



OFSC
THE HEARTBEAT OF SNOWMOBILING
30
YEARS
1966 • 1996

Above: Mike Schafer (far left) and Trapper Biggs (right) of "The Bear" joined Betty Vanden Bosch, Scott MacLellan "Timmy" and Kayleigh Boyd "Tammy", during Chesterville's Snowarama. Right: Nation Valley Snowmobile Association's trail groomer on duty. *Press photos – Fetterly & Wolfe*

Snowmobile Showcase

Ontario Snowmobile Safety Week

February 2-8, 1997

Supplement to Winchester Press, Chesterville Record, Morrisburg Leader, Iroquois Chieftain, Wednesday, February 5, 1997 and Russell Villager, Thursday, February 6, 1997

In 30th year

1996-97 marks the 30th anniversary of organized snowmobiling in Ontario.

The word 'organized' is highlighted because within this concept lies the success of snowmobiling in the province. Without an extensive local club network and the strong central voice of the OFSC, and without 30 years of planning, programs and policies, snowmobiling would likely be underdeveloped today as it remains in so many other provinces and states.

Prior to 1967, grassroots snowmobile clubs existed in some parts of Ontario, each working independently, primarily as social entities.

On February 4 of that Canadian Centennial Year, 10 founding clubs gathered in Midland to create *The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs* and changed the face of snowmobiling forever.

Club membership to the OFSC was set at a $10 registration fee as well as $1 per member in annual dues. The OFSC was not incorporated.

Today, the OFSC is Ontario's pre-eminent non- profit association and the largest snowmobiling organization in the world. Today, the federation operates the world's longest continuous trail network and the most successful user pay program in international recreation. Today, the OFSC is self-sustaining and controls its own destiny.

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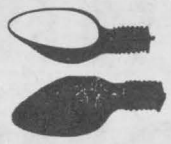

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Mountain Trail Blazers

Club donates over $14,000

MOUNTAIN — The Mountain Trail Blazers began in November, 1971 with 40 members and Harold Boyce as the president. This season there are 170 members. The Blazers became incorporated in 1975.

For the first year meetings were held in the Mountain United Church Hall (now the Mountain Community Hall). In 1972 the club's meetings were moved to the Mountain School House. When the school house finally closed, the members met at each other's homes.

The Trail Blazers held their first snowmobile draw in 1973. Williamsburg's Lorne Empey was the winner of a $750 Snow-Jet from Carl-Don Equipment in Mountain.

The first groomer, an Alpine, was also purchased in 1973.

In 1993 the club rented Don Erwin's cottage and used it for the following two seasons until they leased some land and purchased a building from John Havekes in the fall of 1995.

A lot of work has been done to the building which has resulted in a comfortable club house available to everyone.

The Mountain Trail Blazers joined the Nation Valley Snowmobile Association, along with five other clubs, in order to aid in the club's grooming.

The Mountain Trail Blazers sign and maintain about 150 km of trails.

Regular meetings are held every second and fourth Thursday of the month.

Throughout the year, the club holds many functions for the their members as well as their families.

Over the past year, the Trail Blazers have donated over $14,000 to local organizations.

Mountain Township Fire Department — $2,000

Mountain Township Agricultural Society — $500

Easter Seals — $500

Winchester District Memorial Hospital — $1,000

North Dundas Minor Hockey Association — $500

Mountain Station Park — $500

CHEO — $1,000

Township of Mountain Canada Day Activities — $400

CPR Course — $2,045

Seaway District High School — $1,000

Kemptville and District High School — $1,500

North Dundas District High School — $1,000

Mountain Community Hall — $500

House of Lazarus — $1,688.28

Hallville Recreation Association — $500



'74 Blazers

Members of the Mountain Trail Blazers Snowmobile Club pictured in front of the club house in 1974. Front, left, Heather Alexander, Valerie Madden, Verna Simzer, Susan Percival, Anita Simzer. Back, left, Bruce Spong, Lloyd Madden, Gerald Simzer, Andrew Percival, Larry Simms, Harold Boyce, Ewart Simms.

