



RASCAL NEWS

Autumn 1995

Newsletter of RASCAL INC

RASCAL Committee for 1995



At the AGM on 30 March, the new RASCAL Committee for 1995 was elected. From left to right are: (seated): Mike Vale, Trish Carroll, Valerie Hallin (standing): Anne Reed, Alan Laird, Monty Fox, Steve Ahern, Rod Roberts, Richard Emerton, John Kennard. Not pictured: George Malecky and Chris Acker.

Please note RASCAL's NEW phone, post box and key pickup details:

 **(06) 285 4214**

 **PO Box 99, Curtin, ACT, 2605**



RASCAL CONTACT DETAILS

Please direct all general inquiries and accommodation bookings to the booking officer. Suggestions and complaints may be directed to the Committee, but PLEASE, only call between 7 and 8 pm on weeknights.

BOOKING OFFICER

Dianne Ireland 285 4214
(10-12am Tuesday)
(7- 9pm Thursday)
leave messages on the answering
machine at other times with return BH
and AH contact numbers

MAIL ADDRESS

PO Box 99, Curtin, ACT, 2605

KEY PICKUP ADDRESS

13 Jennings St., Curtin, ACT, 2605

COMMITTEE

(ONLY ring between 7pm and 8pm weeknights,
please)

President

Monty Fox 288 3153

Vice-President/Newsletter Editor

Mike Vale 241 2351

Secretary

Trish Carroll 241 2351

Assistant Secretary

Valerie Hallin 288 9728

Treasurer

Steve Ahern 281 3472

Public Officer

Richard Emerton 286 5134

Lodge Maintenance Officer

Chris Acker 281 4467

Committee Members

John Kennard 281 3435

Alan Laird 288 4708

George Malecky

Anne Reed 294 6040

Rod Roberts 230 2436

RASCAL LODGE

7 Banjo Paterson Crescent
Jindabyne NSW 2627
Ph: (064) 56 2169
Winter Lodge Caretaker: Mark Jury

President's Report - 1995 AGM George Malecky



The following report was presented to the 1995 AGM by Rod Roberts, on behalf of outgoing President, George Malecky.

“Dear Rascals,

Welcome to the 1995 Annual General Meeting of RASCAL INC.

This is the first time since I became a member of RASCAL in 1988 that I have been unable to attend the AGM. I am currently in Melbourne attending the 1995 International Paediatric Surgical Conference and thus, have to send my apologies to you for my absence tonight.

I doubly regret that I am unable to be present in person, as I have to announce that I am not able to stand for a further term as President of RASCAL, or for that matter, for any other Executive position on the Committee of RASCAL at this point in time. This is solely for the reason that the demands on my time of my professional life have increased to the point that I am no longer able to devote the time to RASCAL which I have in the past few years. I feel that any executive position carries with it a responsibility to do the job well and to give it the time it requires.

Nevertheless, I continue to be very interested in the affairs and well-being of RASCAL and would like to

maintain a connection with the management of the Club. If the position is available to me, I would like to stand for a non-executive Committee position and work for RASCAL as much as my time permits.

Over the past twelve months, the Club has continued to benefit from the ongoing efforts of the Committee and membership. The Lodge has been well maintained with repairs and improvements being carried out as required and for this we all owe a vote of thanks to our maintenance officer, Chris Acker and to all who have organised and attended the work parties. On the side of the overall running of the Club, I believe there are some exciting developments in the offing. The Committee has made significant efforts to find out what the members want and expect of the Club, and, wherever possible changes have and will continue to be implemented.

I exhort RASCALS to await the next newsletter with interest to see some of what is in store. I anticipate that any changes will be by smooth process of evolution, rather than by abrupt shifts in direction.

I would like to thank all Committee members for their untiring efforts and for the enthusiasm with which they have approached the running of RASCAL INC for the past twelve months. I would also like to wish the incoming Committee and President the very best for the next year and I hope to be able to contribute in some small way.

I wish all RASCALS a bumper 1995 season.”

George Malecky

Quill of the President - Monty Fox



The 1994 Committee bit deeply into the bullet of challenge to RASCAL's survival.

Don't kid yourself on this one. Operationally, we were and remain close to the RED side of the ledger.

Actually, when the ACT Department of Education changed school holidays such that there were no longer two weeks of holidays smack bang in the middle of winter, we should have heard the siren, or at least seen the warning lights.

