



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

It would seem this winter season that Mother Nature has enrolled us all in the "Challenge Program" given the late start, snow deficiencies and Siberian temperatures! However, it has not dampened the active spirit of the club; far from it...there has been "action stations" on all the club's varied fronts covering the spectrum from first-timer Bunny Rabbits to 80+ seasoned tourers. Our Family Program Director Matthew (Ballick) has on the boil some 16 Bunnyrabbits, 45 Jackrabbits, 19 Challenge and 7 Racers. Initiatives have been taken to introduce participation of younger children in outside ski events, such as the Canadian Ski Marathon and the Morin-Heights/Viking Loppet.

Gordon (Cohen's) Saturday and Thursday touring programs have enjoyed excellent attendance to date albeit challenging with marginal snow coverage on the backwoods trails. Reports of these trips have been supplemented with photos to put non-attendees "in the picture".....and to see what they are missing!

Once again, our traditional "Spring Fling" organizers Michael and Elisabeth (Dohrendorf) did not disappoint the two dozen Vikings who signed on for new skiing adventures further a field; this time a little earlier, and down in the USA. Over the long weekend 2/3/4 February, the spectacularly located Eagle Mountain Lodge in heart of the White Mountains (New Hampshire) served as a cozy base from which Vikings could explore the local trail networks.

Some 50 "cyclists" attended the traditional Viking Pot-Luck Supper that was held at the club house on the Saturday, 27th February. Organizer Daphne (Mitchell), with enthusiastic gastronomic support, pulled off yet another merry evening. This year's theme was to honour the cycling achievement of one of our very own; namely Doug (Bowes-Lyon) who last summer cycled from Verdun, QC to Victoria, BC. For disbelievers, Doug brought in his bike and other trip paraphernalia, plus maps detailing this epic road trip. Just to make Doug feel he was in the "right company", supper attendees were encouraged to dress in cycling garb.

With the Viking racing and touring trail networks being "discovered" by an ever expanding community of users, such as: new members, drop-in Carte Réseau holders and other ski club "one-off" invite visits, it now becomes more imperative that they don't get lost! To this end the board extends its gratitude to the tireless efforts of that incredible GPS duo Chris and Louisa (Teron) who have not only accurately mapped the entire trail networks, but have additionally undertaken to ensure that the signage is as user-friendly as is practical.....given that we are not a commercial enterprise and that for the most part, the trails are on land that does not belong to us! (Don't forget that you can download the latest Viking network maps from www.vikingskiclub.com) In conclusion, we would encourage new members, who even with map in hand, are perhaps not comfortable to venture off onto the Viking network alone, to contact any member of the board so that accompanied introductory tours could be arranged. The trail network is one of the club's greatest assets.....pity not to enjoy it!

Next major event for the club is the 35th running of the Morin-Heights Viking Loppet on Sunday, 25th February. (See www.skiloppet.com). We make the traditional plea that members who are not entering to consider volunteering to assist in its running...it's fun and will be appreciated. (PS A volunteer party follows the event!)

Derek Wills, Secretary (on behalf of the Board) 10-Feb-07

Loppet to Offer “Skiing At Its Best” For the 35th Time

by Tim Humphreys

Despite a very timid start to winter, organizers have been confidently moving forward with arrangements for this year's Morin-Heights Viking Loppet to be held Sunday, Feb. 25th.

The popular cross-country skiing event will be the 35th time skiers of all ages will enjoy “Skiing at its Best” and organizers are not about to let them down. The popular 10k run down the region's Aerobic Corridor has been well maintained and the design of this year's 20k and 33k courses have been finalized. The latter courses will take advantage of the Viking's racing trails and promise participants a safe and challenging run regardless of the length they choose.

“Last year, we were panicking at the end (when severe freezing rain coated trails with a thick sheet of ice and threatened the Loppet altogether),” said organizer James Jackson at a recent Loppet meeting. “Now, we're getting the panic out of the way early and I'm feeling a lot more confident now.”

The lower Laurentians didn't see any significant snowfall until Boxing Day. Cold temperatures during the latter part of January coupled with Montreal-based media reports over the holidays about the plight faced by ski hill operators throughout Quebec only served to create the impression there was no cross-country skiing to be had in Morin-Heights.

The reality, however, is that the cold temperatures quickly solidified ponds and lakes and drove the frost deep into the ground. What snow the region has gotten during January has ensured a healthy base on all trails. Not wanting to damage the base, the Viking Ski Club and the Municipality of Morin-Heights wisely kept track-setting equipment off most trails until more snow fell and this discouraged some cross-country skiers who prefer to ski track-set trails. But avid skiers like Wilma Wiemer and other Viking members have been out on the Club's trails almost every day since the start of the year.

“I was in Montreal (recently) and people I talked with couldn't believe that I ski every day on well-covered trails,” she said, as a coating of fresh snow blanketed the region Feb. 1st.

