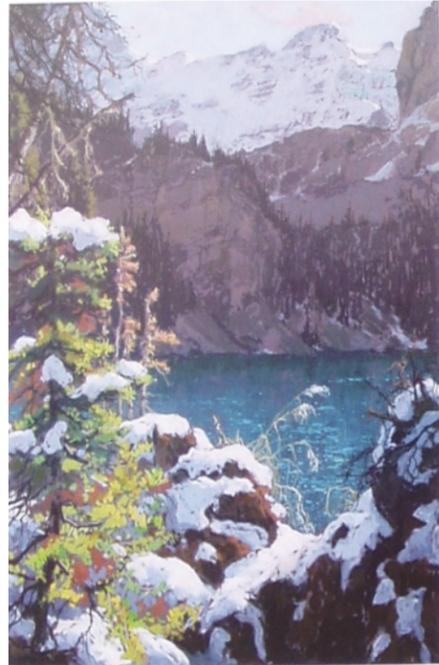


Champagne Raffle



We extend a sincere thank you to Horace for his generous donation and many thanks to those who bought tickets (some of you bought a lot of tickets!) and our most hearty congratulations to our two lucky winners, Monic Bourais, Jonquiere, PQ and Bob White, Jasper, TX.

Disappointed? Keen to try again? Champagne Raffle Part II

One of the remaining framed lithographs will be offered this year. Tickets will be for sale – one for \$2 or three for \$5 – at Le Relais, Lake O'Hara Lodge, the Banff Book and Film Festival and by mail until December 1, 2005 or until they are all sold whichever comes first. Only 2000 tickets will be printed. To get yours by mail, send your full name, address, phone number (with area code) and appropriate funds by cheque or money order plus \$1 handling to:

Lake O'Hara Trails Club
Box 98, Lake Louise, AB T0L 1E0.

Details also available on www.LOTC.ca

Last year we were very fortunate to receive four framed lithographs by renowned Quebec artist and Trails Club director, Horace Champagne. Two of these beautiful lithographs of the Lake O'Hara area were offered in our 2004 Champagne Raffle - \$2105 was raised.

2005 Season

Parks Canada Lake O'Hara staff sends a warm welcome to all Lake O'Hara users. To provide a better information and reservation service, Parks Canada has invested in a new telephone system, (call 250-343-6433) which provides 24-hour, automated information and, during office hours, a queue system. While the bus schedule remains the same as last year due to positive feedback from all users, Parks Canada will be implementing a one-way fare from the Lake to the parking lot. This fare of \$10 for adult, \$5 for youth will be charged to hikers walking into the Lake O'Hara area who wish to ride the bus out. Feedback forms are available on the bus. We appreciate your comments and feedback.

Beth Weaver, Parks Canada

A Little History of Lake O'Hara

...continued from page 3

Tim says he was taken a bit aback: "Tough climbing, and here was this elderly lady – a little frail, looking at me through her thick lenses – telling me she'd done what I considered one of the toughest routes I'd undertaken in the Canadian Rockies." That's the sort of woman Lillian was.

Lillian's O'Hara history is a charming narrative of the area's explorers, alpinists, naturalists, artists, wardens, and its trails and structures.

One day in 2004 a Lodge guest was overheard talking about her purchase of a copy of Lillian's book on e-bay for US\$20 (plus shipping). Readers may like to know that the book is still in print and can be purchased at Le Relais for six dollars!

Stan Munn, LOTC

By mail!

2005 T-shirt

This year, our T-shirt design is from an original water colour donated by Quebec artist Ruby Ewen. The design is printed on a blue shirt. To see true colours, visit www.LOTC.ca.



For Canadian orders, send a cheque or money order for C\$32.50.

For orders outside Canada, please send a postal money order for US \$32.50.

GST, shipping and handling is included.

Donations & Membership

You can make a difference. Be a part of O'Hara by becoming a member or making a donation to support the trail work. All donations made in 2005 will be earmarked for the 2006 Interpretive Programme and Year Two trail work – Adeline Link Lake O'Hara Circuit and Oesa Trail rock work and Wiwaxy, Huber and Yukness Ledges obstacles and erosion.

Buy your membership for \$25 or make your tax-deductible donation in person at Le Relais or Lake O'Hara Lodge or by mail by sending your cheque or money order with your full name and address.

