

# MARMOT

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S UP ON MOUNT WASHINGTON Volume 13, #1 • Winter 2002/03

## The Hawk is Here!

**The new high-speed six-pack chairlift is open at Mount Washington, making history. The Hawk is one of Western Canada's first high-speed, six-seat lifts and replaces the 22-year-old Red Chair.**

The new chairlift snakes its way to the western reaches of the Resort to off-load its passengers at the bottom of the West Basin. Six new runs have been added, primarily intermediate in nature, and a long, sweeping Green run - Sunset - has earned the distinction of being named Mount Washington's longest run. "The lift - the longest on the mountain - is fully operational, on schedule and on budget," Dave Hampshire, the Resort's Director of Public Relations, said the week after testing began.

"We call it the 'flying couch,'" he added. The Hawk moves 2,400 people an hour at a speed of 1,050 people per minute. That means it takes five minutes, 45 seconds to reach the summit. Designed by lift manufacturer Garaventa CTEC of Switzerland, the Hawk is a \$5.5 million investment in the future of skiing, snowboarding and nordic skiing at Mount Washington, Hampshire said.

"Nordic skiers can access the Upper West Meadows trail from the Hawk. The Hawk High Speed Six-Pack will load its riders by way of a gate system," he said. As each gate opens (one at a time), two riders will load, followed in turn by the next pair and so on until the chair is fully loaded. "This way we won't have six riders rushing each chair at the same time," Hampshire said.

"One of the reasons we went with the six-pack is the space between the chairs is wider (six and a half seconds), so it allows for a more comfortable unload time," Resort General Manager Peter Gibson said. A high-speed quad would have been able to carry the same number of people per hour, but wouldn't have offered the same comfort level at the unloading station, he said. The six-pack will also increase unloading efficiency in an area that had the worst bottleneck on the mountain in the past.

"From our perspective, this chairlift has been built for the novice to intermediate customer. It's a lift replacing a lift used by intermediate skiers," Gibson said. "The bonus is it gives more access to black diamond terrain for bad weather days, when people don't want to ski the top of the hill."

*Continued on page 2*



  
**The Hawk**  
 HIGH SPEED SIX PACK

## Mount Washington Experiences Huge Summer Growth!

**Mount Washington is coming off the best summer season it's ever enjoyed. And they have more than 20,000 reasons to celebrate.**

"We were really encouraged with the number of people this summer," Mount Washington Resort General Manager Peter Gibson said. The resort had 20,000 visitors take a chairlift ride, which is how they officially gauge summer visits. However, more and more people are coming up the hill for other reasons - like hiking, walking or mountain biking, Gibson said.

"The (Paradise Meadows) trailhead was even full of cars from Monday to Friday," but there's no way of measuring this peripheral traffic, he said.

Both Gibson and Resort Director of Public Relations Dave Hampshire attribute the summertime success to the new Inland Island Highway, which is now complete from Victoria to Campbell River.

*Continued on page 3*

**Exclusive to The Marmot**  
**Mount Washington Winter**  
**02/03 Accommodation Guide**

**Rick Gibson**  
[www.rickgibson.ca](http://www.rickgibson.ca)  
 250-334-3124 (24 hours)





**The Hawk** *Continued from page 1*

The 16 lift towers were flown into place by Vancouver Island Helicopters and over a dozen resort employees in August. The Kamov KA 32 helicopter would lift the tower from the staging area in front of Raven Lodge, on the other side of a ridge that runs between the lodge and the new lift line. The time from lift-off to the last nut being torqued on each tower was just 15 minutes, Hampshire said.

The technicians who worked on the Hawk when it first fired up in November were ecstatic with the new lift, Gibson said. "The technology has progressed so far from when we built the Eagle Express (two years ago) to when we built the Hawk." The beauty of the Hawk, he says, is it will continue to run even if the resort suffers a power outage. Both the Eagle and the Hawk chairlifts have back-up systems, but the Eagle's diesel system was designed simply to get people off the mountain. The Hawk's back-up is also diesel, but it is designed to operate fully.

## THE INSIDE SCOOP

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## Mount Washington's lift tickets have gone high-tech.

***This year, for the first time, the tickets will have a bar code on them, so mountain staff can scan them. The resort switched to this new system mostly for administration reasons, according to Mount Washington Director of Public Relations Dave Hampshire.***

"It really helps us keep track of the inventory levels off-mountain," Hampshire said. "We can now ship large parcels of lift tickets to wholesalers, bus companies, sports shops and the like, and we can activate those tickets as they are sold."

The new bar codes allow for more retail promotion, too, such as sport shops selling a snowboard package or a skate ski package and the buyer receiving a pair of lift tickets or trail passes as appropriate, he said. "We could do that before, but this new system just allows the process to be streamlined for the shops and for our accounting department."

The bar codes also serve another purpose: they will help eliminate ticket fraud, which has become a real threat at Mount Washington as the resort has grown. All passes - season passes and day tickets - will be scanned as riders use the lifts.

"We won't implement scanning on the nordic trails this year, but skiers riding the Hawk to access the Upper West Meadows Nordic Trail will have their trail pass scanned at the lift," Hampshire said.

"We saw an increasing number of individuals attempting to use fraudulent season passes and the bar coding will virtually eliminate that."

# The View From Here

**Rick Gibson**

***Hold onto your horses, it's another booming season for real estate on Mount Washington. But don't let the high number of sales fool you.***

There is still great value if you are considering a purchase. Just ask Rick Gibson, our resident expert, "While I don't see prices heading downward, I also don't see them skyrocketing either. Sellers are smart. They know that if they raise their prices too high, they won't sell." But he adds with a certain amount of caution, "However, it's only a matter of time before the basic laws of supply and demand kick in."

Since he has the most properties for sale on the mountain and is one of the extremely few who could fully explain how ownership works on Mount Washington (in full detail), Rick Gibson is naturally the realtor to provide the most concise information regarding real estate on the mountain. "Even the big boys come to me with questions," Rick laughs. "I appear to be the resident expert."

And he's right. While Rick also works extensively in the Comox Valley, it's the mountain he comes home to at night. Although he's quick to correct that, "No, it's Julia I come home to. She just happens to be on the mountain too."

The internet has opened up a whole new world for real estate on the mountain. "I get inquiries from all over the world," Rick explains, "Right now I'm running at well over 100,000 hits and over 2000 distinct visits per month on my web site." He proudly displays his web stats, which show inquiries from Great Britain, Germany, Norway, Poland, Indonesia, Japan, Taiwan,



Austria, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Singapore, Denmark and even China. And this list is not nearly complete. "I'm amazed at how international our market has become," says Rick. "It's almost as if people are looking for an alternative to the Whistler's high class resort and finding it in Mount Washington. After all, we are known to be a more family oriented mountain. It's like comparing gourmet food to good old home cooking. There's a place for both in this world. Not everyone needs to eat gourmet every night. Some people prefer the pleasures of home cooking."

Asked if he's been to Whistler, Rick laughs, "Are you kidding? Of course we have. It's just that we go in the summer when we can hike. If we want snow, we stay home." And having said that, Rick looks toward the sky. "And it's going to start snowing soon."

When I push him for an exact date, Rick answers "Monday." As he is with real estate, Rick was right. The flakes began falling Monday night.



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Raven Lodge has proved to be a great facility for summer visitors and groups of all sizes.

**Summer Growth** *Continued from page 1*

"This is the first summer that the new highway has been open," Hampshire said.

"It's taken us some time," Gibson said. However, with the new highway, the paved Strathcona Parkway and good weather, the combination was ripe for success. "We're moving towards the four-season business and this summer was a really significant stepping stone towards that goal," Hampshire said. "We'll really be able to achieve that when we have a true hotel available on-mountain, as this is what the wholesalers need to sell the packages to travel agents and travel businesses.

"People have significant expectations when arriving at a resort and a full-service hotel is a very large factor in meeting those demands," he said. "Things like room service, a gym, business services and an infrastructure of customer service staff and 'back of house' individuals are part and parcel."

Hampshire said resort staff anticipate a major hotel brand to be on-mountain in the next couple of years. "This would be an anchor for the new village that will see cobblestone streets, shopping, dining and a

myriad of other businesses setting up shop to provide the full alpine village experience for our guests - both rubber-tire and destination market."

The key now is to develop more of the overnight market, Gibson said. "That will happen as we start to develop more conferences, etc."

With its ability to handle up to 500 conference attendees, the resort is now attracting companies from around the province that want to expand on the traditional seminar. These companies want to give their attendees both a taste of adventure and the satisfaction of learning in a unique environment.

Andrew Sheret Ltd. Plumbing Suppliers chose Mount Washington to celebrate its 110th anniversary conference. President Brian Finlay leads a progressive team of executives and was loathe to go with the obvious, he said.

Last summer 343 Andrew Sheret employees took over the mountain for a weekend. "From the arrival of the first bus on Friday evening to the last departure on Sunday, we had the full attention of the Mount Washington staff," Finlay said. "The Andrew Sheret staff and guests found the



Fly Fishing, AVT Tours, Horseback Trail Rides and Mountain Biking are just some of the activities that had a positive impact on Mount Washington's summer growth.

meals, hospitality and services for our 110th anniversary celebrations to be outstanding."

While the Andrew Sheret group used the facilities in and around the Alpine Lodge for their conference, many groups ranging in size from 30 to 300 have chosen the sublime Raven Lodge Nordic Facility as the location for their conference and banquet, Hampshire said.

And despite the fact there is no hotel, there are 3,500 beds available on the mountain ranging from single dwellings to luxury condos - the majority being ski-in, ski-out in the winter.

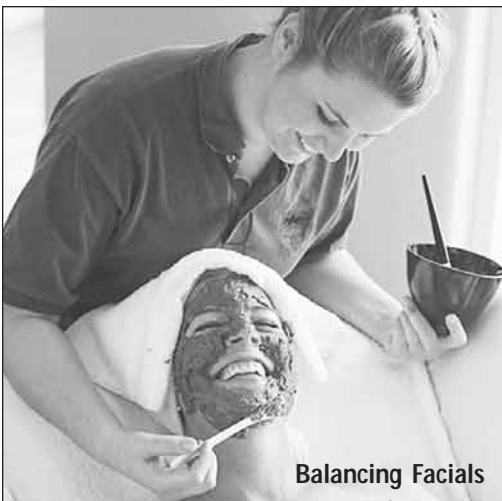
In addition to a hotel, the Resort must also create more activities to draw people. Gibson said they had an event or festival happening just about every weekend, and also had horseback riding, ATVs and fly-fishing. Mountain biking is the fastest-growing activity on the mountain, and the resort responded in the spring by increasing the number of bike trails.

"We still have a ways to go in providing a solid mix of activities and amenities to the Resort's guests," Hampshire added.

"Our next short-term goal is to implement another summer activity that has a broad-based appeal to a wide demographic.

"A golf course would be perfect but that's not within the scope of the Resort to build and operate," he said. However, plans for the new village have provisions for mini-golf and swimming pools. Summer tubing is a possibility, and the Resort is building relationships with eco-tourism operators to provide day trips for resort guests, Hampshire said.

"I think the big thing about summer on Mount Washington is that when people come and visit this region in the summertime, we're on the map now," Gibson said.



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## Summer 2002 ends with \$6.5 million investment

Mount Washington has been busy spending \$6.5 million in capital purchases over the summer.

"The biggest investment (at \$5 million), obviously, is the Hawk Chairlift," says Director of Business Services Don Sharpe.

The Resort has also leased an entirely new fleet of Bombardier grooming machines (five alpine and one nordic). Six of the new tracked units, known universally as "sno-cats", with their hydraulically-actuated implements, will handle the manicure needs of Mount Washington's 1,200 skiable acres. Five of the machines will be found working the slopes with a sixth, smaller version allocated to Raven Lodge and its accompanying 55 kilometres of nordic trails.