The 2007 edition of the Morin-Heights Viking Loppet will comprise three events: 10k, 20k and 33k. The 33k replaces the 38k event of last year. It was decided after last year's Loppet that shortening this event might encourage skiers to try the longer course.

Organizers have worked to ensure the outing remains very affordable and registration fees will include a hearty hot meal, a newly-designed Loppet pin, transportation to and from the start and finish areas and performance medals for various age categories. The Loppet's on-line registration process has been improved this year to allow for multiple registrations with a single, convenient credit-card payment, a feature requested by participating cross-country ski clubs and many families.

Sportstat, the largest timing company in Canada, will again ensure participants' results are accurately captured and quickly relayed to organizers so gold, silver and bronze medals can be awarded to leading skiers. Participants will be asked to seed themselves at the start lines of each event so that the faster, more competitive skiers are at the front.

This year, registrations will not be accepted on the morning of the Loppet to enable volunteers to focus on ensuring everyone has a great day of skiing. However, participants will be able to sign up the day before (on Saturday, Feb. 24th) between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. at the Morin-Heights Elementary School on Village Rd. The school will again serve as the staging area for the Loppet. Participants will receive their race kits and “*ChampionChip*” timing bracelets the morning of the event.

Revised course descriptions and a new trail map, prepared by the Viking's Chris Teron, have been added to the Loppet's website at www.skiloppet.com. Other vital information such as start times for each event, regular updates on trail conditions, registration fees and easy access to the EventsOnline

registration system are also available on the website. Skiers, meanwhile, are asked to arrive at the staging area 90 minutes before the start of their event. Swix representatives will be on hand to assist with waxing.

A lot of effort is being invested by the Loppet's organizers to ensure every detail is properly handled. And, an army of volunteers will be on hand at refreshment stations, road crossings and at the finish area at the Bellevue ski centre to ensure all participants have a great day of skiing.

If you haven't registered yet for the Loppet, you may wish to do so today. The trails beckon and organizers are expecting a record number of skiers will answer the call.

The Joys of Our "Village" Loppet

by Howard Bussey

It's the middle of February and organizational plans are in full swing for the annual Viking –Morin Heights Loppet under Wilma Wiemer's capable guidance. Despite the very short season, you're in reasonable (?) shape, should you race on Sunday 25th, 2007? Here are a few thoughts on the race from an enthusiastic but average skier. This piece is emphatically NOT about serious racing, and anyone under 35 should stop reading now. Its purpose is to motivate recreational skiers, who like me aren't exactly improving, to enter this year's race. The key thing to remember is that racing, even at the age-group category level in local loppets is enormously exciting. It's all about being a child again. Racing gets the jungle juices flowing while calling up the best you can muster on race day. However, unlike running on the roads where almost everyone can run and participate and you can hang out anonymously in the weeds and not worry about being last, X-C-ski racing can seem a little more intimidating. This is all mindset nonsense of course, X-C-racing is a totally whimsical, fun activity. No one, including you, will remember the results even next week. At best you'll smile when you stumble on a ribboned Viking bronze medal stuck in an old klister box in a year or two. Racing at this level is all about the fleeting fun of the moment!

A 10k X-C race most resembles running a road race, not too far and the way well defined. It has lots of entrants, and you can hang out with people all around and do your thing. However, it can pressure you into going just that little bit too fast, especially at the start, testing your ability while bringing your heart thumping into your mouth. This is a place to start to see if you relish the idea of balancing ego against reality as you push down the Aerobic Corridor chasing and not catching 8 year old participants to the finish. In the 20k and 33k races, things superficially seem a bit more serious. Most entrants look like they know what they are doing, although this is only partially true. The fields get smaller, the distances longer, and there is all that technical business with the skis and the snow to distract. Much of this is the usual illusion, a facade for the racing that we the "also rans" are about to do. There is a real race in there for sure, with maybe three or four possible contenders each for the women and men's champions. But this is not what we're about; you'll see the winners group at the start and at the medals, so forget about them and about the finer points of waxing. Just enter!

Practical Pointers for the 20k

1) Know the course, it varies from year to year depending on conditions and circumstances, but much of it runs on Viking trails, and it's comforting to race over familiar home ground. You can build a strategy and pace yourself for the various difficulties as they arise, knowing what is at the bottom of a steep run can be very helpful, though sometimes it's just fallen skiers, so don't get too confident. A good way to get a preview is to volunteer to be on the trail-setting crew the Thursday before, when you get to have a relaxed look at much of the course, putting up markers, trimming branches and generally smoothing out potential problems.

The Start

2) Despite an appearance of order and veteran starter Lou Lukanovich's best efforts, the start is almost always late. The goal is to stay warm, hanging about too long in the windy open field by Skip's hut can be miserable. Wear some warm-up stuff. But, you will be working so don't stay

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overdressed for the race. Just before you line up for the start, take off your warm-ups and shove them all in the bag to go back to the finish.

