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OTTAWA SKI CLUB NEWS

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A Merry Christmas *with snow to burn!*

THIS YEAR as in the past, every two weeks or so, and until the snows of 1939 are gathered in with those of yesteryear, the Ottawa Ski Club News will keep you informed of the past, present and future activities of the Club and of the individual members of the Club, of the snow conditions in the Gatineau hills and in other hills of lesser importance, and of everything and anything that may be of interest to you, as skiers. The Editor hopes that you will come to his assistance with contributions in the shape of articles and stories. These contributions need not be signed, but the badge number of the writer should be given, as a token of good faith. There is plenty of writing ability among the members of the Ottawa Ski Club and the sport offers an infinite variety of topics. A skier's life is always a life of adventure, whether on the beaten trail or out of the trail, and although your feelings, sensations and reactions may have been described a thousand times, they will stand describing again a million more times, to the end of time in fact, like stories of love.

Many expressions of opinions will be found in the papers of this little magazine, and sometimes these opinions will clash. Jumpers will swear that there is no thrill like soaring through the air; they would want every member of the Club, man, woman or child to spend their whole time practising jumping, or staying around the jump to watch their performances; Slalomers and Downhillers "know" that their sport is the best, requiring finer technique and greater daring, while the habitués of the trail, with its ever changing conditions, the pleasure skiers, trailers, ski hikers, or "dubs", whatever you wish to call them, firmly believe that they have chosen the best share and that they are getting more enjoyment out of their form

of activity than they would out of any other. You will be told that you should, at all times, have perfect control of your skis, always ready and prepared to perform a jump turn, a Christiania, a Telemark or a Tempo, and in the next issue some one will come out with the statement that all you need to do to be perfectly safe is a bit of stemming, now and then, and perhaps they are right. You will be told also that your skis should be kept oiled and waxed at all times, whether the snow is dry or wet, and that unwaxed skis disintegrate in a season; and in the next issue some one will be sure to pop up with a twenty year old pair of skis that has never seen wax, or linseed oil and that are still in perfect shape, some people believe in being warmly clad; others would wear nothing but their badge, and then only because they have to. It will be for you to decide out of this mass of contradictory evidence, It takes all sorts of people to make a world, and all sorts of skiers to make a club.

Of the Snow Conditions, nothing will be said in this issue, except that the future is very hopeful. The conditions could not be worse as these lines are being penned; therefore they are bound to improve very shortly. There is a bit of the white stuff on the highest peaks of the Gatineau hills, and a little more a hundred miles north. There is however plenty of moisture in the clouds that is just awaiting a change to cold weather to come down in the shape of snow.

Past and Present Activities.—Sixty miles of trails have been thoroughly underbrushed under the direction of Howard Coleman. John Taylor and his gang have cut a few more shrubs and trees from the edges of the Slalom hill, to provide more space for turning. They are talking about

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replanting pine trees now to make a Glade Slalom. More power to their elbows! Louis Grimes is looking into the question of lighting Dome hill with flood lights, so that night skiing may be indulged in with safety. There is no doubt that a well lighted Dome hill would prove a tremendous attraction. Tod Laflamme and Secretary Jim Leslie are trying hard to solve the difficulties connected with the building of a ski-tow up the Slalom hill, and it is hoped that real progress may be reported in the next issue. No one wants a ski-tow, of course, as it will doubtless tend to make us all effeminate and sissies, but everybody will be using it just the same, and everybody will wonder how "they" could ever climb these 1,200 feet on ski in the old days, before the ski-tow.

The biggest and most expensive activity by far has been the repairing of lodges.

