### THE MOUNT WASHINGTON

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S UP ON MOUNT WASHINGTON Volume 16 #1 • Winter 2005~Spring 2006



## The Snow is Here and The Boomerang is Ready!

For the second year in a row, Mount Washington Alpine Resort will be introducing a new chairlift. It just happens to be the same chairlift as last year!

"The Boomerang will launch Mount Washington into the next level of service for a destination alpine resort... the steep and the deep," says Mount Washington Alpine Resort President Peter Gibson. "For the high-end customer, it's going to be extremely exciting because this is a first for them," Gibson said. "We've had the powder, the face and the back basin, but we didn't have the unlimited black diamond and double black diamond."

The double black diamond territory is called The Outback, and it's 162 hectares (400 acres) serviced by a new, \$3.5 million chairlift, the Boomerang Quad. The Boomerang is Canada's first double offload chairlift; the addition of this lift gives riders 1,600 acres in bounds in which to play.

The Boomerang Chair was touted as the steepest and deepest, the highly anticipated double black diamond chair. However, due to the winter season of which we won't speak, the chair was only ever christened by staff and a handful of media.

The theme this year is 'Sweet'" says Gibson. The Resort spent some \$250,000 last summer to cut and clean up the existing Boomerang trail. "The bottom three-quarters has basically had a haircut," he says. "We've gone with the brush saws and we've cut everything. We haven't done that in a while because we haven't had to." What the 'haircut' will mean is the Resort can open runs with less snowpack, because there is less 'stuff' to poke through early snowfalls. "In spite of everything, we're optimistic," says Gibson.

Photo courtesy Mount Washington Alpine Resort

**Exclusive to The Marmot** 

Mount Washington
Winter '05 ~ Spring '06
Accommodation Guide



Published for your convenience by Rick Gibson in the Comox Valley www.rickgibson.ca
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### **Unsung Heros Clean Up!**

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Bear Lodge is the latest condo building to open at Mount Washington, joining its sister hotel Deer Lodge and other large buildings such as Blueberry Hill, Paradise Ridge, Ptarmigan Ridge, Creekside House.

All of the homes are privately owned, and some are individually managed by accommodation companies that takes care of checking in guests.

Paul and Lana Hawkins of Campbell River (shown above) are ready to take on full-time caretaking duties at Bear Lodge. Paul has worked on the mountain for six years as head of Security and Custodial services.

But who are the people who look after these buildings; changing light bulbs, vacuuming hallways, taking care of burst pipes... the caretakers who often give up their own homes to live full time at the Resort?

The Marmot will profile some of these people over the next couple of issues.

continued on page 4

## The View From Here

**Rick Gibson** 

### Why would I do this to myself?



### Winter is going to be a little colder for me this winter...

I had my head shaved for charity on a cold, rainy morning in September, in support of Cops for Cancer Tour de Rock rider Constable Ian Ritchie. Ritchie, 46, an officer with the Saanich Police Department, is also a Mount Washington property owner.

An avid cross-country skier, Ritchie lives with his wife and four sons in Shawnigan Lake. Ritchie noted on the Tour de Rock website that he wanted to raise \$5,000.

Many Comox Valleyites stood in line to have their head shaved when the Tour de Rock stopped in town. At press time my supporters and I raised just over \$4,700.

In his team bio, Ritchie stated that he was motivated to join the tour to raise money for cancer research. "Both parents have been inflicted with cancer," he wrote. "Know a child with cancer. Love cycling even more, now!"



Just finished its eighth year, the Tour de Rock is a 1,000-kilometre bicycle trip that annually sees a team of 19 law enforcement officers and two media members travel to 27 communities from Port Alice to Victoria. The tour has raised in excess of \$5.5 million for the Canadian Cancer

The Tour de Rock began in 1998 when Saanich Sgt. Martin Pepper topped up the Cops for Cancer head-shaving event with a local fundraiser for children. The police officers who sign up for the tour spend seven months training by cycling more than 3,000 kilometres.

Officers are teamed up with Island kids going through cancer treatment. Ritchie was paired with Justin Maizis, 15, who was diagnosed two months before the ride with anaplastic large cell lymphoma, a rare can-

Cops for Cancer Tour de Rock is a very worthy cause and hats (hair?) off to everyone who supports them annually.

Victoria 🖈









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**Bob Saunders** 



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### Mountain Management Committed To Community Involvement

Running a growing ski resort is busy business. But that hasn't stopped staff members at Mount Washington Alpine Resort from lending a hand with community service in a big way.

"We're quite involved," says Resort President Peter Gibson. "When I took over five years ago ... each manager had to get involved in other endeavours off the hill," he said. The point behind this conscious task was to build bridges in the community.

"At the time there was very much an 'us versus them' mentality between the Comox Valley and Mount Washington. Many people in the Valley saw the mountain as an autonomous entity 'up there', with very little connection to 'down here'," Gibson explained.

Being the kind of person to lead by example, Gibson is involved with the Comox Valley Community Foundation, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. As Vice-President, Gibson has been in charge of raising the foundation's public profile.

The Community Foundation started with a \$180,000 donation, and now manages more than \$2 million. The foundation provides matching grant money to community non-profit organizations for various projects

But that's not all. Gibson also sits on the Canada West Ski Areas Association, and will chair the B.C. division next spring. The association represents more than 30 resorts in the region. "It's a great association because it represents all the resorts in Western Canada," he said.

Sitting on this association means he is plugged into whatever is going on, especially in regards to the 2010 Winter Olympics in Whistler.

Gibson recently accepted a position on the Marmot Recovery Foundation, a sub-



Peter Gibson, Resort President

ject near and dear, considering there is a breeding program happening at a Marmot Recovery Centre at Mount Washington.

### Jay Oddleifson,

Director, Planning and Development

Oddleifson chairs the Comox Valley Folk Society, which operates Vancouver Island MusicFest. "You're going to have to bury me before I leave that, because I love it," says the eight-year MusicFest veteran.

"We're getting recognized as one of the main folk festivals in Western Canada."

When he is not prowling the various outdoor stages during the popular folk festival, Oddleifson is an elected director with the Economic Development Society and a member of the Strathcona Sunrise Rotary Club. "It's not an initiative from the mountain - I do MusicFest because I love it, I do Rotary number one for the fellowship and for service," he says.

"And the Economic Development Society I do because I'm interested and concerned about how we do things in the Valley and I want to see the Valley to grow in a proper manner."

Continued on page 11



# Mountain Biking and Weddings over the top in Summer, 2006

"The summer season saw solid growth in mountain biking at Mount Washington Resort", said Karen Bonell, Resort Director of Marketing.