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Osgoode Carleton Snowmobile Club

Volunteers make season successful

by Ann Renwick

METCALFE — The Osgoode Carleton Snowmobile Club has been around for 20 years.

It has different names but for the last 10 years or so, it has had this name. The club has went from only a small number of people to the present number of 420 members.

How does one get involved with a snowmobile club you may ask? Well, it's very simple. When you buy a Trail Pass you automatically are a member of the club who is selling the pass. As well, you then join the thousands of snowmobilers throughout Ontario who make up the Ontario Federation of Snowmobilers (OFSC).

Most clubs hold meetings once a month. The Osgoode Carleton club holds their meetings on the first Thursday of each month at the Metcalfe fire hall.

The club is made up of volunteers who help everyone enjoy the snowmobile season. We have dances, rallies, cook-outs, young driver training, wardens as well as participate in local parades.

It takes a lot of time and volunteers to make the season successful. We start in the early fall with clearing and opening the trails, putting up signs to late spring when we close the trail.

We even continue throughout the summer to make improvements. We always welcome everyone out to our meetings so please come out and see what your club is all about.

If you have any questions contact the club's president Dave Dow at 821-2385 or public relations officer Ann Renwick at 821-3392.



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More enthusiasts taking to the trails

Stephanie Wolfe
Press staff

IROQUOIS — Enthusiasm for the sport of snowmobiling is on the rise, say local authorities.

With more than 600 kilometres of trails from Crysler to Cardinal, the Nation Valley Snowmobile Association (NVSA) has approximately 650 members compared to 509 in December 1995.

Lise Godard, NVSA treasurer, believes more people are joining the club because the trails are in such good condition.

"The grooming is so good that the trails are great," she said. "I think everyone wants to see the association work."

"The overall enthusiasm for the sport is definitely at an all time high," added Dennis Casselman, co-owner of Cedar Glen Golf Course.

The golf course is often crowded with snowmobilers who take the opportunity to warm up and relax at the facilities, explained Casselman. "We've had a few weekends with much more traffic than last year," he added.

It's no surprise why more and more people are snowmobiling. The trails are well-maintained and driving through heavily-wooded bush is breathtaking, say local snowmobilers.



Groomers keep trails well-maintained in the area so snowmobilers can enjoy 600 kilometres of trails from Crysler to Cardinal. Press Photo — Wolfe

In addition, there are many rest areas for snowmobilers to stop along the trails. Most of the six area clubs — Winchester Township, Mountain Trail Blazers, South Dundas, Williamsburg, Finch North Star, and Mainville/Pittston — have their own club houses.

Although the weather has not been great this winter for snowmobiling, it's much better than last year.

"Last year, we had snow early and then it left us," NVSA vice-president Jeff Whitteker said. "But this winter has been pretty good."

PATROLLING THE TRAILS

Approximately 40 trail wardens patrol area trails and check for permits and can charge snowmobilers for trespassing on the spot.

"We're not the OPP but we do have a lot of power," explained Whitteker, who is also in charge of wardens. "There is great pressure among snowmobilers to get passes otherwise there will be (no money to ensure) smooth trails."

Whitteker added that wardens also act as a liaison between clubs, snowmobilers and landowners.

Landowners are often approached by wardens and members of snowmobile clubs for permission to put a trail on part of their property.

GROOMING THE TRAILS

The NVSA has two groomers who spend 70 consecutive hours clearing the trails. The organization recently received $32,000 from the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs which it used towards the cost of a new groomer.

The groomers are continually levelling the snow on the trails to ensure the best snowmobiling conditions, said Whitteker.

