



President's Message

February seems to be one of the busiest months on the Viking calendar. With our Saturday Jackrabbit and Bunyrabbit programs, our Saturday and Thursday tours and adult ski lessons on Sundays, the club is a busy and active place. In addition we have the Canadian Ski Marathon where we man a mini checkpoint, the Gatineau Loppet, and our own Morin-Heights/Viking Loppet. If that were not enough, after a very successful demo day in January and under the dynamic leadership of Benita Stoyel, the club now has a biathlon program up and running. The program will run for eight weeks. Wow!

As most are now aware, we received our new Yellowstone groomer in mid January; teamed up with the Centaur it does an awesome job. Now we just need some snow so it can show its full potential. We had our club rollout on January 30 when members were able to get a close-up look at the new equipment — and even a short ride in the Centaur.

The club, and for that matter all cross-country ski centers in the region, are being challenged by the snow conditions this season. We need a minimum of 60 cm of snow to groom and track set our touring trails. Despite this lack of snow our grooming crew have been hard at work to provide decent conditions on the Racing Trails as well as the Red and Green touring trails. The main priority at this point is to have the loppet route in top shape for the event. This includes the Red, Crown West, and Blue trails. The other trails will be groomed and track set as conditions permit. But despite low snow levels, several members have commented on how great the back-country skiing has been.

With the 2010 season well underway, the club — through its directors — is now in forward-planning mode and looking ahead to the 2010-2011 season. If

(see President's Message on p. 2)

Message du Président

Février est sans doute un des mois les plus achalandés du calendrier Viking. Avec les programmes Jeannot Lapin et Jackrabbit, nos sorties de samedi et de jeudi, et les leçons pour adultes le dimanche, le chalet est vraiment un lieu actif et occupé. De plus, nous avons le Marathon canadien de ski, où nous sommes responsables d'un point de contrôle mineur, le Loppet de Gatineau, et de notre propre Loppet Morin-Heights/Viking. Et si ce n'était pas assez, après une démonstration couronnée de succès en janvier, sous la direction dynamique de Benita Stoyel, nous offrons maintenant un programme de biathlon qui durera huit semaines. Fantastique !

Comme la plupart des membres le savent maintenant, nous avons reçu notre nouvelle dameuse Yellowstone en mi-janvier. Avec le Centaur, elle fonctionne à merveille ! Nous avons simplement besoin d'un peu de neige pour voir son plein potentiel. Nous avons fait une cérémonie de lancement le 30 janvier, pour permettre aux membres de la voir de près — et même d'y monter un peu.

Notre club et d'ailleurs tous les centres de ski de fond dans la région font face à de dures conditions de neige cette année. Il nous faut un minimum de 60 cm de neige pour entretenir et damer nos pistes de randonnée. En dépit du manque de neige, notre équipe de damage travaille fort pour créer des conditions convenables sur les Pistes de Course, la Rouge et la Verte. Notre première priorité pour le moment est de mettre en forme les pistes de la route du loppet avant l'événement. Cela veut dire la Rouge, la Crown Ouest, et les Bleues. Les autres pistes seront damées aussitôt que les conditions le permettent. En dépit des niveaux de neige, de nombreux membres disent que les pistes d'arrière-pays sont superbes

President's Message (continued...)

you have any suggestions on how the club can improve its services to the membership in any way, be it trails, programs, clubhouse, website or anything else, please send your suggestions and ideas to the directors at vikingskiclub@gmail.com.

The loppet is quickly approaching and we still need volunteers to assist us with several tasks. It would be really great if we could see some "new" faces this year. To volunteer, please contact Wilma Wiemer at wilma.wiemer@live.ca.

This year we will see the departure of several board members. It is vital for the future of the club that these positions be filled. New members to the board are important to keep the club progressing and current with the times. If you are interested in becoming a board member (and who wouldn't be!) or would like to recommend someone, please contact me at dboweslyon@videotron.ca, or get in touch with any board member.

See you on the trails!

Douglas Bowes-Lyon

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Message du Président (suite...)

La saison 2010 étant bien en cours, le club — par l'entremise de ses directeurs — est en pleine planification proactive pour la saison 2010-2011. Si vous avez des suggestions pour améliorer les services du club, que ce soit du côté des pistes, des programmes, du chalet, du site web ou quoi que ce

soit, veuillez envoyer vos suggestions et vos idées aux directeurs à vikingskiclub@gmail.com.