Lake O'Hara Trails Club
Box 98, Lake Louise, AB T0L 1E0



Preservation through
Appreciation

The 2005 LOTC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Le Relais at 8:30 p.m.
Thursday, July 28, 2005

All Members Welcome!



O'Hara 2005

• Published by the Lake O'Hara Trails Club, Box 98, Lake Louise, AB. T0L 1E0 • www.LOTC.ca •

Off Duty at Sargent's Point

The mountain moon poured into the warden cabin like cold sunlight flooding a mine shaft. It picked out the very cobwebs in the corners, and left a hunched shadow in the chair carved with axe and chain saw, out of a great fir stump.

I half expected to see the red comet on the end of Lawrence Grassi's White Owl cigar, and blurted to that shadow "You're back in Canmore, two years..." A pan on the iron stove rattled a reply. I knew his heart was here. In fact his reputation refused to dissipate, night or day and clung to my neck like the storied albatross, whenever crusty Alpine Club members reminded me that I wasn't him. He took shape for me everywhere; he lingered like the coal dust by the stove, or the anthracite tattooed into his hide. Part of him still lived underground, mysterious, ungraspable. Voice like a file stroke on rusty steel gasped through the holes in a Swiss cheese. Except he was Italian. "Greenhorn, I was here before you got here, and I'll be here after you're gone." And blew the candle out behind me, as I stepped out into the light, of the night or it might have been a breeze.

But Andy Suknaski, visiting artiste, forgotten poet-in-residence (O'Hara bunkhouse '62), accepted the apparition without question, being an orthodox Ukrainian though brooding betimes in a secular frame of mind, upon the human condition. He himself

was then haunting Deer Lodge. He said the damsels await: "No time no time Meester Marty, to exorcise the ghost of this geezer." He poured the shade a glass of homemade bingo instead and left a fresh cigar handy on the table. "And if he doesn't smoke it I'll smoke it later," said that thrifty divine, "If I'm still able."

In vain had I implored him, on previous occasions – "Meester Suknaski, a ghost needs whiskey, damn your eyes. They can't survive on wine alone." That crazed verse slinger was a mad grape squeezer, and packed an endless supply. Bottles clinked and rattled in his pack like the jolly milkman of the hungover morning.

Andy and I would clink and rattle up to the hut, guitar and mandolin slung over our backs, a pair of gypsy boys on a tear. Tent roofs shone then in the moonstruck glade. The Odaray glacier gleamed in the looming lift of its cirque, suspended like disbelief above our mere oblivion. Stars blazed everywhere. The rock was Rococo, the sky Byzantine. Art Nouveau was an adman in Calgary and seldom seen.

There was usually a female lover of music camped in solitary bliss in the meadow. The muses of that day came armed with wineskins full of ambrosia to ward off Suknaski's proffering of murky plonk. Skeptical they held court, ruddy faced by fire glow, set to tease or taunt these jesters as the fit took them, and all we could do was

submit. Some nights, like Yeats' Wandering Aengus redux, I traded a "glimmering girl" moon-silvered trout caught at sundown in Cataract Brook for a mouthful of Zinfandel. For a kiss I'd play any song she cared to name, whether I knew it or not. But she had to ask me twice to play one of my own.

The trick was to make it back to Sargent's Point before the dawn. To lie down to the illusion of sleep and wake to some climber's grinning face and sardonic aubade: "Daylight in the swamp! Registration ain't my idea, chum." While Suknaski slept on oblivious in Grassi's wooden throne, the shadow itself now stretched in a bottom bunk, and the smell of cheap cigar smoke stale upon the fresh and mossy Lake O'Hara air, wafting into the warm, too human darkness through the open door that let in the sun's eye-bruising light, and let out the magic, with the night.

Sid Marty, Feb. 23. 2005

Sid Marty was once a boatman and pearl diver at Lake O'Hara Lodge and he is a former park warden, whose first two seasons were spent at Lake O'Hara. Sid is the author of four books of nonfiction and three books of poetry set in Alberta and B.C. His latest nonfiction title is Switchbacks: True Stories of the Canadian Rockies. Lorenzo "Lawrence" Grassi is a prominent character in that book. A list of Sid's books may be found at www.sidmarty.com.



NEWS FROM PARKS CANADA

In last year's newsletter we reported that our plan for 2004 trail work was to rebuild the lower portion of the East Opabin Trail and repair the trail erosion on the SE end of the Lake O'Hara Circuit. The original intent was that LOTC would provide and pay a crew to complete this work under the direction of Parks Canada. It proved to be more difficult than anticipated to locate a suitable crew but one was eventually found and a satisfactory working agreement with this crew was reached.

