



President's Message

There appears to be more than the usual anticipation and excitement about the upcoming ski season at Larch Hills. Our neighbour, Sovereign Lake, is hosting a World Cup event this season, and certainly helping to put cross-country skiing in the spotlight.

I was very pleased with the excellent turnout at the first LHNS general meeting October 18th --- the largest number I have seen at a regular meeting. After thoughtful discussion about track setting patterns for our trails, a motion was passed to prepare *all* the usual trails that we set last year to accommodate the wider machine. An outstanding effort by members of our Track-setter and Trail Committees determined what work was required. Subsequent skilled cat work by Larry Scott and concerted energy by society volunteers at 'Take Back the Hills' work parties have produced a trail system that will accommodate our new-to-us PB 200. (We hope!) A great deal of thanks goes to Blaine Carson, who took on the responsibility for organizing and coordinating much of the work required to complete this project.

Discussion at the October meeting also led to a successful motion to explore the development of some narrower trails that would be track set by snowmobile. The more the Larch Hills trail system is examined, the more apparent it becomes that the diverse skiing experiences available to us are important to a large number of society members. It is hoped that these new trails will help to maintain, and possibly enhance this variety. Work has begun on studying the feasibility of snow mobile set trails.

Here's hoping for a good Larch Hills snow fall so we can all enjoy the new tracks on our adjusted trails.

A reminder that our next general meeting is scheduled for December 13, 7:00 PM, room #2 at the Community Centre. Come share your thoughts and ideas with society members and get updated as what's happening with the LHNS.

Sincerely,
Chris Letham

Tracksetter Changeover, Friday, November 25, 2005 by Blaine Carson



With some regret I said goodbye to the PB 130 after I backed it on to the delivery truck. It had 7674 hours on it and it idled on without any difficulty. It came here in March of 1993 with 5170 hours. There have been some trials and tribulations over the years, but on the whole, it has done a remarkable job and it will continue to do so for a smaller ski area. I didn't realize it at the time, but the introduction of the new trails in 2002 just made our job too big for it.

So we leave 1980's technology and move to a 2002 PB 200 with a cockpit that looks like it should be flying through the skies. Intimidating at first glance, but so was the old one when I started 10 years ago. It does the same things, just with a few more bells and whistles. Saturday, it

set its first tracks with Bruce and Ron at the helm. The report was lots of power as it climbed our hills up to the North Hub. As I skied up the Main Road, I was impressed by the quality of the tracks in low snow conditions.

The PB 200 has been a downhill machine at Mt. Norquay; consequently triple tracksetters have been added for setting cross-country tracks. At the last meeting the Tracksetters were asked to experiment with different tracksetting patterns, so bring your opinions to future meetings. This machine has 275 horsepower, roughly twice as much as the old one, but with new Mercedes Benz technology it should be as economical. With the new tiller width, only one pass is required, saving time, fuel and maintenance. (continued on page 2)

It arrived with 4374 hours, a steering wheel instead of sticks,



and new rubber belts on the tracks. According to the mechanic who worked on it, it is in good shape. It has 2 years or 500 hours of warranty on the drive pumps and motors. With taxes, it cost about \$160 000.00. We received a trade in credit of \$17 000.00 for the old one and future considerations of \$3 to 4000 for the renovator which we sent along as it only fits machines of that era.

Please bear with us as we learn to operate this new machine and do move off to the side if we meet you on the trail. For the first while, as we are learning, we will do daylight tracksetting, but as we get familiar with it we will be able to do more early morning work when the temperatures are better and there is less traffic. Speaking of traffic, if road conditions are poor, report them to 1 877 546 3799 which is a message service for Argo. The road to the ski hill is on Edgar Road off Grandview Bench in the Enderby Highways District.

Narrow (8 foot wide) Snowmobile Trackset Trails at Larch Hills

We enjoy a diversity of skiing experiences on the Larch Hills Trails. That diversity is very important to Larch Hills skiers! It has been expressed loud and clear through Member Surveys, at monthly LHNS meetings and through the special LHNS Members' meeting held last February at the Downtown Activity Centre in Salmon Arm which close to 100 Members attended.