Le loppet s'approche à grands pas, et il nous manque toujours des bénévoles pour aider avec plusieurs tâches. Ça sera vraiment bien de voir de « nouveaux » visages cette année. Pour vous porter bénévole, veuillez contacter Wilma Wiemer à wilma.wiemer@live.ca.

Cette année plusieurs membres quitteront le conseil d'administration. Il est primordial pour l'avenir du club que ces positions soient remplies. Le CA a besoin de nouveaux membres si nous voulons continuer à avancer et à rester au courant. S'il vous intéresse de devenir un membre du CA (et qui pourrait dire non ?) ou si vous avez quelqu'un à recommander, veuillez me contacter (dboweslyon@videotron.ca) ou parler à n'importe quel membre du CA.

Comme nous l'avons mentionné dans notre dernier bulletin, notre secrétaire aux adhésions, Marilyn Geddis, prendra sa retraite à la fin de la saison, après de nombreuses années de service dévoué. Nous cherchons quelqu'un pour la remplacer. Si cela vous intéresserait, veuillez nous contacter

À bientôt aux pistes !

Douglas Bowes-Lyon

X-C Skiing News

Skier nouvelles is the biggest website for x-c news in Quebec:

<http://veloptimum.net/skiernouvelles.html>

Viking Pot Luck Supper

By Derek Wills

On the evening of January 30, as the mercury sank to -20 C outside the clubhouse, the mirth level raised within to the extent that most of the 43 attendees were positively glowing red! As is the custom with these feast events, so well conceived and organized by Daphne Mitchell, a costume theme is declared, related to some significant event, or as more aptly

described by Gordon Little as a “gaudy”. And what more significant event is there than the club’s recent purchase of a trail-grooming machine: the Centaur. It being somewhat cumbersome for all to come dressed as mythical centaurs (half man, half beast), most picked up on its colour – red.

As usual, this affair kicked off in the lower lounge where hot punch and a mouth watering selection of attendee-contributed appetizers were enjoyed.....and where costumed arrivals could be observed, greeted and duly showered with oohs and ahhs!!!

To much hoopla, Daphne presented “Academy Awards” for best-in-class costumes to Gordon and Audrey Little (no surprise there!), Gordon and Sorel Cohen, and Cathy Barr and Bruce Underwood.

The catered portion of our meal, kept warm in the ladies’ sauna, was enjoyed in the upstairs dining area.

For dessert, it was back to attendee contributions, all wickered in their way and enough to give dieticians’ hearts palpitations!

With the throngs satiated, and not to lose sight of the “gaudy” subject, Doug unveiled a specially prepared decorative plaque (thanks to Peter Kirby) bearing some 140 names of those who had donated (including the MRC) and made the purchase of the Centaur vehicle possible. It is intended that this plaque will be posted in the clubhouse.

The evening concluded with some singing of well known ballads ranging in content from “billabongs” to “cockles and mussels alive, alive alive oh”!

It should be added that as a prelude to this “gaudy” affair, during the afternoon Doug performed a presidential unveiling of the Centaur and attached grooming gear, giving a chance for witnessing donors to kick the tires (or tracks!) and even venture off for presidential-chauffeured rides.

Members Show Generosity

By David Marshall

On behalf of the Board of Director’s I would like to thank all contributing members for their generous support of our equipment fundraising campaign. This support--along with a grant from the MRC--has allowed us to take possession of a new Centaur tractor and are awaiting delivery of a Yellowstone groomer and hydraulic plow.

At time of writing, 43 percent of members have participated with a median donation of \$300. We still could use additional support. Please make your cheque payable to “Viking Ski Club” and mail to our treasurer, Peter Kirby, Box 8, 21111 Lakeshore Road, Ste Anne de Bellevue, QC H9X 3V9.

My thanks to Doug Bowes-Lyon, Gordon Cohen, Miklos Fulop, Richard L'Heureux, Norm Horner, Nathalie Rouleau, and Hans Wiemer for their help.

If you have any questions, please email me at dmarshall@wilsonmachine.com.