Camp Fortune was open to many criticisms. It was cold in zero weather and draughty at all times. The entrance, through a dark, underground passage, was such as to give a very unfavourable impression to newcomers. The door into the south wing or so called "Sun Parlor", opening as it did upon an unheated subway, let in torrents of cold air every time it was open, making the occupants of the first tables miserable. In the main wing, the low ceiling made the room dark and stuffy; the north wing, practically uninhabitable, could only be used as a waxing room, and freshly waxed skis, carried all over the building, caused great annoyance to the ladies. There was no small room for mid-week parties, no suitable quarters for the caretaker. All this has been changed under the able direction of Architect Henri J. Morin. An underground, spacious

room has been dug out of the rock and will be used as a ski waxing, ski hospital and competitors' room. Warm and bright quarters for the caretaker have been provided by the building of an extension to the north wing; a new and well lighted entrance has been made, directly from the checker's room into the centre wing; the ceiling of the center wing has been removed, giving a ceiling eighteen feet high, and bringing floods of light into this formerly gloomy part; the north wing has been converted into a roomy cafeteria, and a mid-week room; the draughty opening into the Sun Parlor has been condemned; finally, the whole three wings have been pannelled with white pine, from floor to wall plate, and with Insul board above the wall plate, giving a very pretty effect. The space over the ceiling of the north wing will make a very comfortable dormitory for the cafeteria crew and other workers. The result of all these improvements is a bright, cheery, cosy, warm and comfortable Club house, instead of the draughty barn-like building that has stood for over fifteen years on the top of the knoll.

The Dome Hill Lodge, once the Mecca of Skiers before transportation facilities were improved, and which had to be enlarged three times in succession, has been reduced to half its size and made snug and comfortable. The Pink Lake Lodge has been re-roofed and repaired, and the Western lodge will be the next to receive attention. All these changes and alterations have kept the Executive quite busy during the late fall.

The Alex West Trophy.—A good and true skier who, for many years, was Director of the Ottawa Ski Club, and had a great deal to do with the shaping of its policies, has gone to his long rest, but his memory will be kept forever amongst us by a beautiful Challenge Cup—The Alex West Memorial Cup—offered by his son, Ken West, and which will be put up for an annual combined Down-hill and Slalom competition.

A new cafeteria crew at Camp Fortune.—Fred Dixon and Douglas Parker will take charge of the cafeteria at Camp Fortune this year, having pledged themselves to supply frogs' legs, caviar and cream puffs, and, incidentally, good nourishing broth, baked beans and apple

pies for people of plainer tastes. These boys, who have been long members of the Club, have had quite a bit of experience in cafeteria work and may be depended upon to give good service.

New Slopes.—This fall the north slopes of the ridge, from McClosky's old clearing, past the Western lodge, down to Meach Lake, have been explored a number of times by the President and other members of the Executive, who found marvellous possibilities for skiing. Excursions will be arranged as soon as there is sufficient snow.

Are you going places this year? Are you planning to go to the Laurentians, the Adirondacks, Lake Placid, or the Seignior Club for a change any time this winter? Let the Secretary know of your intentions (J. C. Leslie, 11 Somerset St. West, Phone 2-9740) and he will try to arrange for a party from the Club and get reduced rates.

Captain T. J. Morin, past trail maker of the Ottawa Ski Club and better known as the "Old Man of the Mountain", has gone to Florida to look for snow. That he has been unsuccessful in his search is evident from a post-card sent by him to the Editor and showing, on one side, a lady in very scant attire, watering flowers, and on the other side, a man ensconced in furs and shovelling snow. The captions under the pictures read "Flowers I'll grow—While you shovel snow". Well we are not exactly watering flowers, but we are not shoveling snow either! In his message of greetings Joe adds "After two or three months of deep sea fishing, I may rush in for that wonderful period of spring fishing." You mean skiing Joe!

Professor Hans Thirring, of the University of Vienna, has been advocating "Schwebelauf" or soaring on skis by means of a cape of light cloth extending from the outstretched arms to the knees or ankles. With these wings or capes one can schuss terrific slopes with a delightful sensation of leaning on the wind. They are said to increase the speed, safety, and pleasure of skiing, especially for those of medium ability. The wings take noticeable effect only above 25 miles per hour. By retracting both arms the speed can be increased, and by retracting one arm long-radius turns may be executed.