"Summer was good. We particularly saw huge growth in mountain biking related activities." The mountain biking side of the business grew 55 per cent over last year, and there were almost twice as many mountain bike season's passholders in 2005 than the previous year.

Bonell attributed the bigger numbers to the Resort focusing on maintaining the biking trails every day. She also said having two chairlifts dedicated to mountain bikers, complete with a special attachment to transport the bikes up the hill, has helped grow that side of the business. The mountain bike events were also quite successful.

"We're really making efforts on the trails on the mountain and we're getting good feedback from the mountain bikers. We're running two chairlifts so there's no lift lines," she added.

Horseback riding was as popular as ever, and the mini-golf course attracted lots of families.

"All our events (the WineFest, Chocolate Fest, BeerFest, etc.) are working really well," she said, adding that the marketing department will look at expanding summertime events next year.

Another good marriage for the Resort's summer season has been hosting weddings at Raven Lodge. "We're now booking Raven Lodge into 2007," Bonell said. Feedback from wedding parties is that the Resort is such a stellar setting; people are getting married on the peak as well as at the picturesque Raven Lodge.

"Raven Lodge is really the setting of choice," she said. "It's been a nice addition for us.'

A new trend this year for weddings was bookings on Fridays and Sundays, as well as the traditional Saturday ceremonies. The Resort responded with Sunday brunches to take advantage of the weekend wedding parties with average crowds of 100 people.

"So there's some good spin-offs from weddings. It's really opening people's eyes to the facilities up here, people who might not otherwise have come on up."



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### Unsung Heroes

continued from page 2

Lana and Paul Hawkins are preparing Mount Washington's newest accommodation for winter occupation. Bear Lodge

began accepting visitors in the summer, but the winter season really began December 3 with the booking of a wedding party.

The Hawkins came from Campbell River to take on the full-time caretaking job at Bear Lodge. Paul is no stranger to Mount Washington, having spent the past six years as head of security and custodial services at the Resort. With the Hawkins' new position as caretakers, his commute just dropped dramatically.

Lana has worked as a cleaner in office buildings and apart-

ments and says Bear Lodge will be no different. "It was one of those things where I was working (at cleaning) anyway and this is closer to work for Paul," Lana explains. "This is a new building ... it's a great opportunity to come up here."

The job came with a furnished one-bedroom unit, which Lana has personalized with a few things from home. Their calico cat, Kitty, makes herself at home following the sun's rays as they move across the carpet. Lana enjoys the view from their front window, which overlooks the parking lot and the trees and mountains beyond.

The Hawkins have been at Bear Lodge since August and, although the summer was quiet, they have been busy.

Lana has already established a cleaning routine that is as detailed as dusting the door jams and polishing the doorknobs. The foyer is cleaned every day.

The cleaning and maintenance taken on by caretakers at Mount Washington are building-specific – they don't clean individual units, Lana explained.

Paul Hawkins doesn't anticipate too much maintenance will have to be done at

Bear Lodge this year, but he's prepared for the unexpected!

**Bruce Frame** has been at Blueberry Hill for the past nine years. The Comox Valley native is hard-pressed to come up with just

one happy memory of his caretaker's job. "They're all good, the whole nine years," he says. "I've made a lot of friends, good friends. Some of them lifetime. I've met people from all over the world. Even the renters that come up here, we're on a first-name basis. They're like family to me."

Frame has seen 600 visitors a year pass through the doors to

Blueberry Hill, Mount Washington's first drive to condo development. The building was just three years old when he packed up his construction business, took a building manager's course and answered a newspaper ad for Blueberry Hill.

"I've seen a lot of changes. Raven Lodge, a few extra ski runs, and double the people." He's never regretted answering that ad, even though he rarely has a day of rest during the ski season.

"It's been like a working holiday. I've loved every day of it." Frame will retire in July, much to the chagrin of his grand-daughter, who has been visiting him at Blueberry Hill since she was four years old.

An avid outdoorsman, Frame plans to fish once he's retired. But he will be back to the Resort: taking his granddaughter horseback riding or hiking in Paradise Meadows.

Bruce Frame (shown above) uses a snowblower to clear the way for guests at Blueberry Hill during an especially snowy season. Frame is retiring in July after nine years as caretaker at Blueberry.

Photo provided by Bruce Frame

### 2010 Olympic Update

The 2010 Winter Olympic Games are little over four years away, and Mount Washington Alpine Resort is getting ready.

The Resort has applied for a grant from Western Economic Diversification to help fund a trio of projects. The projects include finishing the trailhead accessing Strathcona Park from Raven Lodge, a Nordic Stadium and accompanying cross-country and biathlon accoutrements and the Mountain Sports Centre.

The Nordic Stadium would include three kilometres of cross-country trails for training, five kilometres of brand new competition trails, a timing hut for biathlon events and power, sewer and water hook-ups to the buildings making up the Mountain Sports Centre.

"I've never felt so optimistic as now," said Don Sharpe, Resort Director, Business Services. Sharpe was expecting a decision on the grant application to come after the Marmot went to press.

The money will be applied to Legacies Now funding, for a total project cost of \$660,000.

From a team attraction perspective, the committee will send a contingent to World Cup Cross-Country races at Silver Star and Canmore, Alta. "What we want to do is meet the coaches and managers - the people who run the teams - and tell them they've got to be coming over here," Sharpe said.

Mount Washington isn't the only resort chasing the Olympic dream, Sun Peaks Resort in Kamloops is investing \$3 million in its own Race Centre. However, Sharpe doesn't expect Sun Peaks' plans to interfere with Mount Washington's plans.

"Sun Peaks' project will be for alpine skiing. We're focusing on nordic," Sharpe said. Sun Peaks has already spent \$1 million upgrading its Coquihalla run (now



Mount Washington's Olympic focus is on nordic trails and facilities, which bodes well for young athletes developing their nordic skiing skills.

called the Nancy Greene International Race Centre) with improved snowmaking, safety netting and wiring for the electronic timing of races. The run was also opened up to allow for high-speed slalom and giant-slalom racing.

The Comox Valley's Spirit of Community Committee is also planning a four-year countdown event for February 11, 2006, at Simms Millennium Park in Courtenay.

Last year's countdown saw former Olympians from Vancouver Island parade through the park, signing autographs along with Special Olympians who hosted the 2005 Provincial Summer Games in the Comox Valley last June.

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Photo: Pick Gibso

# Profile: The Cashin Family

It's nap time at the Cashins, but two-year-old Declan will have none of that. He vocally asserts his desire to watch a video instead, oblivious to the drizzle obscuring the panorama outside his chalet window.

"He needs his fresh air every day," says Declan's mother, Andrea, sitting at the family table in the dining room. The two normally go for a walk before naptime, but the late arrival of a guest has cancelled that thought.

