



The Bulletin

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Anne William - circa 1970

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The President's Message

Dear Trail Riders,

We hope everyone is doing well and that your families are healthy and safe in these extraordinary times. TRCR and our outfitter, Banff Trail Riders, are committed to offer trail rides this summer as conditions allow.

We are working to offer the most flexible options for our club members. Currently most of our rides are full. The payment deadline has been moved to 60 days before the ride instead of the usual 90 to give riders more time to assess the travel situation. We ask that you keep options open for as long as is reasonable. We welcome everyone to keep an eye on our website and emails for the latest developments

This is TRCR's 97th year and we are determined to get out to the mountains and have a real western adventure exploring our mountains as we have done so all those previous years.

2020 will be an experience of a lifetime.

Regards

Gary Sandbeck, President

On behalf of the Board of Directors



On the Trail by Susan Kahler, 2019

Riding with TRCR - From A Guide's Viewpoint

by Erica Woolsey



Erica Woolsey
photo by R. Delorme, TRCR, 2019

Riding and guiding TRCR riders this past season has been one of my favourite and most memorable outfitter's experience. Even if the summer was also one of the wettest, I've ever experienced!

The opportunity to meet and ride with so many people sharing the same passion for horses and the outdoors as I do was amazing. Being able to watch relationships grow between guests and their horses was surprising at times, considering Remington is usually very selective about

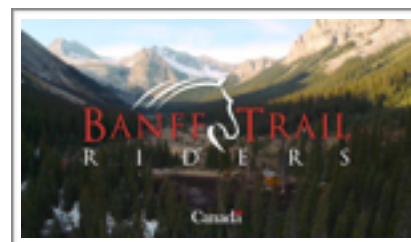
who he cuddles up to. It makes me happy to see when someone really connects with their four-legged trail buddy because I know they will always remember and hold the trip, and their horse close to their hearts. Honestly, the horses make the trips awesome, and I'm just there to make sure we don't get lost!

Guiding can be very challenging at times. Yet even though some weeks are harder than others, my guests make it all worth it. From their awe at the sights that I get the privilege of showing them to the camps I get to call home for the summer, their reactions are what remind me why I love what I do. One of my favourite things about being a guide is seeing how deeply people can bond with each other in such a short amount of time. On the last day, the groups almost seem like lifelong friends, rather than just knowing each other for six days. They bonded over the horrendous rain and lightning, riding through it on the second day. On other days they rode the skinny ridges of the rainbow lake, making some riders nervous, pushing them out of their comfort zone. We supported one another, and every experience brought the group closer together, creating long-lasting memories.

The stories told around the campfires are a highlight of every trip. From The legendary Peak Top Pete - the famous bootlegger, the songs are sung about watching Warden TV, to the countless hilarious stories told of horse adventures and so much more! Every night I was excited to hear more about my guests' lives and their experiences. The fantastic Emcees were able to regale guests with the history of Canada's Parks and TRCR and entertain them. At the same time, Dustin and I did chores such as chopping wood, hooting and hollering as we liked to do to unwind after a long day in the saddle. However, a lot of the time, they would investigate our commotion and join in with us!

With such an incredible summer already on the books, I am eagerly awaiting what the next one brings, hope to see more familiar and new faces in 2020.

Erica Woolsey is a Guide and Wrangler for the **Banff Trail Riders**



Have You Ever Consider Becoming an Emcee?

by Allen Achtymichuk

You are hosting a party at home. Your guests arrive. You welcome them, introducing them to other guests, making sure they have a good time. If any problem arises, you are there to address it discreetly. That is essentially what the TRCR Emcee do but within the context of a trail ride.

Who can be an Emcee?

Emcees are TRCR members that have experienced a ride as a guest at least once. They have seen an Emcee in action and know what the job entails. They have a good understanding of the TRCR's history and are committed to the mission of the organization. Most Emcees come prepared with something unique to offer to their guests. They may be a musician, a singer, an actor, a poet, a storyteller. Or, they might have expertise that might be of interest to the group such as geology, knowledge of the local flora and fauna.