Although impressive performances had been made on famous runs, the Thirring wings were not given a real trial until last spring in the Glockner Race. While training, Leo Gasperl soared down the course in better time than the previous record. The eighteen control gates reduced the chances of the soarers, but all five of the winged skiers came down without injury, whereas 28 out of 93 starters failed to finish, including Helmut Lantschner, who broke a leg. Leo Gasperl with a Thirring cape was third, and Muhlbacher with the rival Luther wings was fifth, ahead of such famous skiers as Anton Seelos, Rudi Matt, and Roman Worndle. The winged skiers were classified separately.

There is no doubt that average skiers with the Thirring cape will be able to enjoy the thrill of running difficult courses with a new speed, safety, thrill, and aggressiveness, but the sport may not be conducive to good ski technique.

By MALCOLM MCN. RORTY,

—*The Ski Bulletin*

You hope you don't! We hope you won't!

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Stemming

WHEN BUD CLARK returned from Sun Valley last Spring he brought a skier's bulletin back with him entitled the "Valley Sun." One of the articles published therein struck me as very amusing, but at the same time contained a very valuable hint to skiers, particularly for those belonging to the weaker sex. I can readily understand Hans Hauser's difficulties in trying to convince women that *the most important part of skiing is to keep one's knees bent all the time*. As the last issue of the Ottawa Ski Club News had been sent out before I saw this publication, I have faithfully saved it for your benefit. I might add that I myself have tried the American friend's suggestion and have obtained remarkably good results. The article is entitled "Nancy Randolph Enjoys Sunny Lunch" and is as follows:—

I ate out-of-doors this noon-time, with the sun beating down on the endless

stretches of snow. It was so warm and pleasant I sat around for two hours.

On the practise slopes a short distance from my luncheon place-in-the-sun, Hans Hauser, head of the ski school, and his brother, Max, were giving lessons to large classes.

"Bentz zee knees: bentz zee knees" they kept saying over and over like a litany. And when not urging their pupils to benz zee knees, they were begging them to get "Opp! Opp! Ged opp, you cannot learn to ski unless you ged opp!"

Teaching American women to ski isn't all beer and skittles. One of the Austrians told a friend last week that "when you tell zee American gentleman to benz zee knees, he benz zee knees; but" he added in despair, "when you tell zee American woman to benz zee knees, she bow forward stiff from the waist and stick out what you call zee fah-nee".

But the American friend solved the problem for the instructor: "Don't tell 'em to bend the knees," he advised, "Tell 'em to squat and I'll bet they get the proper ski-ing stance twice as quickly". (P.S.: they do.—Badge No. 42).

Ski Instruction.—You can be assured that by the time you have recovered from the festival season's activities, that the instruction classes will be in full swing. It is expected that these classes will be even more popular than last year but fortunately many more capable teachers are now available. As well as the numerous experts who so readily contributed their services last winter, we expect to have in addition such well known exponents of the art of ski-ing as Joe Oliver, Louis Grimes and also Tom Odell of Montreal.

It has been pointed out by some of the present instructors that last season many of the pupils were endeavouring to learn the more advanced turns before they had completely mastered stemming. We would suggest that you do not get too ambitious at the start. Learn the stem turn thoroughly first and the rest will follow easily.

On account of so many skiers desiring to take advantage of these classes, instruction will be available to club members

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only. It is further hoped that a bus service will be inaugurated this winter to Ironsides on Saturday afternoons. Furthermore should we be able to install the lighting system at Dome Hill, instruction

could be given at nights as well as on Saturdays in the future. Additional announcements will appear in the daily newspapers and future issues of the Ottawa Ski Club News.