The Cashins, Andrea, Brian, Connor (15) and Declan, are full-time residents at Mount Washington Alpine Resort. They are heading into their third winter on the mountain, says Andrea, her eye on Declan.

The Cashins moved to the mountain from Richmond, BC where Brian was working and Andrea was preparing to give birth to Declan. They moved to their chalet on Foster's Place when Declan was two weeks old.

"We usually skied Cypress. We always wanted to buy in a ski resort. We had to choose a place where my husband could still get to work because he works in Vancouver," says Andrea.

Brian is a commercial pilot who works shift work; his home base is Vancouver International Airport.

Andrea and Brian met in Cambridge Bay, the high Arctic community where Andrea grew up (about one and a half hours north of Yellowknife by plane).

Brian worked up north as a bush pilot for a lot of years. He was on a flying contract and staying at Andrea's mother's hotel when they first met. Later, while going to college in Inuvik Andrea met Brian again

and they started dating.

"Living on the mountain is no different than living in the Arctic," says Andrea. "For me, it's just great. I grew up in snow. It's just different snow than here, drier, colder. Here, it's wet."

She is used to stocking up the pantry in case they get snowed in. In Cambridge Bay, supplies came by air in the winter and a storm could isolate them for days or weeks.

"I used to go to the grocery store on my way home (in Richmond)," she says. "Sometimes trying to plan my groceries is the worst. You don't want to be a slave to going into town all the time. Besides, Declan doesn't like grocery shopping." she says, sighing.

The Cashins chose Mount Washington for their new home after looking at other ski resorts around the province. They liked the location.

"For us it was the park (Strathcona), as well it's a family-affordable place to buy," Andrea said. "Our cousins come here every year to ski. We were meeting them here for a skiing trip when we decided to look around and found that the home prices were afforable. We liked the Comox Valley; here, you can do everything. You can go to the beach, you can ski. You can't go to the beach at other ski resorts."

For Connor, though, life on the mountain has its own teenage challenges. During the

winter, snowboarding takes up all his spare time. In fact, he has opted for the North Island Distance Education (NIDES) program instead of regular high school so he can do his schooling at home and concentrate more on snowboarding.

Mountain biking and his job fills his summers. The shoulder seasons, though, could be more exciting. He wishes there was a place to hang out. And a Skateboard Park

However, even the lack of a teen centre on the mountain is no comparison to living in Richmond. When asked if he likes it better in Richmond or at Mount Washington, Connor doesn't even hesitate. "Here."

# **More New Faces** on Mount Washington

Following on the heels of a world tour **Brent Curtain** has arrived back at Mount Washington. This time as Director of Public Relations and Special Events Co-ordinator.

Curtain first joined Mount Washington in 2000, after six years handling guest relations and assisting in the communications department at Whistler/ Blackcomb.

Curtain spent many years alpine skiing until his wife Andrea, equally outdoorsy, converted him to telemark skiing. He has skied the backcountry at Mount Washington, including Macleod Lake.

"I'm definitely excited that we're opening the Outback and the new lift (Boomerang). It's some of the better glade skiing one could do in North America."

Tim Defert has taken over as Food and Beverage Manager, replacing Alfredo Yabut, who is off to work at Brown's Bay Resort in Campbell River. "He was General Manager at Painter's Lodge (in Campbell River)," said Resort President Peter Gibson. "He's been with Oak Bay Marine Group, he's worked in the Caribbean. He's got an extensive background in the food and beverage industry," Gibson said of Defert.

"He brings a lot of expertise to the table." Thanks to Yabut's foresight, the

Food and Beverage Department has never been stronger, Gibson says. "Prior to Alfredo we were going through Food and Beverage Managers every year. What he's left behind is a very strong team. And Tim has been able to step in right away"

Max Oudendag, as Curtain's lead hand, is another new face on the hill. The Merville resident has spent the past few years in Victoria tending bar, running special events in various Capital Region pubs and doing some on-air work with Shaw Caplesystems

"He's a really good guy," says Curtain. "We're pretty excited to have him on board as well." Oudendag will run any on-hill events for Curtain, leaving the P.R. Director free to handle customer relations and planning inherent to his job. It was a little hell-raising - not divine intervention - that gave Curtain his second chance at the Resort.

Shortley after Hampshire's moving on, Special Events Co-ordinator Jonathan Bonk also left to take advantage of an apprenticeship with the operations side at the Resort. "Both of those jobs became available within a week of each other," Curtain explains. He had heard that Bonk was going to leave, so he proactively submitted his resumé.

Former Director of Public Relations

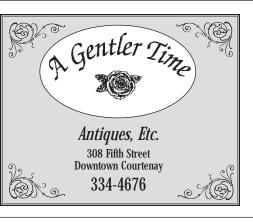
Dave Hampshire left after four years to
become Tour Manager with legendary

Canadian rock band, Trooper.

"I will be helping to take the show from coast to coast to coast - yes, the Arctic - and I'm excited and honoured to be in the midst of some of this country's greatest musicians," Hampshire said before leaving the Resort in September.

"The past 48 months have been a whirl-wind of challenges, excitement, fantastic riding, unbelievable skiing - this includes the six days in April when the season finally arrived - and great camaraderie," he said. "On behalf of my wife Linda, daughter Jillian and son Joey, I bid you adieu and happy trails."







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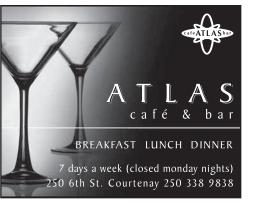
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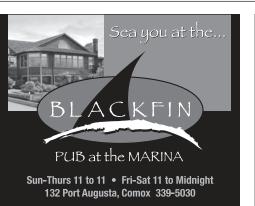
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### Shop & Dine

continued from page 7

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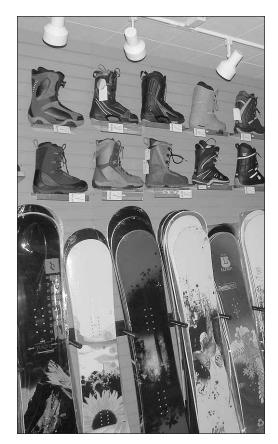
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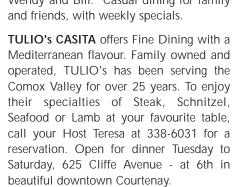






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# Snow Sport Clubs Alive & Well on Mount Washington

Mount Washington Alpine Resort is home to several snow sport clubs that have created such ski prodigies as Alison Forsyth, shown below.



A season of no snow has not dimmed interest in these clubs. "Last year was such a tough year," said John Trimmer, head coach of the Mount Washington Ski Club.