We enjoy the ambiance of over 40K of trackset trails and over 80K of non-trackset trails on the Larch Hills. Until recently about 50% of the trackset trails were 8 feet to 15 feet wide(e.g. Stig's Loop, Gullan's Gully and Larch Lake Loop), while about 50% were wider: 15 feet to 22 feet (e.g. Larch Hills Road, Metford Road, Skyview).

At the March 2005 LHNS AGM the majority of Members present decided to purchase a "one-pass" tracksetter to replace our struggling 20 year old "two-pass" PB130 tracksetter. A near-new PB200 tracksetter has been purchased. This purchase meant that many of the trackset trails had to be widened to 18 feet to accommodate the wider machine. A skillful job of trail widening happened this fall. Now all the trackset trails are 18 feet wide or wider. It is hoped that this increase in trail width will be acceptable to the majority of Larch Hills skiers!

This fall some exploratory work has been done by LHNS Members to identify opportunities for establishing some snowmobile trackset narrow (approx. 8 feet wide) trails that interconnect with the non-trackset and PB200 trackset trails.

If you are interested in discussing these and other narrow trackset trails opportunities please come out to the December or the January Members' meetings.

Also at the December LHNS meeting there will be discussion about which trails will be track-set as two classic tracks, side-by-side, for "social skiing".

George Zorn - Past President and member of LHNS Executive Committee



January 14th is our 22nd annual Reino Keski-Salmi Loppet.

The organizing committee is already working hard. Two important jobs need volunteers:

1. Two men - to build the food shelter outside the chalet on Friday then on Saturday light the stoves and keep the water hot.

2. Snowmobile drivers - for Friday and Saturday to ferry supplies and people to the check points on the course. (You don't need to own a snowmobile - you just need to know how to operate one.) Knowing our trail system is a great asset.

If you can volunteer for these jobs or have time to volunteer in other ways please phone Pauline 833-0325.

Plan to participate in the Loppet as a skier or a volunteer it is fun for every one.

Help Wanted for Lantern Ski December 30

If you'd like to help with the Friday, December 30, 2005 Moonlight Lantern Ski please call Pat Shea at 832-3492 or George Zorn at 832-9335 by December 20. The following Volunteer help is needed:

- * Twenty Lantern Lighters on skis from 3:45 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Dec. 30
- * Four Chalet Hosts for one to 1.5 hours each from 5:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.
- * Six Event Hosts for one to 1.5 hours each from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- * Ten Lantern Gatherers on skis with head lamps from 9:15 p.m. to 10:15 p.m.





Larch Hills Nordics logo embroidered garments FOR SALE:

Quality Canadian made Larch Hills Nordics logo embroidered Fleece Vests, Micro Fleece Half Zip tops, Long Sleeved Cotton T-shirts and Youth's Hooded Sweatshirts in a variety of styles and colours are now available for purchase. Orders may be placed at Smart Imprinting & Promotions, 285-5th St. SW Salmon Arm, 832-3377. Profits go to Larch Hills Nordics Programs and Projects. Sample tops are on display and to try on at Smart Imprinting's store. See the Larch Hills Nordics website for details and an Order Form. Logo Design by Kari Toliver - Toliver Advertising & Design - Salmon Arm)

We have a new address in cyberspace

There's a new Larch Hills Nordic Society website address: www.skilarchhills.ca should now be active. It's easier to remember and to type. The old address will remain active for a year. Thanks to Jim Maybee for his website maintenance and update services!

Challenge Group

Brian Samson and I have had the pleasure of skiing the past two winters with this group of active teenagers.

The challenge program is designed for the Larch Hill Ski members from the age of 12 to 18 who have completed the Rabbit program and wish to continue to ski on a weekly basis with other members of the same age. It is intended to be a program that is casual in nature with the members determining the type of skiing that they do.