The second and more difficult aspect was completion of a suitable Memorandum of Understanding between LOTC and Parks Canada for completion of the programme. Because of liability concerns, Parks Canada must demand a level of accountability and therefore risk that LOTC was unable to accept in part due to the inability to put sufficient insurance in place. Late in August, it was mutually agreed that we would pursue a different approach to see this work completed. This work programme was rolled into the longer term

planning and will now constitute Year One of the four-year work plan.

In lieu of the planned work, LOTC funded materials to enable repairs to two bridges at the lower end of Lake O'Hara outlet towards the Campground and the bridge railing at Seven Veil Falls. Parks trail crew will complete these bridge repairs as part of 2005 maintenance work.

Kim Baines, Parks Canada
Patty Cucman, LOTC

The Lake O'Hara Basin

~ sources and pathways of water

Glaciers are perceived to be the dominant source of water in our rivers and lakes during the summer months. Concerns about glaciers shrinking due to climate change are fuelling the need to document current water sources and pathways for rivers and lakes. To this end, Dr. Masaki Hayashi and students from the University of Calgary, Department of Geology and Geophysics, began a five-year "eco-hydrological study" in the Lake O'Hara basin in 2004.

You may see several weather stations and other measuring devices in your travels around the O'Hara basin. Generally, locations have been chosen that will not interfere with scenic views. The information the devices collect will contribute to our knowledge of sources and pathways of water in a changing global climate.

Joanne Williams
Parks Canada Aquatic Specialist



The study, part of the G8 Legacy Chair in Wildlife Ecology, is the first comprehensive hydrological study of a sub-alpine/alpine catchment in the Rockies. Research objectives are:

1. To characterize the storage and flow pathways of water and dissolved matter in alpine watersheds;
2. To develop a quantitative model of water cycles that can be used to assess effects of climatic fluctuations on the quantity and quality of water in streams and lakes; and
3. To understand the response of the aquatic biological community to the input of source waters having different physico-chemical characteristics.

Preliminary work on the Opabin Plateau indicates that groundwater is a significant component of the water entering Lake O'Hara, while streams flowing into the lake are dominated by snowmelt. Significant groundwater discharge zones are present on the Opabin Plateau, and the Opabin Glacier meltwater travels through the subsurface. Further research will focus on the Opabin Glacier to determine flow pathways of various water sources.

What's Bugging the Forest?

If you drive through the west end of Yoho National Park, you'll notice a lot of red-needled trees. A tiny bug called the mountain pine beetle has colonized and killed these pines. This insect is a natural part of our forests, with high and low population cycles.

The mountain pine beetle outbreak in Yoho is occurring for the same reasons that beetle outbreaks occur in pine forests anywhere. Several decades of fire suppression have created large tracts of even-aged pine forest – a buffet for beetles since they prefer older trees to complete their life cycle. The warmer, drier climate that we have been experiencing recently also favours the spread of the beetle. The beetles are better able to survive the winter at the same time that



drought-stressed trees become more vulnerable to insect attacks.

Prescription for Change

Parks Canada uses prescribed burns to transform old stands of lodgepole pines into a more natural mix of young and old forests. This reduces the spread of pine beetle, and creates a patchwork of habitats that benefit wildlife. Several landscape-level prescribed fires are planned for Yoho National Park, including the Hoodoo Creek Burn in Spring 2005.

For more information on the mountain pine beetle:

www.pc.gc.ca/docs/v-g/dpp-mpb/index_E.asp

The production of this website was a joint project between Parks Canada and Natural Resources Canada.

Marla Oliver, Parks Canada

FOUR-YEAR WORK PLAN

The Lake O'Hara Trails Club (LOTC) mandate is two-fold:

- To be dedicated to the making, improvement and maintenance of the trails of the Lake O'Hara area, and
- To enhance the visitors' knowledge of the area and its history.

During 2004, a four-year plan was developed by LOTC and proposed to Parks Canada to serve as a blueprint for the cooperative advancement of this mandate. The work plan is comprised of annual trail work and the summer Interpretive Programme. Implementation will begin in 2005. LOTC will continue to operate Le Relais Day Shelter under a License of Occupation.

Trail Work:

LOTC commissioned an update of the 2001 document "Lake O'Hara Trails Assessment and Recommendations". This update and discussion with Parks Canada personnel form the basis of the planned trail work.

