



Rascal Inc

Winter Newsletter July 2006

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Hike de Femme - Feb 06

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Tentative close off date for articles for the Spring *NEWSLETTER* is the end September - email contributions to Jack Cornell at rascal@rascal.asn.au

NEXT WORKING BEE: 13-14 October 2006

From the President

As I write this message in the middle of July, there has not been a lot of snow in the mountains, this is particularly disappointing for those on school holidays. However, more snow is forecast (after rain!), so let's hope that gives a boost to the season as there are plenty more people booked into the lodge for the next couple of months!

When you are staying at the lodge, don't forget that you have responsibilities for its upkeep - it's not a hotel! We will have professional cleaning twice weekly in the peak winter season, and appoint a lodge captain from one of the members who's staying there, but you need to do your bit. So please make sure you take responsibility for keeping the lodge clean - if you always clean up your own mess, you will never have to clean up anyone else's!

We are making some progress addressing the audit issues raised by the Snowy River Shire Council. Chubb is carrying out work to upgrade signage and connect our alarm system to the Jindabyne fire station via a dedicated telephone line.

Separately, we have engaged a consulting company, AE&D (Active Environmental and Development Pty Ltd), to advise us how the lodge meets/doesn't meet the Building Code of Australia standards required by the other items in the audit. This will cost Rascal \$5,500 plus GST. Their consultant, Nathan Halstead, was recommended by Sydney members.

Their brief (referred to as Option 2 in their proposal document) is as follows:

Provide a comprehensive Building Code of Australia (BCA) upgrade strategy. The BCA Strategy will include the consideration of all

fire safety non-compliance matters, as well as address the requirements for people with disabilities and Health & Amenity. This option would include the provision of a detailed report to Council outlining the proposed method of compliance with the order.

Re-inspection of the building will be required to undertake a full assessment of the current building. (3 inspections are included in Option 2. An inspection would be required to develop the comprehensive upgrade strategy. A further inspection is allowed for during the upgrade works, and a final inspection upon completion of works.)

Option 2 would include the provision of a report to Council upon completion of works to confirm works have been completed in accordance with our BCA upgrade strategy and to satisfy council's order.

Upon receipt of the upgrade strategy from AE&M, the Committee will consult with members before committing to a course of action and commencing upgrade works.

My usual plea about working bees! We do need your help at working bees, so please make an effort to participate in the ones that are scheduled later in the year. Many thanks to those members who joined us at the last one in May - there's an item elsewhere in the Newsletter detailing their achievements.

Richard Emerton, President

10th Anniversary Hike de Femme

Ten years ago a handful of female members of Rascal got together on International Women's Day and hiked from the top of the Thredbo Chairlift along the ridge of Crackenback to Dead Horse Gap and back along the Thredbo River. They all had such a good time that they decided to organise a hike for women every year around the same date. They decided to call it the "Hike de Femmes", a summer version of the "Ski de Femmes" which ten years ago was held every winter at Perisher to introduce women to cross-country skiing.

Since then, the hike has been held every year in early March and has gone from strength to strength. This year 20 Femmes of varying ages and occupations booked out the lodge on the weekend of 25 and 26 February in a mood to celebrate the tenth anniversary of that inaugural hike.

The weekend started with a gathering of all participants at the lodge on Friday night. Dinner was cooked on the barbecue and suggestions taken for the choice of route for next day's hike. The weather promised a mild day with occasional showers so all options were open. In the end we decided unanimously that it would be most appropriate to follow in the footsteps of that first band of hikers ten years before and to walk the Dead Horse Gap trail. Seven out of the eight original hikers were there: Pat Gorman, Alice Buckley, Julie Pettit, Colleen Fox, Angela Wydeveld, Judy Roberts and Lynne Bentley. The only one missing was Margitta Acker and we toasted Margitta in her absence.

