

The times they are a changing

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mike Campbell

Greetings fellow ski enthusiasts. Well, the snow is gone, the trails are closed and I think all in all, given all the challenges we faced, it was a pretty good ski season.



I would like to thank the many volunteers that have worked tirelessly to keep things running smoothly in the face of constantly changing Covid protocols and an expanded membership of 1320 members. I would also like to thank our membership for abiding by the many Covid protocols, accepting our new members with open arms, and creating a safe, friendly environment for folks to enjoy skiing. It was great for everyone to have a physical outlet during this stressful time. I believe this was as much about mental health as physical health.

Unfortunately one of the highlights of our social calendar, our Pot Luck AGM has been delayed until October 14th, 2021. We hope that by that time, we will all be vaccinated and able to gather as a group to celebrate skiing, share food, wine and craft beer at the Heartwood Hall in Owen Sound.

I would like to take this time to recognize some members of our executive who are retiring this year.

Ken Clarke has run our race program for the last few years and has volunteered with our club for many years, starting with Jackrabbits, Georgian Bay Nordic and many other activities.


Tom Hakela has been our graphic artist, designer and newsletter editor. Tom has held this position for the last eight years. During his time with the club, Tom has redesigned our newsletter, created numerous event posters, re-drawn all of our trail maps, re-branded the Bruce Ski Club corporate identity as well as the logo designs for each of our trail venues. Tom was our go to person any-time we needed a sign or special graphic created.

Marilyn Suke has been a coach at Georgian Bay Nordic for the last 20 years and has also served on the Bruce Ski Club Executive. Marilyn has coached over 100 athletes with GBN as well as athletes on Provincial teams at Nationals and Canada Games. She has also coached 15 National competitions from Whitehorse to Newfoundland.

Fred Scheel has been the trail captain at the Sawmill Nordic Centre for the last 20 years. There has not been a project at Sawmill that Fred has not had a hand in. From building the warm up hut Gerry's Place, the PistenBully shed, and lit loop, to the construction of trails, such as Paperclip, Grunt, Easy Street and Christmas Tree Loop. Fred has also headed up our trail grooming which has evolved over the years from one snowmobile pulling a homemade track setter, to our state of the art \$300,000 PistenBully.

I would like to thank these individuals for their dedication to the club over the years. Their talents will be missed. If any club members are interested in filling these positions please email me: mike@bruceskiclub.ca. Ken, Tom and Fred will be available to train our new executive members in these positions.

Special thank you to our many Sponsors and Friends who contribute to make this club affordable for everyone. Thank you to our patron, Suntrail Source for Adventure. Lastly, I remind you that Bruce Ski Club does not own any of the trails on which we ski. We owe a great deal to the landowners who generously allow us to ski on their property.

I wish everyone a safe and healthy summer, the vaccines are coming, and hopefully life will return to some semblance of normalcy before next ski season. 



Oct. 14, 2021 - BSC Pot Luck + AGM at Heartwood Concert Hall

REGISTRATION

Heidi Tones

What a great season of skiing and snowshoeing, despite the lack of snow and Covid restrictions. We had a record number of members this year, 1320, who took advantage of being outdoors and staying sane! Thanks to our wonderful groomers, who were able to provide excellent skiing conditions for novice to expert skiers alike, and the exec who worked tirelessly to pivot on demand.

As I skied around it was lovely to see so many returning and new skiers on the trails. The trails were packed many days with ever-smiling skiers and snowshoers, keeping their distance and following protocol.

On a personal note, because high school skiing was not happening due to Covid, I had the privilege of helping to coach Track Attack with Jackrabbits. It was an absolute delight to return to JR after being away many years. As well, I did some individual adult coaching. I enjoyed teaching the love of skiing and skate technique and making new friends.

Finally, thanks to everyone who jumped on the "paperless" registration on zone4.ca. Although this was a challenge for some, many reached out to me for assistance and Suntrail kindly hosted an ipad and tech help for those who needed it.

I look forward to being registrar again. _____ 

ED.

Tom Hakala

Cleaning out the files, and oh by the way...

