

DRXC

Executive and Sub-Committee Reports for  
2019/2020 Season

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## 1. President's Report (Bob Donders)

The DRXC had another successful year, with excellent ski conditions once the snow finally arrived in early January.

As always, volunteers have allowed the club to offer a wide range of facilities and programs. On behalf of the members, thank-you, volunteers, for your time and energy.

Our membership is down slightly from last year, likely due to the later start to the season compared to last year. The number of adults in the 31-40 age group increased slightly, which is encouraging as the club is trying to grow interest among younger skiers. Also, our retention rate for new members has increased from the previous few years.

The club had a reasonably good year financially. Overall we are well positioned to move ahead with some significant capital projects (short term: new bridges, longer-term: grooming headquarters).

Over the past few years, a great deal of effort has gone into preparing and improving the trails so that they are smoother and better drained. This year we really saw some benefits, with Short M being skiable very early on, and R loop being mostly dry starting in late January.

With the large amount of snow for the second year running, grooming was a real challenge. Once again the grooming crew did a fantastic job keeping the trails in great shape.

The club offered adult lessons in classic skiing in January (a total of three), and skate skiing in early March. There were also two moonlight skis, which were reasonably well attended. New this year was a new-member open house, which was also reasonably well attended.

This year parking on Balmer Bay road was changed so that parking only occurred on the south side of the road, with extra access points to D loop made available. This seemed to work for our members and most of the residents of Balmer Bay Road. We'll plan on continuing with this system in future years.

Members made suggestions, including:

- Updating and posting emergency procedures,
- Making the donation box more accessible, and establishing a more formal process for guest fees.

The Executive will be following up on these for next season.

## 2. Vice-President's Report (Diane Davis)

As vice president, my position has been in aiding the president occasionally. The following is the list of duties that was done last season by me:

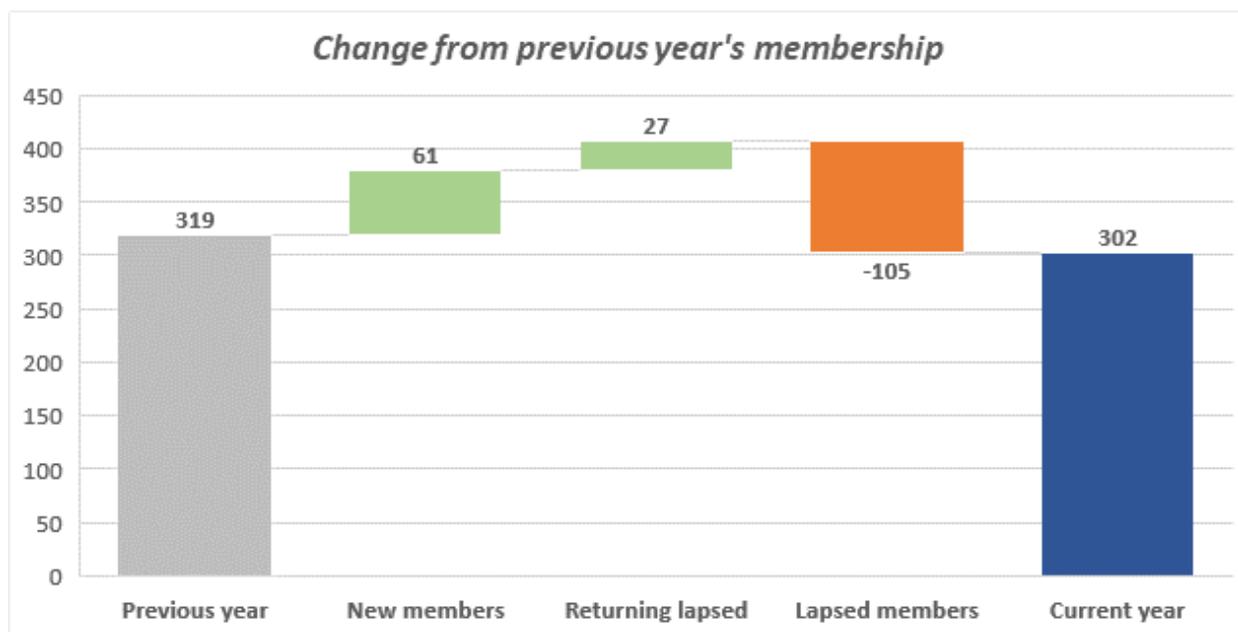
- Attended the all day town conference on how to get grants and made a report which I sent to Bob.
- Attended the town meeting with the Balmers Bay landowners concerning the safety due to double-sided parking on Balmers Bay Road.
- Attended presentation to town council with Bob and Christian concerning the parking issue on Balmers Bay Road.
- Sent thank you cards in the fall to landowners who let the Silver Spoon be on their land (with complimentary membership). This has been done for many years.
- Helped with getting the supplies for the moonlight skis.