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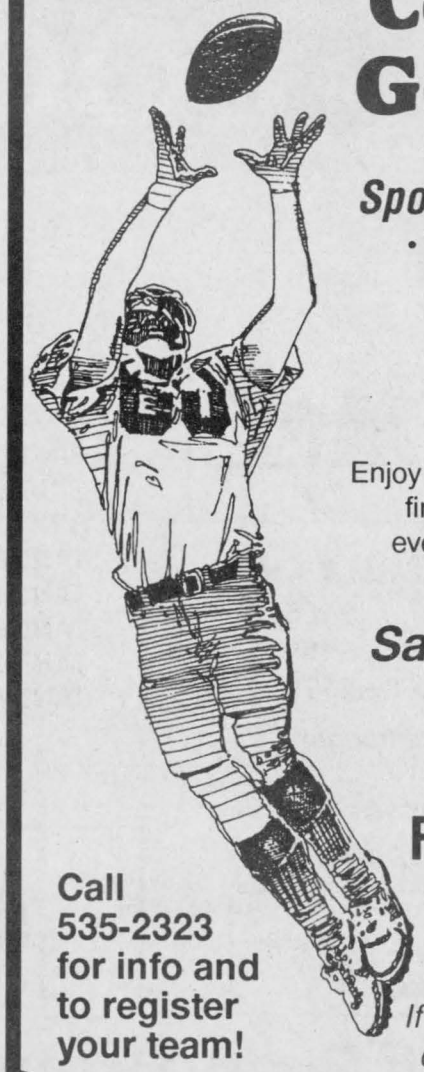

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South Dundas Snowmobile Club

Club busy all year long

by Debbie Strader

IROQUOIS — In 1971 a group of seven couples huddled outside around a campfire and decided they needed to build a hut to call home.

Each of these couples donated $100 and with lumber from Earl Barkley's sawmill and some remains of the Crysler Marina boathouse, the Cedar Grove Lodge was born.

Many years of snowmobiling, summer picnics, Christmas parties, rearing of children and good times with friends were had in that tiny building.

Cedar Grove Lodge was abandoned in the early 1980s after a few years of poor winter conditions and more responsibilities at work and home for those members.

In 1994 a new purpose arose for the clubhouse — a new home for South Dundas Snowmobile Club. We sure enjoy the stories of the 'good old days' of two of the original members, Freda and Ron Whitteker.

The SDSC, being the south end of the Nation Valley Snowmobile Association's trails, is responsible for trails from Iroquois to the Church Road, north to Williamsburg and to Brinston.

We now have over 100 OFSC permit holders and several social members.

As well as being snow-conscious, we are socially active throughout the year. Through organized events such as the Haddo Jamboree, being held on August 9 this year, along with the Haddo recreation association we are able to help clubs such as the Boy Scouts and the Haddo recreation hall.

The SDSC Water Craft Rally has also been a popular event and will be held again this year during the Iroquois Summer Fest. The rally is run similar to a snowmobile rally only travel is by boat. Come out to see if that snow machine will stay on top of the water this year.

On August 19, the SDSC will be helping with Volley for Cancer at Carl and Ruby Van Allen's farm. Last year, this event raised over $12,000 for cancer research.

Many hours of volunteer work have been given in trail forming and brushing, signing of trails and upkeep but we still find the time to enjoy the many excellent trails of the NVSA.

Thanks go out to all of those volunteers, club members and landowners for their support.

The SDSC's club house is open most weekends for the season and we invite all to stop by.

NATION VALLEY SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION
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Social Hour 6:30 pm • Dinner 7:30 pm • Dance 9:00 pm
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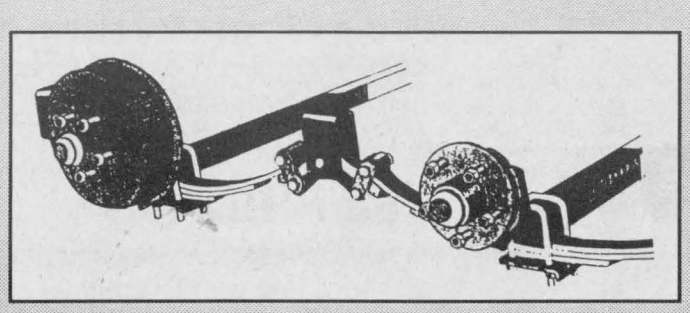