One of the new machines is outfitted with a massive arm and cable mechanism on its rear deck. Known within ski industry circles as one of the most exciting winter vehicle rides imaginable, the "Winch Cat" allows grooming in hard-to-reach areas by paying out its firmly tethered cable from behind. It puts a whole new meaning to the term "steep and deep" as the sno-cat, weighing several tonnes, hangs from a wire over areas where its treads would not have purchase due to the pitch of the slope. This same cable is used to winch the vehicle back to the top of what is normally a Black Diamond run.

Another machine mounts the Resort's Pipe Dragon, a conveyor belt and scoop mechanism that is designed to groom the

half pipe in the Terrain Park.

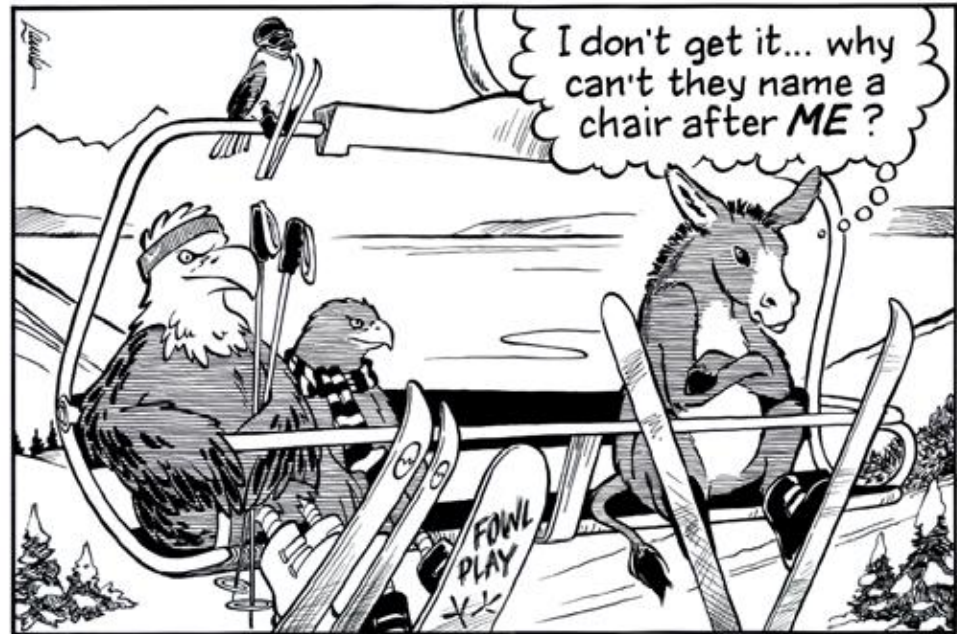
"Grooming is certainly an art and the new machines give the operators increased flexibility and reliability as they perform their nightly ritual of preparing the mountain for another day of skiing and snowboarding," said Mike Klein, Director of Resort Operations.

Parking at Mount Washington has also increased dramatically, especially at the expanded parking lot by The Hawk and at Raven Lodge. Sharpe estimates the resort has added well over 300 sites in anticipation of the 2002-03 ski season.

The former Red Chair parking lot (now at the base of the Hawk) has been doubled, and parking at Raven Lodge has tripled. The Resort has reduced the number of recreational vehicle stalls at the old RV lot to allow day parking, and there is now a seven-day maximum for RV visits.

"The two biggest issues were parking and seating inside," Sharpe said. "We've bought all new tables and chairs in the main lodge, thereby adding about 200 seats," he said. Gone are the cough drop-colored plastic chairs; they have been replaced by classy black chairs with beige tables.

The Resort also bought new snowmobiles, two new trucks, a shuttle van, bobcat and some ATVs. They also continue to upgrade their rental equipment, Sharpe said.

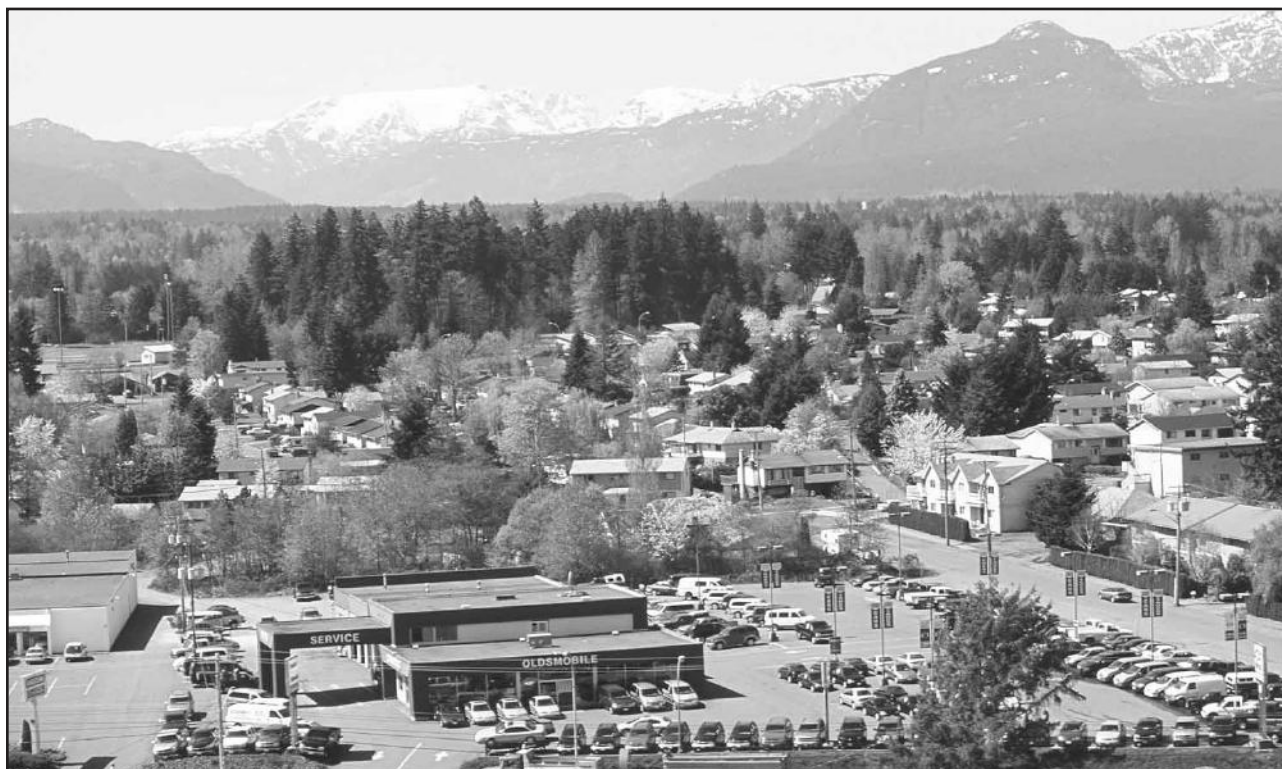


### Celebrate the Six-Pack with a six-Pak this winter Fully-transferable 6IXPAKs replace HighFives.

The 6ix-Pak is a brand new form of ticket voucher that pays tribute to Mount Washington's new high-speed 6-pack chairlift, the Hawk. The 6ix-Pak replaces the now-defunct High Five passes.

*"The biggest change, other than quantity, is the provision for transferring the individual tickets to family and friends during the season," says Mount Washington Director of Public Relations, Dave Hampshire.*

"You can go skiing six times, take a friend three times or give three to your brother. Mix and match!" "It's an answer to family discounting, which we haven't been able to offer in the past," Resort General Manager Peter Gibson said. 6ix-Paks also come with a bonus ticket for night skiing. The 6ix-Paks are available on-line at [www.mountwashington.ca](http://www.mountwashington.ca), at participating sports shops and at all Vancouver Island Save-On-Foods/Overwaitea locations.



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# A new Look and a New Leader for Snow School

**Snow School Director Mike Manara has come to Vancouver Island from Marmot Basin in Jasper, Alta., where he spent three years as Director of Skier Services.**

And he's wasted no time in putting his stamp on the Mount Washington Snow School: streamlining programs, adding new features and emphasizing training amongst the snow school instructors.

Manara has been skiing since he was five years old, learning on a 130-foot "bump" in Markham, Ont. and then Quebec. "I have a passion for it," he says. "I think I was lucky enough to go to school in Quebec and ski at the same time."

After graduating from Bishops University, east of Montreal with a double major in business and economics, Manara worked as the assistant head coach at Jay Peak in Vermont before getting his break in Jasper. At Marmot Basin, Manara was in charge of 70 pro instructors at the ski and snowboard school, guest services, day care, mountain Snow Hosts and the terrain park. "That's where I really got my start in the business," he says.

"While in Jasper I worked hard to earn my Canadian Ski Instructors Alliance Level 3 certification, Level 2 Canadian Ski Coaches Federation ticket and my Level 1 stamp with the Canadian Association of Snowboard Instructors. Somehow I found the time to learn my Level 1 examiners certification. "It was a busy, busy time but I learned a lot."

Manara spent his first two months at Mount Washington getting to know his staff and reassessing the snow school programs. The first change he has made is increasing the availability of lessons at the Resort. Private lessons will happen every hour on the hour (except for the lunch break). Group lessons will run at 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. and Discover Skiing will run at 10 a.m., 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

**One of the newer programs Manara has instituted is Big Mountain Riders. Following the latest ski industry trend, Big Mountain Riders is aimed at teens who are pretty good riders but who want to challenge themselves, go all over the mountain, he said.**

Teen participants will go out with pro riders into some of the more extreme, free riding terrain. "We're trying to develop programs for teens because it's a big part of our market," he said.

Other new weekend programs include Ski or Board the Trees & Steeps and Free Heelers for Telemark skiers.



Mike Manara has big plans for Mount Washington's Snow School

"With the expansion of night skiing, we have really developed a lesson program around that," he said. The resort offers Discover Skiing and Snowboarding group lessons, beginner and private lessons under the lights at the Green Chair, for discounted prices.

Manara has an experienced staff behind him. He has 80 full-time and part-time pros teaching myriad skiing and snowboarding classes to adults. "We have got guys who have been teaching here since the mountain opened (24 years ago)," he said. "There's been people skiing here over 20 years and others who are brand new."

Three-quarters of the instructors are from the Comox Valley, which will help in dealing with the 40 per cent of Resort guests who are from the surrounding area. Manara brought five instructors with him from Marmot Basin, and recruited a few more young instructors. "As well we snagged an additional Level 4 pro for skiing and we have three Level 4 senior snowboard instructors that will focus their skills on all-mountain riding and technical progression of our snowboard instructors," he said.

Manara himself is working on his Level 4, and hopes to spend time on the slopes honing his own skills this winter. "I'm a very much on-hill type of person," he said, smiling.

And while Mount Washington's instructors may be masters of the boards, they are also skilled in their personal lives. "Some of our instructors are fishing guides in the summertime. Some of our snowboard guys are heavy into surfing, so they spend their days off at the West Coast," Manara said.

There is also a legion of ex-military members who are now ski instructors. They have a varied background, from air crew to maintenance. What all the Mount Washington instructors have in common, says Manara, is the enthusiasm to teach and a love of the outdoors. "A lot of people are mountain enthusiasts. A lot of them are coming up to go hiking in Strathcona Park or coming up the mountain to go mountain biking in the fall.

"Those are the types of backgrounds and the types of people we like to see because they're passionate," he says. And that passion translates into customers coming back.



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*Apparently everyone is flying WestJet to get to Mount Washington these days.*

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## Mount Washington Pre-Season Pass Sales Increase from 15% ~ 50%

**Excitement has been building all summer at Mount Washington Alpine Resort, as construction crews have been installing the much-anticipated Hawk six-pack chairlift. And the proof is in the ticket sales.**

"Nordic (season's passes) has grown another 50 per cent over last year and alpine has grown about 15 per cent in terms of overall volume," Marketing Director Karen Bonell said. "It's pretty tremendous growth.

"We budget for an increase. If you get five per cent, you would be happy. With 15 per cent on alpine, we're ecstatic." Mid-week season's passes have seen the most growth on the alpine side, she said.

"We're looking at 25 per cent there. I think that shows we're moving in the right direction in terms of our planning." The Resort gained momentum last year with the opening of the million-dollar Raven Lodge Nordic Facility, and hopes to ride that wave with the opening of the Hawk. It's a spate of unparalleled success for the 23-year-old Alpine Resort.