I plan to start working on updating the emergency plan before the next ski season starts.

### 3. Membership (Christian Kaiser)

#### Current membership

- The total number of members registered for the 2019 / 2020 season has **decreased** from 319 to **302 members** (a 5% decrease in total membership).
- **61 new members<sup>1</sup>** joined the club. Of these 43 were new adults (18% of all adult members).
- 33% of the 2018 / 2019 membership lapsed<sup>1</sup> their membership in the current season (**increase** from 30% in the previous season).
- **27 returning lapsed members<sup>1</sup>** re-joined the club.

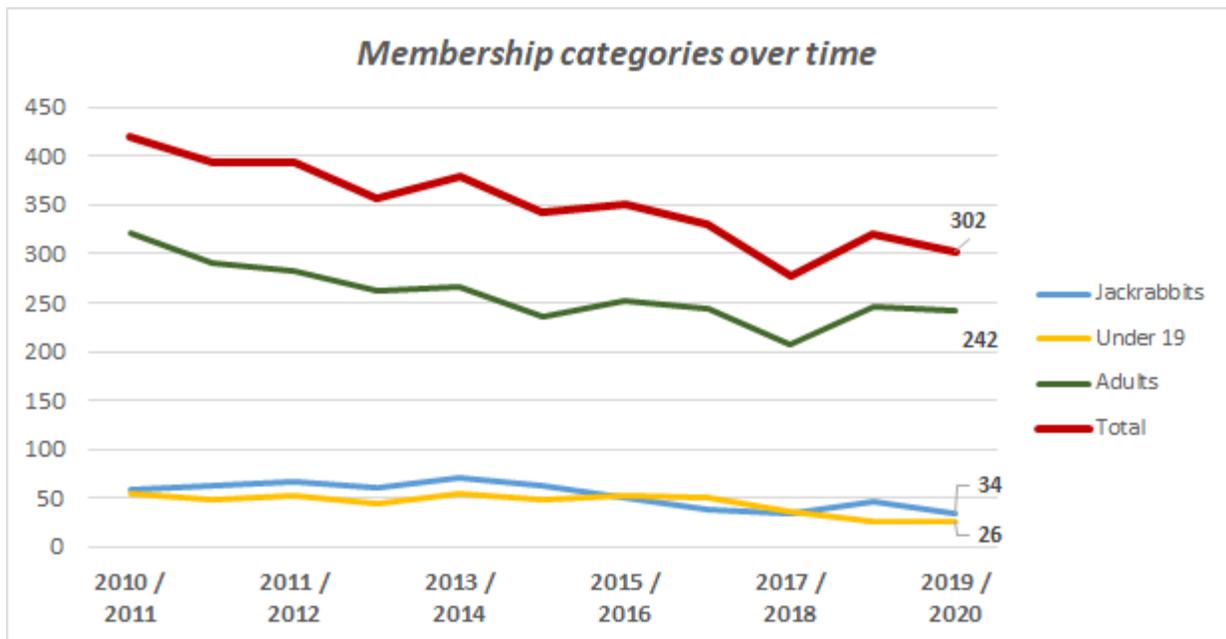
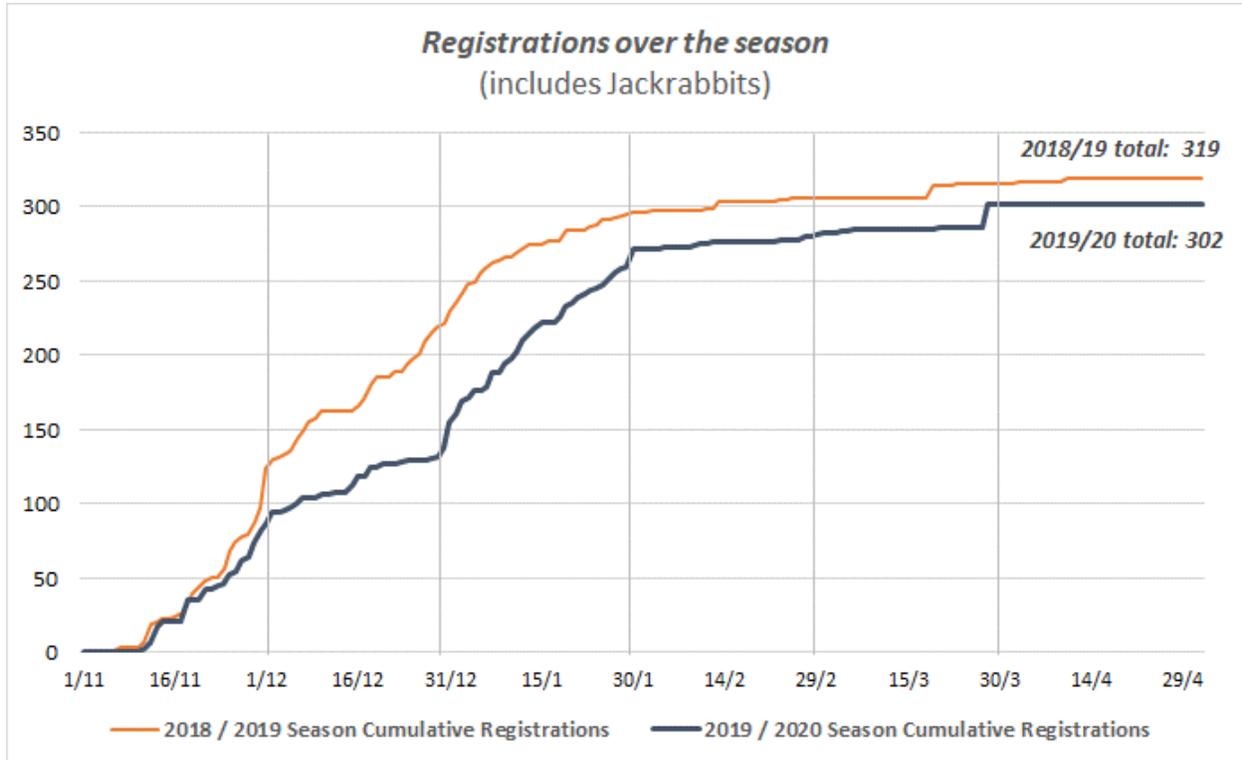


