

The Inside Track

A newsletter for members of the Porcupine Ski Runners



President's Message

~Mike Kornell

A cool, wet summer and fall will soon be replaced by a cool and snowy winter. The promised return of the polar vortex should ensure a long ski and snowshoe season, once again. The change of seasons brings new board members to the PSR: Alan Heino (personnel director), Karl Laiho (secretary), David Vodusek who will be starting a junior development program, and Rhys Lucas. Jane Mulcair is joining us this year as the new Chalet Manager.

The ski swap on November 29th, will provide new and used gear for sale, ski glide waxing, season pass purchases and Jackrabbit registration. A new Piston Bully groomer will be in place to ensure terrific trails. Some event dates include our Loppet on the weekend of February 21-22 (including a repeat of the 50KM option), and our hosting an Ontario Cup race with 150+ provincial racers on February 28th and March 1st, 2015.

Our club of 1,000+ members, with the new chalet and great trails all within a 10 minute drive of our homes, is the envy of other communities. It is made possible with our hardworking volunteers. Please volunteer your time and energy to keep PSR strong.

Ski Waxing Service

~Neal McNair

Drop off: Saturday, November 22, 2014

There is no better way to start the season than with a newly waxed pair of skis: only \$20/pair, plus additional cost to remove grip wax. Proceeds go to the PSR race team. On Saturday, November 22, we will be accepting skis for waxing. Drop off your skis at PSR from 10:00AM – 1:00PM.

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Fall Issue

November 2014

The Inside Track is distributed to the members of Porcupine Ski Runners to keep them informed about club activities. There are two newsletters issued each season.

Thank you to those who contributed reports and information. Suggestions and comments from members are always appreciated.

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Chalet Manager

- Alan Heino

Porcupine Ski Runners is pleased to announce that Jane Mulcair is the successful candidate chosen to fill the Chalet Manager job vacancy.

Jane was most recently employed as the seasonal Park Clerk at Kettle Lakes Provincial Park (for the past three summers) which has many similar responsibilities to the PSR Chalet Manager position. She has also previously undertaken extensive administrative and supervisory responsibilities covering a variety of industries including construction, aviation, mining, engineering, and aggregates. Some of Jane's duties include preparing the chalet for the winter season; hiring, training and supervising Maintenance/Rental Room staff; making arrangements for equipment rentals; as well as keeping and posting a schedule of club events and activities.



Mike Kornell (President), Jane Mulcair (Chalet Manager), Alan Heino (Personnel)

Membership

-Neal McNair

In past years we have experimented with online membership applications and payment via the Zone4 website. This year we are pleased to introduce online registration via our own site: www.porcupineskirunners.com. On the whole, this system will integrate better with our offline membership database and will allow for much more functionality and efficiency. That has benefits for everyone.

Here are a few reasons why you should use the new system:

- NO additional fees charged for paying online,
- get your receipt immediately, including printable membership cards that you can start using right away,
- add a password to your membership and save your data for later,
- pay online with Visa, Mastercard or American Express (payments are handled securely via Stripe.com),
- choose to sign up for email notifications (newsletter, trail updates, etc.),
- save the volunteer PSR membership team many hours of data entry, card printing and mailing.

We think the new system benefits you as much as it does us, and we would like to see as many members as possible register online this year. See the Website report in this newsletter for more details about online registration.

We understand this online stuff is not an option for everyone. At PSR you will always have the option of registering on paper, and you'll find the paper application form in this newsletter.

In other news, while our membership numbers were down very slightly last year, we still had over 1,000 members and remain one of the biggest cross-country ski clubs in the country. This is obviously the result of our very low membership fees and our beautiful trails and facilities. This combination is possible only because of our amazing volunteers, and frankly, we could use a little help. If you have an interest in helping out, please consider indicating that you are willing to volunteer when you submit your membership.

Membership fees remain unchanged for this year; however, you will notice a request to consider making a donation when you pay for your membership. This is to aid our efforts at rebuilding our capital reserve fund after the purchase of our new trail groomer. We appreciate any amount you can contribute.

Not all lockers were rented out last year, so feel free to make a request for a locker when you submit your application. Lockers will be assigned as requests are received, and the cost for the year is \$60.00.