The Stem Problem

By PETER VAJDA

TO STEM or not to stem—that is the question. And certainly it causes a lot of trouble and argument in the skiing world. But if we are going to fight about it we must find out just exactly what is meant by stemming. We might begin by telling you something you likely know already, that we get the word stem from the German verb *stemmen*, which means to brake, or to check.

By keeping one of my skis in the direction in which I have been sliding, and opening the back part of the other ski, always keeping the tips together, I am stemming. You see it is an operation with one ski only. On the other hand the two-sided stem, or you might call it the double stem, that is if I stem with both skis, is called the snowplow.

The snowplow is the best way of braking for the beginner. Even the experienced skier, or the racer may find sometimes on steep narrow trails or runs that it is his only possible procedure. Naturally, he would not do this often. But the stem is not essentially a way to brake; it is a *Way to Start a Turn*. A safe, easy and exact way is it, too!

For the stem is the best way to make the first part of the christie without exerting any muscle strength. When turning from a running traverse to run in the opposite direction, the first part of this turn involves turning the back parts of the skis uphill. This is very difficult to do while the skis are weighted. Doing a stem-christie, you unweight the upper ski and move it into the new direction by stemming. Then all you have to do is step on the upper ski, weight it firmly and you will find yourself in the "fall-line" without any trouble. The "fall-line" incidentally, is the straight downhill direction, that is, the steepest angle of any given slope.

Getting into the fall-line is much more difficult if you try what is known as a

tempo turn. "Tempo" is the name given to a christie done at high speed with no element of stemming. Now, you cannot turn the back parts of the skis uphill in deep snow without too much muscular effort. Therefore the thing you must do is lean forward, weight the front parts of the skis, and let them *Turn by Themselves*, (and they will, believe it or not) into the fall-line.

It is obvious that this first part of the turn done this way will become too long and not nearly so exact and controlled as a turn using stem. We have to be exact in a slalom race—that means seconds saved. And that is why every big slalom racer uses stems and stem-christies.

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Patronize Our Advertisers. — We would like to remind you that a great deal of credit for the publication of the Ottawa Ski Club News must go to our advertisers. In a large club like ours the best way to keep in contact with the members is through this News, without which most of us would not know what is happening. Many of the members are often complaining that this circular is not published often enough. Well, it is entirely up to yourselves. By dealing with those who advertise in our News, you make it possible for us to give you a bigger and better publication. However, it is essential that you tell the clerks that you are a member of the Ottawa Ski Club. We hope that you will do your part.

New Parking Grounds. — Skiers motoring to Camp Fortune by way of the Meach Lake Road, who have been handicapped in the past by the lack of proper parking facilities, will be glad to know that steps have been taken to remedy their grievance. The field at the foot of the Dunlop bush road, on the south side of the Meach Lake road, just a couple hundred yards past Dunlop's barns, has been leased by the Club and will be kept as a parking lot, under proper supervision. The charge will be the same as at Kingsmere or other parking grounds. There is sufficient space to accommodate some 200 cars.

As a way of access to Camp Fortune, the Dunlop bush road, which is seldom sleigh travelled, has proved increasingly popular during the last few years. In the first place, it is sheltered almost from the start; there is no long, open, wind swept

area to cross as at Kingsmere; the ascent is gentle and very gradual; the return trip from Camp Fortune to the parking lot, being all down hill, can be done in 12 or 15 minutes, whereas the return trip by way of Kingsmere, involving as it does a steep climb at the start and a bad hill at the finish, takes at least half an hour. The Dunlop road is decidedly the better way for novices, or for those carrying a heavy pack. The return home can be made much more thrilling, though a little longer, by taking the Sun rise trail (which joins the road a little above the second bridge) or by the Lake Fortune trail, or again by the Côte du Nord . . . but that is real swift, and there is a long climb from Camp Fortune to the top of Côte du Nord.