YEAR ONE

- East Opabin Trail relocation
- Lake O'Hara Circuit – surface erosion and trail flooding at SE end

YEAR TWO

- Lake O'Hara Circuit – rock work N side
- Wiwaxy / Huber Ledges / Yukness Ledges – obstacles and trail widening and short cutting
- Lake Oesa Trail – loose rock work and obstacles

YEAR THREE

- Grandview – short cutting
- Opabin Plateau – obstacles and repair of box structures
- East & West Opabin – short cutting and water bar break down

YEAR FOUR

- Mary Lake and Big Larches – obstacles and trail widening
- Lower McArthur – short cutting
- Morning Glory – obstacles and trail widening
- Linda Lake – surface erosion and water on trail

Interpretive Programme:

The Interpretive Programme is presented in Le Relais in the evenings from June through October. This is a joint undertaking between Parks Canada, Lake O'Hara Lodge and LOTC. The series includes presentations on the flora, fauna and history of Lake O'Hara. Lodge staff contact and book presenters. Parks Canada provides a

campsite for the presenter and prepares communication materials. LOTC provides Le Relais and pays the presenters. The work plan calls for the continuation of this arrangement.

Costs and Funding:

The cost estimate for implementation of the four-year plan is \$74,000 for the trail work and \$13,600 for the Interpretive Programme. Average cost per year will be \$22,000. It is planned that approximately 50% of each year's programmed expenditures will come from donations and membership sales (approximately \$9,000) and fund raising (an additional \$2000). The remaining 50% will come from club reserves.

Le Relais:

The operation of Le Relais is close to revenue neutral, a small loss having been generated in four of the last five years. This operation is sustained through on-site sales (membership sales excluded) and will continue essentially unchanged. One small change is that starting in June 2005, trail maps will be made available for a suggested donation. These maps were previously drafted by Parks Canada, printed by LOTC and provided free of charge. Parks Canada has generously agreed that we may offer these maps for a donation in order to supplement the operating fund for Le Relais. The additional revenue should be sufficient to cover the average shortfall and bring the operation to a true revenue neutral state. Parks Canada currently supplies firewood for Le Relais and will continue to provide this support. We are also in the process of completing and application for a License of Occupation that will formalise our operation of Le Relais with Parks Canada. Operation of Le Relais has no impact on funding of trail work and the Interpretive Programme.

Implementation:

A Memorandum of Understanding is in place between LOTC and Parks Canada that calls for trails work to be completed by Parks Canada trail crew with funds to cover the costs of this work to be wholly provided by LOTC. This agreement does not include costs of regular trail maintenance for which Parks will continue to be wholly responsible. Provision to accelerate the programme, if appropriate and mutually agreeable, is also in place.

Thank You:

None of this would be possible without the support and encouragement of our membership. Many of you have been generous in your donations and many of you have donated year after year. To you go our thanks and appreciation for your continued support.

Throughout the planning process, Parks personnel have worked with LOTC directors to find an agreeable and effective way to ensure the work plan is feasible and that the work will be completed. We are especially grateful to Kim Baines and Gerry Israelson for their input and support. We look forward to a fruitful four years.

Patty Cucman, LOTC

A Little History of Lake O'Hara

One of the most delightful publications about O'Hara is the little book entitled, "History of Lake O'Hara", by Lillian Gest. This short history was first published in 1961 and is in its fourth printed edition (1989).

Lillian Gest was a remarkable woman who spent some sixty summers in the Canadian Rockies until her death in 1986. She had been a member of the American Alpine Club, the Alpine Club of Canada and the Lake O'Hara Trails Club. The fourth edition contains a forward that is a brief biography of the author written by another notable, frequent area guest, Jon Whyte. The bio alone is worth acquiring this little book. Lillian once wrote, of a stay at the Chateau Lake Louise, "...the hotel seemed very stuffy, the air much too hot, and sleeping difficult". Lillian would much rather have been out among the rocks and moss campion. From Lillian's personal diaries, Jon wrote, "One day in the late 1960's Lillian, passing by the O'Hara District Warden Cabin, asked Tim Auger, then warden, what he'd been up to recently. "Well," Tim replied, crowing a bit, "we just did a traverse of the Goodsir Towers." "Ah, the Goodsir Towers, Katie Gardiner and I traversed the South Tower in 1933."

...continued on page 4