Trails & Equipment

Gerry Perreault

The brush cutting and removing of downfall started the first weekend in September and was completed the third weekend in October. We use Bush Hogs to do much of the cutting. These are like big power driven lawnmowers that are pulled by an ATV and they greatly reduce the time required to get the job done. Rob White was a great help by using the Bush Hog during the week, reducing the weekend work for the rest of us.

Thanks to our Leader and Organizer Ray Denis, along with all of the others that assisted. And thanks to Germain Lauzier who repaired and varnished the trail signs. He will be putting them up with the help of Rob White.

As everyone knows this has been a very wet and soggy summer and now fall has had more rainy days than normal.

We did have problems getting the equipment around the swampy areas and anyone working had to have high rubber boots. With all this water on the surface of many areas of the trails, we hope we get days of cold weather before the snow comes to help freeze the ground.

The following is a list of dedicated helpers:

Robert White, Mike Columbus, Greg Deyne, Cheryl Allard, Dale Columbus, Collin Finnila, Brenda Finnila, Joe Vodusek, Luciano Torresan, Ray Denis, Gerry Perreault, Mike Kornell, Neal McNair, Isaac McNair, Rhys Lucas, Alan Heino, Dave Kapias, Dave Vodusek, Kevin Terthof, Christine Dorion, Brad Fennuk, Luc Murray, John Labine.

We have had a problem with our trail lights. Don Sutton checked the problem in late spring, identified the items needing repair and compiled a material list. This has now become a project with a cost. Paul Pirie and his students at TH&VS will prepare the material for installation and assist, along with other volunteers, with the installation. We hope that this project can be completed before the ski season starts because the trail lights are much needed. This is an expensive repair that took us by surprise.

In the spring, Dave Stiles completed checks and maintenance on all of our major pieces of equipment. The snow machines (2 Ski-doo's) were serviced by the dealer; the track setter and renovators were serviced and are ready to go. Thanks to Ray Denis, Germain Lauzier and Gerry Perreault for that work. We are not sure if Dave will be able to continue as our part-time mechanic and operator as he has full-time employment at a local mine.

We have purchased a new groomer to replace the 1984 Bombardier. This is another expense, but it was absolutely necessary. Repair parts for the old machine were becoming very difficult to find, making repairs very time consuming and costly. The new unit is a 2006 Piston Bully, complete with a tiller and track setters. Now we will need some time to get used to operating this unit, so please excuse us if, for a while, you see some weird looking tracks and funny curves.

Ski Swap and Open House *-Neal McNair*

Drop off: Saturday, November 22 from 9:00AM-1:00PM

Ski Swap/Open House: Saturday, November 29 @ 9AM

The Porcupine Ski Runners Race Team is busy preparing for the annual Ski Swap and Open House. This event provides a great opportunity to:

- get great deals on used equipment (20% of sales go to support the race team),
- sell equipment that is no longer in use,
- get advice on equipment, waxing, technique, and clothing,
- shop for new equipment, accessories and clothing from local retailers Luhta Atomic and Northern Sports,
- sign-up for a PSR membership (computers will be available for online registrations).

Drop off the skis you want to sell at the PSR chalet. Donations are always appreciated. Special pick-up arrangements can be made by emailing John LaBine (psrace@gmail.com), Mike Kornell (kornell41@gmail.com) or Neal McNair (mcnairneal@gmail.com).



Facilities

~Neal McNair

The Facilities committee primarily looks after the chalet. That means recruiting several volunteers to do many chores such as unlocking in the morning, locking up at night, making small repairs, getting fire extinguishers serviced, taking garbage to the dump and many other things. We are not idle in the summer either because there is grass to cut, chalet rentals to tend to and small repairs to make. This summer we made two improvements to the facilities. We installed wood siding on the garbage bin using left over material from the construction of the chalet and we've installed a new sign on the septic bed.

John Labine arranged for the purchase of this sign and it is intended to promote the club and club events. Gerry McNair, Germain Lauzier, Gerry Perreault and Rob White installed the unit which included setting up a spotlight with a timer so that it will be visible at night. Whether or not this is a permanent location for the sign remains to be seen. Perhaps we'll decide another location will give better visibility and we welcome your opinion on that. Do you have an idea how best to utilize this new sign? If so, tell us your idea – we'd like to hear.

