



An ancient and icy adventure

Sarah Rogers, REPORTER

When I replaced the gleaming bank towers of my past life for the sky-scraping and snow-capped peaks of Jasper, inheriting the proximity to the Park's icefield was an added bonus.

Located within Jasper's boundaries, the Athabasca Glacier is the largest in the Canadian Rockies and the most visited in North America. With Mounts Athabasca and Andromeda in the background, this six square kilometre large glacier and the adjoining Icefield Centre draw thousands of visitors every day – understandably so.

The Friends of Jasper sent me up the old piece of ice last week, as part of a wilderness adventure course for glacier newbies. Organized almost a year ago, they managed to pick the most glorious summer day with a warm sun and cloudless sky – a welcome respite from the glacial chill.

Revelstoke-based guide Jordy Shepherd, our certified mountain guide for the day, gave the sort of guidance that said "Don't sweat it." Shepherd grew up in Jasper and knelt down to the mountain gods long before I had even seen a snowy peak. But there is something about people who grow

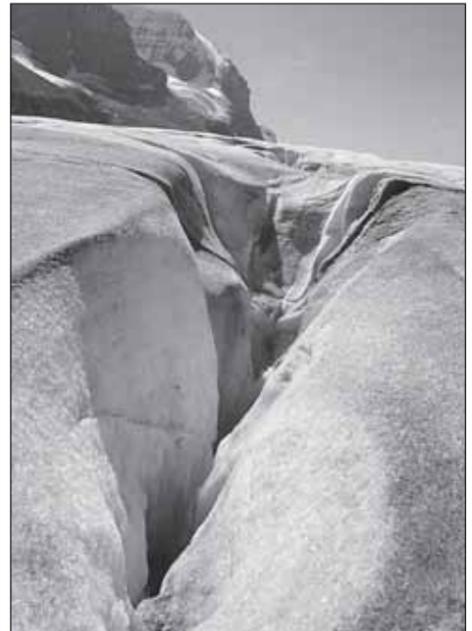
up so closely to the earth that makes them trustworthy. A teacher from Edmonton in our course remarked that she would trust Jordy with her life; extreme, but necessary.

The glacier, enchanting as it sparkles in the sun, makes the average visitor feel as though they are safe on its ancient footing. But the crevasses that cover the terrain, giving way to fresh glacial streams and snowy caverns, are also deadly holes for careless hikers. Shepherd spoke rationally about having that "healthy amount of fear" when trekking, but in the same breathe reassures that there's nothing to worry about, so long as you're prepared.

Asked to bring the necessary gear for a climb, I packed some sunscreen and a water bottle. When told I needed "crampons" among other climbing aids, I worried that there was something wrong with my menstrual cycle and I might not make it up in one piece.

Fortunately, crampons are just really helpful spiky things that attach to your boots and make it considerably easier to navigate the glacier's slick and aerated cover. A handy ski pole or ice pick are good tools to have on hand. And once you get on it, crunching your way up compacted snow and ice never felt so natural.

"This is about living the mountain lifestyle and sharing it with other people,"



Watch your step!: An ice crevasse in the Athabasca Glacier.

Shepherd said nobly, pointing out across the vista. "Athabasca Glacier is one of the most readily accessible glaciers for people to experience."

How lucky we are.

Coming down the rocky slope toward the car park is a bit anti-climactic, as you are reminded of the impact of global warming on our surroundings. Where the glacier sits now is a kilometre and a half back from where it was 100 years ago, leaving behind a barren and dusty moon-like landscape. At the rate it's receding, I won't be around to see another kilometre of it melt into the sea – at least, let's hope. 🐾



Icy Expedition: Participants of a weekend-long program organized by Friends of Jasper, walk up Athabasca Glacier. SARAH ROGERS PHOTOS



Critter

CONTRACTING

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we will be closed

Labour Day



MONDAY

September 4

2006

Deadlines will be the following:

Advertising
Thursday, August 31 @ 5pm

Classifieds,
Bear Hugs or Moose Droppings,
Community Events
Friday, Sept. 1 @ 5 pm

Letters to the Editor
Friday, Sept. 1 @ 5pm



JASPER'S INDEPENDENT, LOCALLY OWNED NEWSPAPER



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303 Pyramid Avenue
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Municipality of Jasper

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The following scholarships are available to graduates of the Jasper Junior/Senior High School:

ALBERTA MARGARET ATKINSON SCHOLARSHIP
For students enrolled in any year (except Pre-Med) in Medicine or Dentistry, 2nd or subsequent years in Nursing, Paramedics, Engineering or Commerce, and 1st year in Law.

MOUNTAIN PARK LODGES HOSPITALITY/BUSINESS SCHOLARSHIP
For students enrolled in courses related to the hospitality industry or business administration

MOUNTAIN PARK LODGES HEALTH CARE SCHOLARSHIP
For students enrolled in courses related to physical, social, or mental care

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS is 2 pm, **October 2, 2006**

Applicants should apply in writing to the Secretary, Jasper Education Scholarships Committee, Box 520, Jasper, AB TOE 1E0, detailing their education goals and aspirations, and attach a copy of their receipt of acceptance into their programme of study. For further information, contact Beryl Cahill, Municipality of Jasper, Administrative Officer, 852-6503.

NURSERY SCHOOL REGISTRATION

Registration
for the
Nursery School Program
will take place on
September 7th and 8th
from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
at the
Jasper Centre for Early Childhood Learning and Care: Meeting of the Waters
(in the Jasper Activity Centre)

For more information, call 852-2100.



Three 11-week sessions will be offered:

September 18, 2006 to December 1, 2006
December 4, 2006 to March 2, 2007
March 5, 2007 to June 1, 2007

Four spots will be offered each day:

- two in the morning (8:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.) and
- two in the afternoon (1:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.).

Costs per session are:

	Mornings	Afternoons
1 day/week	\$158.12	\$127.50
2 days/week	\$316.24	\$253.00
3 days/week	\$474.36	\$379.50
4 days/week	\$632.50	\$510.00

If you plan to have your child attend several times a week, it may be more cost effective to have your child registered for full-time care.

Subsidy may be available if family circumstances match provincial eligibility.