

Canadian Master's Newsletter Spring 2005

Greetings fellow skiers,

The 2004-2005 is now drawing to a close, but it has turned out to be a rich one, despite a lack of snow, particularly in western Canada. Numerous events, including training camps, races, and social activities were held in nearly all provinces. Many of our participating members finished the season with excellent race results under their belt.

The Canadian Cross-country Master's Ski Association can be proud of having ended the year with a strong membership – even with a slight increase over last year. Because Québec and Ontario are usually blessed with good snow conditions, and have larger populations, it is not surprising that they boast the largest number of members. Below is a table showing changes in membership over the period 2003 to 2005.

Province	Number of members 2004 2005		
	2005	2004	2003
Alberta	38	52	54
British Columbia	39	42	52
New Brunswick	18	26	32
Ontario	132	111	116
Manitoba			
Québec	178	185	185
Saskatchewan	14	13	12
Newfoundland	56	37	42
Yukon	1		27
Total	476	466	520

Annual General Assembly and news from the provinces.

In holding with tradition, the annual general assembly was held in conjunction with the Canadian Championships, this year in Stephenville on Friday, 4 February 2005. Perhaps the best way to pass on the news from that meeting is to provide you with the minutes prepared by Jack White. Although the minutes touch on several subjects, some of them deserve to be looked at in greater detail.

Masters Cross Country AGM

March 4, 2005 at Holiday Inn, Stephenville, NL

In attendance: Jean-Yves Babin National Director	Wayne Johannsen
Bruce LeGrow NL Director	Paul Wright
Frank McNamara AB Director	Gerry Morrison
Roger Levesque NB Director	Darryl Oram
Bruce Nevison ON (for Tom Cook)	Wendy Grater
Tom Cook ON Director (by teleconference)	Jack White
Joseph Kryger Translator	Margaret Philpott
Theri Leuzy (representing Rimouski)	Russ Evans

The meeting was called to order at 4 P.M. National Director Jean-Yves Babin introduced all present and read agenda.

Move to accept by Roger Levesque, seconded by Jack White.

Minutes for 2004 Nationals at Onaping Falls were read. A move to accept was made by Jack, seconded by Roger.

Discussion on membership. Jean-Yves expressed concern about low numbers. However, an update from Provincial Directors shows a total of 472 members for the 2004/05 season. Directors will look at ways to increase memberships.

Budget. Jean-Yves reviewed the budget figures. A number of items have changed, notably membership numbers. A finalized budget will be sent out by e-mail. He noted that it was important to try to maintain a balance of at least \$5000.

Provincial Reports:

Alberta - Frank McNamara

Down in memberships slightly. Lack of snow a main cause of this. Bank balance is very good.

Ontario – Tom Cook

Membership of 132 for this season. Eighteen of these picked up at provincial Masters races at Parry Sound Feb. 4-7 organized by Wendy Grater and Katya Mathys. A total of 65 Masters participated. Race format was 11K classic on Friday, 22K classic and free technique on Saturday, and 11K free on Sunday. A wine and cheese was held Friday evening and the banquet on Saturday evening.

A Provincial male and female champion will be declared after the National Masters. A handicapping system based on ages will be used to achieve a final point score using at least two of the three events at the Ontario Masters and two other sanctioned events.

A number of Masters submitted suggestions to improve the Association – to be considered at AGM. Endeavoring to create a home page for Ontario Masters.

New Brunswick – Roger Levesque

They lost some funding that they had been able to access in previous years so as a result have been reorganizing. Membership is down because of this and also because of his inability due to illness to attend some provincial events where he would have picked up some members. Membership will increase drastically next year because of Nationals in Rimouski. P.E.I. is still also under the umbrella of N.B.

Newfoundland & Labrador – Bruce LeGrow

Memberships still coming in due to Masters Nationals being held here. A total of 85 registered for the event. He had hoped for 100 due to a high degree of promotion and exceptional snow conditions in the area this season. The Organizing Committee is certain all participants have enjoyed this year's competition.