Category	Number of members	Percentage of total membership	Previous season
All new members	61	20%	28%
New adults only	43	14%	15%
Jackrabbits	34	11%	15%
Youth and children (under 19 years old)	26	9%	8%
Male / Female	165 / 137	55% / 45%	55% / 45%

<sup>1</sup> See Notes and Definitions section for definition of *New Member*, *Lapsed Member*, and *Returning Lapsed Member*.

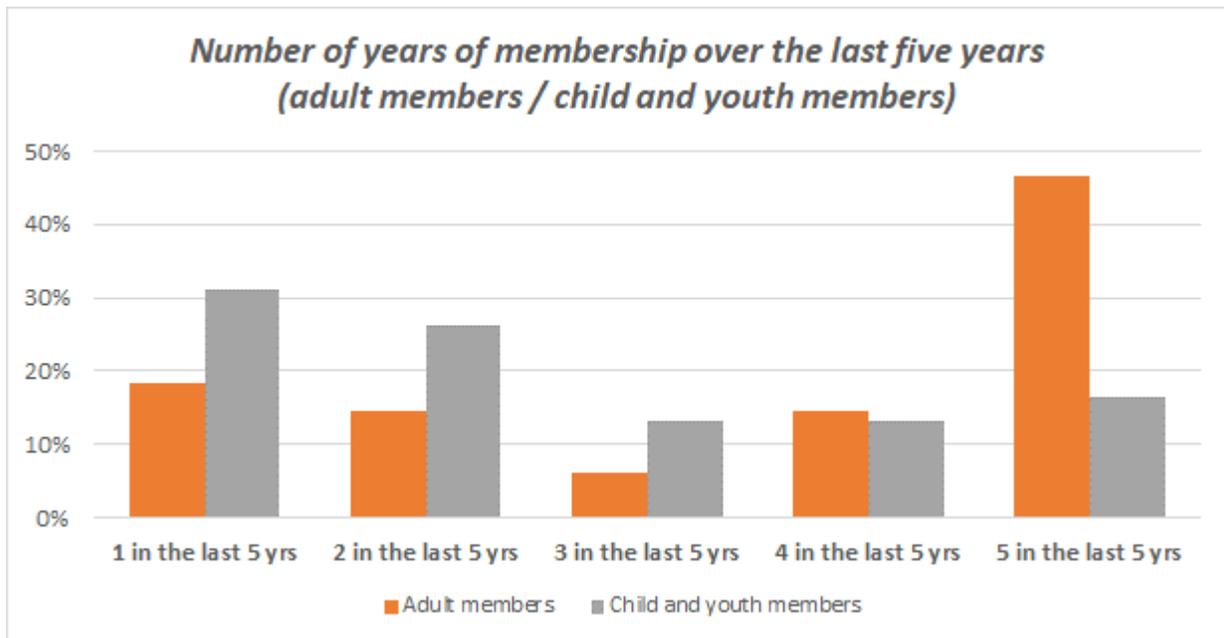
## Membership over time

- The *late snowfall* in December meant that members tended to register later in the season.
- *Jackrabbit membership decreased* significantly from the previous season (from 47 to 34; 28% decrease)