Why an Emcee

As an Emcee and a rider, your role is to bring community into the camp. People come from all over, and some are new to trail riding. You are there to welcome them and make sure they “fit in” and enjoy themselves quickly. You work closely with the guides and the Outfitter's team and assist with scheduling, entertainment, communication and any problems that may arise.

The Fun part

The Emcees is the TRCR official representative on the ride. In addition to assisting with logistics, you are responsible for injecting a festive feel and organizing fun events, especially at night. Playing music around the fire and getting others to do the same, engaging in storytelling and organizing a skit night are all traditional activities expected on

the trail. A good Emcee comes prepared with stories, jokes and, most importantly, knowledge of the TRCR's history. He always has something in his “back pocket” to bring out and ensure the group is having a good time. I personally like to take a book on poetry along for skit night.

On skit nights, everyone is encouraged to perform for the group either solo or in a small group. They can do a skit, read poetry, sing, do a monologue, dance or do just about anything that is within good taste.



Rick Godderis, past Emcee, 34 rides since 1980, twice past president ,and current TRCR advisory council member

Fostering Connections with TRCR

Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies is a not for profit organization that relies on volunteers to carry on its mission. Connecting the guests to the organization and making them feel part of it is important.

The Emcee attends the meet and greets event on the first day of the ride to introduce himself to the riders. The outfitter will discuss the ride, camp and transportation during that first event.

The Emcees assist in answering questions when appropriate. We have a great history to share, and we are proud of it. At some point during the week-long ride, Emcees are expected to talk about the TRCR's 97-year-old history, including the historical development of Western Canada and the role of the horses in the Canadian Park System.

The Emcee also encourages riders to take pictures and submit their best ones to the "Reginald Townsend Photo Contest". This contest started in 1929 by one of the founders. Submissions are accepted within four categories; Fun in Camp, Scenery, Wildlife and Flora and Fauna. Nearing the end of the ride, the Emcee identifies a rider to collect tips money for the outfitter' team. They also distribute the TRCR's calendars, distribute the personalized rider's certificates and award TRCR pins to those that have met some of the TRCR's riding milestones.



How to prepare for your role as an Emcee

Emcees are valued, and for this reason, their ride is offered at no cost to them. As a volunteer, you will receive an "Emcee's Guide," the TRCR's history booklet, and an Emcee Kit complete with a list of the riders on your ride. If you have questions, you are encouraged to connect with one of the past Emcee or the TRCR's administrator.

One or two months before the ride, the Emcee sends an email or two to their group to welcome them and remind them to take a warm vest, rain slicker, gloves and a cowboy hat. Weather can change rapidly in the mountains from sun, to rain and even to... snow. It is a good idea for the Emcee to bring a couple extra hats, gloves, small blanket or jacket for guests who may have come unprepared to endure our crisp mountain nights.



Remember, it is a vacation, so have some fun. Your job is to make sure everyone has a good time and that includes you too.

Anyone interested to become an Emcee is invited to submit their name by email to admin@trail-rides.ca.

Allen Achtymichuk is a past Emcee and a current TRCR board member, Calgary, Alberta

Riding in a Dead Cowboy's Boots

27 years of trail riding memories with Anne William

by Renée Delorme

Anne was standing tall in her saddle, struck by the beauty of the Rockies. At 8,100 feet, she was overlooking Mount Assiniboine, a staggering 11,870-foot-high mountain. After a 3-hour ride, Anne's horse was panting but clearly enjoying the exercise. Below lay a forest of mostly spruce trees interspersed with nature's pastures covered in red, yellow and purple wildflowers. Looking up the valley, trees gradually gave way to the tree line and ancient glaciers glistening in the summer sun with streams of water shimmering down to the river. A gentle breeze and high flying hawks completed the picture. She gave her head a shake. Two days earlier, back in Calgary, she almost said no to her friend's impromptu and somewhat arm twisting invitation to come on the trail ride.