The shift in school holidays and the fact that developers have built a lot of accommodation in Jindabyne (the rents for which, up until we reduced our rates earlier this year, were cheaper for a 4-person group than staying at RASCAL) has been painful to the Club's hip pocket nerve. Our survival depends on a rigorous examination of all aspects of the Club's operations, with a view to increasing membership and accommodation dollars inwards, and reducing operational dollars outwards.

So, what is the Committee doing about it?

The 1994 Committee agreed to put the following into effect:

1. Develop a business plan;
2. Examine options to broaden the

Club's membership base and diversify the recreational activities sponsored by the Club;

3. Examine the adequacy and relevance of current procedures and practices with respect to all aspects of the Club's activities, particularly Lodge maintenance, accommodation bookings, recruitment of new members and promotion.

Sub-Committees have been formed and are working to present recommendations to the Committee in July 1995.

Any member who wishes to have a say on any of these matters should contact Mike Vale on 241 2351.

As well, the 1994 Committee decided to combat loss of members and loss of accommodation income by:

- ✓ aggressive marketing to retain existing members and to attract new members;
- ✓ restructuring accommodation rates to make the Lodge more attractive to members and their guests;
- ✓ diversifying the recreational activities sponsored by the Club, with the aim of increasing non-winter usage of the Lodge;
- ✓ polling members on their interests, Lodge usage, expectations, irritations etc.

This work will be continued by the 1995 Committee.

I thank the 1994 Committee for its hard work, particularly Julie Pettit, Margaret Sharp and Michelle Hawley, none of whom sought re-election 1995. Thanks also to retiring President, George Malecky, who guided us through difficult meetings to

an understanding of the problems the Club faces and to an agreed position of action to overcome those problems.

George's experience and undoubted commitment to RASCAL remains available to us in his "Committee Member" role, in which he will be available to make an ongoing contribution to our tasks in 1995.

But, back to the Ranch ...

Lachlan and Rachel have taken up employment as Managers at a commercial Lodge in Jindabyne and will not be at RASCAL in 1995.

Our Lodge Caretaker (this title better reflects the role than Lodge Manager) for 1995 will be Mark Jury. Mark was a ski instructor at Blue Cow last year. He will be back there again this year.

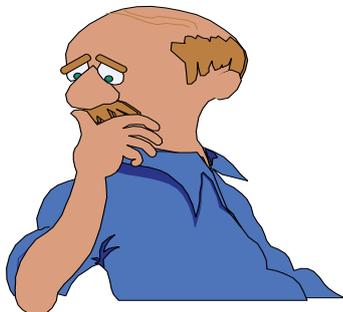
Thank you Richard Emerton, Margaret Sharp and Alan Laird for your help in the selection process.

Now, while drinking water upside down with a brown paper bag over my head, I will stop the hiccup over the new PO Box Number for RASCAL. Forget the past ... Forget anything I said, wrote, thought or implied - the old box number and key pickup details are history. In future, please post mail to PO Box 99 Curtin, ACT 2605; pick up keys at 13 Jennings Street, Curtin - in the letterbox, and phone Dianne on (06) 285 4214.

Finally, in the RASCAL spirit, let us meet and tell improbable skiing stories over drinks and nibbles at the Southern Cross Club on 7 June. Only \$8 each (plus your own drinks). Meet the Committee and the new Lodge Caretaker. See page 6 for details.

Monty

Lodge Maintenance Report for 1994 Chris Acker



Nothing very drastic has happened during the past twelve months, although some improvements have been made for the comfort and enjoyment of members. Most noticeable among these is the leather lounge suite purchased about a year ago, which is providing a comfortable and popular seating arrangement. The windows in the corner of the top floor have been covered with a protective film to protect the leather from the sun's damaging rays.

A large umbrella is stored under the stairs for use on the verandah. It works very well in calm conditions, but members need to be careful with it on windy days. Would members please ensure that the umbrella is NOT left outside when there is no one at the Lodge.

A security light activated by a movement sensor has been installed at the front entrance after the glass panel in the foyer was smashed. As well, the locking system has been changed to provide greater security.

Then there are the more commonplace and less obvious types of repairs - a knob here, a switch there; new bulbs; new batteries in the smoke detectors - that sort of thing. Even the curtain shielding the sliding door to the verandah now has a drawcord, which will no doubt prolong its life a little longer. As the Lodge ages, we seem to be getting more of these sorts of things.