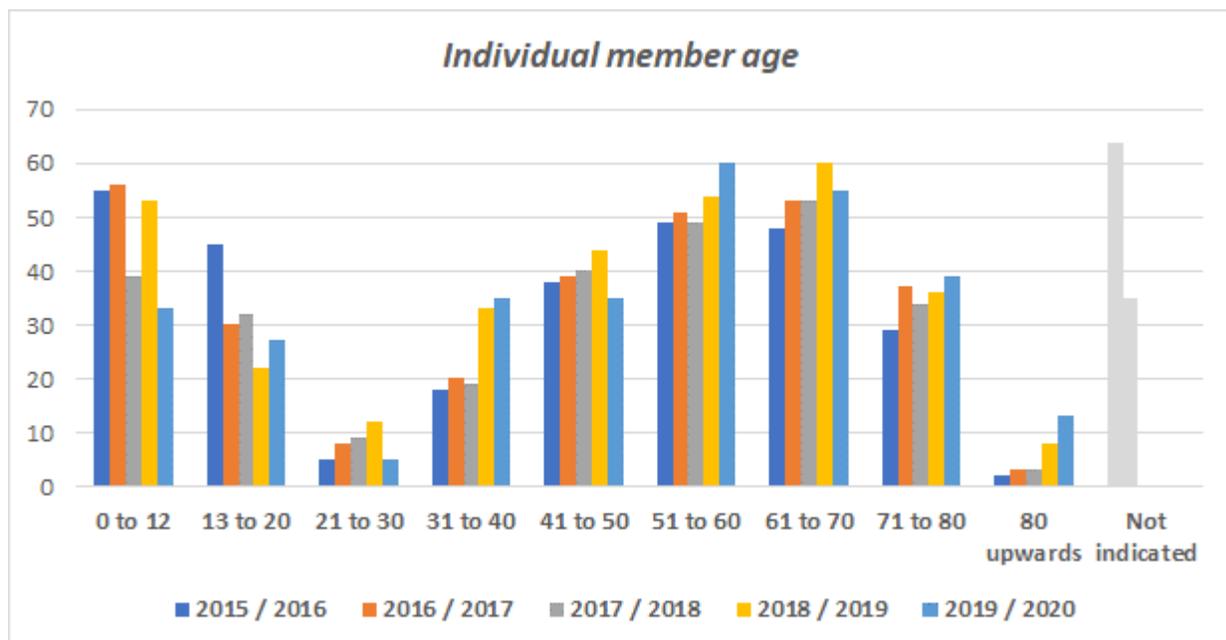
## Membership persistence

- **Almost 70% of adult members** have 3 or more years of memberships in the last five years (similar to previous season).
- **Almost 50% of child members** have 3 years or more of membership in the last five years (improvement from previous season).
- **36 out of 88** new members<sup>1</sup> (41%) in 2018 / 2019 re-joined for the 2019 / 2020 season (**increase** from 28% in the previous season) .



## Age breakdown over time

- In this season, the **increase** in the 31 to 40-year old group continued, but there was a significant **decrease** in the 41 to 50-year old group.
- The general **decreasing** trend in the child and youth membership continued this year, although the 13 to 20-year old group **increased** significantly.
- There were good **increases** in the 70+ year old groups. (*Lessons?*)
- **The median age for adult members has increased to 59 years old**, up from 56 years old in the 2018 / 2019 season.



Age of adult members	2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020
Average	56.7	57.0	56.8	55.8	<b>57.7</b>
Median	58	58	57	56	<b>59</b>

## Notes and Definitions

### Notes

- All analysis is based on the membership data as captured in the **Zone4** database. This is reliable from the 2015 / 2016 season, but not complete prior to that. For this reason, there may be some discrepancies and small errors.
- There were some limited instances of individuals registering as members more than once in a season. This has been accounted for as far as possible but may result in slight differences in total values.

### Definitions

- 1 **New Member:** An individual who has not been members in the last five years
- 2 **Lapsed Member:** An individual who was a member in the immediately previous season but did not renew their membership for the current season.
- 3 **Returning Lapsed Member:** An individual who was not a member in the previous season but had been a member in one of the previous five years; previously.