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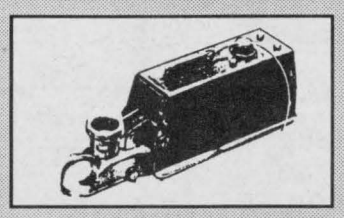

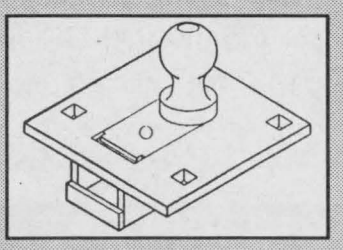

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Positive feedback on new trails

by Greg Erwin
Nation Valley Snowmobile Association

Last year, the winter ended in mid-January. Hopefully it begins there this year.

Grooming where we can has been slow due to poor snow conditions. Countless hours have been put in by hundreds of volunteers just to have Mother Nature start playing with the thermostat.

If you made it out, I'm sure you've noticed a lot of changes from last year's trail system. As always, take your time during the first few trips. Make sure you're not on a trail which no longer exists. Fences may now block it or bridges may have been removed.

Also, thanks to the unusual weather, some trails did not get opened until late, as some farmers left their cattle out until January delaying the opening of gates. Wet areas can't be brushed or signed until after the freeze-up. As well, the wet fall did not allow for the leveling of the plowed fields.

With the low snow levels, some obstructions, which are normally covered, are still exposed or worse yet, just under the surface.

If you come across any branches on the trail, please take a minute to remove them. If you are unable, contact your trail boss but remember, this is your trail system and it is as much your responsibility as anyone's.

Several changes of note to our system that do have some people confused.

The Riverside Trail from Brinston to Stampville got lost when we printed our maps. It is still there, however, groomed and being maintained by the Riverside Snowmobile Club.

Since the Pittston Mainsville maps were printed, we have been able to re-route the trail at Brinston for better access to fuel.

The trail that used to run through the community park on the west side of town, now runs on the east side of town right behind the Brinston General Store and continues south to Dixons Corners where fuel is also available. When trail the crosses County Road 18, between Dixons Corners and Dundela one spur goes south then west to Matilda Hall. The other trail heads east along the road for about a mile then heads south. This is a new trail that intercepts Riverside's trail just a little west of the South Dundas Snowmobile Club.

South Dundas put in this trail to help create a groomer loop and better access to their club from the north. This is a very nice trail with only a couple of plowed fields.

A lot of positive comments have also been received about the new trail north of the Mountain Club.

Winchester has a new trail loop around Chesterville allowing greater access to services. So please take your time. Respect our landowners by staying on the trail.

On a final note. Every year when we start preparing trails we come across sabotaged and/or stolen signs. These signs are there to improve the safety of the system.

The sign you steal could save a life.

If you helped raise funds or prepare the trails, thanks and enjoy. If you want to help, please contact your club rep or myself. We're all volunteers and we're all responsible.



Membership special winners

The winners of the Nation Valley Snowmobile Club's membership special are:

1st: Teresa Berends, Osgoode ($200 gift certificate); 2nd: Jack Berends, Osgoode ($100 gift certificate); 3rd: Arlene Bryan, Mountain ($50 gift certificate); 4th: Charles Bailey, Brinston ($50 gift certificate); 5th: John Vanderlaan, Winchester ($50 gift certificate); 6th: Scott Froats, Brinston ($50 gift certificate).

Snowmobile draw for a 1997 Arctic Cat Cougar snowmobile — Doris Riddell, Iroquois.

Weather hampers grooming activities

Again, Mother Nature is throwing some bad curves at us. The fall crop was late coming off, then the rain, our landowners were late getting the plowing down and then the frost.

This in turn did not give us the time required to disk or harrow the plowed ground the trail runs on. Because of this, the grooming process is very slow and very rough. Add to that the minimal amount of snow that we have received, it compounds the duties our trail grooming co-ordinators are faced with.