Water seepage to the ground floor is a problem which can no longer be ignored, and steps are in the pipeline to permanently rectify the problem after some temporary "fixes". We are awaiting quotes, but it does not look as if it will come cheaply. Another problem that will need to be addressed is the door on the middle floor leading to the bunk rooms - it's coming out of the frame!

These and other problems will need to be dealt with by the new Committee. And the Committee will need all the help it can get from its members, so that the Lodge can be maintained in good shape, and running costs can be kept to a minimum.

Over the past year or two, attendances at work parties have been falling off considerably, despite the various incentives offered. Are people really that busy? Or are members losing interest in the Lodge? Whatever it may be, I hope it is only a temporary phenomenon and that once again the Lodge will be fully booked when this year's working bees are announced.

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Workparty - May 1995

The next workparty will be held at RASCAL Lodge on the weekend of 27/28 May. The workparty will be led by Margaret Sharp.

Please contact Margaret (288 4708) or Dianne to confirm your place. Remember you get \$40 petrol money plus a free bar-b-que on Saturday night. And they say life wasn't meant to be easy !!!!!

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The Claw Rides Again - Monty Fox

There seems to be confusion about the rules for Block Bookings - and no wonder, since previous Committees had really restricted access so that many members probably thought it was all just too hard. But not now.

In the 1995 age of lower accommodation rates, Super Saver weeks and simplified tariffs, there are simplified, flexible rules - block bookings are freely available in March, April, May and November and may be booked well in advance by phoning Dianne.

Block bookings MAY be available in October, December, January and February, BUT ONLY IF there are no other bookings for that weekend. Block bookings for these weekends can only be made 2 weeks in advance.

Block bookings are NOT AVAILABLE from June to September inclusive. I hope this clarifies the situation - by the way, the Committee is currently looking at updating the bylaws and expects to be able to send a copy to all members with the next issue of RASCAL NEWS.

The stereo has been removed from the Dining Room alcove - it broke down once too often and will not be replaced. Bring your own Ghetto Blaster if you want some music. The old microwave oven with the temperature slide that has been taped up forever - with the stained sign warning of dire consequences if changed - is also broken and will be replaced as soon as a replacement can be obtained. All redundant equipment from the Lodge is given to a welfare organisation such as St Vinnies or the Salvation Army.

And finally, I must remark on the quality of input and commitment by

(Continued on page 6)

Highlights from the AGM



The 1995 RASCAL AGM was held on 30 March at Woden Valley Hospital, at 8PM. It was a spirited meeting with lots of questions for the Chair. Here are some highlights:

The following retiring Committee members did not renominate for any office due to pressure of work:

Julie Pettit (Secretary)
Michelle Hawley (Member)

In addition, George Malecky (President) and Margaret Sharp (Member) stood down from their positions, also due to work commitments, with George successfully renominating as a Committee member, and Margaret volunteering to continue as co-opted Purchasing Officer - an offer that was gratefully accepted by the Committee.

Thank you to Julie, George, Margaret and Michelle for a superb effort over the last few years - the Club has benefited greatly from your competent and enthusiastic stewardship and we wish you all the best for the future. Fortunately, George's and Margaret's talents will not be completely lost to the club, just translated into different roles.

The new Committee is now as shown on page 2.

The Auditor's report:

INCOME:	1993	1994
	\$	\$
Accommodation:	16,385	16,272
Bank Interest:	323	6
Debentures		
Forfeited:	-	2,475
Invest. Interest:	429	893
Joining Fees:	4,500	3,500
Subscriptions:	12,150	13,915
Telephone:	474	436
TOTAL	34,261	37,497

EXPENDITURE:

Advertising:	-	100
Audit Fees:	860	870
Bank Charges:	72	80
Filing Fees:	14	-
FB Tax:	133	162
Functions (Net):	1,268	372
Interest Paid:	9	72
Postage:	528	539
Printing/Stationery:	877	827
Lodge Expenses:		
- Booking Officer		
Salary:	7,889	8,274
- Cleaner:	-10	-
- Consumables:	620	334
- Depreciation:	3,917	3,756
- Electricity:	5,860	3,855
- Insurance:	2,708	2,479
- Magazines:	66	77
- Lodge Managers'		
Salary:	975	1,300
- Rates/Taxes:	3,651	3,816
- Maintenance:	3,651	3,816
- Telephone:	1,458	1,628
TOTAL	33,312	28,040

Excess of Income over Expenditure: \$ 949 \$6,435*

* Note that the Treasurer's report shows an excess of income over expenditure of \$3,960 - the discrepancy between this figure and the Auditor's figure arises from the purchase of leather lounges for the Lodge, the receipt for which was not sighted by the Auditor prior to finalising his report.