#### 4. Grooming (Marc Audet)

Grooming operations went well this winter, up until a late winter drought came upon us (no fresh snow for weeks). Both snowmobiles require loose snow for their cooling systems, so we were not able to extend the ski season by renovating the old snow. There is a plan to make up heavy duty "scratchers" to remedy this. Other than that limitation, the snowmobiles ran without issue, with 6 groomers sharing grooming chores. It was fortunate that snowfalls came at regular intervals over much of the winter and we had only one major snowfall that required extensive grooming. Although 6 groomers would seem to be a large pool to draw from, we need a few more groomers trained in order to share the workload better. Skiers with experience operating snowmobiles are encouraged to consider joining the grooming team.

## 5. Trail Clearing (Stuart Craig)

- One trail captain retired, but Ken Chaplin has volunteered as a new Trail Captain for the Cranberry-Tee to Cranberry Lake link, and Office Junction. This allowed a couple of captains to change trails.
- We've managed with the Rhodes' light-weight brushsaw that they generously allow us to use. Pete Rose has used his personal brushsaw and hedge trimmer to rejuvenate S Loop.
- A team of 6, with both brushsaws, Pete's hedge trimmer, and hand tools performed significant brushing of H Loop.
- One windstorm on October 31 brought down a number of trees and a wet snow in December bent numerous smaller trees across the trails. Otherwise there were few tree-falls to deal with after the autumn preparations.
- Both Pete Rose and Roman Pruszkowski completed the Workplace Safety North chainsaw operator course, provided at no charge to the club by Frank Knaapen.

## 6. Trail Improvements (Helena Rummens)

The following projects were worked on or completed in Fall 2019:

1. R loop drainage – improved drainage of standing water by digging ditches, laying drainage pipes, cutting and laying logs for corduroy, and covering with sand.
2. R loop bypass trail – created a bypass (called “chicken run”) as an alternative to the sharp corner on the first downhill.
3. P loop bridge reconstruction – replaced logs carried away by high spring runoff.
4. M loop resurfacing (2 sessions) – spread wood chips over the remainder of short-M loop and over bumpy sections of M extension.
5. M loop dirt cover – spread dirt (loamy sand delivered by Tracy Lance) over the bumpy section of the first descent.
6. M loop culvert and bridge ramp – installed a culvert and large corduroy in the stream at the base of the big M hill, and evened out the approach to the bridge with corduroy.
7. D loop links – created 3 access trails from Balmer Bay Road to D loop, to minimize skiers’ exposure to road traffic after they park.

- Several of these projects came from suggestions by DRXC members (thank you!).
- Trail Improvements had higher expenses (\$800) this fall than budgeted (but were underspent in the past few years).
- Many volunteer labourers turned out for these projects (thank you!). The woodchip spreading was especially popular.
- Some volunteers were especially generous with their time and machines (trucks, dumping trailers, tractors, and ATV): David Lee, Doug Champ, Andre Lepage, and Aubrey Fletcher.

Proposed projects for Fall 2020 (so far):

- continue drainage work on R loop,
- continue spreading chips on M loop,
- even out very bumpy section half-way along C loop,
- lay corduroy at wet spots on B loop.



Project 3: P loop bridge



Project 4: M loop chips



Project 5: M loop dirt



Project 6: M loop culvert



Project 7: D loop links



## 7. Adult Instruction (Phil Davis, Tom Holden, Kevin McDonald)

**Classic Technique, Tom Holden:** Adult lessons in classic technique were held on three Sundays in January. About a dozen students participated in total, but the attendance each Sunday was a bit uneven due to the weather and unusual waxing conditions. The students made good progress and they were seen out on the trails later in the year doing well. I could not have had better help with Joan Kalechstein, Ewan Craig and Nick Cox. The groomers did an excellent job preparing tracks for the lessons after heavy snowfalls and awkward temperatures near zero degrees.

**Skate Ski Technique, Kevin MacDonald:** The Skate Ski adult lessons were held on Sunday March 8th. The time was flexed to get the best snow conditions for the spring day. There were eight participants.

The lesson started with an optional wax demonstration/hands-on wax of skate skis. It was a good format, as it was a great introduction and enabled everyone to ski on appropriately waxed skate skis. In the past, participants would show up with a mix of equipment and often end up skiing on classic skis. Through borrowing, everyone had dedicated skate equipment, so that was helpful.

Kevin McDonald instructed the class on his own. It was certainly manageable with this group, all of whom were able and well-experienced classic skiers to start with. He went through an hour of skiing drills that were skate-specific, focused very much on the fundamentals of skiing. Then the team went on the mini-M with a final video shoot with analysis to finish the class.

Overall the class seemed very well received, and most expressed an interest in having a regular adult skate ski lesson slot beyond a single workshop.