Chalet rentals continued this off-season. We added a reservation form and calendar to the website to simplify booking the facilities and it seemed to work well. The off-season rentals have the potential to become a significant source of revenue for the club, and we will attempt to market it more aggressively next year.

By PSR Board policy, the club is considered to be open for the season when ski trails are being groomed. But that doesn't mean when we are just packing the snow at the very beginning of the winter. The hours of operation are 8:30AM to 9:00PM, every day of the week. Office hours for the Chalet Manager and equipment rentals are still being decided and will be announced online.

Inclement weather could cause us to close the facility. There may also be times that the ski trails become too soft due to warm weather, and in order to preserve trail conditions under these circumstances we may have to temporarily close the facility. If that happens, notices will be posted on our website and Facebook.

Capital Fund

~Gerry McNair

We need your help.

Our club is operating well and revenue is keeping pace with normal operating expenses. And, despite the challenge of building a new chalet, we've been successful at maintaining a reserve fund for capital expenditures. This reserve fund is also a means of paying for emergency expenses, if and when required. For the past year the club's directors have been working on a plan to replace our oldest 1984 Bombardier BR400 grooming machine. The plan included applying for grant money to ease the pressure on our reserve fund but obtaining government grants for equipment replacement has become more difficult. Grant criteria expect organizations, like ours, to be independently sustainable. That is, grants are for new initiatives and replacing equipment is considered maintenance.

As planned, we have purchased a new-to-us 2006 Piston-Bully to replace that old BR400 making use of our reserve funds. Then, quite unexpectedly, we had a problem with our trail lights. This occurred late in late spring, 2014 and, after investigating the problem, we now know that a major repair job is needed. Since night skiing is an important feature of our club, these repairs need to be done immediately. Postponing the repairs would have a detrimental effect on the club's membership and revenue.

Effective trail grooming and night skiing are two features our club wishes to maintain. To defray these costs we need the help of our members and visitors. We have always tried to keep membership and day-usage fees low to encourage our community to be active during our long winters. Now we need you to come forward and contribute as generously as you can to help pay these latest major expenses and rebuild our reserve fund. You will notice that there is a space on the Membership Application Form where your contribution can be stated. Unfortunately we cannot issue receipts that can be used as a tax deduction because the club is not a registered charity.

We are confident that you will want to see your club maintain its excellent reputation for quality trails and extensive program activities.



Website

~Neal McNair

As I write this article the website is getting a graphic design make over, and the final tests are being run on the online membership application and payment system. By the time you read this article, both jobs should be done and 'live' at www.porcupineskirunners.com.

Online Membership Sales

Implementing our own online membership application and payment system has many benefits for the club and for our members, and they are explained in the Membership article. Below, I'll try to address some questions you may have.

1. How do I use the online membership application?

Just go to www.porcupineskirunners.com, and click the "Membership" link. The steps are pretty clearly laid out, and you can pay with Visa, MasterCard or American Express. If you are unsure about something, please email me at mcnairneal@gmail.com, and I will get back to you as soon as I can.

2. How secure is the system?

First of all, we never receive or store your credit card information. Payment processing is handled 100% by Stripe.com, a well-respected ecommerce solution company. While the payment form looks like it is integrated into our website, in fact your credit card information is sent directly to Stripe.com for processing, and we only receive the confirmation that the payment succeeded.

Secondly, the non-financial data you do send to us is transmitted via HTTPS, meaning that it is encrypted in transit. Look for the "https://" in the address bar, usually accompanied by a lock icon:



Our goal has been to setup a secure and easy to use registration process. We encourage all members to use the online application if possible. If you have questions or suggestions for the system, please send them to me at mcnairneal@gmail.com.

Website Redesign

With the help of Marc Gagnon of VisionX Design Studios, the PSR website has a fresh new look. Marc volunteered to do the graphic design, and we think the results are fantastic. Thank you Marc!

We will continue to tweak the features on the new site, and your suggestions and feedback are always welcome.

Ladies Night

~Christine Dorion

Starting January 6th we will ski the lit trails every Tuesday @ 6:30PM. Meet in front of the chalet.

Ladies Night is a fun way of meeting other women and enjoying a night of fresh air while staying fit. All women are welcome from beginners to experts. No extra cost—PSR membership or day pass is required. Rentals may be available upon request.