### MOUNT WASHINGTON SKI CLUB

The ski club has rolled over fees for its Alcan Nancy Greene Ski League, which already has quite a few participants re-registered from last year, about 70, Trimmer said. "It's definitely not a number to worry about at all."

On the competitive level, racers have been working for their physical fitness on snow and glaciers throughout the summer. There are about 50 athletes in the carded program.

"We did a couple of glacier camps (at Blackcomb and Mt. Hood in Oregon)," he explained. "We basically trained just as we would in winter. We'll ski, we'll learn gates, we'll do technique."

The glacier camps helped prepare racers for the upcoming winter season. So did early-season training at Apex Alpine. Racers with the ski club compete at the zone level in slalom, GS, Super G and downhill events. They vie for position with skiers from Whistler, Cypress, Grouse Mountain and Hemlock. A number of those kids will qualify to race provincially and the club has had some qualify to compete internationally.

"We have one group, our highest level group - the FIS program. Those athletes basically race against a lot of people from outside the country," Trimmer said. Mount Washington has hosted FIS events in the past, but not for the last three years.

The ski club has created such products as Alison Forsyth - who is still listed as a club member - and Dustin Fraser, who in the fall was still competing with the provincial ski team. Trimmer expects Fraser to one day make the national team, just like Forsyth.

For more information, visit their website www.mtwashington.bcalpine.com



### STRATHCONA NORDICS

While the ski club takes over the alpine portion of Mount Washington, the Strathcona Nordics have total control of the Nordic terrain.

The Nordics offer a range of programs for all ages and interests consistent with the ideal that cross-country skiing is a lifelong sport. The programs fall roughly into two categories: recreational skiing/ski skill development and ski training/athlete development/racing.

"Our programs should not be confused with lessons, or ski instruction, which is

provided by Mount Washington and their ski instructors," Nordics president Len Apedaile said. "You have to be a club member to participate in our sessions."

Programs include Jackrabbits (ages 3-12), adventure program (ages 10-16), Devo program (ages 10-14), junior racing and high-performance racing programs (ages 14-19 and older). Masters programs are for people aged 20 years and older.

The club hired a full-time professional coach, Dave Battison, in May 2004 to help the club develop and lead its athlete and volunteer coach development programs. Battison helped develop last year's pro-

grams and also implemented a summer training program for the junior and masters athletes.

"Dave's accomplishments over the season despite the snow were tremendous and are evidenced in the enthusiasm and dedication of the young athletes who are in the program," Apedaile said.

The other thing the Strathcona Nordics club does is organize races that are open to everyone. The annual Loppet is the highlight of the season and is scheduled this year for March 18, 2006.

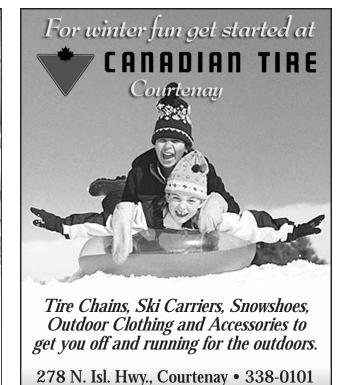
"The 2005 season was a tough one for the nordic teams," Apedaile said in his president's report at the club's AGM in September.

The year was disastrous from a skiing perspective due to the lack of snow from mid-January through to the end of March. This resulted in the curtailment of most club programs and the cancellation of all club races, the Loppet and on snow coaching courses. The lack of snow also meant we were unable to ski on the new trails that were developed above the lodge during the summer of 2004.

continued on page 10







### **Snow Sport Clubs**

continued from page 9

Despite the poor conditions, the club maintained its membership base; the only effect being that for the first time since the club's inception in 1998, its membership did not grow. "Our membership base remains more than double the average club size for B.C. clubs, the 11th largest out of 67," he said.

For more information, visit their website www.strathconanordics.com

### LUGE

The Comox Valley was once home to strong luge competition, so much so that when the Wood Mountain Luge run closed, Mount Washington created its own 300-metre-long natural luge run in the glade next to Raven Lodge to accommodate the interest

However, the sport's local competitors have grown up or gone on to other activities, says onetime organizer James Robinson. "Luge has collapsed here," he said. "There are no teams at present."

### FREESTYLE SKIING

While luge appears to be dead, freestyle skiing is gaining in popularity. The mountain will host the Dairyland Slopestyle Competition on Feb. 4, 2006, featuring riders and skiers competing in a number of different jumps, hits and features down the slopestyle course. They'll show off style, technique and flow.

### **ADAPTIVE SNOW SPORTS**

The Vancouver Island Society for Adaptive Snowsports (VISAS) offers instruction in all aspects of skiing, alpine and nordic, snowboarding, race programs and skill improvement for people with all types of disabilities. The society has been advancing the abilities of disabled skiers for more than 30 years.

They also offer certified training to prospective instructors through the



Canadian Association of Disabled Skiers, where instructors learn to use adaptive equipment and techniques to enhance the abilities of students.

For more information on VISAS, visit their website at www.visdsweb.ca





### A Surveyor's View...

When the Alpine Village (Strata 799) was first carved out of the hill side the road up was little better than a goat trail and there was nothing up there but snow, trees and more snow.

Ross Glover was a surveyor working with McElhanney Engineering of Vancouver when the physical village was first laid out 27 years ago. "We did a lot of work for forestry companies all up and down Vancouver Island, along the E&N Land Grant boundaries. This was more of the same, except it involved creating a new ski resort."

The late John Mathews spearheaded the work; he was a friend of Henry Norie, who along with Alex Linton, developed Mount Washington.

"Establishing the mountain was a tough situation because it wasn't titled property at the time," Glover explained. "The E&N Land Grant gave it to the forestry companies, but the titles hadn't been raised. The land designated for what would become Mount Washington Alpine Resort was accessed by easement at first, because it wasn't possible to put road access in.

"It wasn't much of a road, at first. It took two years to survey the ski resort lands. They carved out the big block first, Block 1450," Glover said. The next phase was to lay out Strata 799. "It was kind of unique because it was bare land strata and any bare land strata was not done in the province, yet."

The original lots were unique sizes and shapes - some were circles, with common property all around them.

"Alex Linton was concerned that we didn't cut down any more trees than we had to. We had to hide branches underneath trees so it didn't look like anything but a pristine alpine village," Glover said. That uniqueness has stayed with the Alpine Village through the last 26 years.

"It's got a real special winter feeling to it. There's no winter road access even now.' Glover has had occasion to stay in the Village over the years with friends who own chalets.

"To me, it's a real luxury to have a place on the mountain if you live in Courtenay or Comox because it's so close." Glover, a season's pass holder since day one, recently surveyed the profile for the Outback.