Mont Tremblant Olympic Torch Relay

By Bill Pollock

Clinging to our seats in a yellow bus headed toward Mont Tremblant, we proceeded with caution as the snow swirled around us making the cars ahead barely visible. Occasionally the snow obliterated everything. It was the first major snow storm of the year. I was in the bus with 22 secondary I students, their physical education teacher, and a retired but volunteer teacher going to see the Mont Tremblant Olympic torch procession. The torch was to be carried by Peter Duncan, a graduate of Ste-Agathe Academy and a past Olympic skier. Peter was to ski down the Flying Mile at Mont Tremblant and pass the torch to Peggy Austin who would carry it to the Place St. Bernard.

Editor’s note: After winning the 1937 Canadian Ski Championships, Peggy Austin was slated to compete at the 1940 Olympics but those were cancelled because of World War II. In December, 2009, she finally played a role in the Olympics.



Peggy Austin carries the torch at Mt Tremblant Photo courtesy of Main Street newspaper

Peggy, at 91, is the only surviving daughter of the legendary Herman “Jackrabbit” Johannsen who played a key role in making cross-country skiing popular in North America and lived to be 111. Following in her father’s footsteps, Peggy still cross-country skis.

Except for white knuckles from gripping the bus seats, we arrived unscathed at Mont Tremblant thanks to our extremely conscientious driver. The snow was falling and blowing but the spirit of “the torch” definitely filled the air: jugglers juggling torches, clowns clowning, children everywhere, and the old red-nosed hermit dressed in furs with his snowshoes draped over his wooden backpack. Organizers passed out red flags, some inscribed Québec, others Canada. Every now and then the crowd cheered, “CA-NA-DA”. After a brief

conversation with Erik Guay’s mom we went with the group following a red Zamboni to the Place St. Bernard.

I knew that if I was to get any photos of Peter Duncan skiing down the mountain I would have to climb up away from the crowds. So that is what I did together with a lot of happy children, singing, laughing, falling and sliding in the newly fallen snow.

As I waited for Peter I thought of all the Olympic skiers that Ste-Agathe Academy had graduated over the years: Lucille Wheeler, Peter Duncan,

Brett Carpentier, Jaycee Anderson and last but not least Erik Guay. Wow, and I have known them all. What a proud moment it was.



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----- **ULTRAMAR** -----

Biathlon Overview

By John Symon & Derek Wills

On January 10, Viking hosted a biathlon demonstration at the clubhouse with the assistance of Lise Le Guellec, the mother of Canadian Olympic biathlete, Jean-Philippe Le Guellec. A short theory talk about biathlons was followed by a chance to shoot at targets on the Pond.

Some 40 participants learned that biathlons can involve either classic or freestyle (skating) skiing, as well as any other cardiovascular sport (i.e. snowshoeing, running, kayaking, biking). The objective is to quickly bring your heartbeat down so that you are steady enough to shoot accurately. Lise provided air rifles for which no special permits are required.

The demonstration was so popular that Viking is now running a regular Sunday biathlon program through March 28. This program includes ninety minutes of instruction per week and costs \$150. More information is available at: vikingskiclub@gmail.com



Lise le Guellec explains the theory of biathlons at the clubhouse lounge. Photo: B. Stoyel

Biathlon is an exciting sport that challenges participants with a diverse range of skills that no other sport requires: the endurance, speed, strength and coordination needed for cross-country skiing, along with the concentration, focus, accuracy and split-second timing needed for accurate and fast target shooting under pressure. Biathlon also teaches

people how to use rifles in a safe and non-confronting manner, a point that is emphasized heavily in the sport. What's more, biathlon is a lot of fun!

The word biathlon is of Greek origin and means "two tests". The combination of skiing and shooting used in the sport today is founded on a tradition of hunting stemming back over four thousand years. The first recorded biathlon race was organized in Scandinavia in 1767, but regular competitions did not take place until the early 20th century. It was initially contested in the Olympic Winter Games in Chamonix, France, in 1924 and has been a permanent fixture in the Olympics since 1960.

Today, biathlon events combine the two opposing disciplines of freestyle cross-country ski technique with precision target shooting using .22-calibre rifles at a 50 m range. Participants ski a designated ski loop and then ski into the range to fire five shots at five targets in either a standing or prone (lying down) position. For every shot missed the participant is penalized. Depending on the type of race, the penalty is either added skiing distance in the form of a 150 m penalty loop or having an extra minute added to their time. The participant then skis and shoots again, repeating this sequence until the required number of ski legs and shooting bouts are completed. Athletes compete over distances ranging from 2.5 km for our youngest competitors to 20 km for the men.

