



# The Inside Track

A Newsletter for Members of Porcupine Ski Runners

Winter Issue

December, 2003

## President's Column

Welcome to the 2003/04 cross-country ski season at Porcupine Ski Runners. Cross-country skiing — what a great way to spend thirty minutes or two or more hours, out in the fresh air with friends, no fumes, no noise, and keeping in shape. It's hard to believe that six months have passed since we were out on the trails. I trust you have had a rewarding off-season. Since the spring many volunteers have been active enhancing the trail system, servicing the light and heavy-duty machinery, caring for the chalet, and planning for this season's events.

Earlier this fall the main construction components of the "Light Our Trails" program was completed. Lighting 3.8 km of trails is a major expense and light poles remain available for purchase should you or anyone you know wish to support this worthwhile project. It is our hope that this service provides additional opportunities for our many members and day users.

The club offers a variety of services and opportunities including the Jackrabbit program, developmental team, race team, masters program, waxing clinics, schools and groups, ski lessons, sprint series under the lights, loppet, etc. Each service is targeted at one or more skier types and is designed to help make their cross-skiing experience more enjoyable and

rewarding. Information about how to get involved with many of these services is available on our web site which can be found at <http://www.porcupineskirunners.com/>, in the various newsletters, posted in the chalet, or through contacting any Director.

Our club boasts some of the best-groomed trails in northern Ontario. During the season our trails are maintained by a number of volunteers who put in countless hours operating the various pieces of grooming equipment. To keep our trails at the highest standards and to

before the snow has had sufficient time to set.

Effective this season, Cross-Country Canada and Cross-Country Ontario increased the fees and insurance for registered members more than threefold. All organized cross-country ski clubs must pay annual fees and insurance to these organizations. As our fee structure is set each spring at the Annual General Meeting the current rates do not reflect the increased cost to the club. At the 2004 Annual General Meeting next spring the Board of Directors will need to examine the impact of these increases to determine if membership rates need to be raised.

The Porcupine Ski Runners Club continues to experience growth and success. This is due for the most part to the many volunteers who give countless hours of their personal time. To our volunteers I say thank you for you are models for us all to aspire to.

Finally, on behalf of the Porcupine Ski Runners Board of Directors, I wish you all a fun filled cross-country ski season and we hope to see you on the trails.

Yours in Cross-Country Skiing,  
David B. Mader  
President

## Jackrabbit Sessions

Start January 4, 2004 at 1:15 pm

**NO REGISTRATIONS**  
will be accepted on this first day.

To have your child enrolled in the Jackrabbit program contact Suzanne before January 1, 2004

at  
268-2843

ensure the safety of all it is imperative that skiers respect the "TRAILS CLOSED FOR GROOMING" signs. While every effort is made to provide advance notice, sometimes this is impossible. Please, do not ski on the trails when they are being groomed. It is unsafe and often damages the ski surface

**Getting Started**

Porcupine Ski Runners moved its operation to the present location in 1976. At that time the design of the trail system had all trails beginning at one point and following the Green Trail. Branching to other trails occurred at various points along the trail system. This setup remained in effect until last year when the Sprint Trails were constructed.

