribed "Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies COUNTRY LIFE TROPHY for the best nature photography taken on the Official Trail Ride presented by Reginald Townsend"

— **Reginald T. Townsend** (1890-1977),
the editor of the American edition of *Country Life*



The history of this trophy goes back to the very first trail ride in 1923, not long after the first national parks were created. During those early years, Reginald Townsend 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.

There are 5 categories:

- Flora & Fauna
- In Camp
- Mountain Scenery
- On the Trail
- Horses and People

Our judges are volunteers from the Calgary Camera Club, with head judge Graeme Kershaw.

Graeme has outlined below how the judges approached this task, "Pictures are judged based on technical merit and WOW factor". The technical side included such things as pictures:

- being sharp and in focus
- proper exposure
- good composition – i.e. don't cut off a horse at the feet.

The WOW factor is what makes a picture stand out. It may be in part technique but is usually due to having a new or unusual subject or an old subject presented in a different way. Generally speaking technique is learned and planned. WOW factor maybe planned but is often just being in the right place at the right time. Pick your best 3-4 shots in each category and send them in by March 31st.

The winner in each category will receive a framed plaque and their photos will appear in the TRCR calendar. The winner of Best of Show will receive a miniature of the original trophy donated by Reginald Townsend in 1929 as well as an engraved plaque that will be added to the base of that trophy.

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

The photograph should epitomize Trail Riding, including elements that are distinctly representative of the TRCR; (horses, riders, teepee town, campfires, mountain scenery, etc.) and can be colour or black-and-white. All entries become property of the TRCR for our calendar, albums or advertising.

The deadline for the photo competition from the 2017 rides is March 31st.
Send your photos to admin@trail-rides.ca

AGM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the T.R.C.R. will be held Wednesday, May 9, 2018 at the Danish Canadian Club in Calgary. All members are invited and encouraged to attend. Please R.S.V.P. to Robert by April 30th.

For the AGM, a package will be sent in mid- April. If you cannot attend, please send in your proxy that is included in the package.

DONATIONS

Our club is always in need of funds to continue to operate, repair and add equipment as needed.

We expect to spend over \$30,000 in the next few years to replace canvas tents, teepees, and our kitchen. Your donation to our non-profit club is appreciated.

Are you re-writing your will? Please consider bequeathing some of your estate to help to preserve our club for future generations.

DON'T BE LEFT BEHIND!

The rides are filling up and we're looking forward to a very successful summer. Check the website for availability. Get your registrations in soon!

...refer a friend is worth \$100 per new rider!!!

CAN YOU HELP US WITH A TESTIMONIAL?

We would like to add some testimonials to our website. Could you write us a few sentences and tell us about your previous rides, how much you enjoyed them and why you are planning to come back? You can also mention specifically what you like about the rides. Again, our best form of marketing over the years has proven to be word-of-mouth.

ARE YOU A SOCIAL MEDIA GURU??!!

The board members are not of the generation of social media!! LOL We are looking for a volunteer to handle and build our presence on Twitter and Facebook. The beauty of this position is that the person does not need to live in Calgary. With modern technology anybody with a level of expertise in social media and an internet connection can handle this most valuable and needed position.

Conventional marketing is changing and we at the TRCR need to keep abreast of new technology and join the social media revolution.

Can you help us?

WANNA HAVE SOME FUN, FRIVOLITY AND FRIENDSHIP?

As part of our contract with our outfitter, we are required to send four to six volunteers to set-up the TRCR camp and then again to tear the camp down. We offer a free 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 a flap and works very well with people.

Note: the date this year is June 15th

Come and join us! — Contact Gary for more information: admin@trail-rides.ca

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

Join your fellow trail riders on the Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies Facebook and Instagram pages.

Share your experiences, photos, and tales of the trails as we count down this year's ride in Waterton Lakes National Park.

Find us at [@trailridersofcanadianrockies](https://www.instagram.com/trailridersofcanadianrockies) on Instagram and search "Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies" on Facebook.

THE RIDES OF 2017

Rides 1 and 3

My name is Bradley Bischoff and I live in Canmore Alberta. I am retired and was a Park Warden in Jasper and Banff for about 30 years. Most of that time I spent on horseback in some of the roughest country in the Province.

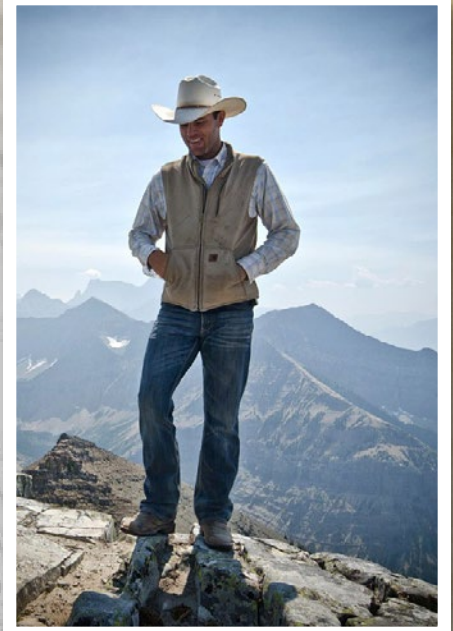
In the spring of 2017 Stuart Watkins asked me if I wanted to emcee some trips for the TRCR in Waterton Lakes in the summer. I knew of the TRCR as being a very well respected organization who had hosted trail rides in national parks all over the west. I had met Stuart a few times and always enjoyed his company. I am very happy I accepted his invitation.