In addition to being a Winter Olympics sport, biathlon is contested in an annual World Cup series with events being held primarily in Europe where the sport enjoys massive appeal and extensive television coverage. There is also a Biathlon World Championships held every winter except for Olympic years. The combination of skills and the nature of the event make biathlon an extremely exciting sport to watch. For these reasons, biathlon is one of the most

widely watched winter sports in Europe!



Biathlon participants take shots with air rifles down at the Pond. Photo: B. Stoyel

Touring Report

by Gordon Cohen

So far, despite a lack of snow, we have had surprisingly good conditions for all of our tours. The first Thursday tour was at St. Adolphe d'Howard, where 15 participants skied south west of the centre for about 13 km. Although most of us have a Cartes Réseau, we were welcomed there under the reciprocal agreement that Doug Bowes-Lyon negotiated rather informally this past fall.

The first Saturday tour, at Morin Heights, was hosted by Judy Rogers and Rudi Scherz. We skied the Triangle, Salzburg and Bellevue trails. After skiing we gathered at the Rogers/Scherz' house for Rudi's renowned lentil soup and good fellowship. About 25 people participated. The second Thursday tour was held at Far Hills (Val Morin) Parc Dufresne, and a

record crowd for a Thursday of 21 members turned up. We skied across the park to chalet Anne Piché, lunched, and skied back by various routes. Sorel, Audrey Speck and I took a fast route back so we had time to explore the trails to the north of the cross-country centre where, because of inadequate signage and a plethora of intersections, we needed some compass work to get back to the Far Hills centre.

On Saturday, January 16, we met at Bill and Diane Pollock's house at Lac Brûlé. The snow conditions were the best we had encountered this season. Again, about 25 tourers participated. The Blue trail around the lake has been improved considerably over the years and is now entirely on solid ground, eliminating a stretch across the north end of the lake that was often wet. It is also about 2 km longer, totalling about 18km. A few years ago the residents chipped in for a snowmobile to pack but not track set the trail, and the result is a beautiful ski, not to be missed.

Thursday, January 21, found us at Camping Ste-Agathe, where, again, there is more snow than farther south. We skied various combinations of the Grignon, Belvoir, Cohen, Davis and Deux Lacs trails, and finished the 11-13 km trip in about 2 1/2 hours. Yes, it was fast.

Our thanks to Derek Wills for organizing the Thursday tours and to the Saturday hosts Judy/Rudi and the Pollocks. A more complete description of the Thursday tours, including photos and maps, can be found on our website. Go to MEMBERS and drop down to Tour reports.

If you would like to receive my weekly email advising where we plan to go on Thursday, and updating the Saturday tour, write to gdcohen@sympatico.ca

Youth Program

by Benita Stoyel

I am currently in the process of reviewing the lesson plans for the fifth session of the program. Yikes! We're already half way through, as the weather has been cooperative and everything is running on schedule. Fortunately for the club, program registration is up this year. This has meant we have

Viking February, 2010

ended up with larger-than-anticipated groups, but the coaches do not seem fazed by the large group sizes. As they put it, "It's not a problem because we have fantastic parent volunteers!" Five out of six coaches were new on the job when we started January 9; I have only been impressed with how well they are doing.

All our young coaches this year have actually gone through the Viking Jackrabbit program themselves. The benefit of this, as I quickly discovered during our pre-season meeting, is that they remember all the fun activities that they did when they were in the program and are bringing them back — in particular, a slalom course on Jack Rabbit hill and the Olympic Day activities still to come. Head coach Karen Oljemark has a long history with Viking; she even was the club president in 1993-94. This year Karen has thoroughly revamped our emergency procedures and has done a great job of organizing the season's calendar and creating lesson plans. Although it may appear that the coaches just show up every week, there is considerable planning and organizing that happens before each session. I believe that the combination of all these factors is what has helped to make this season a great success. Now, if only we could find a volunteer to produce some more snow!

Submissions

Viking, the newsletter of the Viking Ski Club, is published four times annually. Send submissions to: John Symon (see back page).

Text submissions can be in English ou en français. Photos should also be submitted separately rather than embedded in text documents. Also, kindly indicate the subject and name of the photographer.