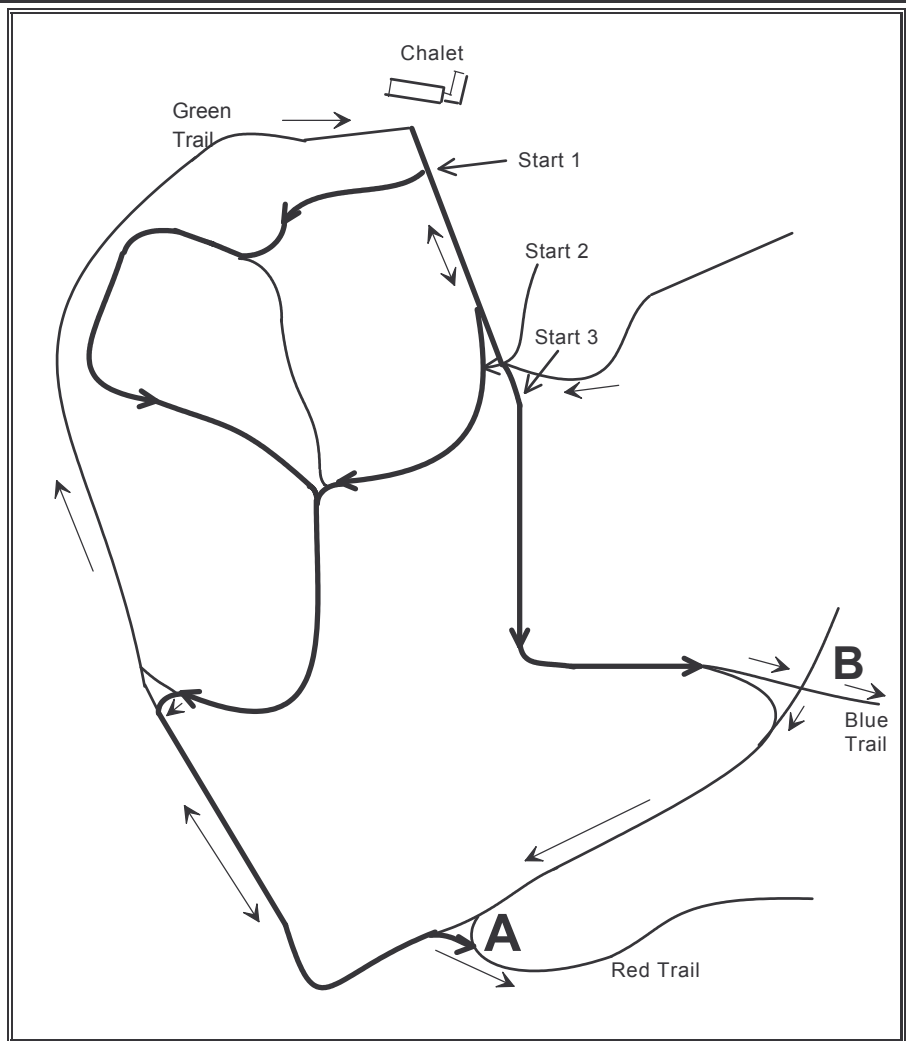
The Sprint Trails, together with the Green Trail reversed in direction, allows skiers to have an option of starting a ski outing along three different routes. We have observed that not many skiers have been taking advantage of these options and choosing instead to stick with skiing along the Green Trail. This is a flat section of trail and a great way for beginning skiers to “get the feel of it.” But for experienced skiers you may enjoy some alternatives.

A lack of signage last year may have contributed to hesitation in choosing a different start. We have added additional signage and the map at the right shows these three start options - so give it a try.

**Membership**

At the Open House on November 30, we received 51 applications for membership which translated to 128 additional members. That put our total membership over 600 and applications are continuing to come in.

We extend a welcome to new members. If you are not



familiar with Porcupine Ski Runners, you need to know that it is totally run by volunteers. That keeps costs low and allows us to keep membership rates low. However, it also means that it may be a bit difficult to find someone around the chalet to answer your questions. Feel free to ask anyone you see around the chalet or on the trails. They may not have an answer but they may be able to tell you who to contact. If all that fails, call me - my phone number and email address is at the bottom of this report.

For all you long time members - you'll notice that I've

just committed you to be a helpful assistant.

This newsletter has a number of activities described but there are many other things that go on during the season that were not fully organized at press time - volunteers are always busy. From time to time notices appear on the bulletin board describing upcoming activities. So visit the chalet and check the bulletin board for events that might interest you.