When the Sunrise Quad chair opened in the early '90s - the first major expansion since the ski hill opened in 1979 - there wasn't the instant fascination with the new lift that the Resort saw two years ago with the Eagle Express high-speed quad. Part of the problem in the '90s was that the public had been told for years that Sunrise was going to open, but the project was stalled, explained Resort General Manager Peter Gibson. People were skeptical; then the first year Sunrise opened, with then-B.C. Premier Mike

Harcourt riding the first chair up - snow was scant.

When the Eagle Express opened December 2000, the parking lot was so full people were abandoning their cars kilometres down the road to get into the lineup. The resort eventually fired up the lift early to accommodate everyone. Mount Washington never really experienced a let-up after that, Gibson said.

"Our season's pass numbers are really encouraging," he said. "In four years we've virtually doubled our season's pass sales." And it's still an affordable day's entertainment. While a report came out in Ski Canada magazine in October that Canada is now one of the world's most expensive

almost half that price, at \$29.

As another example, an adult ski pass costs \$589 (Early Bird) plus applicable taxes, which means the break-even point - the point at which someone needs to ski before they are "skiing for free" - is 14 days.

While the first official skiers haven't even loaded onto the Hawk yet, Gibson and other resort staff are already thinking of expansion - albeit cautiously. "We are looking at expanding into the McKay Lake side of the mountain, but it's premature to speculate how soon that will be.

"Once we get into the new year we'll know which season this lift will go in," Gibson said.

The resort is already examining run alignments for McKay Lake, an area they call "The Outback". They're looking at a fixed-grip triple chair that would run from Little Washington to the lake. Runs in The

build the new Hawk, they sent the Red to Mt. Timothy instead of hanging onto it.

"The reason why we didn't store the old Red Chair for this area is we need what's termed as a top-loader for that terrain, versus a bottom-loader," Hampshire said. The old Red Chair was a bottom-loader, which meant that the hydro and drive mechanism is "loaded" at the top of the lift.

"The hydro for the lift would run from either the top of The Eagle or Hawk to the summit of Little Washington, where the drive mechanism for this new chair would be located," he said.

The cost of running power all the way down to McKay Lake at the level required to operate the new lift would be very costly due to distance."

## Green Chair to be Lit Up for Night Skiing

**When Mount Washington Ski Club coach Andrea Martin was growing up in Labrador City, in Newfoundland and Labrador, she skied at night all the time. "I miss night skiing," she said.**

Well, Martin will not have to wait any longer: this year there will be night skiing under the Green Chair at Mount Washington.

The Resort has invested in and installed lights under the Green and extended night skiing from the platter, where it had been last winter. So night skiing now encompasses Green Acres as well as the run to the side of the Green Chair.

"We're offering lessons at night and Mountain Tech (formerly Sno Tech) will be open in the evenings Friday, Saturday and holidays," said Don Sharpe, Director of Business Services at Mount Washington.



*The Hawk High Speed Six Pack is ready to whisk 2400 skiers and boarders per hour to the lower West Basin, increasing intermediate terrain dramatically.*

places to ski, that's not the case with Mount Washington, Gibson said.

"I think they're very fair," he said. "Our day pass, compared to the Okanagan and Interior, is very reasonable." Adult day passes are \$45 plus tax (last year they were \$45 including tax). Night skiing passes are

Outback would be double black diamond and skiers and riders would access this terrain from off-loading the Eagle Express.

Staff are also busy pricing out a new lift for the new terrain, Public Relations Director Dave Hampshire said. Although the Resort tore down its old Red Chair to



**mount  
Washington**  
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# mount Washington

ALPINE RESORT

## Accommodation & Events Guide Winter 2002/03

**This winter Mount Washington is hosting special events all winter long; from the romantic to the ridiculous, from competitive to just plain fun! Check out the events below and join in the fun!**

Dec 16 **Seniors/ Week** Seniors' enjoy discounted lift tickets all week!

Dec 21 **Carols by Candlelight**

Dec 24 **Christmas Eve Service**  
A multi-denominational service celebrating Christ's birthday.

Dec 25 **Santa on the Slopes**

Dec 26 **Coca Cola Torchlight Parade and Fireworks Display**

Dec 28 **Strathcona Nordic Duathlon**

Dec 31 **Ozone Snow Tubing Party**

Dec 31 **New Years Eve at Fireweed's Restaurant** Serving a delicious three course dinner.

**Raven Lodge New Years Eve Family Dinner Buffet & Music**  
**Fat Teddy's New Year's Party**  
A social bar party with live music and a DJ.

**Elevate House Beats**  
Energetic Dance Party in Whiskey Jack Room

Jan 4 **Burger King Flame Boiled Night Show**  
Entrancing Fire Dancers and Hand Drumming



**For Up-To-Date Information on all of Mount Washington's Winter 2002/03 Events go to [www.themarmot.ca](http://www.themarmot.ca)**

Jan 5-9 **Skiing for the Disabled Winter Festival**

Jan 6-10 **Cross Country Ski Week**

Jan 11 **Safe Slope Prize Draw**

Jan 11 **GS Alpine Race - K2**

Jan 11 **Atlas Snowshoe Romp**

Jan 11 **Helly Hansen Showtime Challenge**

Jan 11-12 **Free Ride Camp**  
13 to 19 years, intermediate to advanced.

Jan 12 **Strathcona Nordic Sprint Race #1**


*continued on page 10*



### Mount Washington Phone Directory (Area Code 250)

Ambulance ..... 911  
Catering ..... 334-5757  
Central Res. .... 1-888-231-1499  
Chain Rentals ..... 338-5527  
Fire - to report a fire ..... 792-1209  
Fireweed's Restaurant .... 334-5706  
General Store ..... 334-5745  
Police EMERGENCY ..... 911  
Police NON-EMERGENCY 338-1321  
Raven Lodge ..... 334-5764  
Real Estate (Rick Gibson) . 338-1723  
Resort Info ..... 338-1386  
Security ..... 334-5753  
Security (after hours) ..... 792-1204  
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[www.mountainwashington.ca](http://www.mountainwashington.ca)

\*Prices are per person, based on four adults in a two bedroom, prices do not include taxes and are subject to availability.





"Events" Continued from page 9

- Jan 13-17 **Kokanee Winter Festival**  
1/2 Price Midweek & Full Day Lift Tickets
- Jan 17 **Snow Carving Contest Begins**  
Judging on Sunday
- Jan 18 **Winter Festival Retro Costume Party**
- Jan 19 **Kokanee Challenge Vancouver Island Alpine Championships**  
Race #1 of a 4 Adult recreational race series.
- Jan 20-24 **Rossignol National Ski/Board Week** 1/2 Price Full Day Rental Equipment
- Jan 25 **Free Rossignol Alpine Race Clinic**
- Feb 1 **Fat Teddy's Beach Party**
- Feb 2 **Herb Bradley Coca-Cola Classic** 16th Annual Fundraiser for Disabled Skiing

- Feb 8 **Strathcona Nordic Sprint Race #2**
- Feb 8-9 **Freeheeler's Weekend** 19+ years, intermediate to advanced.
- Feb 8 **Island Farm's Slopestyle Competition**
- Feb 9 **Corporate Luge Challenge**
- Feb 14 **Sweethearts' Dinner in Fireweeds and Raven Lodge**
- Feb 15 **Mardi Gras**  
Join us for a mountain Mardi Gras in Fat Teddy's!
- Feb 15 **Wood Cup Race & Banquet**
- Feb 22 **Powerade Skier cross**
- Mar 1-2 **Sprite Super Cross** for boarders
- Mar 3-7 **Women's Week** Girls week out! Special Lift, Lesson & Lunch packages with Aprés activities.
- Mar 8 **Pipers After Dark Invitational** Spectacular Ski & Snowboard Jump Show
- Mar 11-13 **Season Pass Holders' Appreciation BBQ's** Sponsored by Coca-Cola.
- Mar 15 **Vancouver Island Loppet Race** Skate Ski Racing
- Mar 17 **Island Farms Poker Run**
- Mar 17-18 **Spring Break Boarder Camp** 13 to 19 years of age.
- Mar 17-21 **Spring SnoJam**
- Mar 19 **Old Dutch Obstacle Race**
- Mar 21 **Ozone Snow Tubing Festival**
- Mar 22 **Viva La Mexico Party in Fat Teddy's**
- Mar 22 **Halfpipe Competition**
- Mar 22-23 **Free Ski Camp** 19+ years, intermediate to advanced.
- Mar 29 **Freestyle Dual Moguls Challenge**



**Accommodations on Mount Washington**

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**Deer Lodge at Mt Washington**

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**Paradise Ridge Accommodations**

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Mar 29-30 **Big Stupid Big Race**  
Ruts, guts, gates & glory.

Mar 30 **Cross Country Spandex Day**

**April**

Apr 5 **Overwaitea/Save-on-Foods Dummy Downhill**

Insanity heading downhill!

Apr 6 **Barq's Slush Cup**  
Can you cross the slush pit?

Apr 20 **Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt**

Apr 27 **Royal LePage Snow To Surf Adventure Relay Race**

**First trip to Mount Washington?**

*Here are things you should know.*

**Getting There...** Mount Washington is located on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, 25 km west of the Comox Valley (approximately a 25 minute drive), 100km north of Nanaimo (approximately a 90 minute drive).

**Auto** If you're travelling by car the new Inland Island Highway offers the most direct route. The Strathcona Parkway turnoff will guide you straight to the Alpine Resort.

**BC Ferries** If you plan to travel via BC Ferries, you would be well advised to make a reservation. You can sail from Tsawaassen to Duke Point or from Horseshoe Bay to Departure Bay in Nanaimo. For information call BC Ferries schedules at 1-888-223-3779.

**Air** Both the Comox Valley (YQQ) and Campbell River (YBL) Airports are serviced daily by Pacific Coastal Airlines 1-800-663-2872 from Vancouver. Westjet flies daily direct from Calgary to Comox 1-800-538-5696.