Due to the rough conditions, both our grooming units have had their share of breakdowns.

The co-ordinators are trying very hard to keep down time to a minimum so that the units are out there.

In closing, we want to mention that if Mother Nature gives us some favorable weather conditions,we will be out there getting those trails into shape.

Message from NVSA president Ray Godard

Fellow snowmobilers:
The Nation Valley Snowmobile Association is now in its third season.

We would not be where we are today without the help of the many, many volunteers who helped make it happen.

Our volunteers help in many ways. Some do trail work, make signs, put up signs, brush trails, get permission slips signed, go to fairs to sell tickets, go to meetings, fill out paper work, help serve food and man the door at our events, repair groomers and the list goes on.

Not only do they give their time, but they also provide their own equipment and repair that equipment at their own cost to provide us with the trail system that we have.

To all these volunteers, I say a big thank you for their efforts.

In closing, I hope that Mother Nature co-operates with us so that we can have a great season.



Trail wardens trained snowmobile ambassadors

MORRISBURG — They manage over 600 km of trails and training.

Hosted by the Nation Valley Snowmobile Association, the trail warden training course, held here on Jan. 22, attempts to keep snowmobiling safe and fun.

The wardens act as a liaison between the snowmobile clubs, snowmobilers and landowners. Because a large portion of the Nation Valley Snowmobile Association trails are located on private property, the onus is on the users to pay attention to signage and remain on the trails.

NVSA vice-president, Jeff Whitteker, explained that landowners allow snowmobilers to use portions of their property and hope all of the rules are followed in return.

Whitteker added that if an unhappy property owner chose to, they could close the portions of the trail crossing their land thereby shutting down 20 to 30 miles of trails.

The vice-president also pointed out wardens, who act as public relation officers, can lay charges against trespassers. He did, however, that noted that no charges were laid last year and no major problems were encountered.

In order to travel the trails in the NVSA district (as well as the Ontario Federation Of Snowmobile Club trails) snowmobilers must have a valid trail permit, which at this time of year is worth $110.

To insure the use of a permit, the NVSA sets up inspection stations throughout the season. Permits should be displayed on the machine's windshield or hood for easy identification.

Fast figures

46,000 — total kilometres of OFSC snowmobile trails. At over twice the length of the provincial highway network, they are the world's longest continuous recreational trail system.

190,000 — number of family snowmobilers belonging to the OFSC, the largest association in international snowmobiling.

$652 million — snowmobile-related dollars spent by OFSC members.

175,000 — best guesstimate of the number of active snowmobilers in Ontario.

60 per cent — per cent of active sleds with OFSC trail permits.

$8,200,000 — total dollars derived annually by snowmobile clubs from trail permit sales.

$12,000,000 — dollars spent by snowmobile clubs on trail operations and grooming.

$110 — regular price of a 1996/97 trail permit, good anywhere, anytime.

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YOU COULD OWN THE 'SNOWMOBILE OF THE YEAR' BEFORE THE YEAR'S OVER

This year the Ski-Doo MX*Z 583 took top honors in races all over and in enthusiast magazines everywhere. It was *SnowGoer* magazine's "Snowmobile of the Year," *SnoWest* named it "All Star Snowmobile of the Year" and *Race & Rally* called it the "best rendition of a new snowmobile in 1996." Behind all the praise is an incredible amount of substance. A race-ready SC-10 Cross-Country suspension system. A trail-hungry 581cc Rotax® engine. And an acclaimed power-to-weight ratio and balance that makes the rider feel like part of the machine. Come in and see how good a sled the MX Z 583 is, talk trade-in... and see why now is an especially good time to buy one.

JIM'S Performance Plus
Flagg Road, RR1
Iroquois, Ontario
652-2245

ski-doo Bombardier

Hours: *Mon.-Fri. 8 am-5 pm; Sat. 9 am-noon; evenings Mon.-Thurs. 7-9 pm*

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