The news that the Federal District Commission owns or will shortly own some 12,000 acres of bush in the Gatineau hills will gladden the hearts of all lovers of trees, but the report that the Commission is planning to open a new motor road somewhere from Kingsmere to Meach Lake is not so welcome. Who wants a motor road there anyway? Surely not the hundreds of people who go to the hills every week-end to avoid motor cars. It seems to us that the Commission would be far better employed in providing new trails for hikers and skiers throughout this territory than in building motor roads. The whole stretch of country which we know to-day as the Camp Fortune range should be left as a wilderness, as a national park and a game preserve. We firmly believe that a motor road would destroy most of its charm, if not utterly spoil it. There are already plenty of motor roads in the vicinity, such as the Meach Lake, the Kingsmere and the Mountain roads, and all that is necessary is to improve them. The distance from Kingsmere to Meach Lake can be covered on foot in less than three hours. Camp Fortune can be reached in forty minutes at the most, and the western Look-out in about the same time from Meach Lake. Thousands of people enjoy the walking in the fall and the skiing in winter and are the better for it. Why bring the murderous motor car in this peaceful land? Let it be kept forever as a hikers' and skiers' paradise!

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The Consolations of a Dub Skier

OF COURSE you know that a dub skier is not a tyro nor a has-been—he's a never-was. He (or she, for they come in both sexes) is one who has acquired the rudiments of the sport, somewhat inexpertly, and shows little improvement from year to year. And our name is legion!

My object is not to lament or sympathize with the rest of the dubs nor to apologize for them. Nothing is further from the truth! I want them to appreciate their many blessings; also to encourage those who, from age or lack of natural sport-ability, fear to start skiing because they know they are doomed to be forever dubs. For, believe me, many pleasures and benefits await the dub when the snow lies deep on the Gatineau trails. . . .

When I sally forth of a frosty Sunday morn with skis, poles, ruck-sack and, of course, red badge—I feel like an adventurer. Away with the humdrum routine and everyday cares! Life is fun—life is grand! (For the dub, no matter his age, is naive, expectant and philosophical). The bustle and scramble to get a seat on the first bus often reminds me of the jolly excursions of the Pickwick Club, and it would surprise me little to find myself seated beside the benign Mr. Pickwick or the joyous Mr. Tupman. Then as the bus pulls out, the hum of conversation begins: last night's hockey game—the bridge hands—how much better skiing conditions were last year . . . All small talk but cheery, diverting, soothing. But first thing you know the bus stops and the authoritative commands of Mr. Bilodeau are heard. Old Chelsea!

The climb to the Top of the World is not to be looked on as a necessary evil. The little runs through the bush on the Lower Canyon are pleasant interludes to the steady climb. The pauses on Excelsior give the opportunity to appreciate the beauty of the surrounding country, and the purity of the clear, winter air. At the intersection of the Canyon and Switzerland trails, the expert stops sometimes, but the dub always. So I halt to debate with my companions the relative merits of the trails, in the light of prevailing conditions. But irrespective the decision, I am

in for thrills and, perchance, spills. Zooming down the Canyon, albeit with inelegant posture and shoddy technique, my heart leaps with exaltation! Taking the Humdinger in Gilpin-like stride fills me with ecstasy and joyous abandon! Gliding down the Nursery Slopes, through a fairyland of beauty, comes a feeling of deep contentment, quiet contemplation. The circuitous byways of Pleasant Valley are soothing to the mind, good for the soul. A far cry from all the hatred, bitterness and bloodshed which fills our daily newspapers!

And so, Camp Fortune!