**Rail** E & N Rail runs daily from Victoria to Courtenay. 1-888-842-7245.

**Bus Service:**

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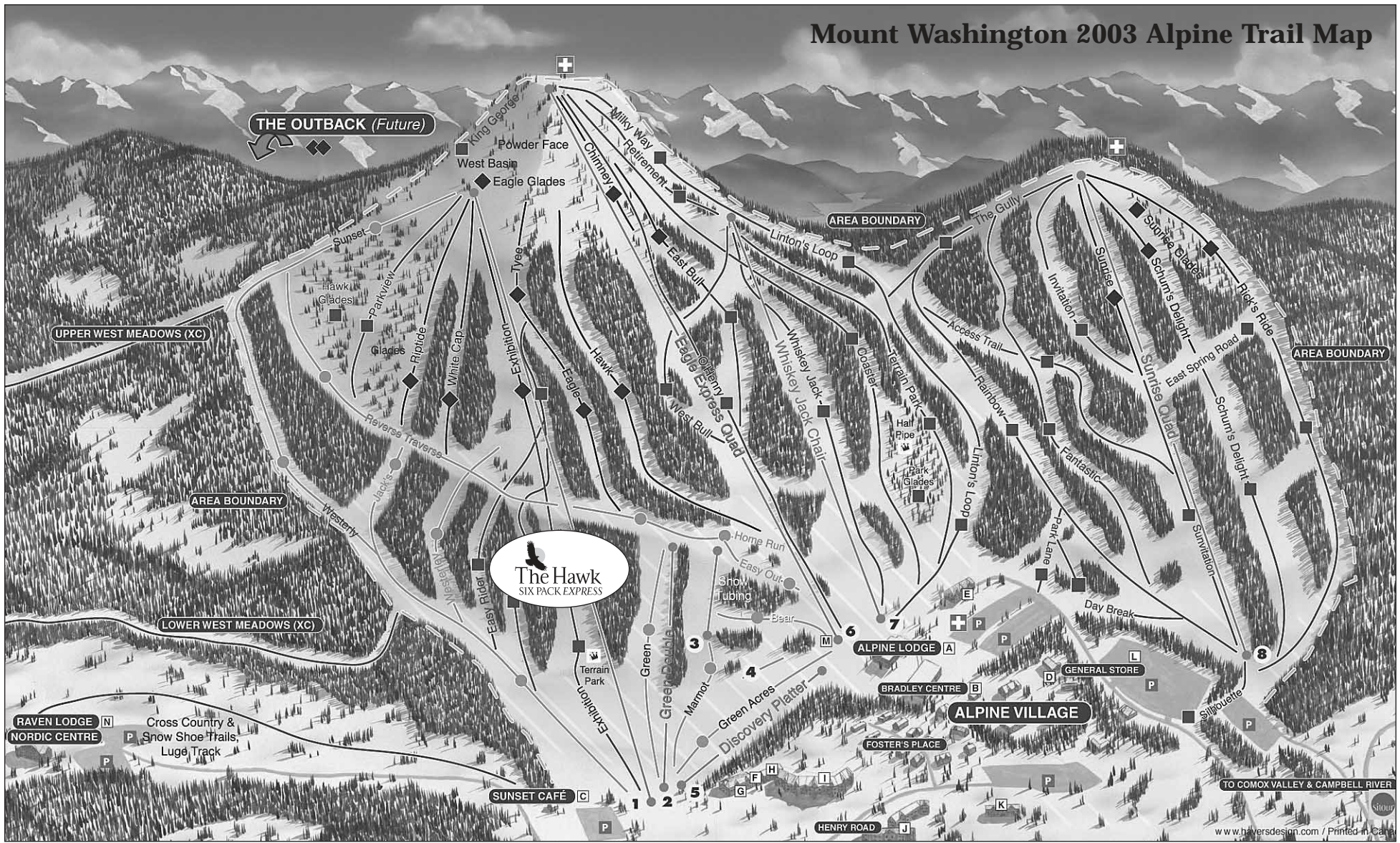
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### Mount Washington 2003 Alpine Trail Map



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- Fireweed's Restaurant
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**B • BRADLEY CENTRE**

- Express Rentals
- Mountain Kidz
- Snow School
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**C • SUNSET CAFE PASTA BAR**

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- Groceries • Liquor
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**L • RV Park**

**M • MtnTek DEMO CENTRE**

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- Sport Shop
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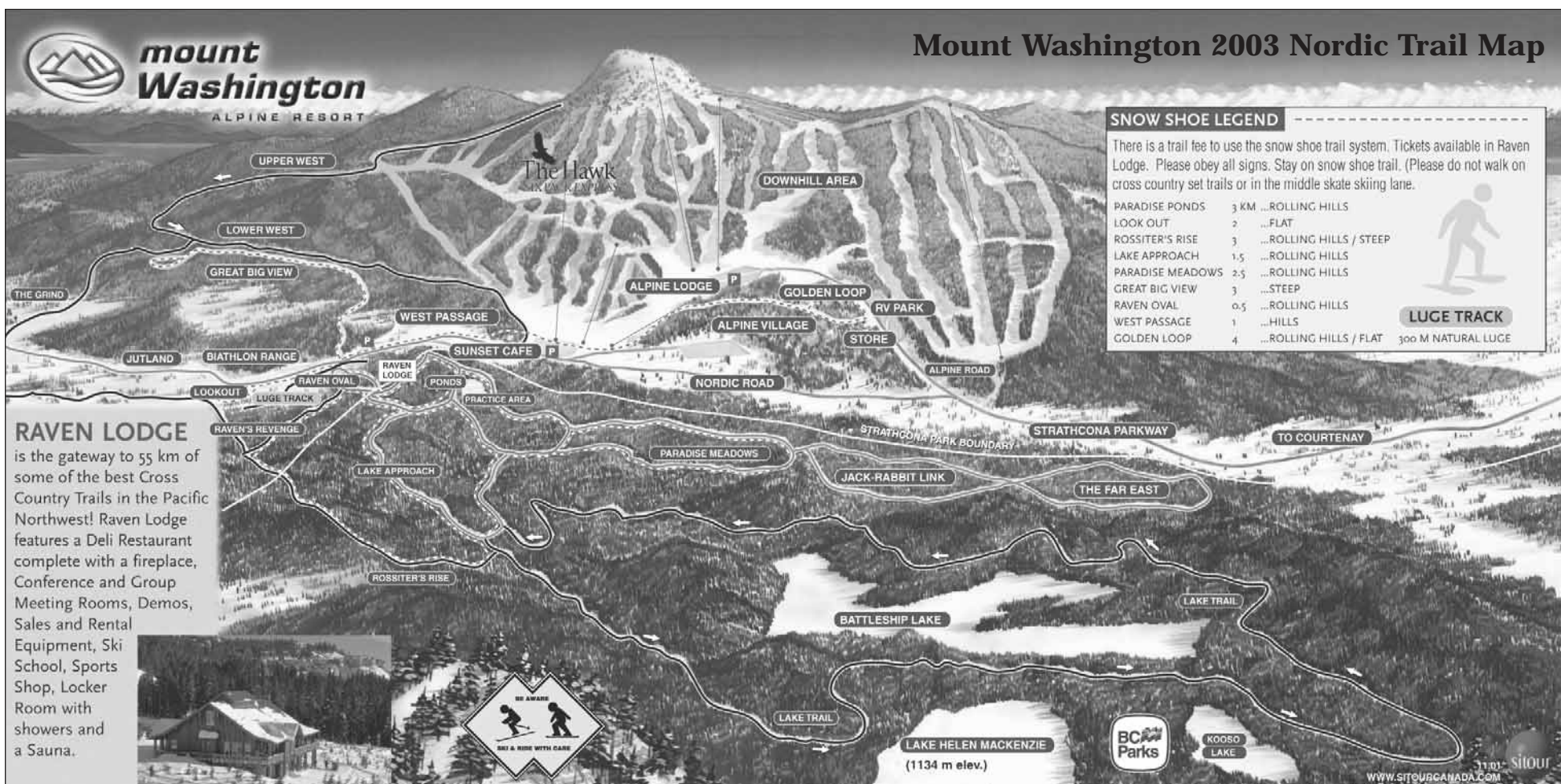
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**mount Washington**  
ALPINE RESORT

## Mount Washington 2003 Nordic Trail Map




**SNOW SHOE LEGEND**

There is a trail fee to use the snow shoe trail system. Tickets available in Raven Lodge. Please obey all signs. Stay on snow shoe trail. (Please do not walk on cross country set trails or in the middle skate skiing lane.)

PARADISE PONDS	3 KM	...ROLLING HILLS
LOOK OUT	2	...FLAT
ROSSITER'S RISE	3	...ROLLING HILLS / STEEP
LAKE APPROACH	1.5	...ROLLING HILLS
PARADISE MEADOWS	2.5	...ROLLING HILLS
GREAT BIG VIEW	3	...STEEP
RAVEN OVAL	0.5	...ROLLING HILLS
WEST PASSAGE	1	...HILLS
GOLDEN LOOP	4	...ROLLING HILLS / FLAT

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## The Top 10 reasons that Mount Washington switched from "Mt." to "Mount" when it created a new corporate logo:

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p>10 Mt. is so small it gets lost on the Comox Valley map.</p> <p>9 M. T. Washington sounded too much like a rap deejay.</p> <p>8 "Mt." Washington is a national park in New Hampshire; "Mount" Washington is one of the best ski resorts in British Columbia.</p> | <p>7 Since "Mount" is spelled like "about", Americans have an easier time identifying the resort as Canadian.</p> <p>6 If Everest can be a Mount, why can't Washington?</p> <p>5 Since the Resort is "mounting" a growth plan it seemed only fitting.</p> | <p>4 Mount comes first alphabetically.</p> <p>3 The longer name confounds the headline writers.</p> <p>2 The guy who created the Resort's new logo got paid by the letter.</p> |
|---|---|--|

**And the number one reason the Resort changed from "Mt." to "Mount"...**

- 1 After more than 20 years in operation, and a growing North American reputation, it was time the "Mount" grew up.

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## Mount Washington's Alpine Village *A Unique Treat...*

There is a distinct difference between "drive-to" accommodation and the original Alpine Village. When you are searching for a tranquil winter wonderland you will want to explore this unique blend of old world charm nestled in a convenient location close to the slopes. Offering ski-out access, the residences of the Alpine Village range from cozy condos to family-sized chalets at the most affordable rates on the mountain.

**Parking...** If you are staying the in the Alpine Village parking is provided for you in clearly designated lots at the top of Henry Road and across the street from the General Store off Strathcona Parkway. These lots are not for the use of guests staying in properties designated "drive-to" where ample parking is provided for all guests.

Due to the excessive snowfall Mount Washington can experience it would be wise to move your car or dig it out after a heavy snowfall to ensure it is not damaged by the snowplow.

**When Hunger Hits Hard...** The Alpine Lodge offers the choice of laid-back

dining at Fireweeds, pub-style fare at Fat Teddy's, Chinese take-out or eat-in at The Mountain Wok, Pie in the Sky Pizza and cafeteria service at The Alpine Café.

Alternatively, you may want to check out The Sunset Pasta Bar located at the base of the Red Chair or see what new secrets await you at the new Raven Lodge.

**Provisions...** In case you forgot an essential item such a toilet paper you can equip yourself with emergency supplies from the General Store located on Strathcona Parkway directly below the original Alpine Village. A limited selection of videos are available for rent and it is a BC Licensed Liquor outlet.



## Avalanche Dog to the Rescue!

The Mount Washington Ski Patrol gained a new member last year. He's a four-year-old German Shepherd Malamute cross named Yuki and belongs to ski patrol director Brad Frechette.

Yuki is a certified avalanche rescue dog, trained to detect human scent under the snow in event of an avalanche.

Frechette began training Yuki for avalanche searches when the dog was eight weeks old. "I wanted to train up an avalanche rescue dog," he said. "I researched suitable breeds and decided to go with a cross-breed."

Frechette and Yuki received their full validation from CARDA last year. It was the final step in a long process, Frechette explains. "You do all the training yourself, and then you go away to a course" with members of the RCMP dog service as well as people from CARDA. After going through the course, a dog team gets in-

training certification. Then after more home training they go back for the full validation.

Yuki is unique in that validated dogs are usually purebred German Shepherds. He is the first malamute cross to be validated, Frechette said.

"Malamutes, Huskies, any dog like that that people would think make a good avalanche dog, don't," he said. "They just like to play in the snow."

Yuki is trained to detect human scent cones in the snow. "It's called air-scenting, as opposed to tracking," Frechette explained. "All of us, whether we want to admit it or not, we're all kind of like (the Peanuts character) Pigpen. Basically there's a cloud of millions of dead skin cells and everything around us."

When someone is wiped down a slope in an avalanche they give off a "scent cone" that is conical, or triangular in shape.

*Continued on page 18*



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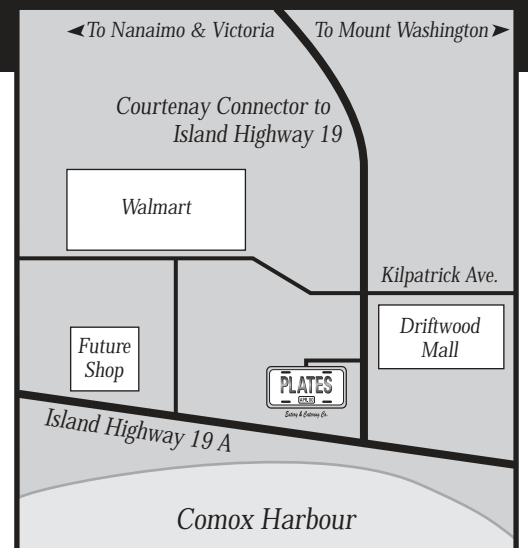
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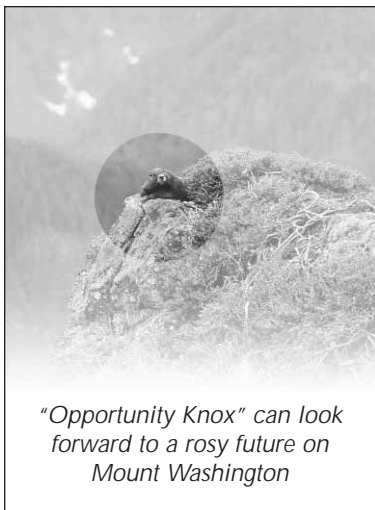
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# Terrifying decline and frustrating standstill finally at an end!