Gerry McNair - 264-9093  
gmcnair@ntl.sympatico.ca

**Ski Swap & Waxing**

This year’s ski swap and ski waxing fundraiser were successful in raising \$2000 for the Racing Team. This annual event is a great way to kick off the season, and of course the light sprinkling of snow helped get everyone in the skiing mood. Thanks Santa, keep it coming.

Thanks to all the club members and community skiers who supported our fundraising efforts. We appreciate your contributions of equipment. As well, Northern Sports provided a good variety of new equipment at very reasonable prices for our swap. At the suggestion of Don Sutton, they also opened their shop on Sunday to accommodate any customers we could not outfit.

For all of you who have those spiffy wax jobs compliments of Yvan Massicotte and the Race Team members, remember to remain humble as you breeze past everyone else this season.

Thanks for the support.  
Mary-Anne Martin

**PSR Activities**

***1000 km & Participators’ Club***

Perhaps the easiest activities to organize are the 1000 km and Participators’ Club. Charlie Vaillancourt outlines a big chart to post on the wall and the members take over.

For new members - this chart is used to tally the number of kilometres that you ski in a season and also the number of days on

which you managed to get out for a ski. The goal that many strive for is the cherished 1000 km mark but the lesser distance of 500 km is also recognized. Then we have those who challenge themselves to greater distances of 2000 km and sometimes exceeding 3000 km.

As for number of times that a member skies in a season - we recognize goals of:

- ✓ 25 (Bronze), 50 (Silver), 75 (Gold) and 100 (some want to call this platinum but I’m sticking with “Nuts”).

This is an honour system and it is the responsibility of the individual member to track his or her own performance. Simple system, eh? Of course, at the end of the season, someone has to get all that data into a format that makes some sense - and that’s not so simple. So please try to keep your entry on the chart neat and up to date. Running totals are most appreciated.

***Free Lessons for All Adult Members!***

Lorne and Diane Luhta will be giving lessons this winter.

Sign up in the chalet! We will try to meet the group needs: never-beens, wanna-bees, have-beens (can ski but need a refresher fine-tuning lesson).

Skate or classic!

We will pick times to suit the various groups – morning, afternoon, evenings.

Oh, it IS great to be retired!

Lorne will also be giving an **advanced** wax clinic on **Sunday, January 4<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m.**

Other wax clinics will be offered but these will be presented by non-retired persons. They aren’t as well organized so at this time we don’t have dates and times. Please watch the bulletin board for details.

*Note: Lorne and Diane could use some help with those ski lessons. When there is a sizable group, it is essential to divide them into smaller groups such that the skiers being taught will be of approximately equal skiing ability. That’s when some extra help is needed. Remember that you don’t have to be an Olympic racer to teach basic skills to beginners. Lorne and Diane will look after the more advanced skiers. If you are interested in helping with ski lessons, speak to Lorne or Diane. Phone: 235-8048. Ed.*

***2004 Annual Loppet***

A loppet is a long friendly race designed to promote cross-country skiing. While some skiers approach the event from a competitive point of view, many prefer the more traditional approach of taking a Sunday ski with family and friends, dressed in costumes, and just generally having a grand time. We encourage all members to take part in this annual fun-filled event that starts at the South Porcupine Trailhead.

The 2004 Annual Loppet is set for Sunday, February 29. Registration, lunch, and presentations will take place at the South Porcupine Branch of the Royal

## PORCUPINE SKI RUNNERS

Canadian Legion. Loppet start time is set for 11:00 a.m.

For further information you may contact Stan Kaczmarek or David Mader. Let's make this year's loppet one of the best.

### *Sprint Races*

The sprint series was a very successful event last year with over 30 people of all ages and abilities participating in at least 4 of the 7 races. The event will be held again in 2004 starting in mid January. Watch for posters at the club for the exact start date.

Races are held at 7pm every Tuesday and the race course is the 1.25 km Green Trail. If the weather is stormy or below -18°C, the race will be postponed until the following week. The focus of this event is participation and fun. It will be a 7 race series like last year and the races are handicapped best 4 out of 7 so everyone has a chance to win. This year's overall prize will be one pair of exel avanti C1 ski poles. There will also be prizes for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>.