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Trail Report

To find out snow and trail conditions before leaving the city, call the Viking Ski Club phone (recorded message) at **450-226-3284** or go to: www.vikingskiclub.ca/

Wondering what to do with the kids this weekend? Find answers in **Exploring Montreal with Kids / Décourir Montréal avec les enfants**
www.montrealwithkids.com
www.montrealaveclesenfants.com



Some ready Vikings at our potluck. Photo: D. Wills

Ski or Snowshoe at the 2010 Loppet!

By Derek Wills

The increased popularity of snowshoeing, complemented by the Morin-Heights Municipality initiatives to establish extensive snowshoe trail networks, has prompted event planners to welcome the participation of snowshoers in the 2010 Morin-Heights/Viking Loppet, now in its 38th year.

This popular local event will take place on Sunday, February 28, and for the first time will now include a challenging 5 km snowshoe course starting at Ski Morin-Heights and sharing the arrival zone with cross-country skiers at Basler Park. This new category of participants, appropriately called “Coureurs des Bois”, should appeal to energetic snowshoers, from adolescents and up.

Cross-country skiers will have the usual three course choices of 10 km, 20 km or 33 km over groomed Viking Ski Club and Municipal x-c trail networks, with refreshment stations en route. The day’s exhilarating events conclude with a hot lunch and medal presentations at the Morin-Heights Elementary School.

Despite lean times, many of our local businesses have been generous enough to continue providing their sponsorship support for this special one-day mid-winter event. Also, some 100 plus volunteers give their keen support to enable this event to take place.

If you want to know more, or to register, please go the Loppet website: www.skiloppet.com

(In case you are wondering, the term “Loppet” derives from Scandinavia and simply means “the race”, which in this case is either on skis...or now snowshoes.)

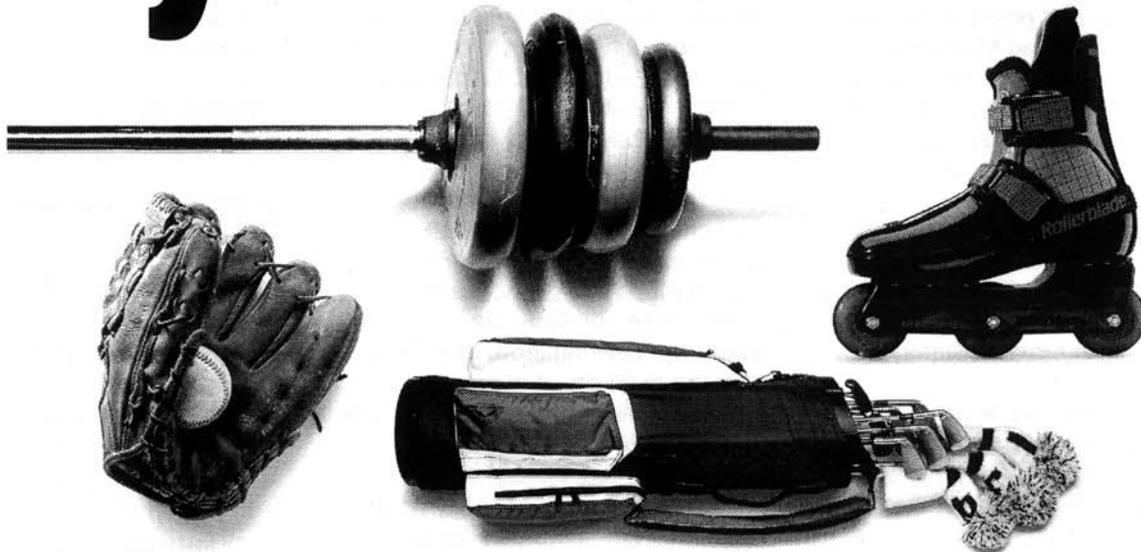
Viking members comprise a large percentage of the volunteers, so if you are not participating but would like to still have fun volunteering, please advise Wilma Wiemer at 450-226-9928 or at wilma.wiemer@live.ca

(NB: At day’s end, volunteers are invited for a reception at City Hall.)



Viking Trail Clearing 2005. Photo credit unknown

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Challenge Program 2005 atop Lovers Leap. Photo: S. Smith

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