"Opportunity Knox" can look forward to a rosy future on Mount Washington

**For the first time in over a decade the Vancouver Island marmot population is on the rise.**

Struggling on the brink of extinction since 1994, Canada's most endangered animal made a gain of almost twenty marmots in 2002 from a population of less than 70 animals to almost 90.

"Last years sad news, two of our breeding adults were killed on Mount Washington by wolves, was softened by news of two successful litters there, plus three additional litters on "P", Heather and Green mountains all located just east of Nanaimo. Our captive population was busy too. We had 5 litters in captivity at our



"Oprah" keeps a watchful eye on a young Marmot.



partner facilities, the Calgary and Toronto zoos and Mountain View Farms in Langley, totaling 13 pups", said Viki Wilson, Executive Director of the Marmot Recovery Foundation.

Now begins an even harder task for the Foundation - reintroduction - or rebuilding the wild population by introducing captive bred marmots into the wild colonies.

"We've finally succeeded in increasing the total number of animals but there are still enormous challenges ahead of us. Introduction of captive bred marmots to wild habitat has not yet been tested although we've had success with two translocations. Four isolated wild marmots were "paired up" by moving one male and one female and both pairs produced off spring this year. That's a pretty good indicator that it should work and a huge win for the wild population," Viki went on to say.

Mount Washington continues to act as the hub for VIM research and recovery efforts as well as supporting the largest single natural colony of wild Vancouver Island marmots on the island - half of the total wild population. The dedicated marmot recovery center completed in 2001 on Mount Washington serves as a "half way house" for marmots bred off island, quarantining and acclimatizing them



"Redsonia & Spargirl" enjoy an afternoon in the sun.

before they are released into the wild colonies, as well as acting as a breeding and research center.

Called the "Tony Barrett Mount Washington Marmot Recovery Center", it sits on land donated to the project by the Mount Washington Alpine Resort who also hosts a public marmot interpretive center



"The Marmot's" own cover girl... "Mom #2"

to teach the public about the plight of the Vancouver Island marmot and the recovery efforts to save it. Unfortunately, the Recovery Center itself remains off-limits to the public to prevent habituation of the animals to humans and to avoid risk of disease.

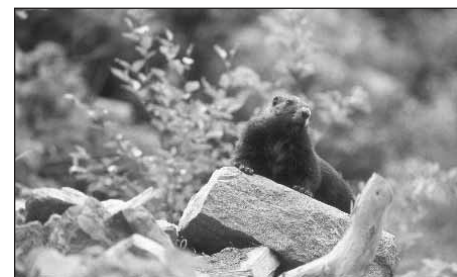
"When you're down to less than twenty breeding females every animal is precious - you can't be too cautious. I'm just grateful for the help we receive from so many sources. It restores your



Field work on Mount Washington is aimed at protecting and increasing the wild Marmot population.

faith to know that Canadians are serious enough about their natural legacy to prevent the extinction of this amazing animal. After all, they're not found anywhere else in the world. If we don't succeed in rescuing them, that's it".

Photos: Andrew Bryant Services



For more information about the rare Vancouver Island marmot visit their website at [marmots.org](http://marmots.org)

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## RCMP presence to increase on Mount Washington

**Don't be surprised if you see more uniformed RCMP members at Mount Washington this winter.**

After meeting with three strata councils and Resort staff in the past couple of months, the RCMP have agreed to enhance patrols for better police presence once the winter season opens in December.

"We're also going to be having members stationed up on the hill on a full-time rotating basis," Mount Washington liaison officer Constable Dean Maxwell said.

While uniformed officers won't necessarily be on the hill every day, they will be there for peak event times and during heavy traffic times, Maxwell said. "We have an excellent working relationship with the stratas up there," he said. The RCMP is interested in homeowners' concerns and how they can be solved.

"We're hoping to go with a team concept

by identifying problems and coming up with mutual solutions," he said. The RCMP will target any problems the residents see is most prevalent.

For example, right now youth drinking is a big concern to year-round residents and property owners. To minimize these incidents officers will ride with snow-cat operators through the Village on patrols.

The RCMP will specifically be targeting drinking and driving, mischief in the Village and theft prevention this year, as well as other issues as they crop up. For theft prevention they may set up a table at the main lodge and offer a free engraving service from time to time. Maxwell asks skiers to record the serial number of their skis, which helps in identifying stolen prop-



erty.

Maxwell has also designed a new form this year to streamline theft reports when there is no officer on the hill. The forms will be available at Guest Services and can be faxed directly to the RCMP station in Courtenay, where they will be entered into

the computer system. The forms have space for skiers to describe exactly what type of equipment was stolen, also for better identification of stolen property.

More RCMP will patrol the Resort on New Year's Eve and Citizens On Patrol will assist them as in past year. "The hill has been outstanding in offering services such as snowmobiles, ski equipment and anything that will make our day-to-day existence (better)," Maxwell said.

## The largest Strata on Mount Washington has joined the environmentally conscious at the Alpine Resort.

A year ago Strata 799 - the Alpine Village - instituted a recycling program among its units. The Village is not the only Strata to institute recycling at the resort, but with 242 units it is the largest.

"Council 799 recognizes that the owners want to be consistent with the move Mount Washington is making," says Bruce Storry, Chair of the Alpine Village (Strata 799). "We thought we should follow suit."

Another incentive for recycling was the news that the Regional District of Comox-Strathcona was going to start penalizing owners heavily if there were recyclables in their garbage. The Village has devised a "three can" plan for their rubbish and recycling: garbage, recycling and returnables. There are bins throughout the Village for

people's convenience. The Strata is encouraging owners in the Village to donate their bottles and other returnables to the Mount Washington Ski Club. Viken Services has the contract to haul recyclables away from the village, Storry said.

***So far recycling is up 15 to 20 per cent over last year, Storry said. "We're still in an educating mode." The Strata has developed a plasticized card outlining their recycling practices that will be hung up in each rental unit. This will help renters to know what they can and cannot recycle.***

The Strata has tried to make the recycling as easy as possible for renters: any plastic, cardboard or paper are put into blue recycling bags that are provided. "We're not separating it at the unit," Storry said.

The recycling is going well, Storry said. "It's going to take some time. "The programs are being met with encouraging success - more than we had anticipated. It will take a couple of years to get to full speed.

"On the positive side, a lot of people (who rent) are out of Victoria and Nanaimo, and they know a lot about recycling."



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## Never Eat Yellow... I mean, Red Snow!

***If you are interested enough to take a walk through Paradise Meadows in the spring when the snow begins to melt, you will likely notice blotches of red in the snow. Some of them are patches the size of a large foot and others barely span the tip of a finger. Are they the remnants of nocturnal nightmares or something more sinister?***

According to ancient Aboriginal legend a certain tribe lived on the fertile coast of the Comox Valley. They fished in abundant waters and lived off a generous land. Their homes were solid and their families flourished. The sounds of joy and laughter rang throughout their village.

Word of their wealth reached another, less fortunate tribe and those people began to covet everything that belonged to the other tribe. When cautioned of an eminent attack of their peaceful settlement, the wise men decided the women and children would hide from their foes at the top of Forbidden Plateau. The men would remain behind to fight. And so, the women and children set off on the long journey to the summit of the mountain.

The enemies arrived and the men fought a long and valiant battle. Eventually, the aggressors were vanquished and the men set off for the mountain to proclaim their victory to their families.

To their shock and horror, the men found no women or children on the mountain. All had vanished. The only sign that they had ever been there at all were the random smears of red in the snow. The warriors believed it was the blood of their beloved families who had been eaten by evil spirits while they awaited word of a safe return. From that moment on, the summit of that mountain was considered forbidden.

### Hence the name "Forbidden Plateau".

Interestingly enough, the phenomenon of "red snow" is not unique to Forbidden Plateau nor is it unique to Mount Washington. It can be found in various alpine climates throughout the world.

Scientifically, the smears are nothing more than algae. Often referred to as "watermelon snow", this algae has a light red hue and is a food source for a variety of mini-critters that live within snow's ecosystem. These include snow worms, snow fleas and Tardigrades or snow bears.

Watermelon snow is most prominent in the spring due to natural warming that draws the algae to the surface of the snow where it reproduces. Once the snow melts, it sinks back to the ground to await the next snowfall.

If you step in red snow it will stick to your boot. If you eat red snow it will give you the trots. And since red is not the only colour of snow algae, my advice to the unwary, curious is: "Never eat red ...or orange...or green....and especially...not yellow snow."



## Safety Building Plans Progressing

Plans for a combined fire hall and public safety building at Mount Washington are progressing, says Jay Oddleifson, Director of Property Development and Finance at the Alpine Resort.

**"What we're trying to do is create a fire service area up on the mountain. That involves going to the taxpayers up here and putting a petition to them," asking if they would approve raising taxes in order to pay for a fire hall, he said.**

At the end of October the Resort donated a piece of land - across from the entrance to the first parking lot - to the Regional District of Comox-Strathcona for a Public Safety Building. If all goes according to plan, the building will house a fire department, ambulance station and a community police storefront for the RCMP, as well as serve the mountain's first aid needs.

Bob Nelson of Vancouver is conducting a feasibility study on fire protection needs at Mount Washington. The results of this study will determine the size and scope of the building, Oddleifson said. Once the study is done the Regional District can draft a bylaw and petition mountain homeowners

for their opinion.

Stakeholders will likely vote on such a bylaw in mid- to late-season. "If that's successful we'll be starting construction on a fire hall as early as the spring," he said.

Oddleifson didn't have any numbers on building costs - that remains to be determined according to Nelson's study - but said the building will have to conform to the design standards on Mount Washington.

Oddleifson is optimistic that a deal can be reached for the public safety building. "It's been a long time in coming," he said. "It's overdue. If we have any chance to develop and grow, we certainly need this type of amenity."

RCMP Constable Dean Maxwell is also optimistic about plans for a Public Safety Building. "The RCMP has a set of plans and wishes for the design and we certainly appreciate being included," he said. Maxwell has met with strata councils as well as resort and regional district representatives to discuss the building's preliminary design and function. "It's certainly something that's needed."

## Avalanche Dog *continued from page 13*

When Frechette and Yuki go out to the site of an avalanche, they do a hasty search from downslope so Yuki can try and detect the edges of the scent cone. Then he traces back and forth within that cone until he reaches the point of origin.

"The dog is just looking for the human scent coming from the snowpack," Frechette explained.

An avalanche rescue dog's sense of smell is sensitive enough that he can even detect the difference between humans who have formed a probe line up the slope trying to find buried people by sticking probes in the snow, and someone who is buried.

"The first time I saw that I was blown away," Frechette said. But it doubles the effectiveness - and swiftness - of a search if a rescue dog can go out at the same time as a probe line.

Despite the busy ski season, Frechette and Yuki find plenty of opportunity to practice searching skills. Frechette gets his fellow patrollers to wear old items of clothing for him, then he seals them in a plastic bag to be buried later in a couple of metres of snow for an exercise. "It's got to be fun for the dog. Sometimes it's good to challenge them on some days and just have fun on other days," he says.



While Frechette brings Yuki to the mountain when he's on duty, Yuki is not the ski patrol's mascot. "He's more of a working dog than he is a pet," Frechette explains. "When I put the harness on that dog he knows it's work time."

Frechette asks people to refrain from petting Yuki when he's in his working harness, although it's ok to talk to the dog. "What he works for is human affection when he's in the harness - all for my praise. If people are praising the dog when he hasn't done anything, it's going to be pretty hard for me to get him to work."