For more information, please contact Erik Luhta at 235-5948.

Calling all mathematicians! I need help devising a good handicap system. Last year was good but I would like to refine it. If you would like to help, please give me a call and we can work it out.

### *Junior Ski Team*

The PSR Junior Race team aims to help young skiers become strong competitive racers. Interested in skiing faster, we love to ski, to train, to

continually improve our technique and to race.

The Junior race team is open to teens who want to race at the regional, provincial and national level. Generally athletes on the Junior Team are 13 -19 years of age, while younger racers train with the Development Team.

The Development Team is coached by Eric Luhta and David Vodusek. Race team coaches are Lorne Luhta, Greg Deyne and Sue Kaczmarek, with support from Yvan Massicotte ( Waxing Technician).

Coaches and parents work together to get the team to races, support racers at races ( transport, waxing, coaching, supervision etc.) and to raise funds to support the team's travel, wax and race expenses. Athletes are also involved in coaching younger athletes, fund raising and in helping with work at the club.

This season the PSR Junior Racing Team has doubled in size, to now consist of a squad of 10 junior age racers . Veterans of the Race Team – Robb Martin, Mallory Deyne, Bibiane Mahy, Natasha Kullas and Veronic Massicotte will be joined by newcomers Martha Sutton, Geoff Sutton, Brent Poppleton, Ghislain deLaplante and Tyler Spigarelli on the Ontario Cup Circuit.

Training began in May with running, hiking, roller skiing and strength training and intensified in the fall with XC running races and hill bounding/striding at Kamiskotia. The racers are now skiing as much as possible to get ready for their first races.

The race season started early for some of our racers. Natasha raced last week while attending the Ontario Elite Race team Camp in Vernon, BC and secured 2 Silver medals at Continental Cup races. Mallory and Robb, also part of the Ontario Elite Race team, head west mid December to compete in the Canadian Trials for a place at the World Juniors.

Ontario Cup races begin December 28/29 in North Bay. They then move through Deep River and Thunder Bay in January and Duntroon in February, leading up to the Nationals in March in Charlo, New Brunswick.

Sue Kaczmarek

### *Jackrabbits*

The first registration for Jackrabbits was held on November 30 in conjunction with membership applications and the ski swap. There were 33 registrations taken on that day. We encourage all others who are interested in signing up to do so before the start date of January 4, 2004 at 1:15 pm. There will be **NO REGISTRATION** on January 4 when the Jackrabbit sessions start. We need that day to get the groups organized and accepting registrations is too time consuming. So if you have missed registration, please call Suzanne Dupont at 268-2843 before January 1, 2004.

There is a \$25.00 registration fee which is cost-shared with Cross Country Ontario. Each child

that enrolls in the Jackrabbit program will receive a toque and a program badge which should be available by mid-January.

The experience of learning a new sport should be enjoyable and not a chore. Parents are welcomed to stay with the group sessions, especially if your child is a beginner to the sport. Here are a few tips for parents.

- Children can learn to ski before they comprehend what they are doing.
- Learning should be accomplished through play and discovery with limited formal instruction.
- Keep in mind that terrain can teach better than most people can.
- The ideal setting to introduce children to cross country is a terrain garden / ski playground which has been set up to assist children to learn to ski naturally - a site that provides a variety of skiing discoveries.
- The focus should be on the development of gross motor skills such as balance, gliding, and diagonal stride without poles.
- Children require appropriate clothing and equipment in order to have a positive ski experience.
- Children should have had enough to eat but not be too full when they begin their ski. Encourage them to drink water before and during their session to keep hydrated.
- Ensure that your child has play time on skis in addition to the sessions.

- Encourage your child to look around and identify characteristics of the natural environment - a creek, a chipmunk, an owl or a cliff.

Have fun...think snow and merry Christmas to all.