The past two years has seen this energetic bunch of skiers ski the untracked trails like; Tree Beards, Raven Ridge to Tom Jordan shelter, Mara Connection down to the Gignac's place and Metford road to South Canoe. They have skied most of the tracked trails, which seemed to have to include either Panorama or Camel's Hump runs on a weekly basis. Once a year, this group also goes and skies another mountain. Last year's choice was to ski the Holy Cow trail off the backside of Mt. Morrisey at Sun Peaks in Kamloops. A 7-km down hill run with great snow conditions. Brian has already started to plan a low elevation backcountry ski weekend that should take us into some fantastic scenic surroundings.

If any of this sounds interesting please call Brain Samson at 832-7916 or Lorne Hunter at 546-6185 (Armstrong). We would like to get started as early in December, as snow will allow. Parents are very welcome to ski with us as long as we have your child's written permission to do so.

News From the Jackrabbit Coordinators

With the early snow at Larch Hills the Cross Country Ski program for kids (Jackrabbits) will start December 3. Starting early will give the children a much longer ski season. Please be at the hill at 10:15 on December 3, ready to start skiing. The program starts at 10:30 so if you are a few minutes early everyone can find their groups and not delay the start. We are looking forward to a great season of skiing. See you up there! – Nadine Quilty

The Jackrabbit, or the Youth Cross Country Ski Program, is off to a great start. I have many new helpers this season. Please welcome Joan Bratty (registration) Nadine Quilty (promotion and media) New helpers and leaders are, Tammy Issac, Ken Whitehead, Abbi May, Julie Bradley, Michael Scott, and 2 of our very own Jackrabbits, who are now old enough to teach and assist at the Bunny level, Tuie Cleveland and Julie Maxwell.

The cross country ski program is entirely based on volunteers. We need your support. If you are a 'busy parent' then I need you!!! Busy people make great workers. We still need someone to co-ordinate the HOT CHOCOLATE ,Please call Anne @832-8625. Parents, please consider doing the leaders course, ITS FREE You are your child's' first teachers , you can do it!! The course will help you to develop some new skills. We can only grow with your help.

You will see our new posters around Salmon Arm, promoting the Youth Cross Country Ski Program-Jackrabbits, as well as the advertisement in the Salmon Arm Leisure Guide. This info is out there to help promote this fabulous sport.

With 2010 looming , Salmon Arm is bound to benefit. Wouldn't it be awesome if our Jackrabbits could run the Olympic torch through our community!! Feb. 2005, our ski club, and the Jackrabbits, started the 2010 countdown at Larch Hills. Mayor Colin Mayes was there to hand out "Cookie Medals" to our skiers, and joined us for the flag raising countdown to the Winter Olympics in 2010.

Mark December 10th, on your calendars, that's when the WORLD CUP Cross Country ski race takes place at Sovereign Lake Nordic Centre, Vernon . We will be handing out posters for the World Cup, on our first Jackrabbit session, December 3rd, 2005 @1030am.

I have checked out the snow at Larch Hills, and its awesome,, see you up at the hill!!!!!!! - Anne Nakagawa, Coordinator.

SHIP AHOY MATES!

The Jolly Roger will fly once again over Larch Hills as Captain Brian (Hook) Smith and his rowdy crew of Pirates host the Elementary School "Pirate Loppet" on Friday, January 20, 2006.

SHIVER ME TIMBERS!

Close to 100 kids enjoyed the winter wonderland 5K "Pirate Loppet" route at Larch Hills last January. As students got off their buses they were greeted by Larch Hills skiers dressed in Pirate's garb, by lively music and by a Fruit Loop Cannon at the Loppet starting line. Each student skier received big cheers from the Pirates along the Loppet route and a tasty Penkert's Bakery Cookie Medal at the colourful finish line. A hearty lunch was served after the Loppet at the warm Chalet.

SEE YOU AT THE PIRATE LOPPET – Friday, January 20, 2006



Many thanks to the Sponsors of the Larch Hills Elementary Schools Pirate Loppet:

Askew's Foods, Central Hardware/TIM-BR Mart, Lakeside Insurance Services, Skookum Cycle & Ski, Tim Horton's, Toliver Advertising & Design

Skate Ski Demo

Skookum will be having a Skate Ski Demo Dec 18, from 10 am to 1pm

Skookum will be demo-ing waxless ski's, both entry level and high end.