B.C Dirk Tempelton –Kluett

Unfortunately Dirk was unable to participate in the teleconference (a technical problem). Nevertheless his report was submitted. This year snow was lacking in BC. In February Dirk was only able to get out on his skis 7 times! The national newsletters and 2 provincial newsletters were sent out to members. It is thought that if the provincial championships were held annually, membership would increase. The financial situation is in good order.

Quebec – Jean-Yves Babin for Francine Dery

Total of 178 members in the province. *Circuit des maitres* has a schedule of 13 races of varying distances in both techniques. There was an early-snow training camp at *Forêt Montmorency* which attracted 130 participants with good snow conditions.

2006 Nationals

Theri Leuzy was representing Rimouski, Quebec, who will be hosting the 2006 Masters Nationals from Feb. 27 to Mar. 4. He presented information on the city, the ski club and local area. *Centre de Plein Air Mouski* is a vibrant ski club of approx. 400 members and last season sold a total of 3000 day passes. There is an 8000sq.ft. chalet with a large waxing area.

A race format was presented. However, the executive membership suggested some changes. These will be accommodated and a new format will be forthcoming along with a price list of accommodations. Hotels will be requested to have wax facilities available. Wendy Grater asked that the Organizing Committee check on the possibility of billets, noting that some Masters enjoy this type of accommodation.

Rimouski is not a bilingual city, however all service facilities have English speaking employees.

The Rimouski OC will have a website set up this fall (possibly September).

Further Business:

A few comments were made regarding race format. Tom Cool talked about the possibility of a combi race. Wayne Johannsen stated the present format was too long. There were also suggestions that the Masters Nationals only be held every second or third year and

there be regional events held in those off years. Bruce LeGrow was not in favour, stating we should continue our Nationals on an annual basis.

Jack White noted this year's event had 85 entrants and considering Masters World Championships with 27 countries participating annually attract approx. 1000 skiers. If we in Canada could be at or near the 100 mark, the event would be deemed highly successful. Several provinces still hold a Provincial Masters event each year.

It was agreed by all that major ski centers in this country are not willing hosts for our Nationals as they value the revenues generated by day passes. Smaller clubs (as has been the practice in the past) will continue to be contacted. Frank McNamera and Dirk Templemen-Kluett will look for possible host club in Alberta and B.C. for 2007.

It was noted that scheduling our event each year is always a problem. It must not clash with Master World Championships and we must also try and avoid major competitions here in Canada.

A discussion was held regarding a rebate for someone registering for the Masters Nationals and not being able to attend due to illness. Something the executive should look at.

A business plan with input from Provincial Directors and individual Master members was discussed with the intention of increasing memberships. All ideas will be evaluated and considered by Directors in the coming months. Objective for each province should be 10% increase in membership for coming year.

The annual ski draw will continue. Jean-Yves has a contact were he is able to obtain the skiis at a very good price. Agreed that members should be able to buy as many tickets as they like.

Brusson, Italy.

The site of this coming year's Masters World Championships. Jean-Yves advised that information will be included in the Spring newsletter about website, etc.

In 2007, the site is Roveniemi, Finland

In 2008, the site is McCall, Idaho

A move to adjourn was made by Bruce LeGrow and seconded by Bruce Nevison. The meeting adjourned at 6 P.M.

jw

World Championships 2005 Krasnogorsk, Russia.

It goes without saying that a trip to Russia is an exceptional experience – 8 hours of jet-lag, lost luggage and, for some, the traditional case of the flu

These championships can be considered an unqualified success! The organizing committee did an extraordinary job in bringing everything together. It was evident to all that the budget did not represent a problem. Logistically, everything ran smoothly. The

trails were in excellent condition, the shuttle buses were right on time; only the food at the stadium was a bit lower than expectations in terms of quantity and quality.