I was the emcee for rides 1 and 3, 37 guests in all. The trips were all based out of *Waterton Lakes National Park* and we rode a number of great trails in the park. My favorite was Horseshoe Basin. Our camp was about 10 kms outside the park and my day started usually around 6:30 am. I'd get the coffee going and attend to any camp chores that needed to be done. The cooks, Ashley and Tamara, arrived shortly there after. I ensured all our great guests had that very important first cup of coffee/tea in hand. Breakfast was served and I hustled to make certain all the guests had a lunch/water and enough bad weather gear to help make the day the best it could be. (I brought extra to share). We'd pile into the vans and head for Alpine Stables and our waiting saddle horses.

This was a busy time. I assisted the guides in making sure horse/rider matches were appropriate. I got Josh's guide horse Bud for both trips (lucky me). We'd adjust stirrups and bridles, tighten cinches, tie on slickers and such. All of us really tried our best to get this work done and help the guests be as comfortable as possible for the day. We split the group up into sporty and not so sporty day riding and made sure the "super seniors" were not over programmed. It was so important to take that little extra time with each guest and really focus on that customer service. We'd haul to some of the trailheads; the rest we'd depart right from Alpine.

The trails were magnificent. Waterton is a national park for a reason! They were all very well-maintained. I do not recall having to drag any blow-down off any of the trails we rode, although they were dry and dusty. The scenery was spectacular and the flora and fauna was out of this world. The bear grass was unbelievable, right from the valley bottom to the alpine. Bears/wildlife galore and Josh and Dee are awesome guides. In my mind, Dee and his family are Waterton as they all are totally client focused. It is much more than just a trail riding experience. Dee and Josh both took the time to explain in detail the history and natural and cultural resources of this World Heritage Site. Both men offered to be the family photographer on several occasions.







You can't image the impact this experience had on me and more importantly our guests. Looking out over the plains east of Horseshoe Basin with the buffalo herd down below, I felt like a North West Mounted Policeman in the March West of 1871. The trips took me back to my wardening days in Banff and Jasper, the Ya-Ha-Tinda, so many great memories. The guests were all so moved by the experience. Checking this trip off their buckets lists was huge for some of them. I had so many unbelievable heartfelt thank you's coming from first time riders and experienced horse men and women. It was just such a privilege to be part of it. It is hard to explain, the great feeling you get helping someone become a cowboy/cowgirl for a week. Priceless.

Skit night and the presentations were all so much fun. They all really appreciated the pins and certificates and the Golden Horseshoe award. Yes - keep that going by all means. Some of that individual recognition goes a long way. I played my guitar and sang some cowboy songs in the evening. I brought a bag of hand-held percussion instruments to hand out and made our little cowboy band. I recited some Jim Deegan poems and asked others to read them as well.

There were many teary farewells. Individuals and families alike all were so moved by the TRCR experience.

The TRCR is a great organization for so many reasons. If you want to get your "inner cowboy" on, this is an all Alberta way to get it done. Get to the mountains, sit a horse for a week, be entertained, meet some great people and fulfill a dream.

Does it get any better? See you on the trails in 2018....

Bradley Bischoff
Canmore, Alberta

Ride 2

Emcee, Stuart Watkins

"It was the best of times, it was the hottest of times!" *

I have not seen a trail ride that hot since the summer of 1978 when TRCR was in the Palliser Pass area. It was sunny all day (+30C), with warm nights (and no wind which is hard to fathom in Waterton). We had a hearty group of adventurers who braved not only the heat but also some pretty invigorating trails.

What a joy it was to have the three granddaughters of our club founder, Dr. John Murray Gibbon, on our ride. Alexa Wilson registered for the trip last February and informed Robert that she was Dr. Gibbon's granddaughter. Needless to say, I was pretty excited to speak with her and did so for over an hour discovering that she had two sisters! Two weeks later Fiona Gibbon-Taillefer and Joan Vaughan registered and I spent the remaining few months planning how to make the ride special for our new found "trail ride royalty."

Repeat riders included June Jansen from Florida, our two board members Al Achtimichuck and Jude Fleetham, John Young from Edmonton (ride #15!) and, of course, I was overjoyed to have Dennis Orr join us for his 44th trail ride after a few years of absence. I brought Dennis on his first ride in 1971!

Our ever faithful TRCR member Donna Fellers joined us for a few days (stay for the whole week next time Donna!); Jim and Melissa Bradbury (otherwise known as the best-dressed cowboy and cowgirl in camp), flew in from Florida and I think had a bit of a life-changing week! Evelyn Hehl and Dennis Tate from Michigan each brought great stories to skit night; Wendy Alexander and Robert and Clara Johnson from Nanaimo, BC were a joy to have on the ride and although I think they were a bit stretched, were very good troopers and really enjoyed the week. Anne from Vancouver was part of Scott's skit (and here I thought Anne and I were friends!) Bev Pyne kept us all going with stimulating conversation and managed to get all the world's problems solved, and Trevor came down from Edmonton for a couple of days to find out what this TRCR is really all about. Speaking of which, Christine Hamilton from Fort Worth was on a mission to find out what we crazy Albertans really do on trail ride (I think she had quite a surprise!) and then of course, there was Scott Jansen..... personally, I don't think I've ever seen a more fraudulent and exaggerated piece of bad theatrics on skit night in my life. No further comment needed....

The ride seemed to be fairly evenly divided between the "lets enjoy it and take it easy" and the "I'm gonna climb that mountain" diehards...