Suzanne Dupont

chore and five days were spent hauling and spreading wood waste. A total of 140 hours was spent on this alone. Thanks to Domtar and the donation of material we were able to cover the areas mentioned. A special thanks to Chris Cantwell and Fred Stiles, they donated 40 hours of their time hauling and spreading wood

**TRAIL GROOMING**

**ALL MEMBERS MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS A WEATHER CALL**

**MOST TRAIL GROOMING IS DONE AT NIGHT. IN ORDER TO FINISH AT SOME REASONABLE HOUR (SO THAT WE CAN GO TO WORK THE NEXT DAY), START TIME WILL BE 06:00 PM (18:00)**

**IF WE GET SNOW IN THE MORNING AND THERE IS NO INDICATION AS TO WHEN IT WILL STOP, ONLY PARTIAL TRAILS WILL BE GROOMED.**

**IF THE GROOMING SIGNS ARE INSTALLED IN THE PARKING LOT, PLEASE STAY OFF THE TRAILS.**

**ALL ATTEMPTS WILL BE MADE TO KEEP AS MANY TRAILS OPEN AS POSSIBLE DURING THE GROOMING PROCESS**

**Reports**

***Trails***

We have been skiing since November 6 even though there was not much snow and trail conditions were less than ideal. We managed to open all of the Wood Chip trails and even track set them.

Trail work, in the summer and fall of this year concentrated mainly on repairing the Blue Loop and parts of the Blue and Red trails. With the wet summer and soggy fall, it was not an easy

waste. Germain and I installed four more culverts; we could have used at least another four. The wood waste project was not easy. Several additional hours were spent by members of the ski team and parents helping to pull roots and rocks from the surface.

Brush cutting the trails took four full weekends. This chore actually started late and we had a difficult time getting volunteers. It's actually very demanding for those organizing to make it roll smoothly so please remember next fall - we need more help from the

members on this very important task. It's the one task that makes the difference between early or late skiing so to all those that started skiing on Nov. 8 weekend, I hope you were there to assist. A list of names appears at the bottom. I hope I did not miss anyone.

I must mention that Mike Columbus has been volunteering not only his time but also his brush cutter for a few years now. His brush cutter died this season (we had a funeral) but I hope this will not keep him from using our equipment, or anyone else for that matter. By the way, Diane Luhta helped out and stated that she would trade vacuuming her home to assist in the future. It's actually a pleasant way to get a workout outdoors. So next year, let's SAY YES and show up when the time comes, it's something that has to be done.

#### **Brush Cutting: Volunteers**

Bracken, Mark / Buck,  
Charles / Cantwell, Chris / Columbus,  
Dale / Columbus, Mike / Davidge,  
Glen / Davis, Jim / Deyne, Greg /  
Deyne, Mallory / Dobrowski, Ed /  
Fogal, Ken / Garlock, Irvin / Green-  
away, Peter / Kaczmarek, Sue / Klein-  
huis, Paul / Labelle, Larry / Lauzier,  
Germain / Leggett, Tony / Luhta,  
Diane / Luhta, Lorne / Luhta, Eric /  
Mader, Dave / Mahy, Bret / Martel,  
Jean-Marc / Martin, Robbie / Martin,  
Tom / Massicotte, Yvan / Massicotte,  
Julie / Massicotte, Veronic / Millette,  
Myles / Nytz, Jozef / Perreault, Gerry  
/ Perreault, Paul / Smith, Stuart /  
Sutton, Don / Timmins Sea Cadets, (7  
members) / Touchette, Denis /  
Vodusek, David

Gerry Perreault

#### **Equipment**

Since March, we have been working on all of our Equipment as time permitted. Fred Stiles performed the end of season servicing and also the pre-season checks that are now completed so we are ready to tackle another season.

The Club purchased a Trailer to haul wood waste; hopefully this capital investment will be put to annual use.

Our older groomer was taken to Ontrac Equipment, for some well deserved tune-up and hydraulic repairs. This should mean more reliability for years to come.