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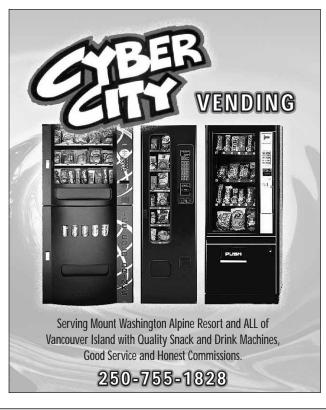
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RESORT & GOLF COMMUNITY





### **Community Involvement**

continued from page 3

Oddleifson is not the only one from his staff who volunteers with MusicFest; **Bev Weber**, *Ticket Operations Supervisor*, is also on the MusicFest board



Don Sharpe, Director, Business Services

Sharpe got involved in the community at first to improve relationships between Mount Washington and the Comox Valley business community. "But it's been a blast," he said.

Sharpe is President of the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce, having spent the past five years working his way up the ranks. He is also on the Spirit of Community Committee, which began as a 2010 Winter Olympics liaison committee. Sharpe is also founder of the Vancouver Island Mountain Sport Society, and once sat as an ex-officio with the Economic Development Society.

### Karen Bonell, Director, Marketing

Bonell sits on the Canadian Ski Council's



market research committee. "I've been doing that for five years. We look at market research for Canada; we look at all the ski areas and are getting a whole program in place where we're trying to get enough informa-



Jay Oddleifson enjoying MusicFest Editor's Note: He looks better playing guitar than he sounds.

tion so we can make some critical decisions for marketing ... to get more people into the sports of skiing and snowboarding," she said.

"The committee created a model for growth four years ago to help strategize where they could be most effective in putting in new programs, she said. "What we've found is we really have to work on the beginners. We get a lot of people trying the sport but not a lot sticking with it."

Bonell also serves on the marketing committee for Tourism Association of Vancouver Island and is heading up TAVI's 2010 Task Force. She gave up her seat on Comox Valley Tourism, but recruited **Mike Manara**, who heads up the Resort's snow school, to take her place.

### **Kate Dodd**, Resort Controller and Director of Human Resources

Dodd is a director with Go To, a non-profit organization designed to ensure there's enough employees in the tourism sector for the growth that's going to happen in the next 10 to 15 years. She also sits on Go To's finance committee. Up until 2005 Dodd was Production Manager for Vancouver Island MusicFest, and was also a board member. "I still volunteer for MusicFest," she said.

# **Vancouver Island Marmots Finally Turning The Corner**

**ANDREW A. BRYANT**, Scientific Advisor Marmot Recovery Foundation

Every skier or snowboarder knows what pleasure comes from making a good turn. Expert or novice, the key is to make considered movements. A good turn just feels good, and it doesn't hurt that it might happen amidst such wonderful scenery as Mount Washington offers.

There is another good turn happening. Underfoot. Literally. As you zoom down Linton's Loop or some of Mount Washington's other runs, you are in fact visiting the home of North America's rarest mammal. That's no exaggeration.

The Vancouver Island marmot (scientists know this species as Marmota Vancouverensis) lives only on Vancouver Island. The wild population of this critically endangered species is currently believed to contain about 35 individuals. That's right. Only 35.

The Vancouver Island marmot is one of 14 distinct marmot species in the world. Canada is home to 4 species (Hoary marmots, Yellow-bellied marmots, Woodchucks and Vancouver Island marmots), but only the Vancouver Island species has unique chocolate-brown fur and such unusual behavior. Researchers have described them as the most social of the world's marmots, which is why I like to describe them as a truly 'Canadian' kind of species.

As recently as 1998, this engaging ground squirrel tottered on the brink of extinction, with a world population of about 70 individuals. The future looked bleak. Which is why I'm delighted to report that the population has now doubled, to about 155 individuals, and the population is growing.

How did this happen? Basically, an unusual coalition of govern-

unusual coalition of government employees, loggers, hunters, scientists, zookeepers and yes, skiers decided that extinction was a bad idea and decided to do something about it.

A captive-breeding program was begun in 1997 with a handful of marmots. Through the Marmot Foundation, Recovery donors from around the world supported this program and the scientific research needed to make it work. And worked it has this past spring we had 48 pups born in captivity. There are currently 123 marmots at 4 locations, including the Toronto Zoo, Calgary Zoo, the MountainView Breeding and Conservation Centre in Langley, and a speciallydesigned facility here on land generously provided by

Mount Washington Alpine Resort.

But breeding marmots was only the first step. Now we've begun the process of restoring wild populations by releasing captive-born marmots back to the wild.

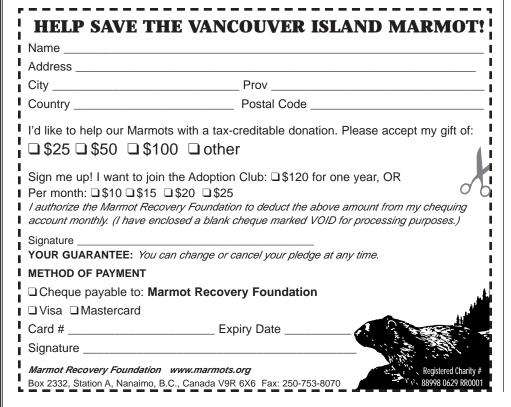
We started slowly, in 2003, by releasing 4 marmots. In 2004 we released 9 and in 2005 we released 15. Next summer we hope to release 20-25. Most importantly, the released animals are behaving just as wild born marmots do, eating grasses and flowers, digging burrows and hibernating from early October to early May.

So, while you're making that perfect curve, remember that marmots are sleeping deep underfoot. But even while they won't move again until next spring, in their own way they have also just turned an important corner. The population decline has been stopped, and reversed. It will take years, of course, to achieve the recovery goal of a self-sustaining wild population of 400-600 marmots. Which is why we need your ongoing support.

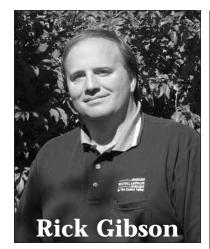
To learn more, please visit our website at www.marmots.org or visit the Marmot's Den, located in the main day lodge.

'Colette' rides out a snow storm on a shetered slope.