Hopefully there will be good new snow at -10C, technically perfect conditions, and a blue wax day to have you flying. More often, alas, this is not the case, with snow or rain or icy freeze up, or some bizarre combination of these to contend with. The increasing variability of the weather has played havoc with the race in recent years, and great adaptability is needed to cope with quickly changing conditions. The race almost always happens, but the size of the field falls when times are tough. Show up, be ready to give it your all, but if it's -24C with an icy crust and blowing hard, you really don't have to start!


3) So, conditions are good and having skittered up and down the multitude of parallel tracks testing our skis, chatted to our buddies and soon to be 'competitors', we are waxed and ready for the "off". Where to stand? Be realistic; get in there in the middle lanes somewhere, behind people who look at about your level, including those that you

may recognize as your likely competition. Avoid the front rows, as you don't want to hinder those behind you who are faster. Avoid the edges, as a squeeze play is about to happen just ahead. Many shoot off far too quickly at the start, don't be carried along on this initial exuberance, a better plan is a steady pace that can be sustained until the end- but only just. The track soon narrows to two lanes from about a dozen, so be prepared to give way at this bottleneck as the full hurtling range of small children to old timers in wool britches squeeze in ahead of you. There will be time to catch them, there's almost 20 km to go and the field will soon thin out. Rather, concentrate on keeping your skis and poles out of harms way in the starting frenzy. Sometimes the race heads out across Jackson Road directly to the Red Trail, avoiding the racing trails, this relatively easy terrain gives you time to sort out your stride and pace. In other years the race takes in the racing trails and this can be an initial challenge. That first hill up to the "Wall" can have a real traffic jam, don't be tempted to push too hard uphill here, just try and stay in touch with your competition and hang on down the hills which can be sporting when busy. In recent

years the "Wall" has not been used in races, however, the "Wall" bypass is itself a nontrivial obstacle when crowded.

The early game then is defensive, stay connected and in one piece. Try not to fall and try not to be tied up with a stitch or aching lungs, just stay at the edge of what you can sustain for the full 20k. It doesn't hurt yet, you're in shape, there is no hint of fatigue, everything flows, just keep it all under control. There is lots of boisterous camaraderie to enjoy at this stage, everyone is feeling good, and people will laugh with you as you fall. Hopefully the technical aspects of waxing that you checked out in the starting area are working, you have a glide, but more importantly you are not back-slipping on the hills! If it's not working don't fight it or steam will soon be coming from your ears, stop and put on more wax or even a softer kick wax. One memorable warm race day I gambled on using glider-coated waxless skis and watched pro's like Erik Vikander and Michael Dohrendorf struggling to wax at around 0C. They stopped, re-waxed, and soon shot by me again, but I had done the right thing and outraced some far more able that day. Alas, there are no universal solutions to the waxing dilemma, on a typical -10C day those waxless skis would have left me at the back of the field, giving, a shorter glide on every stride.

4) The race is now settling in, several kilometres have slid by, and the field is slowly sorting itself out, those around you are more and more likely to be going at around your pace. This is what I call the "backside" phase of the race, because that's all you see. You are just behind someone, they are either slowly pulling away from you, or you are catching them up. Once in a while someone zips by, but for the most part, while maintaining a steady pace, you are slowly gaining or losing on a "backside", and you get to know them for a short while. A trick here is to maintain your steady pace, and not get sucked into chasing backsides, you will catch and pass the slower ones all in good time, and the faster ones will inexorably pull away, to vanish around even the most distant corner. Try and be courteous, be aware of who is behind, and let faster people by, even if on occasion



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Shirley Rene Wachter

those ahead won't always give way to you. Usually all is well, but now and then the dynamic can be surprisingly competitive considering how little is at stake. I had one guy right on my tail, pounding up a hill behind me, I pulled over to let him pass, he didn't want to go, I urge him by, he tells me to "Calm Down!" What's that all about? I then just ignored him although he stayed right behind me, eventually his sound dropped away. Other times people will speed up when you try to pass, you are supposed to say "Track" so that slower skiers will let you by. Please give way at the first opportunity when you hear "Track", and most times it works, but not always. No worries, be courteous, don't even think of road rage here; with patience there is usually a spot where you can get by a tiring, slower skier even those who act as if they are in the fast lane on the Autoroute. With your buddies, it's a different matter, you are doggedly fighting them, but here it all works out because nobody can take it too seriously. So the maintenance of a cheerful or at least positive attitude under stress is the goal, however, achieving this can require more than a little inner Zen.

5) As the race wears on, somewhere out here on the Blue Trail or where it rejoins the Red by the Montfort meadows, you may find yourself largely alone. This is disconcerting, where is everybody? Such times allow you to work on your form and the holding of pace with little distraction, savour these moments. Do not let that little rat in your head tell you that you are going too slowly, or worse that it's time to ease off, as everyone has left you in the snow dust. If everyone were holding a steady pace, as you are valiantly trying to do, you would see no one until the end of the race, but it never works out that way. People will appear ahead of you as they slow, though now you get passed far less often, unless you too begin to slow. This is where you have to dig in to hold that modest pace that seemed so effortless earlier, this is where it starts to hurt, and this is where your technique can falter on hills and on even modest corners. If all goes well and you are now on the home stretch of the Aerobic Corridor, you will gradually reel in those who went out too fast, and passing those who effortlessly sped away from you at the start can be satisfying.