Day one was either Lions Head or Vimy for the "die-hards" (only Jude and Dennis Tate made it to the very top). The diehards then tackled a long ride to Lone Lake and back while the rest rode to Crandell Lake. By day four, even the die hards were tired so we all enjoyed a relaxing day ride to Rowe Lake. Friday was Alderson Lake for the easy ride and four of the diehards (out of the original twelve) went up Carthew ridge and then to the lake, meeting the other riders for lunch. I think those folks were blown away with what they saw. Saturday was the Horseshoe Basin ride and a shorter one for the rest.

We enjoyed Dennis's music and singing; a talk from Mary Harding from Parks; an evening of cowboy Poetry from Doral Lybert who was back by popular demand (with grandson Dillion his protégé) and Brian Johannsen, a local RCMP corporal, gave us a great talk about life as a Mountie. I managed to get a few people up and round dancing and a few square dances too!

Skit night was in a league of its own..... Nearly everyone participated and it was 3 hours long! The poems and songs about the week were a great hit, and with regard to Scott's skit and his crew,....well...I finally got the last of the tar washed off last week, and I am still picking a few remaining feathers out..... Hmmmmmmm..... the things that I have to suffer for the TRCR.....

Jim gave us a 10 minute passionate speech about how his life was changed after a week with the TRCR, and in my 40+ years of trail riding, I have never heard anything quite like it. Thank-you Jim. As I said to the board, "this is why we do what we do and why we need to keep doing it." Your remarks have kept us going this winter Jim; thanks..... (you can watch his speech under "testimonies" on the website).

Dennis and I agreed that after over 100 rides (between the two of us) this one was one of the best ever! Our thanks to Ashley and Catherine for the incredible food; Josh, is just the best cowboy ever and Deb and Dee are the patriarchs of the family that keep things running smoothly. It really was an amazing week.

In my position as President, I was able to meet every rider this summer and watch our two new Emcees in action. I also read the surveys and all I can say is that I feel that the 94th edition of "The Order of The Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies" was the most successful summer that I can remember since the 1970's when Mike Crawley was our head guide and Ron Warner our outfitter. There seemed to be quite a "sparkle" in everyones' eyes after their rides. If we are to keep these rides going, these are the kind of summers we need to have.

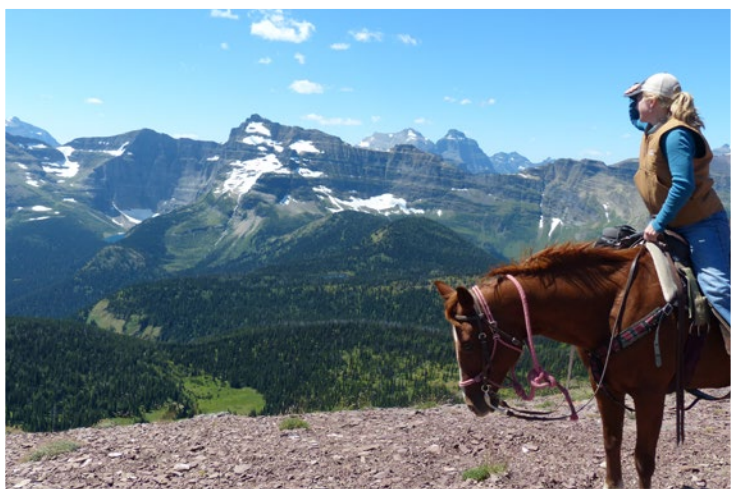
* With apologies to Charles Dickens.....



After a champagne welcome...



...it was, "we're gonna climb that mountain!"



Some made it to the top...



...while others got revenge!"



Jim learned to rope...



...and the man in red was supposed to arrest Scott!

SKIT NIGHT



There were people that sang strange songs...



... and some that wore strange costumes (one even died!)



There was royalty... (and mockery)



... and the mockery continued the next morning!



Burt Reynolds, "eat your heart out!"

Rides 4 and 5

by Larry Krause

I had the extremely good fortune to be Emcee/Camp Wrangler for 2 weeks of trail rides with The Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies, in August of 2017. The opportunity to meet like-minded riders from all over the world and discover new places and sights together, will be a time an experience I will never forget.

I have to admit, there was a certain apprehension in taking on the position with TRCR. Although I have some horse experience, I was mostly a cattleman and am a Western Singer/Songwriter, so headin' up the side of a mountain on horseback was, to say the least, a bit out of my comfort zone. But with the encouragement of Stuart Watkins, I saddled up; what an experience it was! Certainly, one of the aspects of the time I spent at Waterton that had the greatest impact on me, were the people and the horses of Alpine Stables. Being a novice rider, despite my hat, my confidence was built starting with my initial meeting with Josh and Dee. The manner in which they worked with everyone on the rides ensuring that the Riders got the most from the experience was indeed a pleasure to watch and comforting to receive.

We went on trails that challenged me at many levels, and helped me find things within myself that I believed were lost. I cannot stress enough the confidence that was built in me, allowing me to go places and see things on horseback that, a week before, I would never have considered an option. This confidence followed me home and continues to be with me as I go forward.

The base camp exceeded my expectations. The tents and teepees were great, creating the perfect atmosphere for the backcountry experience. There was enough rugged camp experience, balanced with some modern comforts, to make camp life a memorable one in a positive way. The cook tent proved to be the central focus of all activities, even the odd evening wrap-up, when it was decided that the riders were tuckered out and were content to just sit and enjoy the evening. The meals that were served out of that tent are well worth talking about. You would never expect that fare in a backcountry camp. We ate very well every day served by, I believe, some of the best ranch cooks around.