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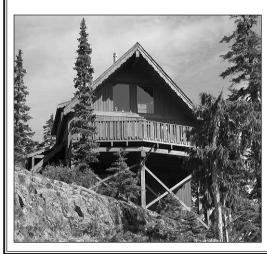
### **Deer Lodge**

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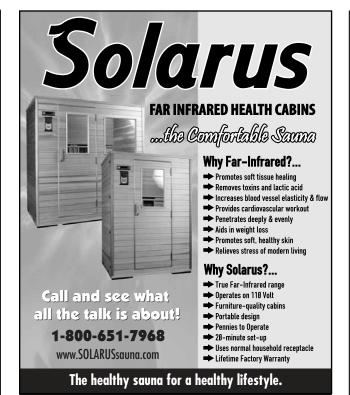


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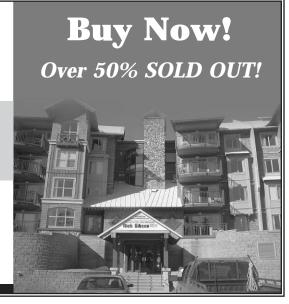
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The home has been split into two areas, the main living area with 4 bedrooms and the spacious owners suite below. Plus, the overheight basement (11 foot ceilings) is ideal for getting out of the winter weather or workshop or ??? In the main area, take advantage of the spectacular views of the Beaufort Mountain Range and the vistas of Strathcona Park from the expansive outdoor patio, or put a hot tub on the upstairs deck located privately off the master bedroom. Downstairs, check out the patio as well!

The owner's suite gives the occupier the feeling that they are in their own chalet with an open plan and great views. The home has huge storage areas and has been set up to look after all the needs of renters and owners alike. Easy access to all winter activities and close to the Strathcona Park trailhead for summer time. Loads of parking available. In a nut shell, if you are looking for the finest accommodation on Mount Washington, come and check out Blue Haven! \$849,900

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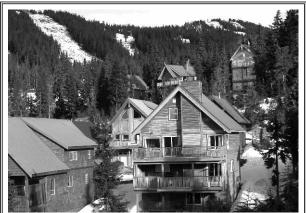
### Top of the World!

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3 bedroom corner suite in Bear Lodge! Fully loaded & ready to move into. Views of Comox Glacier and Strathcona Park. Locks into self-contained bachelor suite (with kitchen unit) and 2 bedroom suite or use as 3 bedroom suite. Bear Lodge is Mount Washington's newest development & is perched slopeside to make skiing in and out a breeze!! \$349,900



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(www.chalet19.com) \$639,900



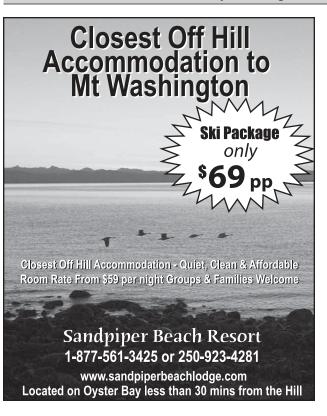
### **Bright LOG Home**

WOW! Log home for sale on Fosters Place. 9 bedrooms and 3 kitchens or 3 separate areas with living room, kitchen and 2-3 bedrooms in each! The chalet is fully loaded with a sauna, outdoor hot tub and a billiards room. Comes fully furnished and ready for you to live in part or all. Proven income winner! \$725,000

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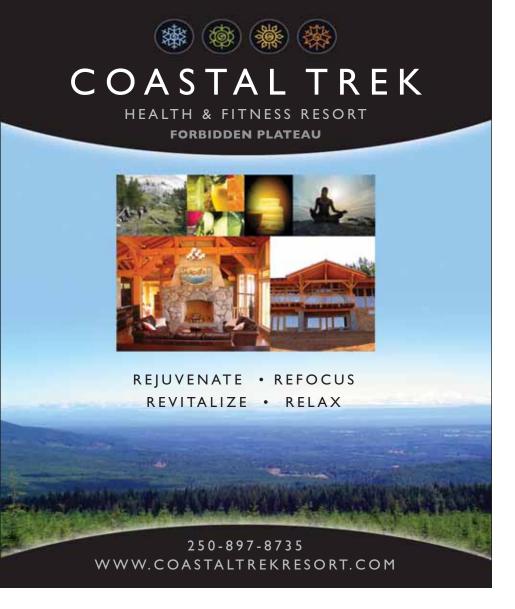
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Dec 24 Christmas Eve Service A multi-denominational service.

Dec 25 Santa On The Slopes Dress like jolly ol' Saint Nick and ski or snowboard for free!

Dec 26 Coca Cola Torchlight Parade and Fireworks Check out the awesome entourage of lights down the Whiskey Jack Run followed by a fireworks extravaganza!

Dec 27 Nordic Club - Pursuit Without a Break Skiers race a loop using classic technique, change skis and complete another loop using skating technique.

Dec 31 New Year's Eve Parties 5 options to help you bring in the New Year! From elegant to rockin - we have something for everyone - including kids!

Jan 2 BC Winter Games Time Trials Biathlon Race

### Jan 3 Freedom 50 Day

The kids are back to school! Anyone 50 years old or better receives a Free Nordic or Alpine day pass.

Jan 9-13 Kokanee Winter Festival
Celebrate Kokanee Winter Festival with
Half-Price Midweek Full Day Lift Tickets
and Nordic Trail Passes.

### Jan 26 Aussie Day

From the Land Down Under... FREE Alpine lift passes and Nordic trail passes for all Aussies. Apres Festivities in Fat Teddy's.

Jan 30 Hospitality Cup

Appreciation day for Hospitality Industry.

### Feb 4-5 Dairyland Slopestyle

Competition Riders on Saturday, and skiers on Sunday compete on a number of different jumps, hits and features down the Slopestyle course, showing off style, technique and flow.

Feb 5 18th Annual Herb Bradley Coca-Cola Classic This fundraiser for Vancouver Island Disabled Skiing Society is open to all public and attracts both skiers and boarders.

### Feb 11 Powerade Skier Cross

Skiers only! 4 at a time, competitors fight for the hole shot, and try to stay ahead while flying down a tight course of sharp corners, big rollers and tabletop jumps.

### Feb 18-1 Sprite Super Cross

Boarders only! Preliminaries on Saturday, Finals on Sunday. 4 at a time, competitors fight for the holeshot and try to stay ahead while negotiating a tight course of sharp corners, big rollers and tabletop jumps. Great spectator event!

Feb 21 US Visitor's Day All visitors from the United States receive a FREE Alpine lift pass or Nordic trail pass.

### Feb 25-26 Telemark Festival

Telemark-specific workshops and clinics on Saturday and the Tele-Cross on Sunday.

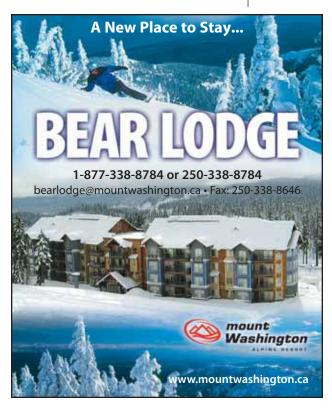
### March 4 Helly Hansen Showtime!