Past the checker and up the stairs to find a parking place for pack and surplus clothing. Then out for a spot of this and that on Traveler's, Mort's or the Dippers. The return finds the lodge thronged with skiers of both sexes and all ages: the vivacious maiden, the capable young matron, the loose-limbed stripling and the grizzled pater families. All are mingling together talking, laughing, kidding one another, and there is a spirit of friendly camaraderie on every hand. And smells! On the stoves are sizzling steaks, hamburgs, bacon and what not; in the ovens are pies and sandwiches of every variety. Then there is the smell of steaming sweaters, of burning hard-wood, dubbin, ski-wax etc. The combination is an aroma which defies description! All of this—the noisy prattle, the friendly atmosphere, the familiar scene, and the savory odors—brings joy to the heart of the matter-of-fact expert and the prosaic dub alike.

What with roaring stoves, hot water on tap, teapots and frying-pans galore, it doesn't take long to rustle up a meal. But time flies all too quickly: the winter sun is hurrying along it's short course, the wind is freshening. So after a hearty repast and a quiet smoke, I don my skis and, with

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my companions, make my way up Fortune Lane or Bonnie Brae.

The long trail to Wrightville, at the leisure gait of the dub, is most delightful. Perhaps a visit to Mr. King's architectural puzzle, then the long rolling runs to Pink Lake lodge. A stop for a cup of tea, then a dizzy ride down Birch valley. The going slows up a bit on the Flats, but the Parlia-

ment Buildings loom up on the horizon—Journey's End!

These are some of the consolations of a dub—any dub. So if you belong to the great majority, don't be discouraged. Get out on the trails and get the full benefit of our glorious Canadian Winter. For there are just as many thrills, just as much healthy recreation in store for the modest dub as for the nonchalant expert.

Ski Jumping

HAVE YOU ever tried to jump on skis? Not high, spectacular leaps, as from the defunct Rockcliffe tower or Sigurd's hill, but good, honest, froggy little jumps, not more than 20 or 30 feet long, from little heaps of snow?

Jumping was all the rage at one time in the history of the Club. Everywhere one went—Rockcliffe, Dome Hill, Pink Lake or Traveler's hill—one would see dozens of Juniors or even full grown people taking leaps from little piles of snow, or small artificial take-offs, which they had built themselves. They must have found it huge fun because they never seemed to get tired of it; they would go up and down the same hill all day long, trying endlessly to perfect their timing from the take-off, their form in the air, their landing and their stop. There was nothing very difficult or very spectacular about it, but it was a pleasant and wholesome pastime, and it was claimed to be very useful as a training for general skiing. There seems to be some foundation for that statement, because we had better performers at that time in all branches of the sport than we have to-day.

There is no doubt that this form of harmless jumping helped a lot in giving that balance, that poise and self confidence that are essential in the making of a good all-round skier, and as it was also a source of great pleasure to the participants, it is a pity that it should have died down. Other activities have taken its place; we now have Slalom and Down-hill running, but it is doubtful if Slalomers and Down-hillers get as much fun and as much

valuable training out of their sport as jumpers did out of theirs, and after all, is not fun the true measure of the value of a sport? If time spent in pleasant recreation enables us to acquire greater efficiency, greater confidence in ourselves, is not that recreation worth while?

The Scandinavians are fully aware of this; they still lay a great deal of stress on jumping claiming that it is the basis, the foundation of all good skiing, and we might be well advised to take a leaf out of their book.

The above lines were not penned with the idea of urging young people to take up ski jumping as a profession; we merely wanted to point out that they are missing a whole lot of fun by refraining from jumping and neglecting a splendid chance of improving their style and their confidence. An occasional day spent in practising from little snow take-offs, on a moderate slope, will help them more perhaps than a whole season spent on the trail or even on the Slalom hill.

The Night-Riders in the Southam and Plant lodges, who usually have a great deal of time on their hands, might help to revive this sport. Let them build small jumps on Traveler's hill and we will soon have the whole Club jumping again and enjoying themselves. After a season or two of such practice, the more audacious ones may try Sigurd's hill, which is not nearly so formidable as it looks, but even if they did not get that far, they will have improved their "technique" a lot, merely by learning to take small leaps of 30 feet or so, and will have had a lot of fun doing it.

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