## 8. Ski Rental (Paul Chiasson)

This year we had 57 adult rentals and 82 child rentals, for 139 total. This is down somewhat from what we have seen in past years; historically we've been better than 150 total rentals, and normally we see closer to an even split between adults and children. A significant number of renters are not local to the Deep River area.

All of the wax kits went out this year, and we could have rented out more. For the Jackrabbits, we're getting more requests for two sets of gear, and there is real demand for dedicated skate ski equipment. I purchased no new equipment this season, although a couple of sets were received as donations. Some of the older rental gear is nearing the end of its service life, and we should consider purchasing new equipment over time. Sizes that tend to run out first are "adult" skis (195 to 210), and large kids / small adult boots (39 to 41).

I believe that I'm seeing more requests for short-term (weekend, Christmas, etc) and late-season rentals. While I have tried to accommodate these, they are a nuisance. As I said at the last meeting, this has been my last year managing the rental program. I have enjoyed helping, especially watching the little kids grow into bigger skiers, it's time to pass the mantle. I will commit to working with my replacement until they are comfortable, and hope this program can continue in a sustained way as an important part of this community club.

## 9. Jackrabbits (Kathryn Chiasson)

There were 34 Jackrabbits registered this year.

We recruited a mix of occasional coaches among parents, students, and the community, to cover O-Cup days and many other days when regular lead coach(es) were absent.

We also recruited one new lead-coach.

We vigorously recruited volunteer coaches during Fall Registration Night as well as at the ski rentals and introduced free ski rentals for any volunteer coaches.

Our coaches emphasized outdoor adventure with a ski to a destination for campfire cook-out and this was a huge success. It was an exceptionally big success for our Bunnyrabbit families.

### **Coaching Certification**

Kevin McDonald ran the Community Coaching on-snow course again this year. For reasons beyond our control, the official coaching certifications, official course facilitator designation course, and on-snow course registration fees have all been delayed. This is significant in terms of carry-forward expense, as well as personal liability coverage for coaches.

### **Ongoing Recruitment means ongoing coaching certification course costs to maintain a large roster with flexible scheduling**

More and more, we really need to maintain a large coaching roster to allow enough flexibility to cover all our groups, and accommodate coaches absences, e.g. student-coaches and parent coaches missed 5 lessons due to O-Cup races, similarly parent coaches whose families are also hockey practices/games also missed in the ball park of 5 lessons, we were down another 2 coaches on a scout winter camp weekend, plus of course personal vacation days or sick days. Oh and also one of our student-coaches was seldom available due to her paying student-job.

Coaching courses are great for teaching volunteers to teach skiing, but assume that volunteers are already competent/confident skiers but we don't have any parent-coaches for our intermediate levels who can skate ski at all.

### **Outdoor Fun and Adventure emphasized**

Our coaches emphasized outdoor adventure this year with firepit hotdog/marshmallow destination skis.

Catalina even recruited her parents to set up the firepit and get the fire going in advance of the Bunnyrabbits' arrival. Ashleigh and Catalina organized a scavenger hunt and games to keep the little ones entertained along the route.

Christian and Martin took their groups on adventure skis to meet up for their campfire roast at Miami Beach North.

Dan and Debbie took their group out to the Observation Deck and identified trees and tracks along the way, returning to the chalet area for their campfire.

Two of the coaching families were planning a ski trek together to the cabin over the March Break, but of course.... as with so many things this year, will have to be postponed until next year.

### **Volunteer Parent-Coaches Ski-Ability and Jackrabbit program needs**

Our parent coaches are wonderful with all the Jackrabbits and Bunnyrabbits and they are huge outdoor enthusiasts, but they do feel they are limited by their own skiing ability to go beyond basic introductory classic ski skills. For now, we rely on our student-coaches to teach intermediate classic and introductory and low-intermediate skate-ski skills when they are not at O-Cup races, which means 5 out of 10 lessons.

However, we now have a rather large group of intermediate skiers ranging widely in age from primary grades to middle-school age, as well as in skill level between slow intermediate and fast intermediate. I hope we retain all of them in 2021.

Steve Hopkins plans to return for 2021 ski season and that should mean more consistency and technical ski skill progression for our intermediate skiers.

However, Steve accompanies his daughter Jamie Hopkins who is also a student-coach to the O-Cup races, which means he too will likely miss several lessons.

So, the program could really benefit from recruiting at least one if not two more coaches with strong technical ski skills in both classic and skate-skiing.

Currently, there are so many kids in this middle demographic that they need to be split into 2 or even 3 groups, due to speed and age differences. The younger intermediates who have been in the program for several years are actually technically better skiers than our older intermediates who joined the sport just one year ago but are very fit.