**So far, Yuki's sniffing services haven't been needed at Mount Washington - no Resort guest has ever been caught in an avalanche in-bounds, Frechette said. "We haven't had any burials. There is the potential of using (Yuki) in-bounds, but my biggest thing is all those people who are going outside our boundaries now and they don't have a lick of avalanche equipment," he said. "That's where I think we're going to be used."**

Eventually, Frechette would like to see two dog teams at the resort, so there is an avalanche dog on duty every day of the week. But it was a hard enough sell to have Yuki on-site, he'll take what he can get.

"The greatest chance of survival (in an avalanche) is getting them unburied right now. If I'm down in the valley and I get the call, it's a bit late."

## Mount Washington comes close to making Canada's Top 50 List

Mount Washington Alpine Resort has come just shy of being named a B.C. finalist for the 2002 Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies.

The 50 Best program is for companies with an operating budget of between \$10 million and \$2 billion. Mount Washington's budget is around \$18 million.

"It was a huge process to go through, but in the end we aren't far enough in our development to be considered," Director of Business Services Don Sharpe said.

The Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies program recognizes both traditional and non-traditional companies that demonstrate excellence in management practices and embrace new technology, globalization and a new generation of people entering the workforce. These companies demonstrate the increased importance of leadership, strategy, culture, brand and technology in today's marketplace.

The program is in its ninth year and is

sponsored by Deloitte & Touche, CIBC Commercial Banking, the National Post and Queens School of Business.

To be considered for the award, companies must undergo a formal evaluation process, which includes in-depth interviews conducted by Andersen and CIBC. Finalists are chosen based on their ability to provide excellent products and services, a motivated team of employees and superior customer service through the implementation of best business practices. An adjudication panel comprised of business leaders and academic faculty members then chooses the 50 winners.

The interview process was quite involved - the questionnaire they were asked to fill out was 20 pages long - and Sharpe spent two solid weeks gathering documentation to back up Mount Washington's values.

"The time it takes to gather that information is huge," he said. "The binders that

went with the documents took three, three-inch binders of information to back (the values) up."

The information-gathering process was an exercise that forced mountain management to pull all of their information into one format. "It makes us go back and explain what it is we do, and where all that information lies," Sharpe said. There are many people on the mountain who know all about the Resort and its values, but they carry that information around in their heads. "In that respect it was valuable."

**Adjudicators complimented Mount Washington on their plans for the future, Sharpe said, but told Resort staff that they need a chance to execute them first - then their true potential will be revealed. In a year and a half to two years, the judges said, they won't be surprised if Mount Washington makes it on that 50 Best list.**

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## Future of the Comox Valley Airport up to it's Citizens

**People in the Comox Valley will get to vote on whether or not to fund a new airport passenger terminal on February 15, 2003.**

A referendum asking the public to approve a \$4 million grant to the Comox Valley Airport Commission was supposed to occur with the civic elections on Nov. 16. However, a difference of legal opinions quashed the question at the last minute.

The Comox Valley Airport Commission has been operating the municipal airport out of a cramped building for several years. Two years ago the airport hit its maximum allowable expansion (the airport leases space from Canadian Forces Base Comox) with a temporary passenger holding area and security area, as well as a new check-in place for WestJet and a baggage carousel.

Twice a day, the airport experiences "zoo time" when both WestJet and Pacific Coastal flights are arriving and departing, packing people into the terminal like sardines.

Tom Dishlevoy Architecture of Comox has designed a new, bigger passenger terminal for Comox, which will solve the congestion. The terminal will be located a few hundred metres away from its present location on Department of National Defence property, which will allow for a bigger ramp area.

The only thing standing between the Comox Valley Airport Commission and its new terminal is money.

The Regional District of Comox-Strathcona will be asking Valley residents to create an airport service area - comprising the entire Comox Valley - and borrow \$4.1 million to donate to the airport terminal project. The loan would then be paid

back over 20 years through raised taxes.

"We resolved the issue and we're now proceeding to another referendum with the wording of the bylaw and the referendum as such that we won't be in a legal hassle as we were the last time," regional district director Jack Turner said.

The new airport service area would be made up of Areas A,B, C and K as well as the municipalities of Comox, Cumberland and Courtenay. The maximum amount that a property owner would have to pay annually, based on their property value, is 10 cents per \$1,000.

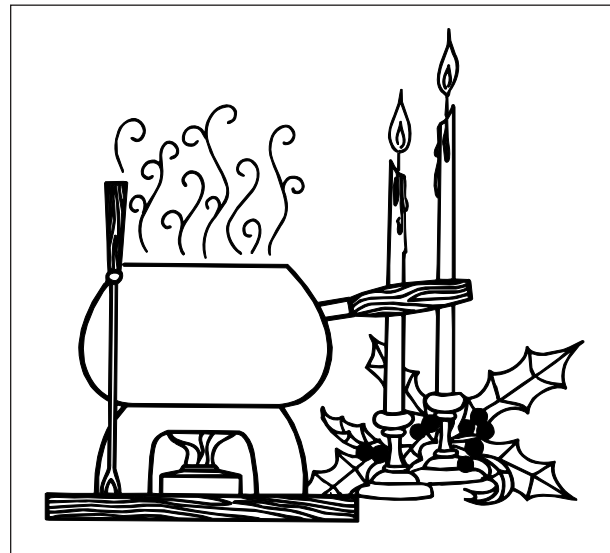
**The proposed new terminal will cost \$7.9 million to build, downgraded from the original \$10 million plan, but functional nonetheless. And the new terminal will be built none too soon, says airport General Manager Chuck Fast.**

Fast hopes holding the referendum in February - and getting a positive vote - will allow CVAC to keep up with their building timelines. The Comox airport is the only such facility in B.C. that's growing, according to a B.C. tourism Web site.

"We're seeing 16 per cent growth," which is quite positive when compared to Campbell River, which is 19 per cent off their previous year's numbers, Fast said.

Comox anticipated a cooling off period with their passenger numbers after Air Canada pulled out last June, but that never happened. "The demand is big," he said. The airport is still on target for 150,000 passengers in 2002, making it the second busiest behind Victoria. "We sure need that facility to be open by next Christmas."

## Fondue Fridays at Raven Lodge



**Many North Americans will remember fondue as a home party craze in the '70s. But did you know that the history of the fondue is truly epic?**

Mount Washington will add to the communal cuisine this winter with their Fondue Fridays at Raven Lodge.

One of the earliest known references to a fondue is in Homer's Iliad (Song XI). However, the Swiss take credit for the popular fondue. And while the Swiss made fondue out of necessity - they needed to soften their cheese by heating it with wine in a large pot in order to eat it - Mount Washington is making fondue for pure bliss.

Build up your appetite for an alpine fondue with an hour of snowshoeing by the light of your own headlamp. The snowshoe trek begins at 5 p.m. every Friday.

Once inside, retire to the cosy ambience of the great room, where a towering fireplace will warm up your frosty toes. Dinner

begins with a cheese fondue, followed by a meat and vegetable fondue and culminating with a chocolate fondue with your choice of fresh fruit, tea or coffee.

"It's really cool," says Mount Washington director of marketing Karen Bonell. "I think people, especially those on vacation, will really value this."

Fondue Fridays cost \$39 per person (children 12 and under are half price) and pre-booking is required. Phone (250) 338-1386 for more information.

### MORE FOOD OPTIONS INTRODUCED

The introduction of Fondue Fridays is in line with Mount Washington's goal of expanding and theming the food and beverage experience at the Alpine Resort, says Food and Beverage Manager Alfredo Yabut.

"As you know, two years ago we opened the Mountain Wok Chinese Food, then the Pie in the Sky Pizza last year," Yabut said. "This year we will be experimenting with sushi rolls in what we call Wasabi Wednesday in Fat Teddy's."

Other new things to look for on the food and beverage side are a la carte dinners in the Raven Lodge from Thursday to Sunday, and a revamped décor in Fireweeds Restaurant in the Alpine Lodge. The old Nordic Lodge has been revamped and renamed the Sunset Pasta Bar.

"We are also looking forward to our first year of evening snowshoe tours followed by a three-course fondue dinner," Yabut said.

### So who are those WestJet-setters anyways?

The attractive couple (shown above left) are Andrea Martin and Ryan Williams, who are engaged to be married. They are both downhill ski coaches with the Mount Washington Ski Club.

No, they didn't fly in with their skis on but more and more skiers from Alberta are discovering the attraction of ski packages to Mount Washington. What makes it even more attractive is the ability to squeeze in a game of mid-winter golf at Crown Isle on the same trip.

A newly-expanded airport terminal can only increase the amount of visitors to the Comox Valley in the future.

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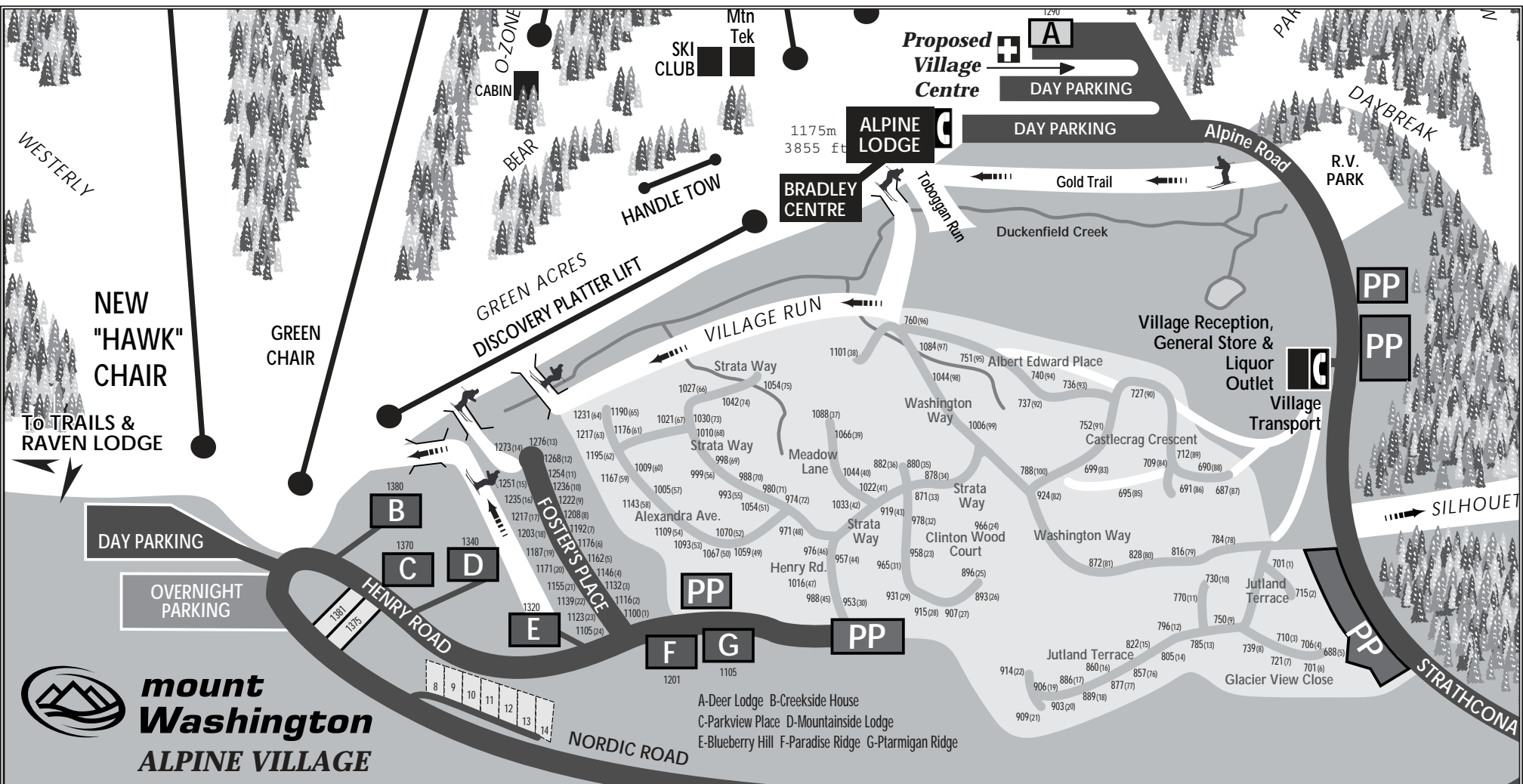
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## Walk-On Ferry Passengers with Pets Beware...