Big Air Competition open to all ages. Riders and skiers aged 14+ go big off a HUGE kicker, and kids under 14 show their stuff off a smaller HUGE kicker. Helmets and Waivers Mandatory!

Continued on B7

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## **Zero Results** in Sasq-Watch

For the first time in nearly two decades, there were no sightings of Sasquatch at Mount Washington this past summer.

There were, however, sightings in Teslin, Yukon that set the cryptozoological community on its collective feet. In a wildlife CSI story, a hairy creature described as something big, about eight feet tall [2.4 metres]. It's black, hairy, muscular. It was huge! was heard crashing through the bush in Teslin, a town of 400 located in Canada's Yukon.

There were three such sightings in Teslin this past summer, and on the last, the creature left behind a treasure: a tuft of brown, coarse hair.

This rare shot was taken in the summer of 2004, before the winter season that will go unmentioned. Naturalists who study primate behavior presume this beast was upset because Whiskey Jacks got all of the attention, and, most importantly, all of the handouts.

The hair tuft was sent to a DNA lab University of Alberta wildlife geneticist David Coltman agreed to conduct the test - where the DNA of most of the Yukon's large animals are on file.

"If Sasquatch is indeed a primate, then we would expect the sample to be closer to humans or chimpanzees or gorillas," Coltman said at the time. However, when the tests came in it turned out to be a plain old bison that had been crashing about.

The news has not deterred Sasquatch believers on the West Coast, though. One sasquatch follower, who declined to give his name, said he will continue to keep watch at Paradise Meadows, where Sasquatch has been sighted before. The follower said it is rare indeed for no sightings to happen at Mount Washington. "What we're likely seeing is the effect of the lack of snow on the mountain last year," said the man.

"The Sasquatch likely altered its migratory path this year; because the snow wasn't covering its traditional spring and summer feeding grounds, it had sufficient food. "Their food sources weren't covered in 12 feet of snow.



### **Fire Protection Solution Sought**

Mount Washington homeowners, listen up: If your house caught on fire today, what would you do? If you called 911 you would be told, "Sorry, but there is no fire protection for structures in your area."

Calling 911 from Mount Washington can send you police and ambulance, but not fire trucks. What about the Forest Service, you ask? The Forest Service will respond to a report of a fire but could take some time to arrive. Then they'll only assist in controlling a fire that threatens to spread into the surrounding forested area. They will not save a burning house.

"Fire protection is a serious issue at Mount Washington," says Al Walker, Chairman of the Mount Washington Community Association. For the past couple of years, the Association has been working towards a fire service being established for the protection of the Mount Washington area.

In the fall of 2003 a petition aimed at establishing a fire service, and supporting a program of self-taxation to fund it, was defeated. Since that time the Community Association and the Regional District have been evaluating their alternatives.

In 2004 Rob Roycroft came out with a report on the viability of creating a fire service program at Mount Washington. The report made some recommendations, and the Community Association has created a mandate to carry out those recommenda-

There has already been an incident that emphasizes the need for fire services... an incident that could have been very serious. Some workers on a site near the hotels at Mount Washington hit a propane line. They called Oddleifson, he called the propane company and was promptly told to call 911- who won't send a fire truck.

Whatever residents decide, it's going to cost them money. The Association is trying to make sure residents get value for their decision. They are being prudent with their choices on handling the fire question,

"The proposed fire service area tax bundle isn't big enough to construct an actual building for the fire service," Oddleifson said. "We'll have some kind of lean-to that keeps the equipment protected. We won't have an edifice."

The Community Association is looking into alternate funding sources, such as government support, which would enable them to construct the building of their choosing

If they had a wish list - and won the lottery - the Association would love to buy a Pisten Bully, a track-run vehicle that can travel on uneven ground or snow and is equipped with firefighting equipment. What they'll likely have to settle for is a Cat with foam that stays at the Resort's works yard, and run by a volunteer fire depart-

"But we'll still need to have a department that's sanctioned and under the auspices and insurance of the Regional District," Oddleifson said. "We can't do something sly and cheap and put anybody

To read a copy of the Roycroft report or stay up to date on the fire services issue, visit the MWCA online at www.mwcommunity.com

### www.themarmot.ca

The Mount Washington

Editorial: Susan Quinn

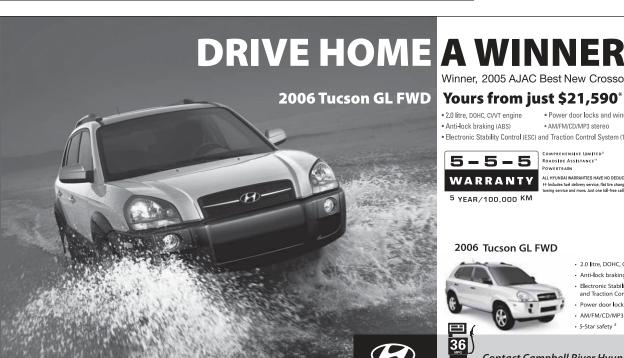
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### MT.WASHINGTON **SKI CLUB**

### The Mount Washington Ski Club is a non-profit society that operates under the umbrella of BC Alpine and Alpine Canada.

The club's aim is to provide a high quality and affordable competitive ski program that:

- · Builds character and self-esteem in
- · Recognizes different ski abilities and interests as part of the skill development
- · Encourages individuals to achieve their highest potential
- · Recognizes the importance of a fun environment in everything they do
- Develops and reinforces the importance of learning as a member of a team

In order to foster their participants' unique interests and skills the Club is divided into a number of different programs:

Allan Nancy Green Ski League E1: Ages 6-8 E2: Ages 9-12

Juvenile Racing Program

K1: Ages 11-12 K2: Ages 13-15

Junior Racing Program Ages 15 and up

Free Ride Ages 11-16

### Alcan NANCY GREEN SKI LEAGUE

The philosophy is to encourage participation, interaction and the development of technical skiing in an exciting and motivating atmosphere without the pressure of intense competition. Skiers are grouped by ability with consideration to age and led



Fostering a love of the sport, developing life skills and creating a few champions along the way!

by professional Coaches. Coaches follow the Alpine Canada 'Snow Stars' program a seven-step skills progression program specifically designed for children of this age group.



### JUVENILE RACING PROGRAMS

This program is for skiers who want accelerated training and the added challenge and learning opportunities that competition brings. All juvenile programs start the first week of September with dry-land physical training. On-snow training begins as soon as possible and takes place every Saturday and Sunday, as well as through Christmas and Spring Breaks. Training is also available on Mondays and Fridays, parents and school permitting.