Special vote of thanks to Chris Acker

In presenting his report, the Treasurer acknowledged the contribution made by Chris Acker as Lodge Maintenance Officer. He particularly singled out for praise Chris' efforts to fine tune the space heating and hot water systems, which in 1994 had saved the Club \$2,000 in electricity charges. The meeting acknowledged Chris' effort by enthusiastic acclamation.

Question on notice

The Treasurer was asked about the item "Debentures Forfeited" and why it appeared in the income column. He undertook to report back in the next newsletter. He advises that the reference is to debentures held by ex-members whose memberships were cancelled for non-payment of fees. Following the procedure set out in Section 6.7 of the Constitution, the debenture amounts were transferred to the general account of the Club.

Accommodation ballot

The question of a ballot for 1995 winter accommodation was raised. Monty gave some background to the issue and noted that the low level of Lodge usage over the past 2 years had made a ballot unnecessary - the Lodge had been very rarely filled, even on winter weekends. Arrangements were asked to be made for members on shiftwork who were not able to pre plan ski trips. Monty undertook to have the Committee examine the matter. **If you have a strong view about accommodation ballots, please let the Committee know.**

Workparty Report - 1 April 1995

Margaret Sharp, Alan Laird and Rod Roberts collectively led the workparty on 1 April. Also participating were Margaret and Alan's children Rahn and Kyria, Meng Cheung, Bob Hain, two Venturer leaders and several Venturer group members.

An impressive and concerted effort by the Venturers made light work of the list of Autumn duties. Bob concentrated his skills with the whipper snipper, while Meng counted and estimated stock quantities.

Rod took trailer loads of garden trimmings to the tip while Megan (a Venturer) could hardly be seen since she was busily cleaning the kitchen exhaust hood (does this make you nostalgic, Julie?).

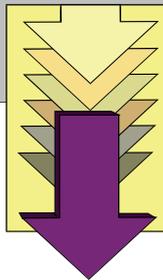
The stocktake proceeded in the afternoon with Kyria learning the difference between table and dessert spoons. All mattress covers were washed and refitted by Sunday afternoon - the place sparkled by Saturday evening.

Lost and Found

During the stocktake the following items were found and put in the lost and found store. They have been at the Lodge for some time. If you want to claim any of these articles, call Margaret or Alan. If there are no claimants within a reasonable time, St Vinnies will benefit.

- * 1 x Anzi Besson jacket (yellow & green with black trim)
- * 1 x K-Way International jacket (Red and Navy)
- * 1 x Quality Winter Clothing jacket (L-40-102)
- * 1 x White towel
- * 1 x Teal and white towel (found in the drying room)
- * 1 x pair, Hagan A125 Stocks

PLEASE READ THIS



The stocktake discovered that the following items were missing from the Lodge:

- * 3 x large stainless steel frypans
- * 5 x blankets

If you have inadvertently taken any of these items, or know of their whereabouts, can you please let Alan Laird or Margaret Sharp know - ring 288 4708.

The frypans particularly were high quality units and will be expensive to replace - please take a moment to see whether you might have taken them by mistake.

A number of minor items was also found missing and will be replaced.

Stocks of all consumable items will be replenished in the lead up to our winter peak.

Alan Laird & Margaret Sharp

(Claw Rides Again - continued from page 4)
the 1995 Committee, as evidenced by their ideas and enthusiasm at the April Committee meeting - this bodes well for a creative and flexible Committee, which is responsive to members' needs. And if they are not sensitive and responsive, the claw is ever-ready to slash on behalf of members.

Monty Fox

Lachlan & Rachel

It is with some sadness that we advise members that Lachlan and Rachel (our winter Lodge Managers for the past few years) have taken up an offer to manage a commercial Lodge (Chalet Jindabyne) and thus will not be looking after RASCAL Lodge residents this winter. But keep an eye out for them in Jindabyne and on the slopes - they will still be around. Their new phone number is 562 175.

Farewell & good luck to you both.

