



Walden Cross Country Fitness Club Newsletter

February 2012

Chalet Phone: 692-2321 Website: www.waldenxc.com

Trails

by Ralph Kitler



The trail system was a little late in opening this season strictly due to the lack of snow. At the Naughton venue, the whole grooming concept has changed dramatically. No longer is the large groomer the principal piece of equipment being utilized or the stand by. For example, the large groomer was used primarily in one of the last three years, and it was used only 3 days last year. Every indication is showing that this season maybe the same. It does an amazing job but requires a certain amount of snow--any less and it can close a trail system quickly.

There has been a return to the snowmobile oriented groomers and other associated attachments. The Ginzu groomers at both the Beaver Lake and Naughton trails do an amazing job, but do have their limitations in heavy snowfalls. The problem can easily be corrected by pre-rolling and packing the trail system with a roller thus reducing the over whelming effect of excess snow on the groomers. The snow can then be processed and utilized forming the base of the trail, rather than being pushed and wasted on the side of the trail.

We have just constructed a roller for Naughton that will roll, compact and finish a trail system with one pass. It is excellent in deep snow, skate trail situations and large areas. We also saved a substantial amount of money by building it in house. Matti has a smaller roller to assist with grooming and the replacement of the older Alpines with the new snowmobiles has been a positive decision.

The substantial off season volunteer hours, efforts and money spent on ski trail modifications, improvements, culverts, laying of wood chips (hog fuel) trimming etc. has returned huge benefits. We can now start to become frugal with what snow we receive. Rather than using it as a filler to fill holes and voids we can form it into a skiable base. Thus skiing earlier in the season and extending that season by processing the snow with up to date equipment and learning to exploit what snow we receive will be possible. Continuing on this path is the way to go on the trails, hopefully minimizing the maintenance and protecting of what has been completed and continuing to improve those areas that are next in line. You are skiing on the fruits of your labour.

All the trails are open and in good condition at both sites after surviving the recent rain. Last weekend a loppet was held at Naughton and from my understanding the comments were very positive. We are fortunate to have two separate sites with a variety of terrain catering to both skiing techniques. Please use and enjoy both sites. The Beaver Lake trails with all of Matti's efforts are returning very positive comments. A pleasant afternoon of classic skiing should be on your upcoming agenda.



The Club is collecting Canadian Tire money to be used for trail work. A jar has been set up at the front counter for donations.



Walden Fundraiser

by Patti Kitler

Walden's Youth Programs are selling BUFFS for their fundraiser. BUFFS are a must have in your sports bag. You can wear the buff all year round in any sport you do, from skiing to golf. The buff is used to keep the wind off your face, as a hat or even as a head band with our crazy weather.

Please help support our youth programs. Cost is \$25 per buff and they are available in at the new chalet. They are available in 2 colours: blue and rust.



New Ski and Yoga Program

by Patti Kitler



A new program for adults only will be introduced on Fri Feb 3.

Friday night ski and yoga with Pam will be offered for Men and Women beginning Friday Feb 3rd and Feb 17th from 630-8pm. The cost will be \$15/person and half the money will be donated to the youth programs. Both sessions will be classic technique followed by about 30min of relaxing yoga. Please email Pam at pamelamaw@gmail.com if you are interested. If you are not a member of the club, a trail pass is required and rental skis are extra.



Beaver Lake Event

by Patti Kitler

Walden would like to offer a classic event at our beautiful Beaver Lake trails. There will be 5km and 10k distances as well as children's races in the field. Please mark Sunday, February 12, 2012 on your calendar. There will be prizes for 2 mystery times.

Cost: \$10 for the 5 and 10 km event and \$5 for the children's events.

Start time: 10:30 am

More information will be coming week. Come on out and enjoy Beaver Lake trails.

