



August 2008 • Volume 42 | P.O. Box 656, Carstairs, Alberta T0M 0N0 | Phone 403-337-2800 | Fax 403-337-2418 | Email pat@pasu.com | www.pasu.com

Brotherhood of Camels

(continued)

The whole night the storm raged and the ocean roared as the wind whipped it into large waves that crashed onto the shore. Fatigue however, was a blissful antidote for the fear that we should have experienced. I remember waking up a few times as the tent flapped furiously in the howling wind and being too exhausted to even give a tinker's damn. All I cared about was the immediate warmth and the secure feeling of being safe in a tent that did not leak.

The new day was anything but welcoming. The storm still raged and the wind turned large raindrops into stinging pellets. We jury-rigged a tarpaulin into a little wind shelter enclosure so that we could heat water for our porridge and coffee. Conversation was limited to the essentials as we hunkered down in our foul weather gear to a breakfast that cooled down faster than we could eat it. By the look on Katherine and Roger's faces it appeared that the night's storm had been a cause for some concern.

Being perched on that escarpment and taking the full wrath of the wind and rain coming off the ocean would have been more than 'a cause of a little concern' for either Sue or I. It would have been a downright fiasco. As it is impossible to relocate your tent in the darkest of nights with a howling gale blowing, I would have been berated by Sue to venture out with a torch in my mouth and heft large rocks to place on the pegs and guidelines in an attempt to further secure the tent while she shouted instructions and encouragement from within.

Heartened by a wet, cool and soggy breakfast we decided to wait out the storm and continue the next day if there was an improvement. If not, we would return and call it quits. The morning was spent exploring the forest and in the process discovering a beautiful creek loaded with sea run cutthroat trout. Despite the weather I did manage to enjoy several hours of spectacular fishing and provide a decent meal for the evening. As the day progressed the wind and rain began to abate and by evening there were signs that the clouds were breaking up and that tomorrow would be a go. By supper time the mood had changed for the better, in part, assisted by a wonderful repast of trout sautéed in butter, seasoned with five peppercorn mix, a pinch of dill, a squeeze of lemon

and a sprinkle of fleur de sel and presented on a bed of Basmati rice. All that was missing was a good Chablis, and possibly a hint of saffron in the rice.

The next morning the sun shone weakly through a heavy mist. We completed an early breakfast, loaded up and continued. Within the first hour we came to the mouth of the creek I had fished the day before. The tide was right out but there was a fair amount of water rushing into the ocean and an unexpected bonanza in the form of two Coho salmon struggling to swim upstream in about six inches of water. One was destined to spawn, and the other was invited to supper.

This was the third day in and second of hiking. It was probably one of the most difficult of the entire trip. There was that sense that you could turn back and with it a sense of failure. As the day wore on those packs seemed unrealistically heavy, awkward and so uncomfortable. Low tide had been around eleven in the morning and that meant high tide would be about five thirty. For the next thirty miles we would be hiking with the ocean on our right and hundred foot sand cliffs on our left that could not be scaled without some sort of mountaineering gear. The map indicated that there was a break in the cliffs about twenty miles ahead where a tiny creek trickled into the ocean and had carved a sort of ravine. The challenge was to get there before the tide was fully in as high water mark was right up to the base of the cliffs.

When the tide was fully out the beach seemed endless and really flat. The trick to hiking on the beach was to keep looking for firm sand and not to be duped into walking out into the ocean. The Naikoon Beach has these peculiar sandbars running forty-five degrees in a North Easterly direction. These sandbars are very flat and deceptive because they are higher than the beach and the sand was firmer on them. As we were walking in a northerly direction it was easy to be fooled into following a sandbar for about three or four hundred yards until you realized that there was a considerable amount of ocean to be traversed before you reached the next sandbar. When the tide is completely out this is not so much of a problem but as soon as the tide turns the troughs between the sandbars rapidly filled with ocean and it

meant backtracking. It is not a mistake you willingly repeated but it happened more than once to all of us as the sandbars are quite deceiving and seductively firm to walk on.