Skookum will also be hot waxing Cross Country skis for Food Bank donations in the parking lot!

Winners! Winners! Winners! Winners! Winners!

There were several prize winners at the Potluck social. Winners were drawn from among those who had sent in their membership by November 5th. The winner of a pair of CCBC racing Goggles was Colin Pike. A CCBC racing calendar went to Cheryl DREW. A \$150 dollar gift certificate for John's ski shack was won by Corrine Smith and the winner of a \$200 gift certificate for Skookum Cycle and Ski was Lena Armstrong.

FYI: Branch Pruning along the ski trails is restricted to 14 feet above ground level by a policy motion agreed to at the November LHNS meeting. Why? To protect the ambiance created by the large overhanging branches high up in the trees on the old growth sections of the ski trails.

The Tracksetter Shed Saga by Blaine Carson

Planning has been under way for some time with a Committee of George Zorn, Don Huntington, Ron Everest, Bruce Motherwell and myself, working on plans and location. A proposed budget of \$75, 000 was prepared and sent in to the Olympic 2010 Site by Chris Letham who also handled the request of a license of occupation for a 20 acre site between the Woodlot and Violet Creek Park. Once that had been received and we had some cost sharing funding, the Committee and the Executive met on the hill to survey the site as located today.

Our original proposal was for a metal building, but on further investigation some concerns about snowload and condensation arose, so we looked at a backup plan of concrete blocks as had been suggested by the planning meeting at Salmon Arm Elementary. However with the construction boom no one was able to start until mid October other than one estimate, which was more costly. Consequently we began to look at more conventional construction techniques.

In the meantime George Jackson, who had broken his collarbone mountain biking with his son volunteered to donate some time clearing the site with his excavator. We started September the 2nd and had great weather to prepare the site and rough in the new bypass trail. Right away we could see the right orientation for the doorway to take advantage of the southern exposure. Des Angove volunteered to lay out the foundation while George dug it. Ron Harder's basement crew went to work to prepare the footings and they were poured Sept. 9. Jim Zappone donated 2 loads of gravel for the site and Shuswap Concrete Pumping gave a donation on the pumping of the footings while Salmon Arm Ready Mix gave us a best price on the concrete. Ron and Des also made donations of materials and time.

We still hadn't finalized construction techniques as consideration was being given to using volunteers to construct a block building. When the volunteer expert was unable to do it, we came up with the idea of poured in place concrete walls. Once that was decided Ron's basement crews, with the assistance of Des, poured a 6' frost wall and then an 8' main wall, providing an impenetrable

10' of concrete. To get the necessary height for the new machine, 4' of wooden pony wall was added and covered with metal to make it more vandalism resistant. Elmco gave us a donation on the forms while Rona and Central supplied materials at contractor's pricing. A metal roof was added to handle the snow load on trusses supplied by Salmon Arm Truss where another donation was received. All framing and metal work was done by Ron Harder's framing crew at cost. Plywood was supplied by Federated at a discount. Cindy Howes volunteered to provide a concept drawing to showcase the building and to recognize the many donors.



A decision was made the Management Team of Chris, John Pagdin and myself to insulate and wire the building and provide an intrusion alarm. This was possible through donations by Dankoe Insulating, Jemb Alarms, and Bruce Inskip Electric. Salmon Arm Window and Door supplied the overhead door and steel access door at a discount, as did Cardinal Rentals for all the associated rentals. When we didn't have any wheels for the scaffolding The Tool Shed in Enderby supplied them at no charge.

Steelhead Machine Shop built and donated a drip pan for the fuel shed and COE Newnes/McGeehee built and donated 3 security gates. Wow! Al Hardy built the fuel-shed door and installed the steel person door as well as designing the gates, supervising their construction and installing them. He made arrangements with Richard Erlam who donated his lift truck and assisted with the installation of the fuel tank, drip pan and gates.