Pre-Season Function

The Committee will be hosting a pre-season social function on Wednesday 7 June, at the Southern Cross Club, Phillip, commencing at 7.30 pm and ending about 9.00pm. The function is in lieu of the ski swap and sausage sizzles we have had in previous years, which have had to be abandoned due to the loss of our venue at Sylvia Curlew House.

Dress will be informal, and the Function will be partly subsidised by the Club. Only Members may attend at the subsidised cost of \$8 per head (plus buy your own drinks). Non-member guests are also welcome, but will have to pay full price (\$12.50). A superior range of "finger foods" will be served including canapes, sate sticks, mini pizzas, fish cocktails etc.

Please advise Dianne of your intention to come by Friday 2 June 1995. Payment may be made on the night. Sorry ... the Southern Cross Club will not allow us to change numbers after Friday so late comers will not be able to be accommodated and bookings cancelled after that date will have to be paid for.

We expect that our new winter Lodge Caretaker (Mark Jury) will be there.

VALE'S VIEW - Mike Vale



Hi, I'm Mike Vale - that's me on the far left of the picture on the front page. At the AGM on 30 March, I was elected Vice President of RASCAL. What this entitles me to is a key to the executive washroom, unlimited use of the RASCAL Range Rover (just kidding) and my very own column in RASCAL NEWS.

Talking of RASCAL NEWS - I hope all of you have noted and like the new production style - if you have any comments or suggestions, please drop me a line.

RASCAL SURVEY RESULTS

Now, on with the important stuff - the RASCAL SURVEY.

Firstly, thank you to all members who responded to the survey. The large number of responses (80) is a healthy sign that the spirit of participation that keeps our Club together is alive and well. Thank you particularly to those members who provided thought provoking comments and suggestions, and those who volunteered to help the Club in more tangible ways. We will be in touch.

Accommodation draw

Before looking in detail at your comments, I have pleasure in announcing the winner of the draw for three nights free accommodation - the prize for returning the survey form. The winners are:

Mary, Chris, Alison and Genevieve Fogarty

The draw was held at the AGM. May you have great snow and good skiing.

Now, back to your comments ...

General comments

Read as a whole, your comments show that you are generally happy with the way the Club is run, but that you see some scope for change and improvement, particularly in the areas of booking procedures and the Booking Office. The adequacy (or otherwise) of Lodge facilities also attracted a broad spectrum of comments ranging from "the Lodge is fine as is is, leave it alone" to "redevelop the Lodge to be more spacious and comfortable". There were many suggestions for specific improvements.

The Committee will be looking closely at all suggestions to work out the costs and benefits of each. Rest assured that any major changes will be presented to the membership for discussion, rather than as faits accomplis. As well as looking at development opportunities, the new Committee will also be having a long hard look at some fundamental aspects of the Club's operations and directions, including the overall way we conduct the Club's business, ways of broadening the membership base without overloading the existing facilities, the possibility of sponsoring more summer activities and some possible proposals for changes to the Constitution to provide greater flexibility.

Specific comments

One or two of you gave the Committee a serve, while some suggested that the Committee should

be more visible and accessible to the members.

Role of the Committee

RASCAL belongs to its members, and the Committee wants to stay in touch with members' thoughts and feelings. While the Committee tries to make decisions that reflect the interest of the majority of members, we also want to be as fair and accommodating of individual needs and interests as possible. Sometimes we won't be able to satisfy everybody; sometimes the Club's Constitution will restrain us from doing what we think ought to be done, regardless of the merits of the situation, and occasionally we might just get things wrong.

If you disagree with a decision that the Committee has made (or not made), please let your views be known. We are willing to review all decisions in the light of further information put to us. You have many avenues - in this and subsequent issues of RASCAL NEWS we will be publishing contact details for Committee members (see page 2). If you have a gripe, a suggestion or a compliment, please ring one of us and let us know - but please do not ring a Committee member to book accommodation or inquire about accommodation - the booking officer is there to take care of those tasks - and PLEASE ring only between 7 and 8 pm on weeknights.

The Committee is also happy for members to attend Committee meetings to observe and argue the merits of a particular matter. Just contact Trish Carroll, our new Secretary for details. All we ask is that you give us a reasonable amount of notice so that we can arrange an appropriately sized venue.

The newsletter is also there for members to air their views - send us a contribution for publication, by mail

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(Vale's View - continued from page 7)

or e-mail (mvale@ozemail.com.au). And if your gripe is a real big one, how about nominating for a position on the Committee come the next AGM. I can assure you that you will be welcomed with open arms. At this year's AGM **five** new committee members were elected. So much for Committee cliques!!!