As the hike progressed we all developed similar survival skills. Look down for hard ground and avoid any obstacles. Try not gazing into the distant horizon as the beach goes on forever in a northerly direction and that tiny piece of horizon that you hoped was your destination for the day keeps being replaced by a new distant landmark. Another trick is to plan your potty breaks for before the hike, the midday stop or for after the hike. Taking the pack off is no problem. However, trying to get it back on without any help is quite a challenge. Squatting with your pack on is not an option as it could end up quite a messy situation. On the other hand, we wanted to leave the smallest footprint possible on this pristine piece of earth's landscape. The book on hiking etiquette suggested that we deposit our doo-doo in a little hole that we dig in the rough sands of the sea, one cable tow below the high water mark. I skipped that option. I was not sure what a cable tow meant and I was not about to have a super douche by the next wave. Besides which can you imagine squatting on top of a little hole with the surf barreling down on you and wondering if you can complete the job on hand before you are about to get swamped by the next wave and all the while your company (remember you are completely visible one mile north and one mile south) is cheering on your progress. No thank you.

Probably the most important survival skill is to zone out. That's when I got to thinking about camels. It's no wonder that they have a mean disposition. I mean, who is to say how much you can load onto a camel? And, who represents them and voices their complaints? I very much felt like a camel and maybe I was the Chosen One who was to represent their union.

By about three in the afternoon it was quite evident that the tide was coming in fast and there was no sign of that little break in the cliffs. We picked up the pace and at last could see it about three quarters of a mile ahead and less than an hour before the waves would be crashing into the cliffs. To make matters worse the base of the cliffs were strewn with boulders that hampered our progress. The last two hundred yards were a nightmare as the waves washed around our ankles. To get to the ledge we had to climb over a huge pile of logs. We made it with minutes to spare.

Once again the liberation of taking off the pack and knowing you would not have to put it on again that day was a euphoric sensation. You had that indescribable feeling of being incredibly light. We were completely trapped on our little ledge and the ocean was pounding the pile of logs and at the base of the cliffs. The weather was turning nasty and it was threatening to rain.

Tents were put up and a crude shelter built with a tarpaulin and branches from the log pile so that we could prepare the evening meal. The day had been quite cool with the odd rain shower and the salmon had traveled remarkably well in the cooler weather. Unlike the day before we had worked hard this day and that salmon was

Fine Dining Saturday Evenings

October 25  November 15

Our Restaurant will be open for a 7- 8-course fine dining experience.

Cocktails from 5.30 pm. Dinner at 6.30 pm

\$65.00 per person

www.pasu.com

Ladies' Night

An entertaining evening. Fabulous Buffet.

Fashion Show and Guest Speaker

Miki Zhaner

The health and wellness of Aromatherapy.

Saturday November 1

Cocktails from 6:00 pm Dinner at 7:00 pm

\$35.00

VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS DINNERS

Sat. 22nd & 29th November

Fri. 5th, 12th, 19th & Sat. 27th December

6.00 pm Cocktails  7.00 pm Dinner

Once again we will be presenting our elegant seven-course, plate service, English Victorian Christmas Dinner. The entrée will be a choice between Roast Leg of Lamb and Prime Rib. To create a warm and hospitable atmosphere our staff will be dressed in Victorian garb, candles and crackers will be placed on the table and the plum pudding will be flamed for all to see.

\$78.00 per person

Service & GST included in the above price.

AFRICAN EVENING WITH **YOUSSOU SECK** AND HIS BAND

Youssou is from Senegal and he brings to us the life and soul of West Africa in the form of music, story and dancing.

A truly talented artist that gives more than his best.

To complement this evening we will be putting on our now-famous

AFRICAN FEAST SATURDAY OCTOBER 18

Cocktails from 6.00 pm • Dinner served at 7.15 pm

This is a pre-booked ticketed event

Tickets \$78 per person

prepared with the bare essentials. Butter, dill herb, salt and pepper. Nothing but the head and bones were left of an eight-pound salmon.

