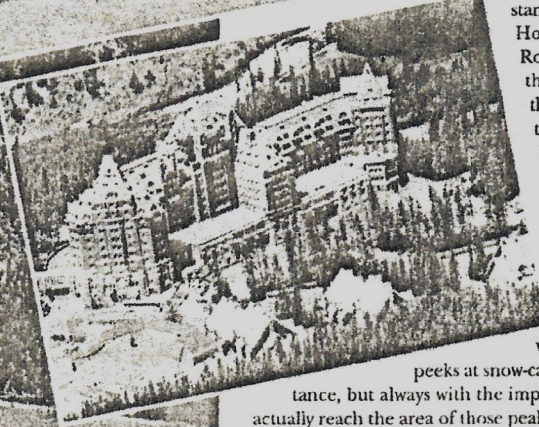


# Leisure & Travel

Yo Adrian!  
It's the Royal Rockies



Not even Sylvester Stallone's  
Philly champ can match the glory  
of these Canadian mountains



Mountain highs (clockwise,  
right): the Deer Lodge at  
Banff; Banff Springs Hotel;  
Banff from the summit of  
Mount Banff; and white-water  
rafting on the Fraser River



**Barbara Ann Rosenberg**  
*Special to the Jewish Exponent*

If I have to hear that word again, I'm going to scream — a really loud scream! The word in question is "awesome" — seemingly the only descriptive word in the lexicon of today's kids.

So when I found myself using that word in almost every other sentence as we traveled in the Canadian Rockies a few weeks ago, I began to wonder. Was I regressing to teen slang? Or had my vocabulary been seriously diminished?

Then it dawned on me — the term "awesome" was absolutely right on the mark to describe what we were seeing out of the gently curved windows and through the glass roof of the Rocky Mountain Mountaineer ... the train that we were traveling on from Vancouver to Banff. The scenery was — well, to put it succinctly — awesome!

Actually, as we were leaving the charming, beautiful city of Vancouver — after a few days of seriously sophisticated living at the Hotel Vancouver and eating at a number of exem-

plary restaurants, including one outstanding eatery at the Wedgewood Hotel — we climbed aboard a Rocky Mountain Railtours train that followed the Fraser River through its valley where it sometimes snaked along with a whole lot of character.

But this was just the beginning of what promised to be an ultimately thrilling experience.

## Peaks piqued our interest

We moved along through some small towns and a whole lot of wooded areas, with peeks at snow-capped peaks looming in the distance, but always with the implied excitement that we would actually reach the area of those peaks in all their majesty.

Sometimes the river became constricted, and there were rapids that promised nifty white-water rafting. And, of course, we saw some groups taking advantage of the wild water.

The train provides accommodations in two classes: Signature, which is actually another word for super-comfortable coach, and Gold Leaf, unquestionably a fancy term for first-class. They both get you to the same destinations in the same amount of time since they are both hooked up to the same powerful engine ... but my, oh my, what a difference in service.

Signature is perfectly adequate for the first day of the two-day trip that we were taking to Banff, with comfortable seats, plenty of leg room and adequate meals (somewhat like upgraded airline food, served on similar trays with limited choices). The cars are immaculate ... and the configuration is, well, like a normal railroad car.

On the other hand, Gold Leaf, with its manifest luxury, is the unquestionable choice for day two, when after a night in an adequate (but that's about all) hotel in the Western-style town of Kamloops, the train enters the high-peak area.

*Continued on next page*



# Travel

*Continued from previous page*

The observation level of the train is encased in wall-to-wall glass for unobstructed views, the seats are generous in size and the service nonstop.

There is a dining room on the lower level of each two-level car. The dining room was complete with crisp cloth covers and napkins, shining silver implements and menus with exciting multiple choices for both breakfast and lunch — the only two full meals served on board since the train reaches its destination in time for dinner.

Breakfast entrees include delicacies like Canadian smoked salmon with perfectly poached eggs on English muffins. And just so there's no mixup while on board, passengers traveling in this exalted style are given small golden maple leaf-shaped pins to attach to their clothing to separate themselves from the hoi polloi.

People on board tend to meander up and down the aisle sharing impressions of the magnificent scenery and comparing notes on the wonderful food and service — and where they're going to stay when they reach their destinations: Banff or Calgary. Many are extending their trips to Lake Louise.

**The term "awesome" was absolutely right on the mark to describe what we were seeing out of the gently curved windows of the Rocky Mountain Mountaineer.**

Banff is great with hotels galore, including the class act Banff Springs Hotel, grand in concept and being renovated to bring its somewhat old-fashioned facilities up to date.

Slightly out of the relative crush of downtown hotels and with a secluded feeling (although there are several other lodges in the vicinity) is Buffalo Lodge, with a wide variety of accommodations culminating in suites with fireplaces, exquisite "retro" style baths with every modern amenity, huge towels and radiant heating, since the heights tend to be very cool, even in summer.

## Elk in view

Each room has a commodious balcony overlooking a pristine meadow where elk frequently come to graze.

Banff itself is a lot like Aspen in Colorado, although not quite as glitzy ... nifty shops, interesting restaurants, including one that specializes in

fondues of all sorts.

The town is crawling with tourists window shopping — and some even buying the relatively high-priced sportswear.

Buffalo Lodge, for all its rustic qualities, has a sophisticated dining room and a second little cottage on the property called Cilantro that pulls people from all the surrounding areas for its odd, interesting lunches and dinners, mostly made from local ingredients.

Lake Louise was our next destination: a tiny town with only a few necessary shops and a couple of little places to stay — until one arrives at the lake itself. And there it is: Chateau Lake Louise, the ultimate destination.

The Chateau is all the name implies: huge, graceful and perched on the edge of one of the world's most magical places, surrounded by snow-capped peaks and mirrored in the exquisite lake itself.

That word had to be used again. Really truly awesome! And it kept popping into my mind and coming out of my mouth over and over again. Not so much for the hotel itself, beautifully situated and with exquisite views over the lake, as for its setting.

The rooms are nothing to write home about, nor are its huge dining rooms and reception rooms filled

with tourists from every land, but mainly England and Japan.

We preferred to take up space on one of the terraces and just gaze at the surroundings for hours. Yes, awesome!

## Deer place to dine

We stayed at the small, nearby Deer Lodge with a well-deserved reputation for its fine food. In the lodge's near isolation, we felt somewhat cut off from the real world — except for the occasional wild animal visitor.

We relaxed, ate well and when we needed our next fix of awesome, wandered up the path to our big, elegant neighbor, the Chateau. A bit of the best of all possible worlds.

And what a shock to return to the city, away from the peaks, the lake, the animals we saw and the peace of the Canadian Rockies.

Awesome! ■



Tourists take in the beauty of Banff from the top of Sulfur Mountain.