As you approach Morin Heights, there are a few onlookers and you force yourself to pick up the pace a tiny bit, your competitors are usually just ahead but aching out of reach at this stage, or if behind they will try to surge by as you approach the finish. Here the game is to guess if they are in your age group, or even in the same race as all converge here, and to only respond to a challenge if there is a chance that they are displacing you even further from the medals. The finish line approaches, do what you can to cross it in good order, the right pace has you unable to continue further. You understand just a little of what goes on at the end of those Olympic races, where collapse follows perfect technique a centimetre over the finish line. But enough heroics, get those skis off right away, have something to drink, walk about a bit and pat a few backs in congratulation and respect for the ambitions of those who struggled with you out there. Then, it's back to the school for a shower and some food and camaraderie, and a chance to see how the real races went, with all the athletes and their amazing times stepping to the podium. But apart from the top crew, there are a

bunch of medals to be distributed to us, the hoi polloi; if you're lucky you may pull off a bronze in your age category. If not, applaud the medalists generously, but do check their times to see how far ahead of you the age-group winners were, it's something to aim for next time. My problem is that all those firm resolutions to improve don't last the season, and now it's the middle of February again! Do enter our Village Loppet race this year-it's a very special kind of fun.

Learning to Love Klister

by Jason Elie of Norway Nordic

After a painfully long wait, winter is finally upon us. We all have our theories about why we had to wait until mid January for a first big snow fall in Montreal, but the fact of the matter is our winters are getting warmer. If we want to keep enjoying skiing all winter long, many of us will have to embrace different types of wax. Many seasoned cross-country skiers tend to avoid it and anyone new to the sport shakes in their ski boots just at the sight of it. It's the one bad word in the cross-country world we all cringe at: "klister."

This is my second winter doing the Thursday evening waxing clinics at Norway Nordic (clinics are free; telephone for more details). I've become quite good at answering any curveball questions about the messy stuff and a big part of the intermediate clinic, apart from hot waxing, is spent on klister. The only way to actually talk about klister, without having everyone run out of the store when I pull out the tube, is to explain why in certain conditions it is the *only* wax that works.

Snow is a fascinating substance. The problem is that it's highly sensitive to temperature changes. There are many different factors that affect the structure of the snow crystals and therefore affect the kind wax we need to use. It sounds a little technical but when we choose a grip wax we are essentially trying to match the wax properties to the condition and structure of the snow. When it's really cold, snow crystals are sharp and abrasive. Because we want to be able to ski all day without re-applying wax, we need something that will

stand up to the rough texture of this dry snow, all the while still giving us good grip. In contrast, if the snow has a lot of moisture in it, the snow crystals are soft and not strong enough to penetrate a harder wax, that's why red wax is so soft. Basically, hard and dry snow needs a hard and dry wax, while soft, moist snow needs a soft wax (there's no such thing as moist wax...).

We can go even further to say that the crystals of wet and/or granular snow are so soft and damaged that only something just as soft and damaged would be able to give us lasting grip. Wax that soft can only be contained in a tube and that's where klister comes in. granular or wet snow conditions are what you mainly find in the spring. You see, in order to really enjoy every day of skiing, in any conditions all the way to late March, a tube of klister is a must in any skier's wax kit.

To apply: Always keep a clean piece of Fiberlene (or cloth) and a bottle of solvent close by, just in case. Carefully open the tube and apply, in a fish bone pattern, on both sides of the groove (not in the groove). The wax pocket for klister is 10cm shorter than your blue wax pocket, to the middle of your foot. With the provided scraper, or even better your thumb, spread the klister to form a uniform layer. Or, if you own an iron, you can set it to 100°C and iron in the first layer of klister. Let the ski cool for ten minutes and apply more klister in the same way as I described above using your thumb to spread it out. This base layer of klister, ironed in, will cause your additional layer(s) to adhere better.

To clean: Spray on a liberal amount of solvent on the klister. Take a few strips of Fiberlene cloth and apply on top of the klister. Pat the Fiberlene down so that it is embedded in the klister (you can pass the iron, if you have one, to heat the klister into the Fiberlene). With the provided scraper, pick up the Fiberlene and klister in one pass. You can reapply solvent and wipe off any residue.

It is that easy; and learning this can significantly extend your skiing season into late March and make your skiing more enjoyable. temperature-specific klisters are

not necessary unless you really want the best. A universal wax like SWIX's VM Universal 10°C/-3°C works just fine in most conditions. Have a wonderful end of the season.