I had fun skiing and snowshoeing this past winter. Though the snow coverage was not great, we never had a total brown-out, and I skied into late March. The XC Ski Challenge was a great way to record how much I skied and I even attempted a time trial.




When snowshoeing in our woods this winter our cat, Billy Bob, came with us. He followed us like a puppy. That is, except for the time when it was very windy and stormy. He hid in the woodpile behind the garage and waited. When we came by he leaped out as if he had followed us the whole way.

Late in the season my son Kalle decided to bike from his home in Ottawa to Gatineau Park, XC ski, then bike back home. He said his biggest concern was low tree

branches, but it otherwise proved to be exhilarating.



Sadly (at least for me), I cannot continue to be the editor of this newsletter. At my ripe old age, I have developed a number of eye related issues and am finding it more difficult to stare at this computer screen for extended time. So I hope to pass this duty on to someone younger with new, fun ideas.

So if you are interested in finding out more about being Newsletter Editor, send me an email: hakalathomas@gmail.com. It really is not that difficult and I will work with you to bring you up to speed. _____ 



SAWMILL NORDIC CENTRE

Fred Scheel

This is a general summary of our Covid ski season at the Sawmill:

1. We had about 80 ski days this season compared to 86 last season and 100 days on average over the last 8 years.
2. Snow quantity was light and very sporadic. Historically we get about 130 inches of snow, this season we got 73.5 inches.
3. The last 3 weeks of the season, snow conditions were very difficult to groom due to huge temperature swings, sometimes up to 20° in one day. This causes huge melt and freeze conditions which makes it impossible to groom in the mornings. On several occasions we had to groom later in the day.
4. Three trails were closed by March 13th, (Grunt, Sheldon's and the Chute) as snow conditions deteriorated.

5. Our day passes have done well throughout the season.

6. The outhouse cleanup has gone very well, signage was generally well accepted and wearing of face masks in parking area was respected.



7. Lots of new ideas being suggested, just remember that these ideas should be representative of our membership needs and we need to recognize that climate change is affecting our snow.

8. Our last Grooming date was March 21st, 2021. By this time all black trails were closed and the remainder of our trail had some vast bare spots and access to the back loops was icy and dangerous. Some members complained about shutting the trail down but the temperatures for the rest of March were all double digits and access to skiable snow was dangerous. By March 25th, there was hardly any skiable trail left.

9. The GSCA will be logging the trail, probably this summer. Tree Marking has started. We have met with the forester at the trail to submit our wish list for tree removal, however we may not get what we wish for.

10. We are in the process of putting the trail to bed for the season.

11. I am planning to retire as trail captain this year and we will need to find a replacement for next season. I will be happy to stay on as a transition person to help the new trail captain.

Later, Fred! _____ 

WHO IS FREDDY & THE GROOMERS?

Tom Hakala

Most of us have seen the by-line 'Later, Freddy and the Groomers' or just 'Later, Fred' on the Sawmill trail reports that appear on the Bruce Ski Club website and Facebook page. So who is this Freddy guy and where did he come from? It seems like he has always been there... grooming trails and fixing everything that breaks down. Well his name is Fred Scheel and he is

the Trail Captain for Sawmill Nordic Centre. I thought I would find out for myself what Fred's story is, so here goes:

TH *When and where did you first get involved with cross country skiing and how did you end up at Bruce Ski Club?*

FS In 1975 I started grooming for the Loree Cross County Ski Club at the top of Georgian Peaks, using a single ski Bombi with no reverse and a home made track-setter.



In 1986 we moved to O.S. and became involved with the Owen Sound XC ski club and their Jackrabbit program at Harrison Park.

TH *How long have you been involved with the Bruce Ski Club and when did you become trail captain?*

FS In 1990 the OS club folded and our JR program joined the Bruce Ski Club at the Whispering Pines. In 1996 we left the campground and ran our program at the present location with no buildings.



In 1998 we built Gerry's Place and the first of the five PistenBully sheds.

I became trail captain and Reg Martin the assistant captain in 1998.