For the up coming season, Fred Stiles, Rick Mahon, Germain Lauzier, Chris Cantwell, Ivan Mascicotte, Gerry McNair, Lorne Luhta, Denis Brûlé and I will be part of the equipment group. Please thank these people when things look good and appreciate the fact that these chores are done outside any skiing time and is all on an as-needed basis. There is no schedule or start time. They all respond to the weather conditions, and they all have homes and drive-ways to clear as well. Let's hope for a good safe season, happy skiing to all.

Gerry Perreault

#### **Facilities**

Part of the fall ritual is getting all that signage posted on and around the chalet as well as the many trail signs. Thanks to Germain Lauzier who was the

leader in this department. Larry Stewart and I assisted.

Two new fire extinguishers were purchased, one for the garage and the other for the waxing area. If you use the waxing area, please take time to notice the location of the fire extinguisher and get familiar with its use. This applies to the chalet as well. Should there be a fire, it's nice to think that our members would be able to react decisively - and be sure to call the City fire department.

The wood heating stove will have to be replaced to bring it up to present fire and insurance codes.

Denis Brûlé

#### **Web Site**

Porcupine Ski Runners is pleased to announce our brand new web site. Our new Web Master is Rick Cecconi and if you have any suggestions, you can contact him at:

[webmaster@porcupineskirunners.com](mailto:webmaster@porcupineskirunners.com)

Over the next while Rick will incorporate much of the older information in an archive with a search engine so you can search for topics of interest to you. e.g. 1000 km club etc. The site will also have a new weather feature: "Real Conditions Report". All you have to do is log onto:

[www.porcupineskirunners.com](http://www.porcupineskirunners.com)

and click on the link to find out what the current weather conditions are.

The site also has detailed trail maps and a membership

application form that can be printed out and mailed in.

Keep on visiting the site as you will see numerous changes.

Rick Cecconi

**The Fun Stuff**

***Cross Country Skiing and Dining in Italy***

I was craving adventure last year when an email from Ernie Roth of the Halton Outdoor Club popped on my screen. The club had organized a trip to the South Tyrol of Italy (in north-western Italy) and had a few extra spaces for avid cross-country skiers. It was just what I needed and I replied immediately. I did not know anyone going on the trip or what to expect but that made it all the more exciting. I met the group of 27 at the airport in Toronto and we flew to Frankfurt, then over the Dolomites to Venice, then we bussed through the Dolomites to Sesto near the Austrian border.

I met my “Bunkie” Margaret, a retired (but definitely not tired) U. of T. librarian and I spent the rest of the trip awed and inspired by this 70+ German-Canadian. She felt like a wimp (her words) if she did not ski 15 kilometres a day and she played a mean game of scrabble too! I also had a much-needed menu and bus schedule translator for the two weeks, as there is little English in South Tyrol.

The menu was in German and Italian and each morning we had to pick from two entrees and two appetizers. The Saturday we

arrived we were treated to a six-course dinner with gourmet presentation and gourmet taste. The food was superb! I never had the same dinner twice and I did not have spaghetti, hamburger, pizza or French fries! On Valentine’s Day each woman was given a rose with her meal!

Several possible ski routes tempted from the door of the Hotel Monika and after exploring these mountain trails we used our bus pass (10 Euros for the week) to take us to other mountain passes and valleys. The weather was beautiful, around minus five most days, and along the trails there were restaurants where hikers and skiers sat outside in the sun, drinking wine, beer or cappuccino and eating strudel. Sometimes we took a bus to the top of a mountain and skied down, stopping for refreshments along the way. The trails were always well groomed even though there was not much snow last winter.

It was also possible to ski on the World Cup Racing trails in Toblach or at the Biathlon Centre in the Antholz Valley, where we stayed for the second week of the trip. I found the 5 km world cup biathlon trail at 1600 metres to be the best I have ever skied on. It just flowed beautifully and it did not have the brutally impossible uphill and downhill like the trails at Canmore and Big Thunder. Groups formed naturally as people found others of their skiing calibre and fitness and dinner was always entertaining as people traded stories about their day.