In general, lodging was completely adequate, although some accommodations were a bit far from the stadium. The following people were present at the championships:

Kryger Joseph Ont.	Angeluchi Christiane Qc
Vanderlugt Harry Ont	Vibrec Georges B.C
Vanderlugh Sue Ont	Vabrec Barbara B.C
Babin Jean-Yves Qc.	Girard Georges Q.C
Carboneau Régean Qc.	Mathys Catja Ont
Manning Sally Ont	Servold Irving Alb.
Hrdlicka Rudolf)Ont	

Almost half of the group was from Ontario. As in past competitions, the ladies did best : Kadja Matis, masters 2, won a bronze medal in the 30 km free-style, scarcely 39 seconds behind the silver medal winner; she also came fourth in the 10km free-style, but a nasty case of the flu prevented her from competing in the 15 km. Christiane Angeluchi, masters 8, won the bronze in the 15 km free-style, only 2 seconds back of the silver medal winner. During the medals ceremony (as if the medal was not enough!) Christiane also received a kiss and an autograph (and had her picture taken) with Bjorn Dahlie, the honorary president of the championships. Some girls have all the luck!

On the mens' side, Joseph Kryger was unable to participate in any of the races due to a bad cold, but this did not dampen his perpetual good humour! Among the others, the best performance went to Irving Servold, M 9, with an 11th place in the 15 km Classic, with skis , boots and poles borrowed from the Russians; he even completed a race at -8C without gloves (but with a jovial smile!). His skis and other luggage showed up on the last day of the trip.

I can not say enough about the closing banquet which turned out to be a phenomenal event. There was food and drink to be had – in quantity and quality to satisfy the most demanding tastes. The show started at 18h00 and ended at midnight, including performances of classical ballet, Russian ballet, French can-can, opera singers, trained bears and many more. Truly a heartwarming and tasteful evening in the company of our Russian hosts.

Canadian championships: Stephenville

The Canadian championships in Stephenville was an outstanding success. Bruce Legrow and his team of 85 volunteers can be proud of the results of their exceptional efforts. The trails were in excellent condition, the races ran like clockwork, and the volunteers encouraged the racers along the entire course. The number of participants was the same as that of the volunteers, 85. This fell short of Bruce's objective of 100 participants, a goal that would have been achieved if Québec and New Brunswick had been represented by their normal contingents.

It was a great pleasure to be able to soak up the legendary hospitality of our friends from Newfoundland/Labrador. Indeed, the social events and camaraderie dominated the scene. It all started with the famous « kitchen party » on Monday evening (that I unfortunately missed because of my trip to Russia); from what I heard through the grapevine this was an astounding success! This was followed by “Newfy Night”, where participants, after an initiation session, received a certificate confirming their honorary membership in the community. And then, to top it all off, there was the closing banquet, which, like the rest, left nothing to be desired.

Oh yes, there were races as well! On the men's side, the events were dominated by Alfred Parsons from Labrador City. He clocked the best times of the day for each race. For a M 05, those were fabulous results! He will be at the World Championships in Italy and, if my information is correct, he will graduate to M 06 next year giving him excellent chances to bring back medals; congratulations Alfred. In the other categories, Faron Yong M 03 of Stephenville, Gary Morrisson M 06 of Kelowna B.C. and Helge Halvorsen M 07 of Spruce Grove Alb. won 4/4 gold medals.

In the ladies' category, the competition was tougher. Rhonda Lawence M 3 of Wabush TN won 4 gold medals and recorded the best time of the day in 3 of the 4 races. Cynthia McLoughlan M 4 of Labrador City TN, 4 gold medals, Wendy Grater M 5 of Perry Sound ON 3 gold medals, Silvia Stetter M 6 of Canmore AB 4 gold medals and the best time of the day in the 20 km free-style.

Italy 2006

The organizing committee for the World Championships in Brusson Italy in 2006 have presented a final overview of the upcoming event. It seems clear that everything is running smoothly and that everything will be in place on time.