TH *What did the trail system look like when you first became trail captain and what grooming equipment did you use?*

FS Jackrabbit, Paperclip, Easy Street, the Bus Stop, the first half of Grunt, the Lit Loop, and the connection be-

tween Hairpin and Christmas tree did not exist. We used a single ski Bombi with a reverse and a flat pan and a home made track setter to groom the trails 2 or 3 times per week.

TH *Speaking of grooming equipment, were there groomers that you realized after the club bought them that just maybe it was a mistake?*

FS Cross Country grooming equipment was evolving by the end of the 1990's. We bought a 550 Skandic and a Tidd Tech G1 by 2000.

In 2004 we purchased an 8 wheel drive Centaur on tracks and an 8 foot Ginzu with a track setter. The Centaur turned out to be the machine from Hell.

By the time it had 400 hours on it, we had replaced the engine, drive mechanisms, broken wheel's, and spent many hours in the cold repairing this machine.

We sold it to a Conservancy in Michigan in 2008 and bought a 24 year old PistonBully with a 14 foot tiller and two track setters.

Since 2018 we have upgraded our PistenBully and purchased a Quad Track with an 84" Ginzu groomer and track setter and purchased a Flail mower to control weeds during the off season.

In a perfect world it would be great to own a modern day Cross Country groomer from PistenBully or Prinoth but these machines cost \$400,000 and they are so new that used one's rarely come on the market.



TH *You had a hand in adding loops to the Sawmill Trail System. Which ones were they and what issues did you encounter?*

FS Reg and I planned the building of all the trails mentioned in question 3. Once our plans were approved by the land owners out went a "call to arms" to our membership to participate in planned work bees.

TH *You and Reg Martin were partners in crime with a number of building projects and upgrades at Sawmill, like the warm up cabin, PistenBully shed as well as the lit loop. Though there was a lot of hard work involved, do you remember any lighter moments with these projects?*

FS The Building of Gerry's Place created an environment of members belonging to something special. Over 4 weekends people came out, worked, had



lunches together, socialized and collectively saw the fruits of their labour.

I hope that whatever we do as a Club down the road, we remember who our membership is.

Good luck with your future retirement, Fred. _____ 



Richard Bonert

Skiing at Colpoys started on the 26th of December with trails packed and skier made tracks on that base. Due to lack of snow we could groom and track set only at 22nd January. Since 22nd January all trails were groomed and track set regularly, depending on snow conditions, that means once or twice per week at Colpoys.

So there were 23 days of skiing on all trails in December and early January and 49 days (7weeks) skiing on groomed and trackset trails on all trails until 11th of March, a total of 72 days- not a bad winter, often with sun. By the 14th of March all snow on the trails from the parking lot going east and north had completely disappeared so the trails had to be closed.

Many skiers, over 200 of them day pass users, enjoyed the Colpoys trails this season - and may have had a memorable lunch - where is that?



Have a great summer, before we start thinking about the next season. _____ 


RACE COORDINATOR

Ken Clarke

I am retiring as the Race Coordinator and so Bruce Ski Club will need someone to take my place. Here is a bit of background on the Race Coordinator's job.

The Bruce Ski Club has a long history of hosting ski races. Most years we host The Suntrail Special and co-host 1 or 2 High school races with Owen Sound District SS. Hosting races is very much a team activity. And the Bruce Ski club has a great team of experienced, dedicated race volunteers who efficiently execute the plan for each race. The race coordinators role is to communicate with the club executive committee to help set race dates and ensure hosting requirements are met. This involves monthly meetings usually one evening per month from September to April. And then to communicate with co-hosts, club members and race volunteers to develop the race plan and assemble the team for each race.

A basic understanding of race officials duties is helpful and can be gained through the free online level 1 officials course. <https://cccofficials.moonami.com/> In addition there are many great people within the club who will be a valuable resource for the person or persons who hear the call. Races at the Bruce ski club are festive opportunities for our ski community to assemble to celebrate our love of the sport.

If you have any questions about the role of race coordinator I am happy to answer them. Ken Clarke: kcrclarke@gmail.com 

GBN

Marilyn Suke

A Season like No Other

GBN was on the Podium without leaving Sawmill Trails! We participated in the XCSO distance challenge and 23 team members and coaches skied 15,895 km's. This put us in third place in the Province! It was certainly fun to have a Cross Country Ontario develop and maintain a spread sheet to encourage us to get out a little more often and ski a few more kilometers. Cross Country Ontario sent the participants on our team special ski ties to mark the accomplishment.