Otherwise, our Bunnyrabbit program is fun, creative, and challenging thanks to the enthusiastic and engaging coaching team in Catalina Anghel and Ashleigh Cluff. It's definitely worth noting that we have some strong cross country skiers among the current bunnyrabbit parents that bodes well for the future if the families remain involved in Jackrabbits. At any rate, there are several skiing families among them which bodes well for the club.

Also our most advanced level, it was a Level 4 and 5 split at the start of the season, with the Level 4s having spent several years in Level 4, so by the end of season they are all Level 5. This level has a solid team of coaches. Martin was the regular lead coach with Jamie Hopkins assisting when not at O-cup races, or with Visay, a parent of two kids in this group, who assists when he and his kids are not at hockey practices and games. (I can place Jamie with other group levels at times, but Martin and Visay are quite happy to only work with this group.)

Finally, Kevin and Liam McDonald, and sometimes Joanna McDonald, would occasionally co-coach the intermediate groups with Dan Cluff and Christian Kaiser, and offer supplementary technical ski instruction. Occasionally they had to lead groups when we needed to fill a gap.

The Covid-19 Lock Down forced the cancellation of the Jackrabbits Year End Awards and Potluck Dinner, and also made it impossible for people to return rental ski equipment as the Squash and Curling Club had closed up. People will have to hang onto their ski equipment for the foreseeable future.

#### **Notes:**

1. If this wasn't a pandemic year, I'd ask that we open on-line registration in time for Fall Community registration night. The earlier we have some idea of numbers, the easier it is to plan for coaching needs, to recruit coaches, to get coaches through the online courses and on-snow certification courses.

a) If we offer graduated fee-levels like many other clubs, including Mount Martin and skating, it offers an incentive to register early.

b) Possibly consider offering a Bunnyrabbit Family Membership Plus Ski Rental package.

c) Possibly consider offering an Outdoor Adventure Ski Family Membership package, with or without rentals. I haven't fully thought this through but maybe we would retain families whose kids don't wish to progress through Jackrabbits after learning the basics, or conversely after they've gone as far as they can in our program.

Maybe the Outdoor Adventure ski wouldn't emphasize ski lessons, rather ski outings. This might encourage families who ski but don't buy memberships to join the club.

2. Maybe we need to create a club "brand". It seems to have worked for Mount Martin which enjoys very strong membership retention among young families despite their comparatively huge annual fees, lesson fees, plus rather expensive downhill ski/snowboard equipment costs for growing kids. They began a few years ago with t-shirts, sweatshirts, and hats.

I had thought it would be cool to offer letter badges for each trail, so Jackrabbits could earn a badge for completing the trail.

I don't think people value the official Jackrabbit sticker-awards the same as they would a badge, and in particular, a badge that really ties in with the DRXC and the child's personal experience. Maybe it would also give all-ages of new skiers an incentive to stick with xc skiing to collect them all, and it might also foster a stronger sense of connection to the club. I actually floated this idea out to Kevin and Dave last year, and Kevin got a quote from someone. But we were also already in the hole last year, and I didn't pursue it.

3. Perhaps look into increasing grant application request-amounts so that we can offer to pay students. It's my understanding that most other clubs' are getting grant money to at least subsidize student wages, if not cover them.

4. Apparently there's a grant through xc ski Ontario or maybe it was Cross Country Canada to start-up a xc ski club in elementary schools, not sure if that will change next year.

I mentioned it to Monica Cameron and she seemed interested and I'd forwarded the link about the grant to her. That was of course before covid-19 made everything less predictable. I'm hopeful that an elementary school program could mutually benefit the high school and the DRXC as well as Jackrabbits.

5. I need to make my exit plan. I think it would be useful to break up the tasks of co-ordinator into smaller roles that hopefully more parents might be willing to take on, and get them begin taking those tasks on now. I think maybe a Jackrabbit or Junior co-ordinating committee rather than a single co-ordinator position might help with transition and continuity, especially because no one is eager to take on the role single-handed. If we can establish a committee with specific roles/tasks, hopefully people will feel willing to take on a task that won't take up too much of their time. More importantly, it would (hopefully) foster a stronger sense of community if more parents are sharing the responsibility of running the program, and more people means more ideas and more energy.

6. I think we need to be able to make our Junior program more flexible so we have a plan for years when we have many volunteers with a high-level of ski expertise and competitive spirit and years when we have really enthusiastic recreational skiers who simply love the outdoors. I'm hopeful that covid-19 lock-down might propel xc ski-ontario/cross country canada to find ways to make their insurance qualifying criteria and other logistical hurdles more in line with the small resort's needs.