This program is designed to create great all mountain skiers! Participants will ski all terrain, steeps, groomed, bumps, park and may even spend some time in the gates. This program is for the intermediate to advanced skier (11-16 years) who does not want to compete but wish to continue to learn in a fun, exciting, team atmosphere.

### **FAMILY MEMBERSHIP FEE**

\$100 per family

Every family in the club pays a yearly membership fee to cover cabin maintenance as well as Provincial Membership Fees for parent(s). Club members built the cabin, located at the base of the Eagle Quad chair, and the Ski Club families are welcome to dry out, eat lunch or rest in the cabin.

Help Celebrate our

### PROGRAM COSTS

Please go to the Ski Club's website for details on the costs of the programs.

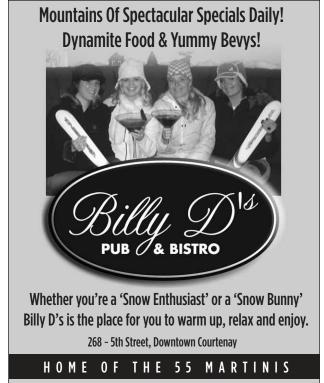
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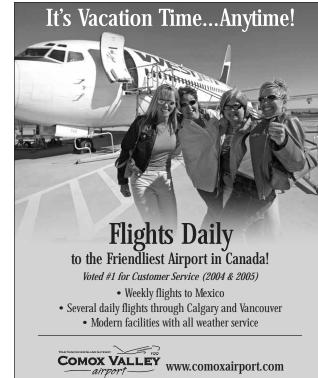
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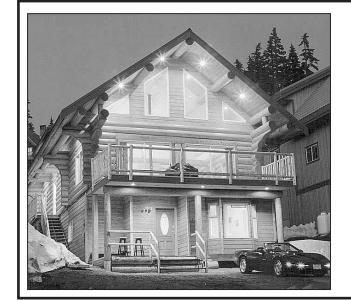
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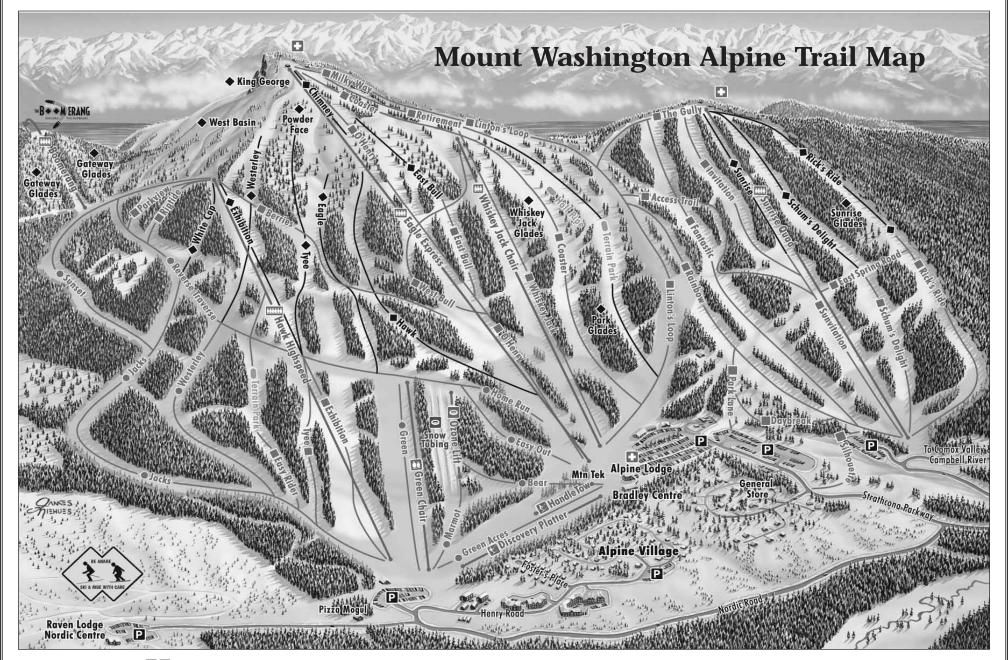
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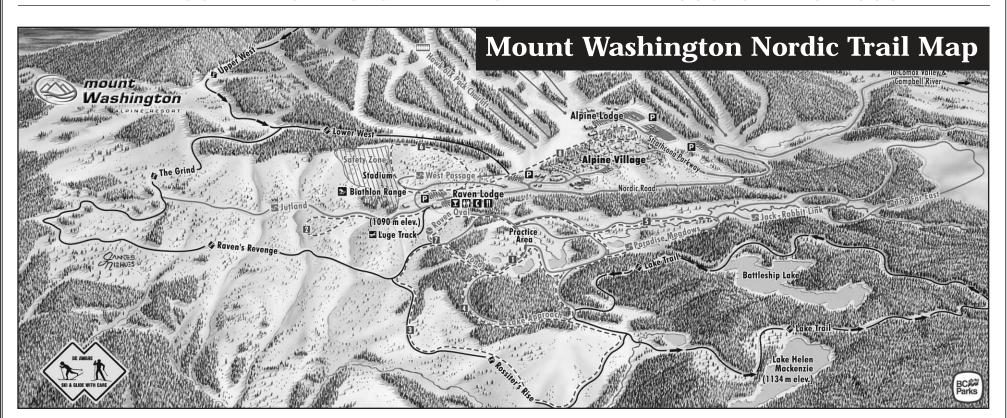
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Restaurant

Snowshoe Centre







Events Schedule continued from B1

Mar 11 Pipers After Dark Invitational Come and see some of Vancouver Island's best skiers and boarders go off spectacular, hair-raising jumps under the spotlight.

Mar 12 Dual Mogul Challenge Freestyle Club

Mar 13-17 CH Spring Snow Jam

Three great Spring Snow Jam events this Monday, Wed. and Friday, starting with the Barq's Snowtube Fest!

March 18 The Brick Halfpipe Competition Boarders and skiers battle in the pipe!

### March 18 Vancouver Island Loppet

This annual cross country race consists of a 30km distance and a shorter recreational category.

March 26-31 National CADS Learn to Ski/Board Festival

### April 8 Save-on-Foods Dummy Downhill

Build a Dummy Skier or Boarder, send it over a big jump. Prizes for best dummies, wipeouts...

### April 9 Barq's Slush Cup

Participants straight-line down a run, over a small ramp, and onto a deep slush pit.

### April 23 The Royal Lepage Comox Valley Snow To Surf Adventure Relay Event

Come on up and see one of the most incredible team races on the planet!

For Up-To-Date Information on all of Mount Washington's Winter 2005/06 Events go to

www.themarmot.ca



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