A special thanks to coach Jack Van Dorp for organizing the Thursday night Time Trial. Starting with dry-land training when we ran the Time Trials then on skis throughout the winter (even in lockdown) we were able to challenge ourselves to ski the varied distances and compare ourselves against others in a safe way.

Unable to travel, we did ski in the Virtual Gatineau Loppet. Most of our members skied the 25 km. option. -

Lila's Loppet. This is becoming an annual event. This year most of the team challenged themselves to ski 50 km's. Quite an accomplishment for our youngest members!

Thanks to Bruce Ski Club for supporting our team in allowing us to run a sprint weekend. We had a very fun and fast "King's Court" style individual sprint race on Saturday where GBN members skied at least four 700m races in heats of 3 or 4 skiers. It was great fun to see the athletes developing techniques and strategies for managing passing and speed on a short tight course.


Day 2 saw the team sprints with socially distanced transitions and some excellent racing. When racing as a team the athletes find an extra gear for a little more speed so as not to let down a team mate. It was exciting to see them recognize that they could access this extra energy.



A Covid season presented many challenges. We were unable to travel, to socialize and for a time unable to train as a team. However we invented new games we could play while distanced, amazed ourselves with our ability to ski great distances and had some fun going really fast. I think we were happy to have more time to ski and we spend less time traveling! Thank you to the coaches Ken Clarke, Tim Smith, Matt Nelson, Jack Van Dorp and Bella Waterton for your enthusiasm and generosity with your time and knowledge.

Thank you as well to the parents for your unwavering support of the coaches and team and our biggest thanks to the amazing kids who make up our team. Their love of skiing, being outside and having fun makes every day together a real joy. Especially this season we appreciate what a gift being a member of GBN is as we meet and play entirely outside. The coaches and athletes were consistently careful of masking and hand sanitizing which allowed us to continue to meet in a safe way.

After 20 years with GBN as a coach and master skier, I will be leaving the team in the capable hands of our

coaching team. It has been a privilege and a joy and I highly recommend that anyone who wants to spend some time with some great people, coach cross country skiing. _____ 

MARILYN'S STORY

Tom Hakala

So now that you are retiring Marilyn, could you fill us in on how you became a coach?

I started coaching in the 2000-01 season with Westhill and became a Master Skier with GBN. 20 years later here I am!

Probably I have coached about 100 athletes with GBN as well as athletes on Provincial teams at Nationals and Canada Games. I have coached at about 15 National competitions from Whitehorse to Newfoundland.

GBN'ers are wonderful kids. There are so many who are Doctors, Engineers, Scientists, Planners, Nurses. They have been on the Podium at SOD races, Ontario Cup Races and National races. And of course Julian Smith has been on the Podium at International events. They have qualified for SOD teams, Provincial Teams, University Canadian teams and our National team.

For me, a real source of pride is seeing the personal growth each member achieves while on the team. They learn to become team mates and then friends to others they may not normally choose as friends. They learn to take joy in success and lessons from disappointment; they learn to find satisfaction in hard work no matter the outcome. They learn to be the "little ones" on the team (even if they are the eldest sibling in their family) then they learn to be the 'big ones'. The ones who lead warm up at races, help calm nerves, help with strategy, make it all fun. They take coaching courses and help the "very little ones" at Jackrabbits. There, they learn to ski through a beginner's eyes.



A short story. At Nationals two years ago a volunteer sought me out and asked if I was Julian's coach. When I said yes, she said that he was so polite at the finish line, thanking the volunteers, she remarked on his appreciation. Well, he said, my coach always insisted that, before I leave a race I must thank three volunteers and officials. Kindly, she passed on how well this message had stuck with Julian. Now I was pretty proud when he medaled at Nationals but equally proud in that moment. After all, going fast is good but being good is better. It is

what we, as coaches, have tried to instill in all the great young athletes we coach.