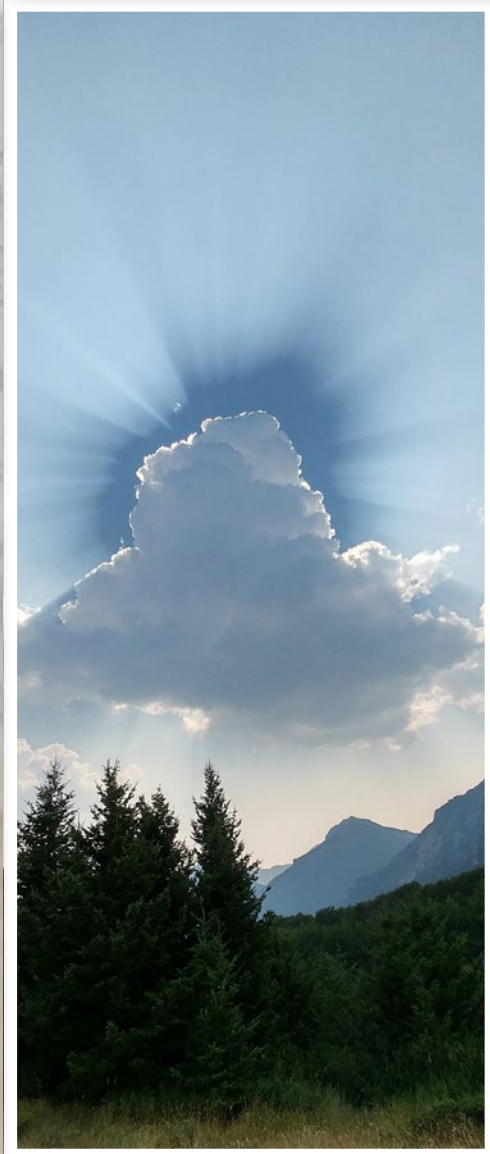
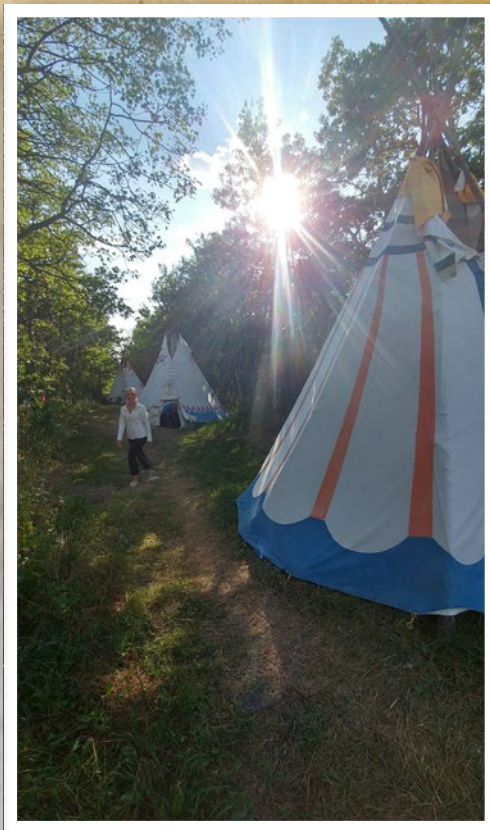
Evenings in the Doughnut were special, allowing those who wanted to be a close part of the event, as well as those who were content to sit on the sidelines, to have a place where they could enjoy the evening at their desired level. The part that received many positive comments included the Western themed evenings, including Cowboy Poetry, Western songs, and Storytelling, all reflecting on the Old West. These evenings wrapped up the perfect TRCR back country riding day. One thing that I appreciated was the flexibility to tailor each ride to the participant's interests. That made their ride unique, and allowed them to get the most out of their experience.

As I said, it was two weeks that I will never forget and will always have close to my heart. I appreciate the invitation to have been able to be a part of it.

Thanks again for the experience, and I look forward to seein' ya down the trail.

(Note: Larry will be unable to join us this coming summer. I do hope that you can Larry, in the future. -Ed)





OUR COLOURFUL HISTORY



“SOAPY” SMITH Alberta’s Mountain Man

By Dennis Orr and Stuart Watkins

Soapy Smith and his brother Fred, arrived in Calgary in 1903, looking to start a new life and to make their fortune in the raw frontier land of Alberta. Born as 'Herbert Alonzo Scott', he had just finished serving in the Spanish American war and was looking for opportunities to establish himself as a cowboy and as a rancher. He probably came to Alberta in response to the offer by the Canadian Government to homestead land along the newly finished Trans Canada rail lines that had joined Canada from coast to coast.

Herbert bore a striking resemblance to a notorious con artist called Soapy Smith, who was operating in the northwest of British Columbia, the Yukon, Alberta, and the State of Alaska. As a result, Herbert



“Soapy Smith” as
Trail Riders
remember him
best.

Reprinted from a TRCR Bulletin

was arrested by the Calgary RCMP and thrown in jail, where he enjoyed the notoriety and fame of the original Soapy Smith. He enjoyed it so much, that on being released when found innocent, he kept the name 'Soapy Smith' for himself.