Jason Elie is the Shop Technician at
Norway Nordic: (514) 457-9131

(editor's note: as noted in Howard's article, waxless skis are an alternative to klister)

Olivia Goes to Canmore

by John Symon

As communicated to the membership recently by email, Viking's Olivia Nesbitt, 14, was one of 13 female adolescent skiers chosen nationwide to go to Alberta from February 2 to 10 to participate in the "Fast and Female" program. The Canmore Nordic Ski Club is hosting this year's event with support from (Olympic Gold medalist) Chandra Crawford's Fast and Female Foundation and from Cross Country Canada. As part of her application, Olivia had to complete the essay featured at the bottom of this article. Olivia, with her parents (Rick Nesbitt and Sylvie Bouffard) and older sister, Audrey, of Morin Heights has long been a keen x-c skier. Here she is in her own words:

ON: My Mom was a top telemark racer and has been skiing all her life, same as my dad, and my sister used to race at the national level. I was in really good hands! My parents taught me how to ski at the age of 4. I joined the Jackrabbit program and did two years of it: JR3 and JR5, then graduated to the Challenge group when I was nine. At age 9 I completed 7 sections in the Canadian Ski Marathon. At age 10, I came in fourth at the Jeux du Quebec in a classic race and won a bronze medal in the relay. At 11 I won the Noram (North American Midget Championships) classic race. When I was 12, I completed my bronze coureur de bois in the marathon, and at 13, I accomplished my silver coureur de bois (skiing 160-km over two days, carrying 5-kgs). I would like to soon accomplish my gold coureur de bois but according to my parents, I will have to grow a little bit more!

Viking: SOME PEOPLE SAY THAT TALL SKIERS HAVE AN ADVANTAGE. DO YOU THINK THIS IS TRUE?

ON: I think whatever your size, you can be an amazing skier, it just depends on how you use it. Take Chris Blanchard for example who was on the Canadian National team who was an amazing skier, and yet is not tall, or Stefania Belmondo who was on the Italian National Team, who won several world cups and many Olympic medals and never weighed over 100 pounds! They were some of the best skiers in the world, and size definitely didn't matter for them! All you need is determination!

HOW DID VIKING HELP YOUR PROGRESSION AS A SKIER?

ON: Every Friday night in the winter, I would look forward to the next day to go ski at Viking. What I liked the best was interacting and having fun with other kids of my age who had the same passion as I did. I also enjoyed all the different things we would do, especially with the X-treme team challenge group. It wasn't just skiing, there was so much more to it. I think it really enhanced my love of skiing. Some of my best friends I've made through the years at Viking were Maikke Kirby, Sebastien Campeau, (He was much older than me, but he was sort of like my big brother), Jamie Law-Smith, Douglas Conover, Sarah Lone, Alba Taylor-Cape, Jackie Wiemer, Daniel and Sarah Moore, Jessica Krejcik and all my other buddies, you know who you are!

OLIVIA'S ESSAY

Who said girls can't keep up? Who said we couldn't carry our own weight. Girls aren't wimps! Bring it on! Never underestimate girl power, yeah sure, sometimes we like to dress up and all that, but we can be tough, we can take the pain, we can handle it! Girls can definitely handle a lot more than expected. We won't complain if we're tired or fed up, when the lactic acid kicks in, no one will know because you won't hear us whining. I may be small, I may be a girl, and I am often underestimated, but appearances may be deceiving. Never judge a book by its cover!

It's time to make room for the girls. It's our time to shine. All this time, we have been in the guys shadows, but we have to show the

world what we're made of! We have the chance so let's take it. Let's do our best to be recognized and appreciated. We have the power so let's use it. We're fast, we're fearless, and we're girls! Fast and female, a term we all love to live by. Guys, step aside, make way, watch and learn, here come the chicks!

For more information, go to:
www.fastandfemale.com



Olivia Nesbitt (right) with father, Rick, at 2005 Marathon. Photo: S. Smith

Members' News

Welcome new members
Gerry Bard & Talia Hamalian
Audrey Bouffard-Nesbitt - (instructor JR program)
Brian Cape & Pam Cape
Jeff Clarke & Carlyne Clarke
Jean-François Cordeau & Anne Mercier
Marc Cormier & Shauna Craig
Jill Didur & Bart Simon
François Dionne
Richard Duncan & Kathleen Duncan
Derrick Hanni & Renata Oballa
Joar Hovda & Grace Hovda
Julie Valente (instructor JR program) & Sylvain Gagnon
Lucy Vieira & Kevin Lowmasney

Welcome back past members
Eric Johnston & Irene Bucheli
Dennis Martin & Maureen McGregor

Lack of Snow Doesn't Stop Lessons

by Derek Wills

Notwithstanding the contribution of El Niño to our wacky weather, Viking Niños and Niñas were able to participate in the first session of the various club family programs: Bunnyrabbit (BR); Jackrabbit (JR); Challenge; and Racing on Saturday, January 13 at the Basler Hill in Morin Heights.

This was a fallback location since our traditional family stomping ground at the Viking pond still resembles a grassy savannah! Although temperatures were crisp around -10°C, we had brilliant sun and little wind, making conditions close to ideal. Whilst the Basler flats and hill served the BRs and JRs well, easy access to the nicely-groomed and track-set Aerobic Corridor was perfect for the older participants from Challenge and the Racing Team.