You know, two days of being a camel leads you to ponder about the load you are carrying. I began to question each and every item in my backpack. Would the world come to an end if I chucked out the toothpaste and used ash and salt? I don't think so. What about the container of mayonnaise? Don't need it. I searched the driftwood pile and found a plastic ball about the size of an extra large football that was used on fishing nets; cut a six-inch hole in the side and left a substantial care package for the next set of hikers of stuff that I thought they might need like mayonnaise, flour (a romantic breakfast of pancakes), a small jar of maple syrup, a pot of jam, a small but comprehensive collection of herbs and spices and altogether a substantial eclectic selection of gastronomic paraphernalia that would delight the next chef who might just happen to pass this way. I think I was down to about 70 pounds.

Water was a concern. We tried to make sure that at each stop we processed and filled water bottles for at least 48 hours. At this stop there was a trickle that we could process. Of course no water meant no bathing. This was my third night without a bath and I was beginning and I was beginning to believe that I was a motel for creepy skin crawlies booking in for a quickie but forgetting to check out.

Day four was beautiful. Breakfast was fun although it was porridge and coffee because they were quick, easy and porridge is one of the best energy foods. The sun shone and there was just enough of a breeze so that the day was pleasant. To top it off we were entertained by a herd of feral cattle that were brought over in the late eighteen hundreds. They were unusually small and had Dalmatian type markings, which were reddish on a white background. Apparently they have been living wild for the last century and only a few people have seen them.

Camp four was the most beautiful. There were no cliffs although the campsite was perched on high ground with a grassy meadow, a little creek and a waterfall. Despite the fact that the water was dark and brackish that waterfall was probably the best shower that I recall having had. The afternoon was perfect. The sun shone out of a blue sky, the ocean had settled down and it was neither hot nor cold.

Day five was hard as we were walking into the wind and rain and our ponchos acted like drag parachutes. That evening we stopped on a massive beach with huge logs tossed around like match sticks. Some of the tree trunks were eight foot or more in diameter. We found the ideal spot between two large tree trunks and hung a tarpaulin over the top that resulted in the coziest little kitchen and gave ample protection from the blustery weather. The meal was reconstituted beef curry and Basmati rice. At this stage of the game it was not about dining but rather eating to satisfy hunger before falling dead asleep.

By now the packs had become a burden that was part of life. However shedding them was always a relief. The new focus was our distressed feet and taking care of them. We changed socks twice a day. The midday break

Christmas Dinner Theatres

NEW

CAROUSEL PRODUCTIONS

Last year we were really pleased with Carousel Productions. We know you will be pleased too.

Saturday 6th December

murder@gigaflop.com

Tonight's gala party hosted by the Reverend and Kandy Meekly has two purposes, to honour the engagement of Bill Bytes to Jasmine Sensor and to celebrate the thriving fundraising of the Meekly's Church of the Divine Download. Oh yes, it abounds with larceny, lust and greed. The pressure builds, explodes, and we have murder.

Saturday 13th December

EXPRESS CHECKOUT!

The employees of Calgary's Halliday Plaza (a member of the Interconvoluted Hotel Group) are meeting tonight for a Staff Appreciation Gala. It is supposed to be a relaxing fun-filled evening but regrettably staff have agendas and problems. It leads to some hilarious situations and eventually... Yes, you guessed.

Saturday 20th December

MURDER ON ICE

Tonight is the "Meet and Greet" party before a strenuous Training Camp for everyone's favourite hometown hero hockey club, the Fort Macloed Mullets, who are having a very strong year where they almost - but not quite - succeeded in winning the coveted Lord Manley Cup. After a relaxing summer, the team is back to finish what they started the year before. Unfortunately, it would seem that somebody has plans of their own for payback, which may very well result in murder on ice.



Tickets are \$78.00

Includes GST & Gratuities on meal and show.