Those that are interested should make their reservations as soon as possible – ideally, right away. Already hotels close to the stadium are booked up. All the pertinent information is available on the web site: www.mwc2006.com. With the Olympic Games being held in Turin 2006 a week following the Masters Championships, arrangements will be made to provide charter bus service from Brusson to the Turin olympic cross-country stadium, if the demand is high enough.

To end on a poetic note

To finish up, I thought you might enjoy this magnificent piece of literature that Mary Whitley of the Yukon recently brought to my attention. What a surprise to learn it was written by one of our own, Benoît Roy of Québec (what a small world!). Benoît has been a local “died-in-the-wool” cross-country skier for more than 30 years. Formerly a regular participant in local races, he now specializes in long distance expeditions. It was in fact during a crossing of the rugged Gaspé Peninsula that Mary met Benoît. (It might be mentioned that in this event the skiers follow tracks set down by a snowmobile that

leads the way – over 6 days and 300 km!). I am sure everyone joins me in thanking Mary for this suggestion. Benoît of course wrote the text in his mother tongue, but the feeling he so eloquently expresses is felt by all of us who love the challenge of our northern winters. Austin Reed, another former local racer agreed to translate it but, in recognizing that any good work in literature will inevitably lose something in translation, he suggested we provide both texts. Here, then is the original, followed by the translation:

Ski de fond en tous sens

J'aime le ski de fond parce qu'il me révèle à moi-même. Il soude mon esprit à mon corps. Il me fait connaître la froidure du vent qui heurte mon visage et transit mes membres. Il fait cohabiter la chaleur qui monte en moi et le froid qui m'enveloppe. Il me procure cette douce sensation qu'éprouvent mes mains glacées quand la bienfaisante ondée de sang envahit bientôt mes doigts. Je sais apprécier les sueurs de l'effort qui narguent le froid qui me guette et m'espionne.

Le ski de fond m'amène aussi dans des royaumes de cristaux et de brillance. Soleil qui m'éblouit et m'inonde de reflets qui allongent les formes au fil des heures. Ombrage de mon corps, compagne de mes randonnées solitaires. Mes yeux sont gavés d'alternance de lumière et d'ombre. Les pistes encore fraîches qui traversent ce lac ou se faufilent entre les arbres, interrogent ma curiosité. Ici la neige vierge du jour qui se lève laisse deviner les ébats du lièvre qui m'observe depuis son repère sous le sapinage. Charme du chant des oiseaux qui se font si discrets que leur présence passe presque inaperçue en ce temps de l'année. Sentiment de tristesse qui m'envahit quand je quitte la nature que j'ai partagée quelques instants avec cette faune qui s'apprête déjà à se blottir dans son refuge nocturne. Résineux aux branches qui ploient sous le charme de la neige mais qui savent imposer fièrement leur verdure. Délicats flocons aux dentelles variées.

Le ski de fond m'a appris à me complaire dans l'aérobic, cette ivresse de l'équilibre homéostatique où corps et esprit sont à l'unisson. Univers spartiate de l'anaérobic où se confrontent le désir de dépassement et la douleur de l'engagement ultime. Goût amer et âcre dans la gorge et dans les bronches quand on touche la crête de ses limites.

L'atmosphère euphorique de la salle de fartage dans les instants qui précèdent le départ me fait vibrer du rêve caressé et de l'espérance de liberté. Odeur de paraffine et de résine chauffées: promesse olfactive de l'heureuse chimie où adhérence et glissement se marient à la structure des cristaux en perpétuelle métamorphose.

Ski de fond qui m'enivre de descentes négociées avec aisance et fierté. Peur viscérale des pentes abruptes et aux virages inattendus. Humiliation des chutes inévitables. Longues montées prometteuses de descentes euphoriques et de vitesse folle. Ski de fond qui m'envoûte de ses sensations d'une technique

maîtrisée un instant trop court, mais perfectible à l'infini. Beauté du geste dynamique, élégant et presque sans effort. Gaucherie et maladresse du débutant. Geste embryonnaire, mais si prometteur, de ces tout-petits, impatientes déjà de laisser leurs traces dans celles des aînés. Sérénité et lenteur édifiantes des sages qui se font les complices de cette nature toute blanche comme eux. Passage du skieur incognito qui me double et m'ignore.