With close to full turn out, the club thanks all those who devoted their efforts into planning and implementing what was a most encouraging and successful start to a (delayed) season...not to forget the enthusiastic participation of our "valued customers"...the Viking Niños and Niñas!

NNN versus SNS

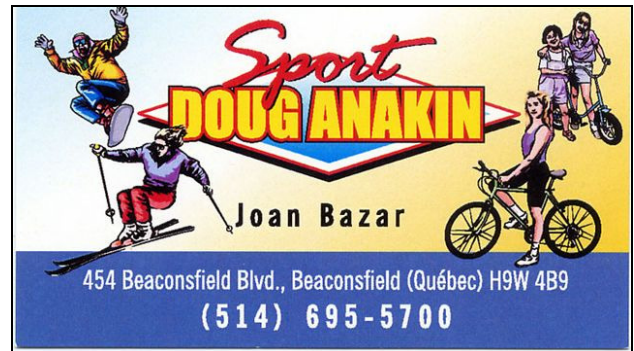
by John Symon

As most Vikings know, there are two main types of x-c ski bindings: Alpina, Madshus, Rossignol, and Rottefella use the NNN (new Nordic norm) system while Adidas, Fischer, Hartjes, and Salomon brands use the SNS (Salomon Nordic System) system. Boots from one system are essentially incompatible with bindings from the other.

Viking reached Joan Bazar, owner of Doug Anakin Sports (695-5700), a popular shop

for families buying and selling x-c ski gear, to ask her which system is better.

"They're both good systems," replies Bazar. "It's usually best, however, to start with the boots. Once you find a pair of boots that fits well, then get the corresponding bindings and try and to then stay within that system (NNN or SNS). Kids often need new boots every second season or so and it's a lot easier if everyone in the family is using the same system in case you have to swap equipment."



Viking Racing Team Captures Four Medals

by Karen Oljemark, Racing Team Coach

Congratulations to the Viking Racing Team for a stellar start to a new racing season, and welcome to official team members Kyle Stoyel, Jessica Krejcik, Quentin Stoyel, Aimée Wallace, Nicholas Wiemer, and our training partners from Montérégie, Justine and Louis Camirand-Dallaire.

We attended our first race of the season at the Coupe des Fondeurs on Saturday, January 27, which was also the Jeux du Québec qualifying event for most of the skiers. Competing against more than 450 other young skiers from the Montreal and Laurentian regions, our little group came away with four medals and seven Viking members qualifying to attend the Jeux du Québec Finals in l'Épiphanée.

Congratulations to Coupe des Fondeurs medal winners Jessica Krejcik and Kyle

Stoyel! And all the best to the seven qualifying Vikings: Jessica Krejcik; Peter Krejcik Jamie Law-Smith; Kyle Stoyel; Quentin Stoyel; Aimée Wallace; and Nicholas Weimer at the Jeux du Québec Finals from March 3 to 5. Go team!



Karen (in red) with Viking's racing team, January 2007. Photo: D. Wills

Viking Trivia:

A question in the December newsletter asked how many former club presidents were mentioned in that issue: We count the answer as six:

1. Michael Dohrendorf
2. Karen Oljemark
3. Aleksander Olsen
4. Kaare Olsen
5. Erik Vikander
6. Robert Weiler

Our new question is: Which recent Viking member won an Olympic gold medal? (hint: it wasn't in x-c skiing)

How many Viking members have made the Canadian national ski team?

(answers in the April issue)

Looking for White in the White Mountains

Michael's (early) Viking Spring Fling to New Hampshire 2-4th February 2007
by Derek Wills

I would be easy to imagine raised eyebrows at the Situation Room of the US Homeland Security when reports began to dribble in on Friday 2nd February from the Derby Line border crossing. Why were so many people

crossing here and all claiming to be going to Jackson, New Hampshire??

More intense border questioning was obviously called for: "going skiing eh!"...

"Cross-country or down-hill?"... that should trip up any suspects!

However, the US security level was never raised to Red Alert and some two dozen undetained Vikings arrived safely at the generously appointed Eagle Mountain Lodge, scenically located in the heart of the White Mountains, the towering Mount Washington (elev. 6,288 ft) lay just 14 km to the north of us. Somewhat Titanic in scale, (complete with rocking chairs on a decked veranda) the Eagle Mountain Lodge positively dripped historic Americana and with some 90 rooms, easily absorbed us Vikings. (See www.eaglemt.com)

A groomed trail network starts at the front door, but the experience of early bird Vikings who had already ventured out was not good: paper thin snow coverage, even grass in some sections! Waxing for grass conditions might prove problematic....use green? But all was not lost for Michael obviously has contacts in high places as during the night we were blessed with a fresh snowfall of some 6 US inches!