Advance booking and ticket purchase essential.

Cocktails from 6:00 pm

Dinner served at 7:15 pm



was a podiatrist's fantasy as we bared our tender feet and repaired the damage before donning fresh socks and continuing the trek. We never actually ate a lunch as we drank water and snacked on trail mix as we were hiking.

The fifth night was cold, wet and windy. At least it was like that when we went to sleep and very much the same when we woke up in the morning. It was however the longest haul and I estimated that we did at least twenty-seven miles in about eleven hours. We had to cross one small but fast flowing river and several small creeks. Everyone was pretty crabby when we eventually arrived at Rose Spit, which is the Northern-most tip of Graham Island, an ecological reserve and sacred grounds to the Haida Indians.

We could not have cared if it was the lawns of Buckingham Palace. It was a flat peninsula with the ocean on both sides. We were standing on a thick lush carpet of wild strawberries in probably one of the most spectacular spots on the Western Coast of British Columbia. There was a view of both the sunrise and the sunset over the ocean and to the North you could see Alaska. The magic of the moment was however lost, as there was a wee bit of tension in the air. About fifteen minutes back someone had made a mistake in a judgment call that resulted in our landing at this spot rather than taking a shortcut that would have shaved about twenty five miles of extra hiking and one less night of camping. In retrospect, I am very glad that we ended up on Rose Spit as taking the shortcut out would have diminished the sense of accomplishment and we would not have experienced the wild beauty of this remote part of the world.

On day seven we hiked out to Tow Hill. There were quite a few people beach combing and I managed to persuade a kind soul to take me back to the Rangers station to pick up our vehicle and then return to pick up the rest of the gang. They had collapsed on the floor of a little cookhouse attached to the Tow Hill campground.

Last year, in September, I was fishing the Tlell River. Sue had struck up conversation with one of the locals. It turned out that he was a retired army fitness and survival instructor and had retired to the Charlottes. When we told him about the hike he was amazed. Apparently, several years back he had led a group of ten people on the same hike that he thought were in fairly good shape. After getting to the first stop he had to turn around and bring half the group back and then go back to finish the trip. Three more were taken out by boat about half way and he finished with two. If it was not for the fact that we could describe the scenery and the topography in detail I am sure he would have dismissed this as the fantasy of a couple of old farts. I truly think that we managed the trip because there was not the option of failure as there were no safety nets, satellite phones or boats to bail us out. It is amazing what you can accomplish when your back is against the wall.

Would I do that trip again? In a heartbeat, provided I can get these knees fixed and the use of a pack donkey or camel.

SHOPPING NOTES FOR CHRISTMAS

EXTRA SHOPPING HOURS

For your convenience we will be open in December on Friday nights for shopping until 8pm.

ALSO

The Mondays before Christmas we will be open from 11 am to 5 pm.
The restaurant will not be open on these Mondays.

OTHER LOCATIONS

As usual we will be at

NORTHHILL MALL

(Off 16th Avenue/TransCanada Hwy.)

November & December

Please Note we will NOT be located in Northland as we were last year.

AG TRADE RED DEER

November 7 -10

SPRUCE MEADOWS CHRISTMAS MARKET

November 14 - 16

November 21 - 23

(TWO weekends this year!)

And of course

CHRISTMAS TRADITION

at

PaSu Farm

Years ago, before we had the shop, we used to have an **OPEN HOUSE** at the farm on weekends in December. This tradition still continues and we offer **FREE Christmas Cake and hot cider** (*in the boutique only*). Let us take the stress out of your shopping by pampering you in a relaxed environment far from the maddening crowds.

Shop Hours:

Tuesday to Saturday: 10 am – 5 pm MST

Sunday 12 pm – 5 pm MST

Closed Mondays

Restaurant Hours:

Tuesday to Sunday: 12 pm – 4 pm MST

Closed Mondays

Saturday Evening Fine Dining

Reservations Essential

Phone Toll Free: 1-800-679-7999