Soapy (Herbert) and his brother Fred decided to homestead on a piece of land about 30 miles west of Calgary in the valley just under a small lake on the last ridge before the Stoney Indian Reservation. The lake bares their name and the ridge is called Scott Lake Hill. As you drive west into Banff, the Trans Canada Highway rises and crosses over Scott Lake Hill, and the lovely little lake is hidden in the trees to the south of the highway. It is assumed that the land that Soapy and his brother homesteaded was the valley on the east slope of Scott Lake Hill. Fred was interested in farming and ranching, and Soapy wanted to raise and train horses, which was his life long interest and love. To begin with, they had separate homesteads, but Fred eventually acquired Soapy's piece of land. There is no definite record of how long Soapy and his brother stayed on the Scott Lake Hill homestead, but Soapy became acquainted with the Brewster family (in Banff and Seebe) and began to work for them as a cowboy, harness maker, cook guide and general ranch hand to make extra money.

At some point, Soapy was able to acquire land around the Jumping Pound area west of Calgary, where he would winter and look after his horses, but he always returned to Banff to work for the Brewsters and the TRCR. He had the reputation of never selling a good horse and by 1946 was reputed to have owned nearly 600 head. The good ones he trained as saddle horses, or pack animals and sold the less worthy ones to the fox farm (aka slaughter house) in Cochrane. He was responsible for supplying Brewsters with many of their saddle and pack stock for their outfitting business

many of which would have been used for the TRCR. "Soapy stories" have been told for years around campfires and in our very own TRCR Doughnut about his mis'adventures and his character, and some of the favourite ones are as follows:

Sometime in the late 20's or 30's he guided a photography trip for Mr. George Eastman the founder of the Eastman Kodak company on a trip from Lake Louise to Bow Lakes. Eastman wrote a book about the trip and took a multitude of pictures, many of which have become famous in the Banff area. The most famous was of a man on a horse beside a Teepee at Bow Lake. That picture is featured in many publications and is found in the Whyte Museum as part of their historical memorabilia. On that trip they took along a crate of pigeons, to let the outside world know where they were. Eastman described Soapy as a man who could not utter a sentence without swearing, but really knew his horses and trail business.

From the history of the TRCR, the story of Soapy and the pipe organ has brought many a laugh. It became a tradition to have music around the campfire, a tradition that was established as early as the first TRCR gathering in 1924 at Takakkaw Falls, when an organ was packed in for the gathering in the Doughnut. Over the years transporting these instruments became a nightmare for the packers, and one particular portable organ would not stay quiet, but kept wheezing and moaning on the back of the pack horses, causing many wrecks. In frustration, Soapy hurled it over a precipice. However, John Murray Gibbon, the TRCR's founder, retrieved the luckless instrument, and got it going for the Doughnut. Not to be thwarted in his purpose, Soapy again found an opportunity to hurl it into Og Lake north of Mnt. Assiniboine, where it met it's final watery demise.

As mentioned before, Soapy had served his



Reprinted from a TRCR Bulletin

Photo by Associated Screen News
Soapy and Topsy

early years in the Spanish American war, and doubtless became a very fine marksman with a pistol. He brought two revolvers, with him to Canada, a Colt 45 and a Colt 44, and bragged that he never missed. Bill McCallum of the RCMP was visiting Soapy and his wife and over a bottle of whiskey, the discussion was about who was the better shot. Soapy went out to the back porch and shot all of the clothespins off of the line, where his wife had just hung up the washing to dry. Eva, his wife, was not amused.

The years rolled by and it wasn't until Soapy was in his sixties that matrimonial bliss found the old cowboy. Eva Coates was a young woman working for the Brewsters as a cook at the Seebe ranch, and it wasn't long before Eva and Soapy fell in love and were married at the McDougal Church at Morley, on the Stoney Reservation. Together, Soapy and Eva moved a few miles south of the Brewster Seebe ranch and built a cabin home on the Kananaskis

River. That first spring a flood washed the cabin away and they moved further up on the flat lands at the mouth of Bow Valley and built a new home which later became known as the Rafter Six Guest Ranch. They started with a small log cabin, a blacksmith shop and a big outhouse, with three holes. A big one for Soapy, a medium sized one for Eva and a small one for their young son Mike. Eva complained that the outhouse was extremely cold in the winter, and was about 100 yards away from the house, much to far to go on a cold winter night.

In 1946, The National Geographic published a story about the TRCR and Mike, Soapy and Eva's son, is captured receiving his 100 mile pin from John Murray Gibbon. Mike was about 5 years old, and Soapy was a guide and Eva was the cook on the ride. The food was good and delicious pies were provided cooked in Dutch Ovens for the guests. The horses were reputed to be steady and well trained, by the guide who used colourful language, but knew his business. (Note: See picture on the following page. -Ed)

Eva, Mike and Soapy continued to operate the guest ranch on the Rafter Six site up until the spring of 1948, but in April of that year Soapy died as a result of TB and hepatitis, which he probably had carried since the war years. The weather was cold and Bill Bagley, another memorable cowboy, who worked for the Brewsters helped Mike load Soapy's frozen body on the train at Seebe and shipped for the funeral. The service was held at St. George's in the Pines Anglican church in Banff and he was buried in the old Banff Cemetery, beside many other old time cowboys and mountain men, including the TRCR founder, John Murray Gibbon. Eva, remarried and she and her second husband, Alvin Guinn, had three more children; Shannon, Colleen and Rick. Rick Guinn went on to become an outfitter and was the TRCR's outfitter in 2008 and 2013. Eva and Alvin continued to operate the ranch

until Stan Cowley bought it in 1976. Soapy Smith is just one of the many "colourful characters" that rode with the TRCR.