For any questions, rental requests or to help out beginner skiers during Ladies Night, you may contact Christine at psrcoach@gmail.com or call 705-262-9610.

Soirées pour dames

~Christine Dorion

À partir du 6 janvier nous skierons les pistes éclairées chaque mardi à 18h30. Rencontre devant le chalet à 18h30.

Voici une façon amusante de rencontrer d'autres femmes et de profiter de l'air frais tout en restant en forme. Toutes sont bienvenues, que vous soyer débutantes ou expertes. Aucun frais supplémentaire—adhésion ou forfait journée nécessaire. Location d'équipement est disponible sur demande.

Pour toute question, demande de location ou si vous souhaitez aider certaines skieuses débutantes lors de ces soirées pour dames, contacter Christine au psrcoach@gmail.com ou au 705-262-9610.



Jackrabbit Program

~Mireille Fortier and Christine Dorion

Getting ready for skiing . . .let's start planning for our little ones.

The Jackrabbit Program is for children 3-12 years of age. It includes 3 levels: Bunnies, Jackrabbits and Track Attack.

*Please note that children 5 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

Registration *** IN PERSON ONLY ***

Saturday, November 29, 2014 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Sunday, November 30, 2014 from 1:00 to 4:00 PM

Spaces are limited – first come first served!

Jackrabbit membership fee: \$35.00 per child

Child must be a paid PSR member to join the program (PSR registration will also be available at this time).

Equipment rental: \$35.00 for 10 weeks

A limited number of sizes are available and fitting will be on registration days (bring along your skier).

Season dates: January 4, 2015 - March 15, 2015

Every Sunday at 1:30PM.

Snacks: A sign-up sheet will be posted on the first day of the program.

We are looking for assistant coaches; please contact Christine at psrcoach@gmail.com. High school students are also welcome to join our team of volunteers. For more information about the program, or to volunteer, you can reach us at psrjackrabbits@gmail.com.

Remember, cross-country skiing is a sport for life, starting children early on will assure a healthy and strong cross-country community!



Programme des Jackrabbits

~Mireille Fortier et Christine Dorion

La saison de ski arrive, on doit préparer nos tout-petits.

Le programme des Jackrabbits est pour les enfants de 3 à 12 ans. Il inclut les 3 niveaux : Bunnies, Jackrabbits et Track Attack. *Veuillez noter que les enfants de 5 ans et moins doivent être accompagnés d'un adulte.

Inscription *** EN PERSONNE SEULEMENT ***

Le samedi 29 novembre, 2014 de 10h00 à 13h00

Le dimanche 30 novembre, 2014 de 13h00 à 16h00

Les places sont limités – premier arrivé, premier servi.

Frais : 35.00\$ par enfant

L'enfant doit être un membre du Porcupine Ski Runners (inscription au PSR sera aussi disponible).

Location d'équipement : \$35.00 pour 10 semaines

Notez que nous avons des pointures limités.

Ajustement des équipements sera la même journée que l'inscription (assurez-vous que votre petit skieur soit présent).

Dates du programme : le 4 janvier 2015 au 15 mars 2015
Chaque dimanche à partir de 13h30.

Goûters : Un datier sera disponible la première journée du programme.

Nous cherchons des assistants pour nos entraîneurs; veuillez contacter Christine au psrcoach@gmail.com. Les étudiants du secondaire sont bienvenus à notre équipe de bénévoles. Pour de plus amples renseignements, ou pour offrir vos services aux Jackrabbits, rendez-vous à psrjackrabbits@gmail.com.

Pensez-y: le ski de fond est un sport pour la vie, y introduire nos enfants tôt assurera une communauté de ski forte et en santé!



Schools

~Neal McNair

Again this year, Porcupine Ski Runners will be inviting local schools to bring groups of students to experience the outdoor winter fun of cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Schools run weekly programs, special activity days and race teams. With the option of equipment rentals, all students now have the opportunity to take part in these wonderful activities.

For PSR, the school program is a net positive as well. This is often the first introduction to skiing for these students. Our experience has been that entire families often take up skiing and/or snowshoeing after being introduced to these activities through their children's involvement in these programs.