It was in June 1964. A week before, Anne Williams, a young nurse, had travelled by train from Vancouver to Calgary. Her plan was to spend time with her best friend Pat Waite and enjoy each other's company. The challenge, though, was to do this within the confines of her friend's maternal obligations – she had five children. Upon arrival at her friend's home, Jack, Pat's husband said, "Sorry, Anne, we forgot to tell you. We are going on a week-long ride with the Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies" leaving in two days. You are welcome to come with us or stay with the children." Anne had some riding experience as a child, but that was years ago. She had no riding clothes or backcountry equipment. However, the prospect of being left alone with five kids gave her no choice.

The following two days became a marathon to find riding clothes, a sleeping bag, rain gear, gloves, a hat and boots for Anne. Pat's father, Dr. R.C. Riley, the City's pathologist joined in the excitement. He came through with the best piece of equipment that Anne would wear for years to come. As he removed the boots from a cowboys who died that day, he thought, "Perfect size, quality leather, can't let them go to waste". Dr Riley was right. Strangely, Anne's feet fit perfectly in the dead man's boots. Perhaps for that reason, Anne's first ride awakened in her a passion for horses and big wild skies. As she said – she was "Bitten by the bug."



Anne William and Guide Mike Crowley, circa

The following summer, she came back and did so for 27 years. Her last ride was in 1996. Today she is an impressive 89 years old, living in her midtown condo in Vancouver. She is limited by shortness of breath and a weakened body; however, she reminisces fondly on those precious years of freedom and light-heartedness. She took pleasure in telling me a few notable incidents with photo albums and TRCR pamphlets in hand. **It is now my pleasure to share those stories with you.**

The Nature of A Ride

27 years of trail riding memories with Anne William

by Renée Delorme

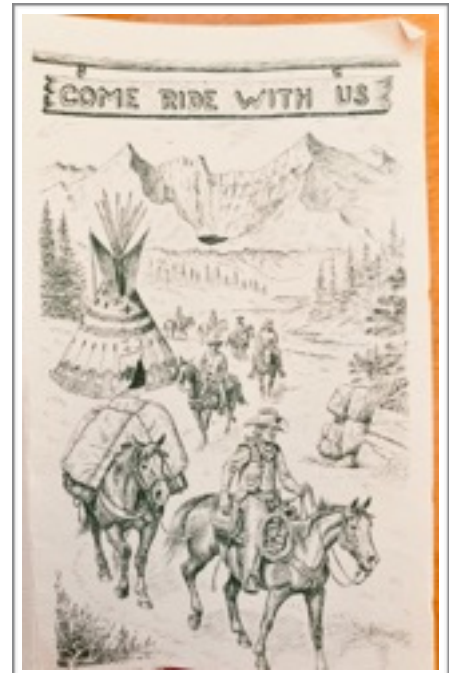
Anne cherished every single ride in the mountains. They were moments in time when all the mundane concerns of life were set aside. She loved waking up to crisp morning's sweet earthy alpine smells and how it gradually gave way to the scents of pine sap freed by the hot afternoon sun. She loved the gentle sway of her horse's gait following others in more or less single file. The idle chatter between riders, in front or behind her. The moments when a rider or the guide would point a finger up on a mountain and say, "Look! A grizzly!" Or simply stop in their tracks and point ahead, this time much closer to you – "Look! A grizzly!" or a black bear, or an elk, even a cougar. Then came time to stop for lunch at a pristine crystal clear emerald lake, or along a gurgling creek. After lunch, the ride carried on. Sometimes, they would cross a lively river, horse knee-deep or deeper, causing her heart to race.

Some of the rides would take her on steep trails, demanding a bit more of her. She would have to bend forward on her saddle to avoid branches. She would be told to give her horse more reins to help it go over fallen trees or other obstacles. At times she would hold her breath going on narrow paths overlooking a deep gorge, remaining calm and trusting the animal. In Anne's words; "Sure, scary moments were going on narrow ledges. Horses are so sure-footed. They do not want to fall. Do not argue with the

horse." Same applied going down steep hills this time, bending backward on the saddle to help her horse negotiate the path.