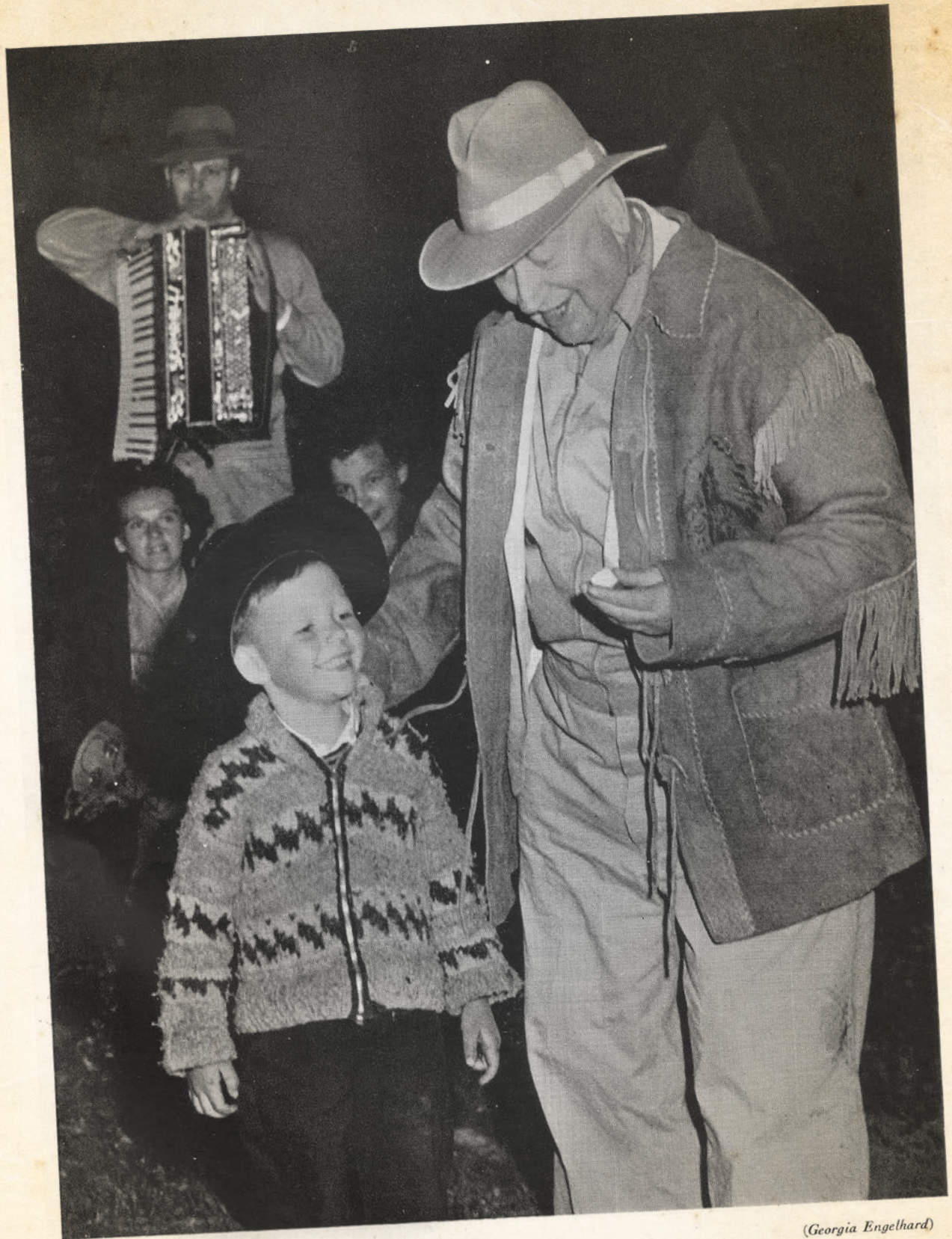
Editors Note:

Dennis and I are extremely grateful to Mike Guinn for a good portion of the material used in this story. Mike is Soapy and Eva's son and is now retired from the City of Calgary Police force and winters in Costa Rica and then works as a trout fishing guide on the Bow River west of Calgary in the summer. -Ed.



Our club President visits the grave of our founder, Dr John Murray Gibbon in the Old Banff Cemetery, July 2017. Located nearby are the graves of Byron Harmon, the Brewster clan and Soapy Smith.

SALUTE TO OUR YOUNGEST RIDER



(Georgia Engelhard)

*Five-Year-Old Michael Rand Smith receives 100-Mile Bullion from J. Murray Gibbon,
Founder and Honorary President, at interesting Camp-fire Ceremony*

PASSAGES:

It has been a sad year as the TRCR has lost four of its longtime club members.

Heading off into the sunset and greener pastures are:
**Maddy Driscoll (24 rides); Past President Lois Laycraft (25 rides);
"Webb" Webster (30 rides); "Nice Ron" Pruden (too many rides to know...)**

MADDY DRISCOLL

Many Trail Riders will remember dear Maddy Driscoll and her smile. She passed away in her sleep May 3, 2017 at age 73. We celebrate her life and the many days she spent with us ridin' the high trails and telling tall tales.