I cannot stress how much I have enjoyed the coaches, parents and athletes I have known over the past 20 years. I know I will miss every Tuesday and Thursday at Sawmill and "on the road" most weekends. We have a strong coaching team in place (some of whom I coached) and I feel confident GBN will continue to be a great team.

JACKRABBITS

David White

The Jackrabbit program was able to run for 4 weeks this winter. Coaches worked hard to help skiers have fun and improve their skiing the shortened sessions. Thank you to our coaches who gave up their Saturdays so to teach children to ski.

We are always looking for new coaches, assistant coaches and volunteers. Please reach out to bruce-kiclubjackrabbits@gmail.com if you are interested in helping out.

See you next season! _____ 

THE FINAL DAYS OF THE XCSO KM CHALLENGE

Bryan Dubeau


The XCSO KM challenge closed on March 31 at 10:51 pm (2 hours after sunset at the eastern most point of the Eastern time zone). An impressive 795,337 km. were skied this season by our Ontario ski community. Ontario wide, the top male skier was Ken Hawthorn from Arrowhead Nordic with a whopping 4707 km. and the top female was former World Cup skier Brook Latimer from Lappe Nordic with 3377 km. logged.

Overall, BSC was cat-and-mouse with Arrowhead Nordic for most of the winter. Arrowhead pulled ahead later in the season to secure the 5th place finish with BSC landing a respectable 6th.

Georgian Bay Nordic secured a 3rd place finish in the Average kilometre Per-Skier category with a solid 691.11 km. skied per member. That was well ahead of the 4th place powerhouse Big Thunder from Thunder Bay. It is also worth noting that Big Thunder's ski season had an addition boost from Mother Nature with a mid-March snowstorm that returned their skiing to pristine conditions for the remainder of the challenge. Each GBN skier will receive a handsome set of XCSO ski ties for their efforts.

David White was the top male skier in our club logging 2162 km., the last few km's described as "that was some pretty icy skiing". Andrew Howlett and Bryan Dubeau both finished with over 2000 km.



The 3 skiers joined together in a morning ski to surpass the 2K mark. Cup-cakes and recovery beverages followed. 

TIME TRIAL UPDATE

Jack Van Dorp

There were 11 on-snow time trails, from December 31st to March 5th.

The biggest dates were January 14 (2x jackrabbit free-style) and January 21 (1x Jackrabbit classic), with 29-30 participants each of these dates.

A total of 227 times were reported, with some people racing against themselves and reporting more than one result for the same course/day.

There may or may not have been some strategizing as to whether conditions would be best before 10:00 am, right at 5:00 pm, or later still in the evening.

Once set up, the time trials were fairly easy to administer, and it was also fun to prepare results including place and % of leader.

Look for them to return in 2021-2022! 

MILK CRATE SKI STORAGE


Andrew Howlett

Thank you to Bryan Dubeau and Keith Day for sharing this project with me ... and now with you. This is a great idea to store your skis and poles easily and conveniently. All you need is a milk crate, some 2 inch PVC pipe and a hand saw. Optionally you may add some 3 inch pipe for big old classic skis and poles or 4 inch for downhill skis. Home Depot has online ordering and in-car pickup. (Milk crates are \$8.50) I have lots of 2 inch PVC in my backyard including some pre-cut pieces. Email me to



arrange a pick up and bring your own bleach.

Assembly: cut the PVC into 11 and a half or 12 inch pieces and put them vertically in the crate. Continue until the crate is full. The last piece should be a tight fit. I packed eleven 2 inch pieces, two 3 inch pieces and three 4 inch pieces in my crate. For advanced DIY'ers Keith suggests reaming the insides of the pipe with a 45 degree camfer to avoid possible scratching.

When the crate is packed full of PVC, arrange your skis & poles in the holes. Please practice safe sawing. 




SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Laura Howlett

The Owen Sound Waxwings and Centre Bruce Snow Gliders were approved to start practices again in mid March, by which time the trails had become too icy to ski.