Vikings in New Hampshire. Photo: J. Philipp

Post evening meal, we took over the Lodge's gym facility....not to exercise, but with the objective of killing each other off! Let me hasten to add that this was an entertaining, but deadly card game called Loup-Garou that Réal bravely tried to introduce us to. But being well satiated after the meal and being the kind folk we are, we had no appetite to identify those malicious card holding wolves.... Réal could only

watch exasperated as he witnessed our mutual destruction, leaving the wolves alive howling with laughter!

Saturday morning, after a communal buffet breakfast, Michael had defined a rather lofty skiing objective: to ski from our Eagle Mountain Lodge (elev. 1,000 ft) to Hall's Ledge (elev. 2,500 ft) and back via a cocktail of trails, variously described on the map as "easiest", "more difficult" and "ungroomed".

Sun shining, and with the exception of a few who had opted to snowshoe, we set off enthusiastically whipping along beautifully groomed trails, but not for long as Michael steered the pilgrimage northward onto "ungroomed" trail No. 46.... the Wildcat Valley Trail. Goodbye groomed trail, hello trail breaking! The boulder strewn and a steep upward gradient made it obvious why it was ungroomed, and mumbling among the ranks made it clear this was no way to return; not to mention that Michael's ski-damage insurance premiums skyrocketed! However, short lived, the next section of the Wildcat Valley Trail was more pleasant and eventually we came out to the main valley road, an appropriate time to assemble for lunch and discuss options.

All agreed continuing on to Hall's Ledge was not an option, a schism developed and we ended up the "walker-backers-along-the-road" and the "lets-ski-back-by-another-way" avoiding the rocky section.

The latter group took a leap of faith by returning on a "more-difficult/ungroomed" category trail No. 7 (The Circuit) which seemed to entail climbing eternally and abruptly terminating with a Mach 2 descent down the Black Mountain down hill ski centre! A short walk along the road and we were greeted by Ernie issuing "reward cookies" on a spur of the groomed network that would take us easily back to our Eagle's nest lodging. We later learn that the "trail sweeping" Anglo-Danish duo (Hjørdis and Linda) followed our tracks and likewise ended up, somewhat lost, at this down hill ski centre.

Fortune shined on them as they managed to get driven back by a sympathetic ski marketing lady at ski centre info desk! Respective husbands of course were

worried, as they lay immersed in the Lodge's Jacuzzi!!

As a prelude to the Saturday dinner, Gordon and Sorel hosted the traditional Happy Hour in their room, a chance to review the day's adventures over snacks and drinks....albeit a little crowded!

Well rested after Saturday's exertions, its check-out time Sunday morning, following the community buffet breakfast, and then general assembly in the car park to await Michael's guidance for Sunday's ski action.

The Viking vehicle convey heads northward through the valley of the White Mountains until we drive into the Great Glen Outdoors Centre, a very well appointed base lodge where we get tagged and issued with the network map. We set off by skiing through a tunnel which brings us under the highway and out onto the start of a busy network...numbered participants whizzing around apparently on a 300 minute relay event. However, with generous Olympic style grooming, there is room for all and we decide to head off to a cabin (Great Angel Station), located at the extremity of the network, as a lunch destination objective. All trail junctions were numbered for easy map reference, and much to Réal's satisfaction they even had trail signs posted bilingually....were we still in the US?

Despite taking the longer peripheral trails we ended up at the cabin in surprisingly short order...were we getting fast, or was this a small network? Whatever, we settled into the cabin and indulged in an early packsack lunch. Too early to head home, we pottered around the network, checked out the Caddisfly Yurt. Those still up for a concluding challenge decided to round off with a map described "Back Country Trail" called simply Outback.....we discovered that it should have been called Back-out!!! Why or how this particular trail should have ever been on the map was beyond us since the final descent was so steep and obstacle strewn that most took off their skis and walked down!

Soups, hot chocolates, and cakes were enjoyed back in the Great Glen Lodge before we all departed for the long drive

back home...and into what seemed to be the start of the next Ice Age with plummeting temperatures. A final round of grateful applause to Michael and Elisabeth for orchestrating, once again, an eventful venture into new skiing territories!



Bunnyrabbits on Basler Hill. Photo: D. Wills

Fitness Tax Credit

provided by Cross Country Canada

The federal government has implemented a new non-refundable tax credit to encourage youths to participate in active sports. Cross Country skiing is one of those sports.

The clubs and membership committee of Cross Country Canada thought that we should make sure that clubs are aware of the programme and are thinking of how they can take advantage of it. We hope that you find this information useful.

The federal government just recently released details on what types of programmes would qualify. Expect changes as there is already significant lobbying going on by groups that believe they have been excluded. This may result in either a loosening of the rules or even a tightening to ensure that only the types of activities that the government had in mind, qualify.

At this time none of the provinces or territories has announced their intention to participate in this programme so for now it remains purely a federal only programme.

What is a non-refundable tax credit?

A brief lesson in non-refundable tax credits. Tax credits reduce the amount of tax that you would otherwise pay. It won't result in a refund if you have no federal taxes otherwise payable or it will limit the credit to the total federal taxes payable before the credit (that is why it is called a non-refundable tax credit). The amount of the tax credit is the same regardless of how much money you make – so the wealthy have no extra advantage.