On Saturday morning, after an unhurried breakfast we broke up into groups to travel to Thredbo in cars that already had National Park entry stickers. Heaven forbid that anyone should have to fork out today's entry fee! Thredbo was holding a mountain bike competition that day, and the village was full of hundreds of young school-age males all fully acquitted with the required helmets, knee guards and other gear and bearing their competition numbers on the front of their bikes. They were travelling to the top of the chairlift with their bikes, two at a time, and racing down a track which followed the Village Trail back down to the starting point. The air was thick with the sound of the public address system calling out the numbers of the next competitors to make the descent.

Fortunately, walkers were being given preferential treatment in boarding the chairlift, and we were all at the top of Crackenback by 11am. We were immediately nearly blown off our feet by a freezing cold westerly wind blowing straight into our faces. We were well equipped with coats but the wind was so strong it was difficult to battle our way for the first few metres of the trail which heads due west towards Kosciuszko. Two groups of walkers arriving at the top of the chair with us were wearing only shorts and T-shirts and heading off into the wind towards Kosciuszko and we wondered in the conditions how long they would last before being forced to turn around and head for warmth.



We had left behind us a hot sunny day in Jindabyne, and were reminded once again that one really must be prepared for all weather conditions in the mountains.



Happily, our route led us off to the left below the ridgeline of Crackenback, and out of the wind. The walk was easy at first, traversing the mountainside through large patches of alpine wildflowers, mosses and lichens. When we stopped to catch our breaths, the views back towards Thredbo and across to the south east were spectacular. After about an hour of walking we began the descent to Dead Horse Gap and the effects of the 2003 fires were immediately apparent. The vegetation changed to a mixture of healthy and burnt out snow gums, with the dead gums stark white in colour, twisted into different shapes with a mass of bright green regrowth at their bases. The overall effect was a striking, almost Japanese-style, artistic landscape.



The walk down was a strenuous one, descending as it did for an hour. By the time we reached the bottom the knees of many of us were complaining loudly. We stopped and had lunch at the same spot where the inaugural band of hikers had had theirs ten years before, and then headed for home along the Thredbo River. Again, the going was not easy on the knees, and it started to pour with rain about twenty minutes from home, but the river was rushing along and provided its usual delights as we crossed from one side to the other over its bridges and passed through massed wildflowers growing on its banks. Along the river the snow gums were striated with new luminous green bark against the stark white of the older bark and gave off a pungent sweet smell when the rain started.



At 3.15 pm we arrived in Thredbo, to find it virtually closed! Hundreds of walkers and mountain bikers in town and we could find only one coffee shop open!! Are they mad up there? Anyway, we found enough space for all of us to have our traditional and compulsory post-hike cappuccino, before returning to Jindabyne.

That night we had an anniversary dinner, with a cake inscribed "Ten years of hiking and still lost in the bush!", which had been arranged by Margie Sharpe. We heard amusing readings from records of earlier hikes, and presented the traditional "Order of the Boot", again arranged by



Margie Sharpe, to Judy Roberts for her outstanding contribution to the Hike de Femmes over the last decade. We sang Happy Birthday to Us and Auld Lang Syne, and then went to bed.

Next day some of us wandered into Nuggets' Crossing, while others, obviously suckers for punishment, drove to Sponars and walked to Rainbow Lake for morning tea. This very picturesque area was unaffected by the fires, the lake was full, and the bush was green and beautiful.

Then it was back to the lodge, for a swim for some, lunch and then the big cleanup and pack up before we all headed back to Canberra, stiff, sore and exhausted, but looking forward to next year's Hike de Femmes!

Letter from Tony Booth

There was considerable discussion at the recent AGM regarding admission of new members to RASCAL from the current waiting list. Members will know that our Committee has had a moratorium on new members for over a year now. It makes obvious sense not to take on new members when accommodation becomes stressed and really the only reason ever to take on new members is to balance those lost through attrition unless of course there was some major initiative resulting in increased accommodation.