She hailed from Kelowna, B.C. where she had horses of her own. A long time "Bay" store employee - people say she always greeted them with that wonderful smile. A kind person and skilled rider, Maddy was an avid member of TRCR over the years taking 24 week-long rides, her last in 2013 to Mount Assiniboine. Her favorite she told me the first day of the ride. She said "I'm not really up to it health wise but couldn't resist the allure of Assiniboine even if I might just have to rest in camp a day or 2 - Just to get to be out here one last time." In 2004, she settled into returning most years on Ride 4 (I was host). She was often joined by friend Victor Langdon from Montreal. Maddy always came a number of days early to hook up with life long friends she had made over the years (among them, many Warner staff).

To all who rode with her, she was a delight to have on the rides always participating to the full extent in conversation, the fun, the laughter, skit night and sharing photos after the rides. She truly loved mountain riding and I was amazed in recent years that she managed her diabetes in a way that she could handle even the most challenging rides including walking stents. Hey Maddy, when not riding those mountain ridges in the sky, we wish you Rest and Peace dear friend.

Submitted by
Rick Godderis, Past TRCR President.

Obituary:
https://www.castanet.net/obituaries/DRISCOLL%2C_Madeline_L./11410/



LOIS LAYCRAFT

June 29, 1930 – April 13, 2017

Lois attended her first ride in the early 1960s and like the rest of us was soon smitten with the “best vacation of your life.” It wasn’t long before Lois joined the Board of Directors eventually becoming club president in 1970. Lois’s husband, Wendell, loved to fly fish but did not like horses and neither did any of Lois’s four sons. Consequently a week on the trail was where Lois would “let her hair down” and get away from all the men in her life! (as told to me by her son Tom) - and did she ever! Lois was famous for her cocktail parties, camp shenanigans, and participating in David Miller’s crazy skits. The tradition of the emcees’ cocktail parties continues each summer in Lois’s memory. I have very fond memories of being assigned by Lois, the task of making hors d’oeuvres way back in 1972. She decided that she would be my “trail ride mom” and I was known to her as “trail ride son” or simply “son” for the next 45 years. In the summer of 1973 she started the tradition of The Order of the Golden Horseshoe; an award given on each ride at the emcee’s discretion to the best all-around trail rider.

In July 1970, her husband Wendell and oldest son Jack were tragically killed in a car accident. True to herself and the TRCR she continued her role as President and rode for many more years. Lois eventually met Frank Sudol and she moved to his beautiful log home in northern Saskatchewan until Frank passed away several years ago. Frank joined Lois on many rides and I have many happy memories of Frank teaching me how to sharpen a chainsaw and listening to him tell wonderful stories of his years as a woodsman and naturalist for Parks Canada. Lois and Frank were quite a team on the trail ride and their absence has been very much felt by those that remember them well.

Thank-you Lois for your years of hard work and dedication to the TRCR. Always remembered and never forgotten.

Happy Trails “Mom”...
(submitted by the Editor)



"NICE RON" PRUDEN

January 3rd, 1930 - November 15th, 2017

I met "Nice Ron" in 1971 when the TRCR had their summer camp along the Pipestone River. Ron was a friend of Ron Warner's and worked as a heavy-duty mechanic for Mobil Oil. In the summertime he would come out and work on one or two rides at the beginning of the season, as a staff member. He would arrive in mid-June to either help set-up camp or finish any "loose ends" and was just an all-around great assistance to the other staff. One year he spent a week building a corduroy bridge in the Palliser Pass camp so that the riders could avoid a bad mud bog. He would spend three of his five weeks vacation with us and on ride two or three, his wife Joan who pre-deceased him last year, and her mother Ona would arrive. I have fond memories of watching Ron and Joan square dancing in the Doughnut with Ona too. Ron taught me a lot about chainsaws, logging, and horses. He was a man of many talents and a master of all of them.

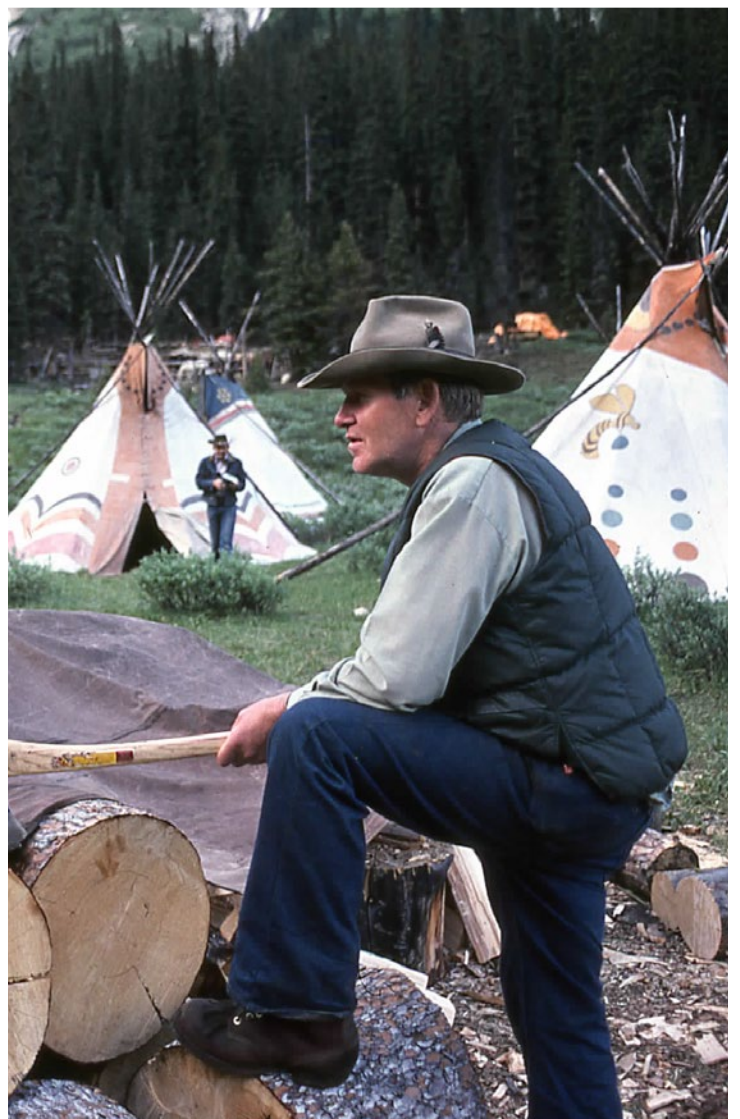
It was a bit confusing to have "two Rons" in camp since Ron Warner always rode in for the last night in camp. Since Ron Pruden was such a quiet and humble man who never said a bad word about anyone and was loved by all, we simply nicknamed him "Nice Ron" to differentiate between him and Ron Warner. We used to have our own staff coffee cups that were marked with our names using a felt black marker. I remember my second year as staff working in the Palliser Pass area that a funny incident that took place. "Nice Ron" had spent his three weeks of holidays with us and had gone home and Ron Warner had come into camp. We were short of staff cups so Jane Gilmore (nee Raby) took "Nice Ron's" cup and in the presence of Ron Warner, rubbed the "Nice" off the cup! It was hilariously funny and Ron Warner took it all in, in good fun. (sorry Ron, but I could not resist telling this one!)