Most of the couples were retired and enjoyed ski touring at a leisurely pace. One woman only hiked and there were plenty of winter hiking trails. We also shopped, visited medieval towns and villages and got to see the “Iceman” in the museum in Bolzano - a rather gruesome sight of a five hundred year old cadaver found in a glacier recently.

All of this - flight, hotel, meals (except lunch), bus to and from hotels, and ski pass cost \$2600 from Toronto and everything was organized for us. Some people even went downhill skiing at the famous Kronplatz ski area. The hotel provided free ski equipment.

Needless to say I am going back this year with Lorne (he also plays a mean game of scrabble) and the price has only risen a bit. The trip is the first two weeks of February. If you are interested I may be able to put in a good word to Ernie. Ciao!

Diane Luhta

PORCUPINE SKI RUNNERS

**Wet Socks Stop Colds**

While in Italy last year I started sniffing and sneezing after skiing and Bonnie (from Vancouver) suggested I try the Wet Sock treatment to stop my cold. "The wet sock treatment?" I inquired. "What's that?"

She told me to wet a pair of thin wool socks in warm water and wear them to bed covered by a pair of thick dry wool socks. It sounded horribly uncomfortable but I had nothing to lose so I tried it. I woke up in the morning with warm dry feet and no signs of a cold. I was also told to drink plenty of water, which I did.

Apparently there is science behind this and several more people tried it during the trip and it worked for them too.

Try it! It works!

**Finances**

The budget for the current season is shown on this page.

It is divided into two parts to separate the operational income and expense from those that we classify as non-operational and projects. The membership contributes directly to the operational expenses while non-operational and projects are funded through donations (some from members) and bingo revenue.

While a deficit is shown in both sections of the budget for this season, that is part of the planning. The trail lighting project was completed this year but the financing for it was mostly completed in past years. The overall project does not have a deficit nor debt.

The deficit in the operational budget is due mainly to the purchase of a trailer to haul wood waste onto the trail. This expense was more than covered in last year's surplus.

The "bottom line" is that we have no debts and there is a positive bank balance in addition to investments.

**Operating Budget 2003-04**

<u>Revenue</u>	
Membership	50,000
Day Fees	3,000
Lockers	4,550
Jackrabbits	1,900
Donations	2,500
Events	1,000
Other	500
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>63,450</b>

<u>Expenses</u>	
Administration	4,700
Eqpt/Trails	21,100
- Trailer Purchase	6,900
Events	1,500
Facilities	10,450
Insurance	6,000
Jackrabbits	1,900
Property Tax	880
Utilities	14,800
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>68,230</b>
<b>Revenue-Expenses</b>	<b>- 4,780</b>

**Non-Operation & Projects  
2003-04**

<u>Revenue</u>	
Investment Int	2,275
Donations	10,000
Special Funding	30,000
Bingo/Lotteries	25,900
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>68,175</b>

Expenses

Bingo Expenses	9,000
Trail Lighting	60,000
Trail/Road Repair	10,000
Race Team	17,500
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>96,500</b>
<b>Revenue-Expenses</b>	<b>-28,325</b>

**Future Projects**

With the trail lighting project completed, our attention is now turning to the next development. The chalet is rustic in appearance but it is also deteriorating. The list of requests for locker rentals is growing annually. These concerns are our next priority.

Plans are presently being worked on to replace the existing chalet to provide a better building with more space and conveniences. More lockers, more space for large groups and larger washrooms with change rooms are items that come quickly to mind as needs but for those of us that have to maintain the buildings and keep them functional, we'd first of all like a building that is better built on a firm foundation. Then we will happily build in the features of a more functional chalet.

We hope that some work can begin next summer but it is our overall financial position that at least partially controls the pace.