... but please be patient

Being a voluntary group, the Committee often cannot respond to members' concerns as quickly as we would like. Lack of an immediate response from the Committee to a member's concern does not mean that your views are being ignored, just that there are inevitable delays in formally dealing with matters. We are looking to improve what we believe to be an already high standard of service and ask you to give us some breathing space.

Responsiveness of the Booking Office

A number of members complained about a lack of responsiveness in the Booking Office. That there were relatively few complaints reassures us that the system seems to be working reasonably well for most members. That there were any complaints at all, and that several members now think less of RASCAL as a result of their experiences, is a cause of considerable disappointment and concern to the Committee. Some of the problems reported might have been due to the physical move of the Booking Office from Richardson to Curtin and some might have arisen as a result of special circumstances applying last year that no longer apply this year. Which is not to say that the Committee will not try and improve the situation.

The Committee has already embarked on a program to thoroughly review the Club's operations and we will be looking closely at booking arrangements as part of that process - if you run into booking problems, please get in contact with a member of the Committee immediately so that the

problem can be investigated and fixed.

But ... to ensure that inquiries and bookings left on the answering machine are promptly dealt with PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE include both day and evening telephone contact numbers, the time and date that you called, and a very clear message.

Key pick up details

Several members commented on the awkwardness of the current key pick up arrangements and expressed interest in a new system. However, no one came up with a workable alternative to the current arrangements. Ultimately, there is a trade off between convenience and security, and until we can sort that one out, the current system is the best we have. But we will keep looking.

It is also noteworthy that about 87% of respondents thought that Curtin was either more convenient or equally convenient as Richardson as a key pickup point. So it looks as if the new location has the overwhelming support of members. Please note the new address on the front cover.

Booking procedures and rules

Some members seemed uncertain about the booking rules that currently apply. In most cases, the rules are more liberal than several comments suggest, and the Booking Officer has authority to exercise some discretion to accommodate particular needs. We may, from time to time, be able to get overflow accommodation at an adjoining Lodge. So, if you have an unusual accommodation need, please ring Dianne and discuss.

The rules are there mainly to provide a predictable and transparent basis for resolving competing bids for accommodation during periods of heavy usage. According to our records, the Lodge is very rarely fully booked, even on winter weekends and the issue of competing bids does not often arise. Therefore, flexible

arrangements apply most of the time. Of course, if our new low accommodation rates dramatically increase Lodge usage, or we have a bumper season, we may have to have another look at the current arrangements.

Now here are some short responses to a few specific issues raised. Please call me if you wish to discuss:

Some specific questions answered

- ✓ Memberships can be suspended under special circumstances such as extended stays overseas, but each case is considered on its merits by the Committee - just drop the Secretary a note outlining your situation and what you want.
- ✓ There is no minimum age for a Junior Member. The rule of thumb is that if a Junior occupies a bed that could be used by other members, then membership & accommodation fees are payable at the Junior rate.
- ✓ While the shower heads at the Lodge are not low flow, the hot water system itself has a flow restrictor. We will look to see whether low flow shower heads might also be worthwhile.
- ✓ Ballots for accommodation were introduced by a special resolution of Members at an AGM. This was when school holidays fell in August. Ballots have not been conducted for the last 2 years because they have not been required. The issue was raised again at this year's AGM and the Committee will be keeping a close eye on bookings as this season nears.
- ✓ The current practice is that if there is room, members may book in more than one non-member guest. There are no

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(Vale's View - continued from page 8)

time restrictions and bookings are now processed in the order received. The Committee is mindful that the Lodge is there for members and that booking rules should distinctly favour members. But it is a matter of balance and we cannot afford to leave rooms empty if we can fill them with non-members, particularly in winter when the overhead costs of heating the Lodge are so high. And the quality of some members' stays at the Lodge is significantly improved by having their non-member guests stay with them. Again, we will be monitoring bookings to try and ensure that everyone has a fair chance of being accommodated. But we only have 816 winter weekend bednights and a total membership of over 600 so ...

✓ It is preferable, but not mandatory, that winter weekend bookings are for two nights - ie Friday and Saturday nights. But if space is available, single night bookings may be accepted - talk to Dianne.

✓ On the infrequent occasions that Dianne is away, she diverts the RASCAL phone to a Committee Member, so you should never be out of touch.