Please email or call Patti if you can volunteer at 705-692-3818 or

pattikit@gmail.com



Learn to Ski

by Patti Kittler

For elementary students grades 4 to 8:

Have you tried cross country skiing and wanted to learn more? Come on out to the Walden Cross Country Fitness Club. We are offering 4 ski lessons for \$40 per student. Class size: maximum 20 students

Program runs: Wednesday February 1st to February 25th from 6:30 to 7:30 pm

Contact: waldenxc@gmail.com or call the chalet 705-692-2321 and ask for the Elementary after school program. You will be learn the fundamentals of classic and skate skiing to prepare you for your high school's nordic ski teams.

The Club is collecting Canadian Tire money, a jar has been set up at the front counter for any donations. This will be used for trail work.



Biathlon News

by Pam Hull

The Walden Biathlon Club wants to thank the Walden Cross Country Ski Club for allowing us to use their facility to host our annual Biathlon O-Cup which took place on January 28 & 29th. Athletes from across the Province enjoyed a very well run event and congrats to all those who participated. Special thanks to Ralph for the excellent grooming and trail conditions!

Twenty-two athletes from the Walden Biathlon Club competed in Chelsea, Quebec on January 21 & 22.

Saturday's Individual Race results are:

Senior Boys: Ryan Hunter 2nd, Alex Shea 6th and Aidan Spoel 8th

Youth Men: Eric Schryer 3rd

Sunday's Sprint Race results are:

Senior Boys: Aidan Spoel 2nd, Alex Shea 7th, Ryan Hunter 10th

Youth Men: Eric Schryer 3rd





Membership

by Len Wiseman

Our membership grew very rapidly once the snow arrived. We are presently around the 600 mark (586 plus those forms that have accumulated at the chalet over the last few days). I am struggling to get all the data compiled for the use of the chalet attendants. License plate data was quite sparse on the paper forms and many did not give e-mail or telephone contact information. We use such information only when necessary, but need to have it in case of an emergency. If you think we do not have your data or know members who do not get our e-mails, don't hesitate to send me an e-mail with the missing information -- len.wiseman@sympatico.ca

Walden Skate Loppet

by Patti Kitler

The loppet which was held on Sunday Jan 22 was originally planned so our members could try a skate loppet. However, with the weather's cooperation we were able to add the classic technique as well. The loppet was a great success thanks to all the volunteers and participants.

Congratulations to everyone, especially Mathieu Archambeault who tried skate for the first time in December and skated the 8km event. Mathieu is 12 years old. Another first for the club; we had 7 para-nordic athletes competing in the loppet from the 3km to the 20 km distances. What an awesome day!

If you would like to see this event next year let the front desk know, so we can pick a date and start getting ready to make it bigger and better.



Walden Skate Loppet

by Sara McIlraith

The skate loppet was a fun family ski race with distances ranging from 3-30 km. There was even an added 'classic' track to the race course for those not wanting to skate. Close to 90 skiers participated in the loppet, including many young skiers and para-nordic racers.

With perfect snow and optimal temperatures, you couldn't have asked for better conditions. In true loppet style, skiers erupted out of the starting line in mass. The flurry of skis and poles was too much for a few skiers. I narrowly missed falling into a pile up of people – thanks Patti for teaching us how to use our quick feet to avoid obstacles. Those of us skiing 30k did 3 laps of the 9k and 1k trails. I really like to race a course with laps, as I become very familiar with all the sections of the trail. Each lap I try to improve my technique – better tucking on the hills, climbing with quicker steps, increasing my 'one skate' on the flat sections. I find that I really gain more comfort with the course and can push a bit harder on each lap.

Loppets are great events--even the competitive skiers are happy to slow down and say hello to fellow skiers, or step aside to let faster skiers by. It is a very friendly atmosphere, and great place for new skiers to try out racing.

Looking forward to next year's 2nd annual Walden Skate Loppet.



Start line for the 3 km loppet including 5 para-nordic athletes.

The Chase...

by Isabelle Langman

No matter the freezing rain or the 43 minute drive, skiing at the Walden Cross Country Fitness Club provides me the opportunity to spend that special time with my daughter Alissa, an avid and determined para-nordic skier. Last year, I asked for skis, poles and boots for Christmas. Santa Claus answered and I have skied as often as possible since. Going out on the trails with my daughter used to be a slow and difficult trek (she fell a lot and did not have the endurance or strength back then) but I have now had the best opportunity to truly ski the trails this year.