While the teammates are sad, we look forward to return to training in the fall, including cleanup of the BSC trails in October, and a big event for one of our skiers. Owen Sound native Annie Howlett has been named to the Special Olympics Canada 2022 Winter Games National Team Training Squad. Once she completes the training program and assuming international travel resumes, she will be attending the 2022 Special Olympics World Winter Games to be held in Russia January 2022, representing Canada in Nordic classic skiing at the 1 km. and 2.5 km. distances. She has already met her teammates virtually and started her training program online, and in town with the help of Dad (Andrew Howlett) and training coach Dianne Speed. To this end, she logged over 350 km. in the XCSO Kilometre Challenge. She looks

forward to a summer of long walks, cycling, weight training, and (once vaccinated) a return to the YMCA. The best thing will be to return to on snow training with her friends this winter. Give her a shout out if you see her working out. _____ 

PREPARING SKIS FOR SUMMER

Marilyn Suke

Well, I have finally resigned myself to the likelihood that there will be no more skiing this spring.

Out to the shed to ensure that my skis perform at their absolute best next season. Here is what I will do.

1) Check that the skis, boots and poles are in good repair. Are your grips and tips well attached?

Straps worn? Boot zippers good? Bindings working well? Now is the time to attend to these issues, particularly boots as sometimes they may wait awhile at the shoe repair.

2) If you need to reattach ski pole tips or grips (or shorten them) the glue should be the heat sensitive kind you find in a glue gun. Warm the grip or tip in hot water or gently with a heat gun. They will loosen and you can reapply more glue with a glue gun. If you need to shorten a pair of poles (for instance if you are making skate poles into classic) mark the cut with masking tape and cut them with a hack saw at the grip end. Take care to put the grips on the correct pole as they are sometimes left and right. Try them out before the glue sets to ensure they are correctly aligned with the tips.



3) Now clean your skis! This is vital as dirt is the enemy of glide. Thoroughly remove every trace of grip wax – even on the side walls. A light swipe with wax remover on the glide zone will ensure no grip wax has traveled. Wipe your glide zones (or your entire base of skate skis) with a clean cloth or shop towel then brush them vigorously with a nylon brush. Wipe them again. If you are storing classic skis mark off the grip zone (fish scales

and skins as well) with masking tape. Apply 1 layer of hot paraffin wax (yes – even “waxless” skis require the occasional glide waxing). If you think your skis were really dirty scrape this wax off while it is still warm and reapply a second coat. The wax will lift the dirt out of the ski and the final coat will protect it.

4) If your skis bases are looking rough, it is possible to have them reground several times over their lifespan. This will remove minor damage (scratches but not gouges) and open up the bases so that they are more accepting of wax. They will then glide more easily. Gatineau Nordique in Wakefield, Quebec provides this service. Wayne Johansson is the owner, and his website is www.gatineaunordiquesport.com Wayne can also test skis for their weight (of skier) range and mark grip zones.

5) Tape or apply ski ties and store in a place that will not get too hot.

6) Skin skis need some special care to keep the skins in good shape. There are numerous online videos discussing this but basically, clean them carefully with a small amount of isopropyl alcohol. Allow it to dry (about an hour). Lightly rub a soft paraffin wax on the skin then iron in with an iron set at 120° (no warmer!). Brush them gently with a metal brush until the hairs feel free – about 8 passes. You can finish with a light application of a liquid glide wax such as Easy Glide. You need to apply product sparingly and gently. The intention is to protect the skins from dirt and moisture.

You can now rest easy through the pesky season of poor sledding knowing that our beautiful snow will return and you will be ready to go on day 1! First snow, a glorious thing.

If you have questions, I will talk wax any season. _____ 



DESPERATELY SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

The Bruce Ski Club is in need of four very important volunteer positions.

• **Race Coordinator**
(Click here to see job description)

• **Newsletter Editor**
(Click here to see job description)

• **Site captain for Sawmill Nordic Centre**
(Click here to see job description)

• **Groomer Captain for Sawmill Nordic Centre**
(Click here to see job description)

If you are interested in any of these volunteer positions contact Mike at: mike@bruceskiclub.ca

Bruce  **Club**



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Grey Sauble Conservation Authority
Ron Gatis
Kiwanis Whispering Pines Campground
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
The Spencer Family
Laura McNamara & Bevan Ratcliffe

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