How much is it worth?

The maximum expenditure claim per eligible child is \$500 per year; however the limit is not really per child but rather a maximum of \$500 times the number of eligible children in the family. That means if a family has 3 children and only one is participating in eligible programmes then the maximum for that family is \$1,500 which might all be expended on one child.

The tax credit is 15.5% of the expenditures. That means it is worth \$77.50 on a \$500 expenditure.

For more information:

www.cccski.com/main.asp?cmd=doc&ID=4376&lan=0



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Insurance Is a Great Idea for Skiers

provided by The Co-operators

Did you know that a hospital stay in the United States or another country can cost thousands of dollars a day? Provincial medical plans cover only a fraction of these costs. Even staying in a hospital in another Canadian province can cost you money. If

you get hurt or sick while travelling, you could easily spend more than you bargained for.

The good news is that travellers can protect themselves from financial loss with travel insurance. The Co-operators has affordable policies that cover all types of trips and all types of travellers. How does travel insurance work?

Depending on the plan you buy, your benefits generally include:

- Financial coverage for emergency treatment of an injury or sickness
- Benefits like emergency transportation, out-of-pocket expenses, dental emergencies and return of travelling companion
- Fast, upfront payment to hospitals and doctors so you don't have to worry about money
- Options for extended benefits like trip cancellation or lost baggage
- 24 hour support from a team of multi-lingual medical consultants and claims specialists

Multi-Trip Travel Insurance

If you take ski trips out of Canada or travel frequently to the US or other out-of-country destinations, Co-operators' multi-trip travel insurance might be right for you. Multi-trip insurance lets you sign up once and stay covered for as many trips as you want during a one-year period. If your trip lasts longer than you expect, just "top up" your coverage for a small extra charge per day.

Group Sports Plan

If you're a group of three or more people travelling for an amateur sports competition, the group sports plan is just what you need. Receive all the same benefits and at discounted rates. Both plans are available to Canadian residents covered by provincial or territorial government health insurance plans. Both plans also cover outdoor activities like skiing, hiking, camping or rock climbing.

Other things you should know

While insurance is certainly a great idea, it doesn't cover everything. For example,

multi-trip and group sports plan insurance don't cover speed contests in excess of 60 km per hour. Nor do they cover professional sporting activities. Travellers should always read and understand their policies.

How to buy insurance

For more information about travel insurance, visit www.cooperatorstravelinsurance.ca or phone **1-800-856-8726**. Travel insurance is the best way to travel!

Editor's Note:

Wilderness trips always involve a certain amount of risk and Viking members should consider travel insurance as part of trip preparation. The good news is that for those who are members of **Mountain Equipment Co-op**—and that's probably most of us—free, multiple, two-day travel insurance is offered as a co-op membership perk through the Co-operators Travel Insurance. Also offered is group insurance for those competing in sports events. Outdoor activities such as skiing, hiking, camping and rock climbing are specifically covered by these insurance packages.

To activate your free insurance for a one-year period, simply call the above telephone number while having your co-op membership number on hand.

Where Did The Snow Go?

by John Symon

Early winter of 2006-2007 in eastern North America broke records for mild temperatures and lack of snow. Northern locales from Quebec City to Thunder Bay experienced their first green Christmas in recorded history. The unusual weather wreaked havoc on wildlife and agriculture...and on x-c skiing. Since then, temperatures have plummeted, and some snow has fallen, but snow cover is well below what it should be.

Viking trails are largely ski-able now, even if not all "officially" open. But not all Viking members are aware that their membership entitles them to ski on Morin-Heights' trails for free (while parking elsewhere), including the 13-km Aerobic Corridor, which has been open continuously since December 2. Each

season, this trail is often the first to open and last to close in the region. The telephone number for the **Aerobic Corridor** is **450-226-1220**.

Some Viking members have been experimenting with ways to keep in shape when there isn't enough snow around.



Unidentified roller skier on bike path in Lachine, Dec. 2006. Photo: P. Vikander

There is increasing evidence that human activities are triggering massive global climate change. Scientists are now almost unanimous in blaming man-made emissions of greenhouse gasses (GHG) for the dramatic changes to the global climate patterns. In the meantime, the federal government has revealed a plan that would have Canada meet its Kyoto GHG reduction targets, but only by the year 2050. If you are among those who feel this is too little, too late, you can contact the office of **John Baird**, Canada's new **Environment Minister**, by telephoning: **(819) 997-1441** or emailing: john.baird@ec.gc.ca

Trail Reports: **(450) 226-3284** or go to: <http://x-c.com/clubs/viking>

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Full-page	\$70	\$200

Newsletter Submissions

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John Symon, Editor,
john.symon@videotron.ca or to 2044
Trenholme, #3, Montreal, QC H4B 1X6



Nordic walking was initiated by Finish x-c skiers who wanted to train outside of the ski season. The sport is now gaining popularity in Quebec. Photo: J. Symon

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