Tonight, Alissa has shown great improvement and I saw a new side of her. She took off full force and was determined to improve her time, glide down those hills and climb up the next hills. It was fascinating to see and I was up for the chase. And chase I did! It was amazing the change in her and the skill and fearlessness she demonstrated. She worked hard and in turn, I worked harder. She is my new weight loss program and it is worth every penny.

Thanks Patti, Natasha and the other athletes for giving her the courage to chase her dream and for giving me the chance to chase my daughter... and burn about 200 calories (give or take a few).

Taking the Risk

by Alannah MacLean

On a beautiful day in Canmore, Alberta, four junior women lined up at the line to start the A final for the 1.2km skate sprint. I had set my goals that morning to make the A final, and then as a dream goal, to win my first NorAm medal in the junior women category. After qualifying in 4th position, I knew I had a good chance at both of these goals—as long as I stayed on my feet and followed my race plan.

Immediately as the horn is blown, I'm boxed into 4th position. I wasn't as snappy on the 10m double pole section as I usually am. The first tendrils of fear start to cross my mind, that maybe I won't be able to get by and end up in 4th, that I'll be the only girl to not make the podium, that maybe I'm not strong enough to stay with these girls through the entire course. Already Marta and Camille have put a gap on Frederique and me, and we've only covered the first uphill corner into a downhill. But I banish those thoughts quickly and as I get into the tightest tuck possible, I pull even with Frederique for the next uphill. This uphill is fairly gradual, with a little steep offset section and a right turn into a gradual hill. The top of the gradual hill is the top of the course, so I knew that I could put a lot of power into this hill and then be recovered enough to take on the 250 m slightly inclined straightaway to the finish. I go wide on Frederique and transition smoothly into offset, and then dig deep to catch Camille who is a couple strides ahead of me. At the top of the hill, I'm half a stride ahead of her. Marta, who has led the race from the start, has already gapped the field by a considerable margin, so I focus on trying to reel her in while fighting off Camille. I know my skis are fast as I get into my tuck for the upcoming downhill into a 180° turn, but Camille isn't going to let me go that easily. I clear the turn with her hard on my heels and one skate quickly down the flatter section of the downhill to transition into a tuck. The downhill dips at the bottom and then begins to incline for the last 250 m of the course.

In my race plan, I had decided that I wanted to start to free skate at the bottom on the dip so that I could maximize my speed coming into the finish line. But as the day has worn on, the sun has glazed the course and it's much icier than it was at 9 am that morning. I make the snap decision to stay in my tuck longer because I know my limitations. If I try to rush into a free skate while I still have too much speed, I'm going to end up on my bum. My balance in sprinting has come a long way this year, but it's not yet perfect (for those of you that don't know, I'm notorious for falling in sprint races). And I definitely do not want to blow my chances for a medal. Camille has now pulled even with me, and starts her free skate earlier, giving her a half stride advantage. As we transition into one skate and pass the "100m to Finish" sign, she is slightly more than 2 feet ahead of my body. We're moving at about the same speed, and I just can't seem to make up any distance on her. Marta has already crossed the line, but all I can focus on is coming 2nd instead of 3rd. We're now only 10 m from the line, and Camille is still ahead. In a split second I decide to lunge instead of getting in one last pole 5 m out from the finish, and stretch to my full capabilities. It was a big risk, but I needed to take it if

I had any chance of beating Camille. I can't remember if I closed my eyes or looked down at my foot, because as we collapsed into the finish area, neither of us knew who took 2nd place. It was way too close to call.

I remember hearing the announcer say that from his perspective, it looked like I had got it, but he was going to have to wait for the photo finish. When the photo came out, and I found out that I was second by about 0.06 s over Camille, I knew that my risk had paid off. The experience definitely taught me the lesson that you need to fight to the line, no matter what. It doesn't matter if you're still behind, because the race isn't over until it's over.



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Newsletter prepared by Pearl Duff