Another individual who has donated much to this year's projects is Larry Scott who finalized the grading around the shed, cleaned up the right of way for the Hydro line, and donated his loader for clearing the road. He prepared the creek crossing on the new bypass trail which George Jackson scouted out and helped pull out Reimer's Farm Service truck as he backed in to deliver organic wood waste donated by John Thielman. As this is being written, Larry is donating his time to fall and remove the leaners, which may eventually come down on the new line when it is installed. He also provided advice for the blasting done by Jock's Blasting at a discount. George looked after the logging and clean up for the right of way and we look for power early in the New Year. A lot of credit for this new power line must go to Jon Young, Manager at Hydro, and if we are really good, we may get it for Christmas.

Mention must also be made of all the individual Club members who so willingly jumped to assist when they were needed and of course raised the matching funds! It is important to note the assistance from George Abbott, M.L.A., Gaming Grants, Columbia Shuswap Regional District, Salmon Arm Savings and Credit Union, Argo Road Maintenance, Woodlot 1572-Glen Ritchie, Salmar Classic and Grand Cinemas, and the District of Salmon Arm. Thank you to all, as the building has its first occupants, the old Pentimobile and the new PB 200 as of November 25th, built in less than 3 months, and as George Jackson would say, on time and on budget!

Update on The Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail Alliance

The Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Alliance is a multi-partner effort promoting extended non-motorized trail routes throughout the region.

After a summer of route exploration, conversations and research into some of the key challenges that surfaced during the spring community sessions, the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail alliance presented an update on the project November 23, at OUC in Salmon Arm.

The evening also marked the official announcement of the newly created Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance.

Phil McIntyre-Paul pointed to efforts such as:

- Roger Beardmore and Olive Dodd's work with local communities on the regional district's parks and trail plan;
- the Shuswap Backcountry Horsemen's trails around Skimiken Lake;
- the Gordon Dale Memorial Trail Society's work on extending the Enderby Cliffs trail toward Three Valley Gap;
- Salmon Arm Greenways and SABNES' work to link the foreshore with canoe beach,
- Shuswap Outdoors and the Larch Hills Nordic Society's continuous upkeep and refining of trails in the Larch Hills area;
- the Switzmalph Society's winter village and river trail;
- the South Shuswap Recreational Trail Society's tireless lobby for pathways along Blind Bay road; the local mountain bike community's work on trails in South Canoe and the Rubberhead area;
- the Little Shuswap Indian Band and Quaaout Lodge's expanding outdoor hiking and mountain biking trail system.

There are also new comers to add to the this list, including renewed energy to work with partners on the West Bay trail between Salmon Arm and Tappen.

Some F.A.Q.'s about the Shuswap Hut to Hut Trail alliance:

1. Who will manage these trails?

We propose the formation of a regional hut and trail council that leverages the combined support of regional partners to oversee trail management. The day-to-day management of the hut and trail system will be done by a dedicated management team. This

management includes a working relationship with the Provincial Government ministries, regional government, private operators, and community organizations. It will also require appropriate tenure over the hut and trail system held in the public interest – or commons. The hut system becomes a key factor as we consider how to build in the necessary economics of management and maintenance. As part of this question, we have reviewed 10 other hut and trail systems in North America and elsewhere. Three of these were the focus of a more in-depth case study. Bottom-line: our consideration of viability is based on the ability to put a sound working management strategy in place. We are not interested in simply building some trails and hoping that they are cleared each season. We also recognize there is no provincial ministry currently in place with the resources to assume trail management.

Note: we have also worked on a draft proposal with the 5 Rings Trail (Okanagan) strategy outlining how several regional trail councils might coordinate management efforts under a single interior trail council alliance spanning the Okanagan-Shuswap corridor.

2. Will there be a policy of: “What is taken in must be brought out?”

Yes, but enforcement is a question we are concerned about and are looking for sound solutions to. Several components are currently being considered: a) an educational strategy that includes both static tools like signage and brochures, and a public relations strategy involving regional partners; b) standards and training of hut and trail staff, operators, and volunteers; c) the need for hut custodians/hosts.