Anne's favourite ride was by far to Mount Assiniboine. She describes the mountain as the Matterhorn of the Rockies, referring to the famous Swiss mountain. In fact, she liked that ride so much that she still has a poster on a wall promoting the TRCR Mount Assiniboine ride. She experienced the magic of Mount Assiniboine at least four times in her riding career.

Beyond the mountains, Anne loved connecting with fellow riders and living in communal life in the backcountry. **She lived fully and "in the moment."**



1992 TRCR Pamphlet Cover



Anne William
ready for skit night circa 1980

About the Outfitters, the Guides and the Cooks

27 years of trail riding memories with Anne William

by Renée Delorme



Photo by Renée Delorme, TRCR 2019

Outfitters and guides are the backbones of the riding adventures. Anne's admiration for them rings true for all of us, still today. The Outfitters' knowledge of the horses, their familiarity with the mountains, their easy-going, even seemingly nonchalant behaviours acknowledges their deep connection with nature. They understand and respect the mountains, the elements and their horses. We are their guests, and they are our guides. Their job is to give us a ride of a lifetime while keeping us safe.

One wrangler, in particular, stands out in Anne's memories; Mike Crawley. Originally from South Africa, Mike developed a passion for horses when he moved to Banff. Hired by Warner's Stables of the Canadian Rockies, he guided many riders over the years. His sense of humour and his charisma was legendary. So was his high level of energy and horsemanship. Listening to Anne, I suspect many riders came year over year to enjoy his company as much as for the ride itself.

The routine of the camp brings fond memories to Anne. Riders sleeping in teepees or surveyor style canvas tents. Eating in a big communal tent and spending nights around campfires in a large tent called "the donut." The routine has not changed much over the years and Anne's experiences. Early morning starts over a cup of coffee, near the wood stove in the big tent, or outside by the fire pit. Some riders would take that time to line up and have a shower in a makeshift tent/shower where the water would be more or less warm. Others would tend to that task in the evening. The food is simple, wholesome and satisfying. Anne particularly remembers Mrs. Watkins. She spent several years cooking for the riders. In those years, her son, Stuart, was spending the summer with her, helping out. No doubt, his passion for trail riding was forged during those years. He became a dedicated member of the Trail Riders and eventually, the President.

The days were spent riding and enjoying the outdoors. The evenings were spent socializing, singing and performing. Many new friendships were created and promises to meet again the following year were sealed. Riding for Anne was a gateway to an alternative lifestyle. One that broke her free from daily urban living to a space in time where life was kept simple. In her words: **"Riding is where she found Peace."**



Photo by Renée Delorme, TRCR, 2019

How to Rescue a Hiker Treed by a Bear

27 years of trail riding memories with Anne William

by Renée Delorme

It is not every day that you encounter a hiker up a tree. In one of her early rides, Anne and her fellow riders had that opportunity. The unfortunate hiker had been up the tree for a considerable amount of time already, holding on for dear life. The grizzly was sitting comfortably on the hiker's coat and bags at the base of the tree dozing off, waiting for his prey to make a move. A perfectly dramatic yet somewhat hilarious scene

The arrival of twenty or so horses and riders frustrated the bear's plan. Uncertain about them, the grizzly thought it best to retreat, leaving behind a shaking trekker - his impending lunch. That was the cue for the hiker to come down and join the riders.

However, the grizzly, having second thoughts, decided to rush back to catch his hanging fruit. The hefty bear's decision did not give the hiker sufficient time to rescue his belongings. He had to leave them behind. The waiting game started. The bear settled back on the hiker's coat and bags, the



riders and the hiker settled down a short distance away. One hour? Two? Hard to tell, but the bear eventually grew weary of waiting for a lunch that obviously would not fall off the tree. He left. The hiker quickly grabbed his belongings by then reeking of the bear's oily and the smell of rotting flesh.