I spend a lot of time on BC Ferries. On average I visit Vancouver Island two or three times per month. That means I ride a BC Ferry approximately 48 to 72 times in a year. With rates running upwards of \$40.00 for a car and driver per trip it doesn't take a rocket scientist to calculate the annual cost. Don't get me wrong, it isn't that I don't like BC Ferries, it's just that I'm a rather frugal person who looks for simple ways of saving a buck. In the interest of saving that buck I decided it was time for me to leave my car behind and "walk-on" the ferry.

Now, BC Ferries provides a vast array of comforts for their regular "walk-ons". They have cozy waiting rooms where you can relax, purchase a beverage or a book and stay warm and dry. There's a place to drop off your luggage and to pick it up at the end of your journey. And if you require assistance due to a physical disability the staff is eager to help.

Just don't ever walk on with your dog. You see I get the feeling BC Ferries doesn't care much for dogs. I have a little pooch. Weighing only ounces over ten pounds, he's not a big, slobbering mutt. He doesn't bite, he doesn't bark much but he does cry piteously when he's not happy about something. The sound is enough to soften even the hardest heart. Or so I've always thought.

In order to make my little poochie's journey as comfortable as possible I brought along his Hound-Hotel. It's one of those pet carriers made out of beige plastic with

a handle on top and bars on the door. Typical of any jail, it restricts the internee to a small but practical space. I even brought along his blankie. At the risk of embarrassing my pooch, I will admit that yes, he has a blankie and yes, I was kind enough to bring it, along with his toys and cookies and...

My point is, the dog was restrained. I approached the ticket wicket and was promptly advised that the dog and I were not invited to share the comforts of the lounge on the upper level but would instead have to wait for the ferry under the dock, outside in the wind and rain. It was February, it was cold and I was stunned. If you've ever been caught in a west coast mid-winter deluge you will understand my horror. But being a law abiding citizen I dutifully made my way down into the bowels of the terminal.

So, there we sat, my pooch and I, plus a few Ferry employees dressed appropriately for the last leg up Everest and an entire parking lot full of cars waiting to load onto the next ferry. I shivered. My dog wailed a sad country ballad about his sorry state and I shivered some more.

Now I'm a curious person, so I decided that this was a golden opportunity to explore the dark side of the terminal. I removed my reluctant and suspicious pooch from his luxury accommodation, clipped his leash onto his collar and went in search of some warmth. There was none to be had. Every doorway leading to a public area had a large "NO DOGS ALLOWED" sign firmly affixed to the glass.

What I did find in abundance were poochie potty bags. How nice of BC Ferries to remind us to clean up after the dogs they don't want around in the first place. In the spirit of co-operation I made sure to pick up every smelly scrap of evidence that my dog left behind.

The ferry finally arrived with a long barreled hooooo that sent my dog scrambling for safety behind me, of course. After watching disembarking cars stream by and

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spatter us with a shower of dirty droplets from their tires, we were told it was time to enter the ship.

The entrance to the car deck of a BC Ferry resembles a great, yawning, metal mouth, so it's hardly a wonder that my poochie was a teeny bit hesitant. But remember, he's a slight canine and I was holding the other end of the leash. That made me the boss. He slid on board in a squat position, like it or not.

And that's when things got ugly. You see the Spirit Class Ferry I boarded appeared to have no place for dogs. No corner, no kennel, no remote out of the way anything. And cars were beginning to load behind us.

"Where can I take my dog?" I asked. "Beats me." Came the answer. Beats me? What kind of an answer is that? But wait, it gets better. The kind gentleman informed me, none-to-kindly, mind you, that wherever I placed my dog, I had to stay with him and that taking him upstairs to the passenger deck was not an option.

Cars loaded and people pushed past me as I clung to the wall near the stairwell. They growled, they groaned and they complimented me on my cute poochie. But nobody offered any help. With a grunt and a wheeze the ferry shoved off and set sail across Georgia Strait. And my rear end

froze as I huddled in a stairwell, buffeted by the frigid February wind. The only place to sit was on the Hound Hotel and the hound was blissfully snoozing, buried beneath his warm and fluffy blankie. As I sat there watching my fingernails turn blue I wondered if all ferry terminals and all BC Ferries were as welcoming to walk-on dogs?

Over the next year I made it my mission to walk onto as many ferries as I could with my pooch. Here is what I found: Horseshoe Bay likes dogs the best. Not only is there a covered walkway to keep both you and your pooch out of the rain but also there are plastic form-fitted seats bolted to the wall of berth #2 where you can sit in a slight semblance of comfort.

Departure Bay makes you walk approximately half a kilometre outside regardless of the weather and the baggage pick-up area is inside behind a door that is clearly marked NO DOGS allowed. When I asked the driver of the luggage van to please not slide my bags onto the luggage rack, he informed me that his job required him to put all bags on the sloped rack. Period. So, my luggage went inside while I was left outside with the dog.

*Continued on page 23*

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**Marmot**

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## Wendy Woodley, Our Mountain Star



**Despite the fact that everyone tells me she knows absolutely everything about Mount Washington, I decided it was time to try to stump Wendy Woodley. Surely there was a question or two she couldn't answer. Right?**

We shared dinner in a cozy restaurant and I spent two hours picking her brain. Darned if she didn't answer every single question I asked.

She knows who the mountain is named after. Not George Washington, she's quick to point out. She actually remembers Bernie's Sing-a-longs in the Alpine Lodge. Do you? She knows who bought the first lot on Mount Washington and where to get lemons on the mountain in August when the store is closed. She has skied the mountain since opening day, which, she informed me, was long before a single chalet was built. She has watched the resort grow from dream to reality and she

has loved the mountain every step of the way. And frankly, the mountain loves her.

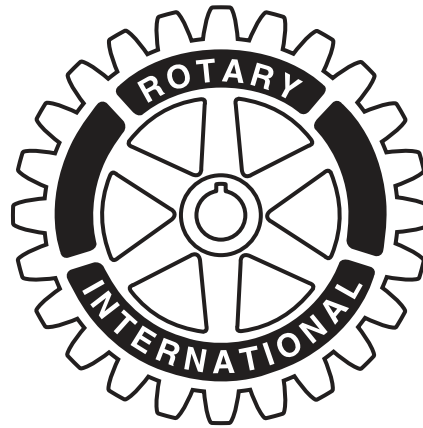
She has volunteered as a snow hostess, run one of the nicest Bed and Breakfasts, started one of the most successful rental companies on the mountain and worked in a variety of capacities all over the mountain. And she's the best-kept secret up here.

Just try defaming any aspect of the mountain and she will politely and eloquently remind you of its innumerable virtues. Gush a little too much about its greatness and she will gently remind you of its flaws. Her honesty and integrity are a special gift to be treasured.

With husband Gary and her trusty Balinese sidekick the estimable Snowball (who incidentally has written from time to time for The Marmot), by her side, Wendy Woodley has become a veritable feast of information about not only Mount Washington but the Comox Valley as well.

Just ask anyone who has taken a flight into town. Wendy also volunteers as an Ambassador at the airport. Need a gift on your way out of town? She works in the gift shop too. Need to know anything about tourism in the Comox Valley? Wendy volunteers there too. Sports minded? You'll find Wendy at the Royal LePage Snow to Surf Race and the Brian McLean Chevrolet Tri-K Triathlon. Need to know where a trail goes in Strathcona Park? She's been a BC Parks trail volunteer too! And that's the short list of her accomplishments!

It's no wonder she's won awards for her community service. Wendy is everywhere! So, next time you see Wendy on the mountain, whether she's busy filling The Marmot newspaper racks or whizzing down the slopes (and man, can she ski fast!), take a moment to thank her for all the time and effort she has offered simply from the goodness of her heart. Hats off to Wendy Woodley one of the unsung heroes of the hill.



## Len Rossiter receives recognition for his many years of work

Mount Washington Resort President and General Manager, Peter Gibson, presented a framed set of historic photos to Len Rossiter at a recent Campbell River Rotary Club luncheon. Rossiter, club member and past-president, was honoured for his contributions to the development of Forbidden Plateau recreation dating back to the 1920s. Rossiter Lake, recently added to Strathcona Park, was named in his honour.

*The snow may be great on Mount Washington but the spectacular coastal views are the icing on the cake.*



## Sunset Pasta Bar breathes new life into old Nordic Centre



Despite the wildly successful opening last year of the Raven Lodge Nordic Facility, the sun has not yet set on the old nordic lodge.

The facility that originally served cross-country skiers at the entrance to Paradise Meadows has been revamped and renamed the Sunset Pasta Bar.

"We've done a full renovation of the restaurant itself. Our returning guests can look forward to a fresh, new look," says Mount Washington Food and Beverage Manager Alfredo Yabut. The pasta bar is a quick-serve concept featuring your choice of hot pasta, sauce, garlic toast and salad for \$7.95. There are also extras available, like meatballs and chicken.

"Our intent is a big, hot, fast meal for cheap, and get (customers) back out on the slopes," Yabut said.

The dining area has been renovated and Yabut has purchased some new equipment in anticipation of opening day. The kitchen can operate with three people, and Yabut says he might bump up his food staff for the pasta bar.

"It's got great access to the expanded parking lot, given the new lift (The Hawk) is in close proximity. That's why we've chosen to go with a 'quick-service' concept," he said. The Pasta Bar is also open for private Christmas functions in the evenings this year.

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**Pets Beware** *continued from page 21*

Of the ferries that run between Horseshoe Bay and Departure Bay, the Fast Cats had the cream of canine quarters. On the upper car deck are a bank of individual kennels that provide safety, warmth and protection from the weather and other dogs for your pooch. There are also dog dishes and a water hose in case of emergency. Despite the fact that you must embark and disembark from the lowest car deck, it is fairly easy to find your way upstairs to the Pooch Palace.

Regular "C" class ferries on the same route provide a car deck compound that often contains an assortment of large dogs tied by leashes only. Occasionally they do break free of their restraints and I know of one specific instance where a renegade rover released himself and was romping roughshod round the car deck.

The Tsawwassen terminal is much the same. After purchasing your ticket, you walk inside with your dog to the luggage drop-off area, then straight out the door into the weather. I couldn't find a covered outdoor seating area, so in poor weather you get wet. And as everyone knows, there is a good reason why BC is so green.

In addition, both Swartz Bay and Tsawwassen terminals have relatively few signs directing the disembarking passengers with dogs where to go to retrieve their luggage; or how to exit the terminal for that matter. I wandered around Swartz Bay for half an hour, completely lost until I finally found someone who directed me toward my luggage and the exit. Again, it was behind a door clearly marked, NO DOGS. Tsawwassen was much the same but in this case the driver of the luggage van told me simply to ignore the "No Dogs" sign and go inside to retrieve my bags. I have yet to ride a ferry out of Tsawwassen en route to Swartz Bay that provided any level of comfort for my dog and I.

The ferries that run to Duke Point have a small compound available for dogs. I wondered why the floor was covered with raised wooden skids and was shocked to discover water pouring into the area the moment the ferry left the dock. Yes, I said pouring. The floor was at least two inches deep in some areas before it slowly drained away. It is wide open to the weather and while there is a bank of plastic seats bolted to the wall of the ferry, the smell of exhaust was enough to make any person or dog nauseous.

The Duke Point terminal was the most frustrating experience of all. Not only is the luggage drop-off point behind the ticket wickets but one ticket-taker was firm in stating that the dog was not moving one step past his booth. He also curtly informed me that I would have to stand outside, in the sheeting January sleet without any cover for the full half hour prior to the ferry arriving.