3. Will there be sign in and sign out for all participants?

In some form, yes, but many people have experienced voluntary sign in/out kiosks not being maintained. So how do we do this effectively? Again, this is where the hut-to-hut system gains ground. It provides a tangible, clear way to monitor and control use within the system. The 5 Rings Trail strategy has proposed a single live-calendar booking system for all huts linked throughout the Okanagan-Shuswap. Examples of this are found on New Zealand’s extensive hut-to-hut system managed by the Federal Department of Conservation. We envision the regional hut and trail management team coordinating trail use registration for both local recreational users and guided groups.

4. If trails cross open grass lands such as fragile alpine areas, what control will there be to ensure vehicles stay on the trail?

This is critical - if we cannot do this, it is best to stop! Routing of the trails and trailhead location is our first step in directing appropriate trail use. In many cases, clearly identified trail routes will be designed specifically to direct travelers away from fragile habitat. We have been gathering current guidelines and best practices both from our own provincial ministries, and from other national and international sources. Where our efforts clearly jeopardizes fragile habitat we had best not proceed.

5. Will there be obstacles such as on the West Coast Trail to restrict some of these trails to hikers only?

This may be the way to solve some of the problems when we cannot restrict off trail access through other means. Most of the Anstey section is only suitable for hiking anyway. However, the Queest and Crowfoot sections are wide open. Currently there is a lot of quad and 4x4 use of both of those areas during the summer, some of it increasingly off track. For winter use, see question 6.

While our goal is to try to identify truly non-motorized opportunities in our region, we are not setting out to alienate current user groups. Research and discussions to date have affirmed the importance of working together with the motorized off-road coalitions and snowmobile associations as we plan for this. In certain areas, negotiating appropriate non-motorized routes within traditionally motorized areas will be required.

Similarly, we have approached this with the view that some route areas will be suited to several modes of non-motorized travel - hiking, biking, equestrian use, snow shoeing and skiing, while others are suited to exclusive use by one mode of travel. To this end, partnerships are being developed with the mountain biking community, the local chapter of the BC Backcountry Horsemen, and hikers. (Winter use and paddling present different challenges.)

In general, three strategies seem to be predominant:

- a) Create shared planning, development, and educational strategies with motorized recreational user groups;
- b) broader education and training of regional partners, tourism operators, recreational user groups, volunteers and staff;
- c) use of terrain, features, and other appropriate filtering systems when designing routes for exclusive non-motorized use.

Fortunately, most of the alpine routes we are considering lend themselves to the strategy of appropriate terrain filtering. Areas where mixed biking, hiking and equestrian use are suited will be harder to manage for motorized access.

6. If snowmobiles are to be allowed, what protection will there be for wildlife? E.g. Mountain Caribou.

We have no say over snowmobiles. They are currently the dominant recreational user throughout much of the higher sub-alpine areas both through tenure and winter access. The cat ski operations are also of concern re: Mountain Caribou. Currently most of the plateau areas and alpine surrounding the Shuswap are impacted by these tenures. Summer hiking is not nearly as critical on Caribou habitat as most of the routes will be above their habitat. As indicated in question 5, our goal is to explore and to identify non-motorized hiking routes within this already motorized landscape.

7. Will users be responsible for all costs or will taxpayers pay for evacuation of injured users?

Our general response to this is: “Wow-users should be responsible!” However, current reality is different. Concern over the issue of search and rescue is a concern of our local Search and Rescue Society. We agree that research, and planning together with Shuswap Search and Rescue is required to create a sound risk management strategy. Another focus is on reduction of risk through appropriate educational strategies, and through training hut and trail custodians and hosts. As well, we believe that the development of trained guides, and the use of skilled local nature-based ecotourism operators is a proactive step toward managing and reducing risks associated with backcountry and wilderness travel. (Note: we have also been gathering information on insurance and liability related to the system.)