"Nice Ron" leaves to cherish his memory, two sons; Phillip Pruden and Joseph (Nicole) Pruden, five grandchildren; Melanie and Marcie Pruden, Aidan, Erica and Miles Pruden as well as numerous relatives and friends.

Thank-you "Nice Ron" for your years of hard work and dedication to the TRCR. Always remembered and never forgotten.

Happy Trails Ron....

(submitted by Editor with help from Ron Warner)



STEWART "WEBB" WEBSTER

In August of 2016, we honoured Stewart "Webb" Webster with a 30th year TRCR belt buckle. It was on the occasion of this 30th ride with us, and his 87th birthday....

Webb was a genuine character who had lived in Castlegar for more than 40 years. He was born and raised on a farm near Deloraine, Manitoba. Webb (he got the nick name when he was 15 years old and it stayed with him for the next 72 years) served in the Signal Corps during the Korean War. Afterwards, he studied engineering at the University of Manitoba and UBC. As an electrical engineer he worked for BC Hydro on the projects at Hudson Hope, Waneta, and the Kootenay River. Over his long career Webb was also employed by utilities in California, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and West Virginia.

Webb was active in the outdoors until the end of his life. He was an avid hiker, skier, fisherman and loved to camp in his Roadtrek van. He built his own airplane, which is still flying in B.C., as well as many cedar strip canoes. Webb rode with us for 30 consecutive years, often with large groups of family members. Never one to shy away from the group, Webb always contributed to skit night, usually with a memorized poem or short story. He was the consummate trail rider; never a complaint and always a cheery word about something. We published a picture of him receiving his belt buckle in last years TRCR Bulletin (see our archives online) and he passed away within a week of it being sent to our membership. We had a toast to Webb last summer on the ride; he was very much missed in our camp.

Webb was predeceased by his wife Marguerite in 2014.

Always remembered and never forgotten.

Happy Trails Webb.

(Written by Gordon Webster, Webb's son with edits by the Editor)



PASSAGES:

PART II: A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE



Barbara and Frank Wotypka first heard about the trail ride from a friend who had read an article about the TRCR in the Western Horsemen magazine in 1968. They along with Frank's sister Anne rode with us for well over 25 years. For about 15 of those years they graciously hosted the fall TRCR Round-up held on their acreage east of Edmonton on the third weekend of September. Between 50 and 100 people would gather there, many with their RVs, where we would have a fun barbecue evening with singing and dancing in the Doughnut which was put up in their backyard for the occasion.

Never forgotten and always remembered.....

Sol Lipkind (left) lived in Calgary and owned Ribtor Hardware and Sporting Goods, a very famous Calgary landmark. Sol rode for us for over 20 years and was President of the club in 1972. He graciously gave us office space (at no charge) for the club's secretaries for many years and stored our camp gear and equipment in his warehouse. This "family tradition" continues today by his son Joel who stores our equipment all winter long, at no charge.

John (Chick) Fowler (right), lived in Ruston Louisiana and was given a birthday gift by his family on his 80th birthday - 6 days on the TRCR! John took out the back seat of his Volkswagen Beetle and drove from Louisiana to Alberta, sleeping in the back that night while parked in campgrounds. Chick was a retired university professor with a PhD in biology and gave many informative talks in camp about the environment. He was so enthralled with the TRCR, he was back the following year, again driving his beloved Beetle. He was back the following summer for his third ride but this time flew to Alberta with his wife and children.

Never forgotten and always remembered.....



Del Brassard had a career working for the Canadian Pacific Railway. He was an experienced horseman and spent his summer vacation as a guide on the TRCR. Del was "a cowboy cowboy" and always had a joke or story for, or about everyone. He had the most iconic cowboy face of anyone in our 95 year history and we would often joke that when he passed on, his face would make a great pair of cowboy boots! Del brought more fun and laughter to our rides than any other cowboy.

Never forgotten and always remembered.....