In explaining the moratorium the President noted that the Committee saw its obligation to look after the interests of our existing members first and in particular to ensure that they have ready access to accommodation. However it is in the nature of our peaks in demand, weekends and school holidays and if there is excellent snow that even if we had only half as many members as we do there can still be times when not everyone can book in exactly as they might wish. So there must always be a balance between having enough members to generate enough income throughout the year whilst at the same time ensuring as much access as possible for members during peak demand.

Presumably in order to allow member numbers to decline somewhat the moratorium has been introduced and a waiting list established. This is fine but a waiting list inevitably carries with it the implication that there is some prospect of advancement along that waiting list eventually to acceptance as a full member. There should therefore be criteria in place by which the Committee can judge when it is appropriate to accept new members. During discussion at the AGM no criteria were proffered. The general statement about the primacy of member's interests is not a criterion by which admission can be decided. Suitable criteria might be based on the maintenance of an arbitrary total number of members or perhaps based upon accommodation usage at the Lodge at various times of the week and of the year or some other but that is for the Committee to develop.

However I do think that it is not right to accept people onto a waiting list unless they can have a reasonable expectation of advancement and they can monitor their advancement according to transparent criteria which are generally known. What do other members think?

Tony Booth

Club Patron

Camera Found in Lodge - May 2006

Is this your camera?



It's a Canon Ixus 500 with case located in the Lodge a few months ago. A sample picture is at left. Contact Angela on 02-6259 5980 if

it's yours & you want it back.



Working Bee 13-14 May 2006

Attendees:

Lynne and Noel Bentley, Tim and Kim Dunnet, Gabe, Vera and Jack Bloxham, Ian, Diana and Mark Beaver, Wal Costanzo, Ken Moylan, Gale Funston and Richard Emerton

Tasks Completed

Remove screen door

Remove Sails

Removal of garden waste and Tidy front garden

Oil Deck

Check and clean Bar-b-q area, check gas cylinders

Stock take all pillows and doonas

Check all window winders and windows

Check/fix operation of Fire doors

Check drains, toilets and shower outlets

Check light switches and globes

Clean Kitchen drawers, cupboards & stock take

Check exhaust fans

Check ZIP water heater

Check exit lights

Clean leather furniture

Clean fridge filters

Clean central heating filters

Relocate key safe

The major focus was to get the lodge ready for winter. Special thanks to Lynne for her excellent catering, and to all who attended, did lots of good work and had an enjoyable après-work dinner.

NEXT WORKING BEE: 13-14 October 2006

Richard Emerton - President

FUN RUN ON A BIKE

The Rascal Team for the Tour de Femme (happening in Canberra later in the year) has met for its first training ride.

On a frosty Sunday morning, after a heart-starting cappuccino, the team plus spouses enjoyed a very pleasant and leisurely circuit from the National Museum through the Jerrabomberra Wetlands to Kingston and back to our starting point.

We intend meeting every second Sunday at 10:00am for a ride, weather permitting.

If you're interested in joining us, please contact me at nlbentle@bigpond.net.au.

All you need is a bike and helmet.

Lynne Bentley

Key Return

Please return keys promptly.

In these days of petrol prices around \$1.40/litre, the Rascal rate of \$6 for key postage is not bad value - particularly if you take on board the "real" cost of travel including your time in coming out to Evatt to both collect the key before your holiday and return it after your stay in the lodge.

A check with Australia Post has revealed that it now determines key postage cost on the basis of the THICKNESS, not weight, of the key post package. Under the current rules, postage cost of a two key pack can be either \$1.00 or \$3.40 each way depending on the thickness.

Because of this, we are gradually replacing the leather key labels with thin, laminated labels (in hot lemon colour). The keys should more easily fit into pockets, parkas and purses.

Note that, whilst we accept that your group may need a certain number of keys, we can only provide the additional keys if other members have been prompt in returning their keys. Please do NOT keep the key for your next stay in the Lodge (unless you have expressly cleared that with us).

Angela and Jack Cornell - Office Manager