It was more than I could bear. My luggage included my suitcase, my son's Saxophone, my laptop computer, the Hound Hotel and of course, the hound himself. So, in the interest of fairness I waited a few minutes then went to another ticket counter and asked the same ques-

tion. The woman looked at me and smiled. So far, so good. She immediately saw my dilemma and creatively suggested that I put the pooch inside his hotel and do my best to "sneak" him onto the ferry via the upper walkway. She advised me that if I ran into any difficulties to please let her know and she would escort me down on an elevator (that I couldn't see anywhere) to the lower level. I am happy to say that my pooch successfully snuck onto the ferry. Mission accomplished.

However, the pooch patrol was in high gear and within thirty seconds of setting foot on the ferry, two separate employees approached me and indicated that the dog had to go below decks immediately. This while I was making my way to the elevator to take him down. They don't waste any time in delegating the dogs to the dungeons.

Picking up your luggage from Duke Point when you have travelled with a dog is darn near impossible. Access to the luggage carousel is directly from the overhead walkway and due to security reasons there are several sets of doors between the luggage and the place you wind up with your dog.

With two glaring exceptions, most BC Ferry employees were very helpful. It is not their fault that the ships and terminals are ill equipped to handle such a situation but they make the best of it. During one voyage an employee even sat with my little poochie for a while to keep him company while I went upstairs to get a cup of tea.

During the summer, the lack of dog conveniences wasn't as big a problem. It is actually quite pleasant to sit out on the ferry car deck when the sun is shining and a warm breeze caresses your cheeks as the spectacular views of Active Pass slip by. Of course this means you have to ignore the announcement that requests all passengers leave the vehicle deck in order to enjoy the many services available on the passenger deck. Even waiting outside at the terminal can be a restful reprieve filled with all the sights and smells of seashore life.

In all fairness, I would like to point out that BC Ferries does not charge anything for your dog. That's right, nothing, zero, zip. And for that, your dog is treated as unwelcome vermin. It wouldn't bother me to pay a small fee for my pooch providing it was more pleasant to bring him aboard, the travel areas for dogs were warm and enclosed and the luggage pick-up access was improved. Not to mention the installation of a couple of directional arrows to help navigate the terminals. And since my first experience on a Spirit Class ship I recently discovered a sign designating dogs to the upper auto. Could they perhaps have heard my vociferous complaints about being stationed in a stairwell during my previous voyage?

Let's face it; my dog has not enjoyed his experience as a BC Ferry "walk-on". For a pampered pooch that has slept numerous nights at the Empress Hotel it was a cold and windy slap in the face. Are you planning to walk your dog onto a BC Ferry? You might want to think again.

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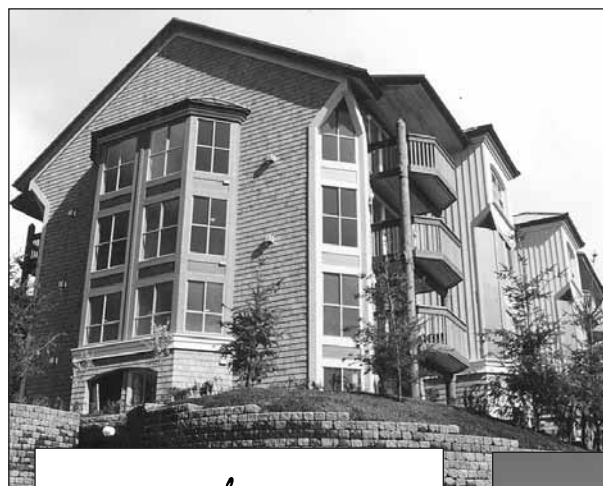
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**Mountainside Lodge**

**Location! Location! Location!** 2 bedroom suites available next to the new Hawk Six Seat Chairlift! Underbuilding parking and views of the mountain runs or Strathcona Park. Units are furnished, and have gas fireplaces. **From \$139,900**



**DEER LODGE AT MT. WASHINGTON**



**DEER LODGE Features Include:**

- Mount Washington's only slope side hotel • Located in the heart of the Village Centre • 2 & 3 bedroom fully furnished deluxe condos • On-site management available • Ski to and from your door • Underground parking

2 Bedroom from \$149,900

3 Bedroom from \$192,900



**Vaulted Ceilings**

Modern townhome with vaulted ceilings and a very spacious floor plan. 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms. Crawl space is large enough to develop into another full level. Check out this bright townhome! You will be glad you did!

\$174,900



**WOW!!! Single Family Building Sites for \$79,900!!!**

Located adjacent to Strathcona Park with views of Island Mountains and Meadows. All the lots offer drive in access all year.



**Top Floor Penthouse**

2 bedroom lock off unit in Deer Lodge. This top floor penthouse condo has all you need. Overlooking the village is a dream location. Deer Lodge offers rental income, underground parking, hot tub & more. Ski right into the front door & drive out the back.

\$189,900



**Perched on a Ridge**

to view the sunsets, park and the stars! 4 bedroom chalet in the Alpine Village. Chalet has been rarely rented. Ownership is yours. 1st floor could easily be remodelled to accommodate an in-law suite. Sit in the hottub and enjoy the views of the mountains, glacier and sunsets.

\$209,900



MAY CONSIDER A TRADE



**Home Away From Home**

Luxuriously appointed, large spacious plan awaits you in this ski-in and out townhome on Washington Way. Easy access, just a 5 minute stroll to the Alpine Lodge. Ideal for families or rental with ample room. Loads of storage, hot tub, sauna & more!

\$214,900



**Nestled in the Woods!**

Your own chalet nestled in the heart of the alpine village of Mount Washington. Easy access in and out and the slopes are a downhill ski away! This mountain home is very cozy with 3 bedrooms, wood burning fireplace, 2 bathrooms and sauna.

\$239,900

**Recreational Home, Make An Offer!**

on Foster's Place. Drive in and ski out from this cozy retreat, with proven design. Hardwood floors and many upgrades, insulated floors and basement finished with an extra kitchen and bathroom. This home is owner built with many thoughtful features. Come and explore this cute and cozy chalet, you won't be disappointed.

\$294,900



**PARKVIEW PLACE**

**Features Include:**

- Only 4 left • Occupancy now
- The only new site across from the New Hawk Six Seat Chairlift
- Low Maintenance Exterior
- Fire Protection Sprinkler System
- 10 Year Home Warranty Program
- Same builder of Raven Lodge
- Easy access to Alpine, Nordic and Strathcona Park
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- 4 bedroom plans
- Double garages
- 1860 ~ 2400 Sq. Ft.

#6, 3 Levels, 2400 Sq. Ft. \$324,900

#7, 3 Levels, 2400 Sq. Ft. **SOLD!** \$199,900

#8, 3 Levels, 2400 Sq. Ft. \$249,900

#9, 3 Levels, 2400 Sq. Ft. \$274,900

#10, 3 Levels, 2400 Sq. Ft. **SOLD!** \$199,900

#11, 3 Levels, 2400 Sq. Ft. **PENDING** \$274,900

**CREEKSIDE HOUSE**



**Features Include:**

- Located across from the loading area of the NEW HAWK six seat chairlift
- Underbuilding parking
- Elevator and secured entry
- Locked ski storage area
- Propane fireplaces
- Suites are furnished.

101 Corner 3 bedroom suite overlooking the Hawk Chairlift. \$209,900

304 Penthouse 2 bedroom suite with morning sun. \$199,900





**Incredible Views**

Designed by David McSweeney Design & Construction, Comox much more into this 3 bedroom chalet located on the edge of Strathcona Provincial Park with the ski lifts across the street.

**\$249,900**



**This One's A Keeper!**

Located in a very private area of the Alpine Village with easy access in and to the slopes in this 4 bedroom immaculate. Extras include wood burning stove, wood burning hot tub, decks, and a security system. Owner's have never rented this property and pride of ownership is evident.

**\$259,900**



**Cathedral Ceilings**

Ski out access and close to parking, this chalet has cathedral ceilings and an open concept. Two sundecks face south, with sauna and woodstove for apres-ski. Loft for children play and sleep area. Excellent, year round rental clientele. Open kitchen, living and dining on entry level. Lots of storage with separately accessible basement for future development.

**\$259,900**



**A Must See!**

Pride of ownership is evident in this truly ski-in/ski-out chalet located in the Alpine Village. Move right in to this spotlessly clean and tidy mountain home. Ideally located close to everything, yet nestled in the woods. Separate owners suite down. New hardy plank exterior and inside, you don't need to do a thing! Bright, spacious floor plan.

**\$289,900**



**#7 Fosters Place**

Drive In and Ski Out from this 3 year old chalet on Fosters Place. Designed with 3 levels, the basement is undeveloped, waiting for your imagination. Open living area features superb views.

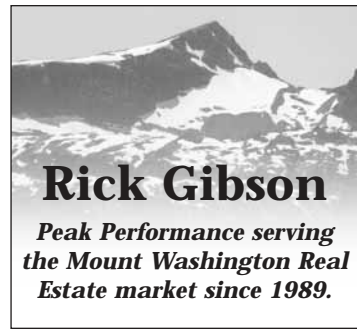
**\$294,900**



**Side By Side Duplex**

Once in a while a unique property comes available. Each side has 2 bedrooms and spacious plans. There is also a common area which includes a large family room, sauna, kitchen, bathroom & bedroom. Ideal for 2 or more families, spectacular views.

**\$299,900**



**Rick Gibson**

*Peak Performance serving the Mount Washington Real Estate market since 1989.*



**Incredible Value!**

This 3 level Mount Washington semi detached chalet has just under 2500 sq.ft. of quality construction and living area. There is a 1 bedroom suite on lower level fully self-contained w/its own entrance & upper level has 4 bedrooms, 2 baths chalet that has a huge rock fireplace, glass etching in Master Bedroom 2 gas fireplaces & much more.

**\$274,900**



**Executive Styled Chalet**

Drive in and ski out from this executive styled chalet on Fosters Place. This spectacular chalet is on the high side of the cul-de-sac with great exposure, huge vaulted ceilings and sleeps a bunch. Ski out the door and be back for lunch.

**\$399,900**



**Fantastic Foster's Place**

Over 4000 sq. ft. of living space in this spectacular recreation property. Separated into 2 living areas with the main area having vaulted ceilings, sweeping views and down is a bright, open owner's suite. Below is a garage and workshop. Located on Foster's Place with easy drive in access and ski from your door to the slopes.

**\$434,900**



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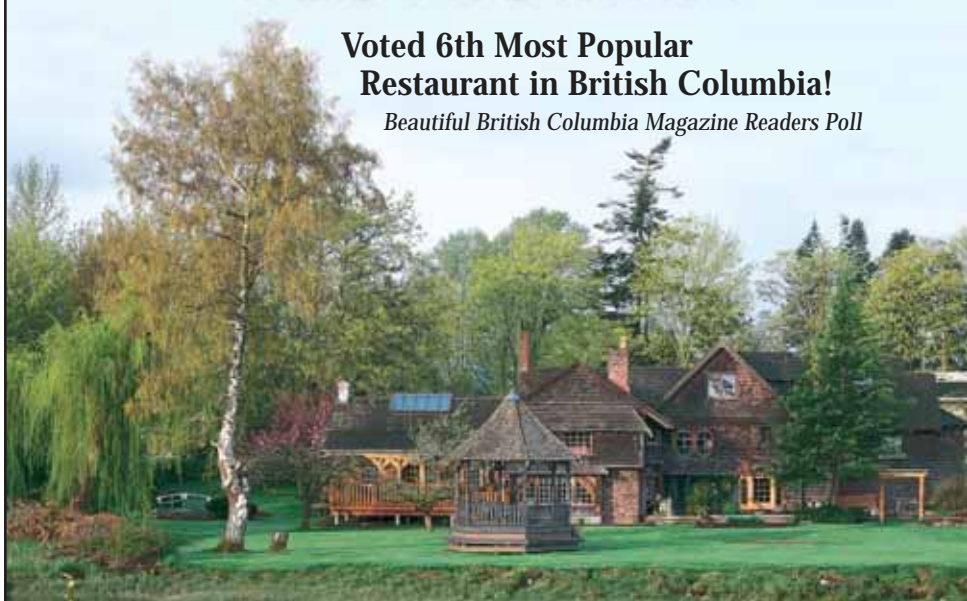
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