## 10. Junior Racing (Aubrey Fletcher)

The junior racing/high school program faced some adversity this year, but came out having provided a quality training and racing experience for the athletes involved.

This year's team comprised approximately 25 skiers from MCS at the beginning of dry-land training and by the end of the season consisted of about 15 skiers continuing to the Ontario Federation of Secondary Schools Athletic Associations's championships.

The final number for OFSAA was 12 skiers moving on. Deep River (MCS) fielded a junior girls team (4 plus a spare) and a Junior Boys team (4 racers) as well as 3 individual senior boys.

The adversity of the season could easily be forgotten in light of the present circumstances with the Covid 19 virus, however the adversity faced earlier on in the season was linked to job unrest between the teacher's unions and the government. As far as impacts on the ski season this year is concerned, Deep River escaped relatively unscathed.

A normal ski season for MCS consists of dry-land training from mid November to whenever the snow falls, an early outing for senior racers to Hardwood Hills before Christmas, followed by a season of on snow training and three principle races. Mackenzie normally hosts the Mackenzie Invitational in early February, followed by EOSSAA in Mid-February and finally OFSAA either in late February or Early March. This year saw the seniors race at Hardwood, a very successful Mackenzie Invitational, albeit with many fewer skiers than normal due to staff restrictions resulting from job action, no EOSSAA race and a truncated OFSAA taking a three day event and reducing it to two.

The racers went through a period of not knowing whether or not the season was prematurely over which stretched right up to OFSAA. In the end, the job action caused the cancellation of EOSSAA races and cancellation of the third day of OFSAA which included the Banquet and relay races that were to have taken place on the main street of Huntsville.

In short: the season was reduced to Hardwood Invitational, the Mackenzie Invitational, a weekend time trial in Pembroke, and one day of individual races at OFSAA in Huntsville.

Deep River's top skiers at the championships in each category were: Jamie Hopkins (19th overall Junior Girl), Blake Menard (39th overall Junior Boy), and Raphael Guerout (13th overall Senior Boy).

Our Junior Girls team of Jamie Hopkins, Alison Chiasson, Olivia Sykes, Wren Rauliuk Dunn and Abby Bakewell placed seventh in the province with a combined score of 170 points.

Not to be overlooked are the accomplishments of Jamie Hopkins and Raphael Guerout in their racing season on the Ontario Cup Circuit as they raced for PAXC's racing program coached by Rene Sauve.

## 11. Chalet (Doug Killey)

Once again, thanks to the volunteers who opened and closed the chalet, tidied it up, and started a morning fire during the somewhat shortened 2019-2020 season. Stuart Craig and Helena Rummens were major players in regenerating the firewood supply, and Helena also instituted a blue box in the chalet which got some use (and abuse). Bruce Heinmiller helped replace/repair the roof's snow guards, which came off or were damaged in the spring of 2019, and the guards successfully made it through this past winter.

## 12. Ski Cabin (Eric Hagberg)

The winter season was rather erratic. Periods of decent snow interrupted by rain and freezing rain. The cabin trails were thus often not in great shape and the skiing suffered. We thus had a record number of cancellations of booked cabin stays due to bad weather or dangerous trails. The cabin was used for 9 nights and a total number of 31 person nights so far. It was about half the amount of last winter.

The books are not closed until the season end of June 30. As it currently stands we will have a loss of \$200 for the season. We are still in decent shape as we have more than \$3000 in the bank.

The cabin trail system took a lot of effort to maintain. It was in pretty good shape in November but the trails took a beating later on as a result of wet snow and freezing rain, that bent numerous saplings and bushes over the trail. Much work had to be repeated, but was accomplished by the regular trail crew as well as many other skiers who helped out while touring out there.

### 13. Silver Spoon Race (Anne Murphy)

#### Participation Stats:

Competitive Races: Kids (up to age 17) = 197 (159 last year) - of which DRXC = 6  
Adults (29=F, 52=M) = 79 (81 last year) - of which DRXC = 13  
Total = 230 (29 from exchange club in British Columbia)

Open Races 11km, 7km, 4.5km: = 28 (17 Pre- Reg + 11 Race Day) of which DRXC = 19  
King's Court Skate: = 90 - of which DRXC = 1

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS = 304 (268 last year)  
of which TOTAL Deep River Participants = 38 (27 last year)

As far as the net revenue, this is a statement from our treasurer's report: The event generated a profit of about \$2,600 – good, considering the ~\$1,300 medallion purchase this year.

Also, I'd like to include a thank-you to all members of the DRXC who volunteered in some fashion for the Silver Spoon. There were at least 60 volunteers, most of whom are or were DRXC members!