The hiker carried on with the group for the remainder of the week, somewhat in shock. Anne can't remember if the hiker walked alongside the riders or found a ride on a packhorse. We also do not know if the hiker became a rider. But, what is sure is that the incident gave plenty of material for jokes over suppers and sketches on skit night in the donut tent.

Backcountry's First Aid Response, Riders' Style

27 years of trail riding memories with Anne William

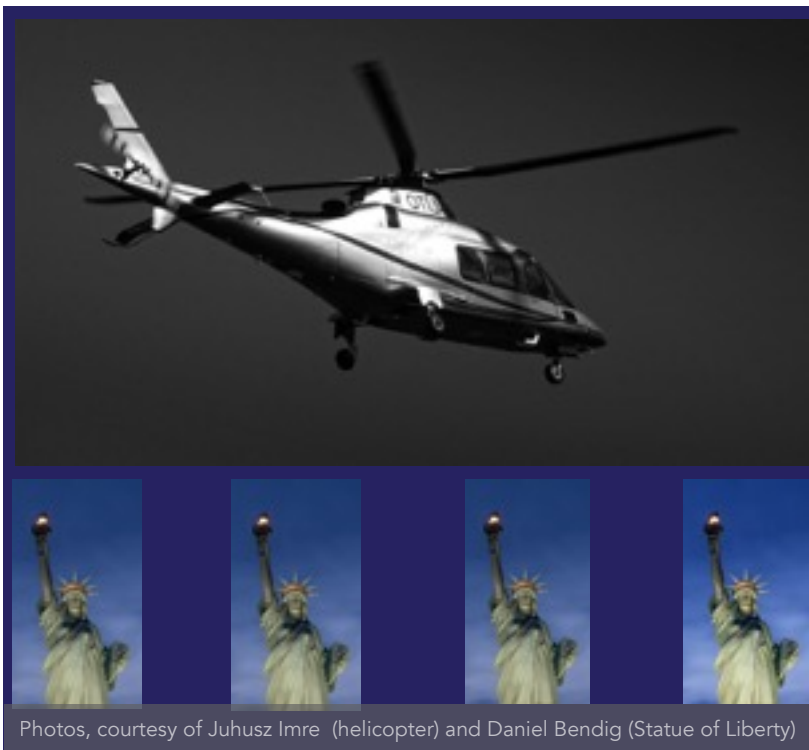
by Renée Delorme

Calling in for first aid responses in the backcountry was not an easy affair before satellite phones. Anne cannot quite remember the year. It likely was the end of the 60s or early 70s. The rides back then had a medical doctor on staff just in case. That year, the assigned doctor came with his wife and young son. It was perhaps the second or third day into the ride, and the group was deep in the backcountry when the son, in the middle of the night, developed an acute appendix attack. The diagnosis was imminent. He had to go to the hospital for an emergency operation as soon as possible.

We only had one "phone" – an army-style radio activated communication device. The guide reached rescue services, and a helicopter was summoned in. Meanwhile, the riders and staff were all woken up and ordered to dress warmly and bring their flashlights.

They gathered near the kitchen tent; after which they were guided to a clearing where they formed a big circle – large enough for a helicopter to land in. The group did not have to wait long in the chilly, quiet night. The sound of the chopper soon became audible. On cue, they held their flashlights up in the sky. Thirty or so statues of liberty proudly signalling where the makeshift landing pad was. The helicopter slowly made its way down in the middle of the pad, creating gusting wind that took off a few cowboy hats. The son, on a stretcher and the mother, were rushed in the helicopter to the Banff hospital.

The next morning, the doctor left the group and joined his family. They did not come back to finish the ride that summer. All we know is that the son's appendix was removed, and he recovered. The camp took comfort in this news and relished **the spirit that united them that night.**



Photos, courtesy of Juhusz Imre (helicopter) and Daniel Bendig (Statue of Liberty)



Interview and article on Anne William by Renée Delorme, Calgary, January 2020

JOIN US



Trish Mainey, On the Trail, 2019

For The Ride of a Lifetime



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