We send invitations directly to schools but any parent or school staff member can visit our website:

www.porcupineskirunners.com to get more information and to access the various forms associated with the schools program.



Timmins Biathlon Bears

~Angele Caporicci

The Biathlon Bears program is being offered this year by Timmins Biathlon using the facilities of Porcupine Ski Runners. This is a fun challenge for skiers aged 9-14 years. Biathlon involves skating cross-country technique and the firing of a rifle. This combination requires not only endurance and strength, but also tremendous skill and precision. Unpredictable elements like weather and wind conditions make this sport a fun and rewarding challenge.

Participants will learn the parts of the air rifle (pellet gun), safety requirements of the air rifle and on the shooting range, how to shoot and the format for racing. They will develop fitness through active play, games and activities, participate in regular cross-country skiing during the season, have fun and be part of a club.

Parents are encouraged to come and support your son/daughter in this very challenging but fun sport. We are in need of volunteers! Please ask us what you can do to help your child enjoy this sport.

The majority of training will take place Saturdays from 11:00AM-1:30PM with the possibility of Monday evenings if a training location can be secured. Fees must be paid before training can begin and covers insurance, materials, equipment, badges, club award dinner, expenses and membership to the Biathlon Ontario/Canada. Membership to the PSR is required. Coaches are trained in the Sport Specific NCCP (Biathlon Canada and X-Country Canada).

For further information about prices and training, please check out the PSR website www.porcupineskirunners.com under Biathlon Bears or contact Head Coach: Angele Caporicci at 705-262-0257 (cell) or caporiccia@me.com.



PSR Nordic Ski Teams

~John LaBine and David Vodusek

Interested in enhancing your Nordic ski technique while training at a higher level? PSR has a number of groups that do exactly that.

PSR Development Ski Team: In conjunction with the Jackrabbits Track Attack program, the Development Race Ski Team is designed for youth aged 9 to 12 years of age. The objective is for the participants to become technically competent cross-country skiers and use their skills to explore a wide range of cross-country ski activities, from back-country excursions to ski tournaments. The goals of the program include fitness development through active play in a fun, team atmosphere while exposing children to a variety of "adventure-based" cross-country ski activities. Development Team skiers must be enrolled in the Jackrabbit Program (Track Attack) with training sessions twice a week. For more information email David Vodusek at psrrace@gmail.com.

Junior Race Team: Youth in Grades 8-12 train approximately 6 days a week for most of the year. In the summer, training consists of jogging, cycling, hill bounding, Nordic walking, roller skiing and core strengthening. Winter training consists of strength training, along with improving classic and free skate ski techniques. The goal of the team is to enhance their fitness level and compete with other Nordic skiers at the provincial and national level. Participation at local Loppets is encouraged. OCup race information can be found on the Ontario Cross Country Skiing website www.xco.org. For additional information contact John LaBine at psrrace@gmail.com.

High School Teams: The goal of the high school Nordic Skiing teams has been to have fun while working on improving fitness levels and free-skating technique. For more information contact your high school or email John LaBine at psrrace@gmail.com.

PSR to Host Ontario Cup Race February 28 & March 1, 2015

~Greg Deyne

Porcupine Ski Runners will be hosting an Ontario Cup Race on February 28th and March 1st, 2015. The number of participants should be around two hundred and fifty. For the safety of our members and athletes, the parking lot, chalet, and all interior trails (both cross-country and snowshoe trails) will be closed to our members for Saturday, February 28th and Sunday, March 1st, 2015. The Olympic and South Porcupine trails will remain open for skiing by our members during these days. Depending on weather and scheduling there is a good chance the interior trails could be opened sometime Sunday afternoon.

This is a major undertaking for our club and it is expected to generate significant financial benefit for our community; your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

If you wish to volunteer your time to help make this event a success for PSR and the City of Timmins, please e-mail Greg Deyne at deyne@vianet.ca.

Event Dates to Remember

Ski Waxing Service

drop off November 22, 2014 10:00AM-1:00PM

Ski Swap drop off

November 22, 2014 9:00AM-1:00PM

Ski Swap and Open House

November 29, 2014 beginning at 9:00AM

Family Day - February 16, 2015

PSR Loppet - February 21-22, 2015

Ontario Cup Race - February 28-March 1, 2015