The Committee will be thoroughly reviewing the issues raised in the survey returns and will be feeding back the results of the Committee's deliberations on those issues, in subsequent issues of RASCAL NEWS.

Skiing the Internet - Mike Vale

Many RASCALS may have heard of the Internet - a world-wide network of interconnected electronic databases that can be accessed almost instantaneously from your home computer via a connection to the telephone line. Many papers have run features about how the "Net" will change our lives, and the current IBM TV ad featuring a group of nuns highlights that access to Internet is commercially available here and now and that everybody is getting into it.

There are some Internet developments which may be of interest to RASCALS.

A major Internet activity centres around newsgroups - electronic bulletin boards set up for users to post messages to one another. The number of newsgroups is huge, covering just about every aspect of human endeavour. Relevant ones include:

Aus.snow - a newsgroup for the discussion of all matters to do with the Australian snow scene. **Aus.bushwalking** centres on bushwalking, and **Aus.conserve** has been set up for the exchange of views on nature conservation.

There are other international newsgroups for alpine skiing, nordic skiing and snowboarding. There is also one for fishing. Most postings to the international groups come from Internet users in the US and Canada, which is great if you are planning a trip there. Post a message asking about skiing conditions in Vail, the state of the carpark at Aspen, whether or not Jimmy's Diner at Steamboat is still open etc and it is likely that you will have an answer within 24 hours.

As useful as the newsgroups are, they are limited to an interchange of typewritten messages between individuals. More interesting is the World Wide Web (WWW). The WWW is developing as the main way of accessing Internet information from

a wide variety of business, government and institutional sources, in multimedia format ie) as well as allowing access to text, it also provides linked access to images and sounds. For example, at one WWW site information is available about birds. Not only can you download a description of each bird's characteristics, habitat etc, you can also get images (moving pictures are available if you have the right software) as well as sound files that reproduce each bird's call on your computer's speaker. I have been told that the Botanical Gardens in Canberra has something similar.

The Academy awards has a site, as do the America's Cup race organisers, the CIA, FBI, Homer Simpson, President Clinton, and many wineries.

A nice WWW ski site (called a "Home Page URL" in Internetspeak) has been set up by the Lake Tahoe Ski Resort in the US (for computer buffs at address <http://www.together.com:80/biz/rsn>). The resort has online information about a number of things including accommodation, eateries, trail maps, road closures and weather conditions.

Also available for downloading onto your computer screen are images from two cameras mounted respectively at the top and bottom of the Heavenly Valley Tram. Just click on the download button and you will see exactly what the cameras are recording. Now that's what I call virtual reality and it would sure be more accurate than 2XL's winter ski reports if we had something like that set up atop Ramshead or Mt Perisher.

Most of the US and Canadian ski resorts are putting similar information on the Internet. Another site is Blackcomb in British Columbia at <http://www.whistler.net/blackcomb/>.

Locally, the Australian Alpine
(Continued on page 10)

(Skiing the Internet - continued from page 9)

Information Services (AAIS) has a home page at <http://www.adfa.oz.au/aais>. It features a news service and has a long list of answers to frequently asked questions on skiing. There is also a history section; a picture archive; a list and description of Australian Ski Clubs and Associations (sadly, RASCAL doesn't feature, but we're working on it); a short story section and information on all the Australian ski resorts. Most usefully, it also contains a large number of

"hotlink" pointers to other Internet home pages (hotlinks are highlighted sections of text, buttons or images that contain background computer code which instructs the computer automatically to go to that address, just by clicking on them). Great for people like me with lousy typing skills. And once you discover an interesting home page, just leave an electronic bookmark to return there directly at any time. The AAIS home page has links to a large number of

home pages in Europe, Canada and the USA, as well as "special" sites like the winter olympics village.

If anyone is interested in Internet (whether related to skiing or not), I am happy to arrange a demonstration or to provide advice on setting up a home system (although I am an enthusiast not an expert).

— — —

(First Fold)

Look what's inside your RASCAL NEWS this issue:

- ✓ **The Committee for 1995, complete with photo**
- ✓ **Survey feedback, plus we announce the winner of the three nights free accommodation**
- ✓ **Outgoing President George Malecky's AGM address**
- ✓ **Incoming President Monty Fox sets out directions for 1995**
- ✓ **Skiing on Internet**
- ✓ **NEW postbox, phone number and key pickup address**

(Second Fold)



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