Au printemps, je me délecte des rayons du soleil qui signale sa timide chaleur dans mon dos et sur mes jambes. Caresses de ce vent sensuel qui annonce la fin de mon évasion. À ce moment de l'année, le soleil s'allie à la neige métamorphosée pour accueillir ces minuscules araignées annonciatrices d'un hiver qui agonise déjà. Le reflet brillant de la piste tôle me révèle que l'humidité de l'air s'est mariée à la neige. Toutes ces images qui m'habitent et qui défilent en des paysages de lumière, de vallons et de plaines se cristallisent dans mes rêves.

Heureux moments de silence et de recueillement à l'unisson de mes enjambées avec mon ami l'Hiver. Souvenirs embrouillés d'un hiver qui se confond dans un printemps naissant, où ce qui fut jadis de délicats flocons, se résorbe et se dissout dans des ruisseaux mélodieux : cycle inlassable des saisons sans cesse renouvelées.

Benoît Roy
2005

Cross-country skiing, awakening of the senses

I love cross-country skiing because it reveals to me my true self. It welds my spirit to my body. It awakens me to the sharpness of the winter wind that strikes my face and penetrates my arms and legs. It blends the warmth that rises within me with the coldness that surrounds me. It brings that gentle sensation when cold hands feel the welcome pulse as warm blood invades my fingers. It makes me appreciate the sweat of effort, scoffing at the cold which watches and spies upon me.

Cross-country skiing takes me into a world of crystals and of brilliance. The sun which blinds me and floods me with reflections of forms that lengthen as the hours pass. The shadow of my body, companion for my solitary treks. My eyes are fed with an alternance of light and shadow. Fresh tracks that cross the lake or wander between the trees arouse my curiosity. Here the virgin snow of the rising day tells a story of the nighttime frolics of a snowshoe hare who watches me from his coniferous bower. Charm of birdsong, discrete at this time of year, almost to the point of going unnoticed. The feeling of sadness that rises within me when I leave this world of nature that I have shared for a few moments with the wild creatures as they settle into their nocturnal abode. Branches of spruce and fir

bending under the charm of snow, but proudly imposing their eternal greenery. Delicate flakes, lace of many patterns.

With cross-country skiing I have learned to delight in aerobic activity, that intoxicating, homeostatic equilibrium where body and spirit are in harmony. Spartan universe of anaerobics, that narrow battlefield where the desire to push ever harder struggles with the pain of the ultimate commitment. The bitter and acrid sensation that invades the throat and lungs on reaching the summit of our limits.

In the euphoric atmosphere of the waxing room during those moments before the departure, I vibrate as in a comforting dream and with the expectation of rediscovered freedom. Aroma of paraffin and heated resin: olfactory promise of chemical perfection where glide and grip are wedded to the crystalline structure, in continual metamorphosis.

Cross-country skiing that intoxicates with downhills negotiated with ease and pride. Visceral fear of steep inclines and unexpected turns. Humiliation of the inevitable falls. Long uphill, promise of euphoric downhills at breakneck speed. Cross-country skiing envelops me with the pleasure of deploying a technique, mastered ever so briefly but infinitely perfectible. Beauty of dynamic gesture, elegant, effortless. Clumsiness and awkwardness of the beginner. Embryonic, but oh so promising, of the child, ever anxious to follow in the tracks of his elders. Serenity and wisdom dominating over speed, in full complicity with nature's whiteness, like them. The unknown skier that strides past, without recognition.

In spring, I revel in the sunshine that timidly brings warmth to my back and legs. Sensual caress of breezes that announce the end of my evasion. At this time of year, the sun joins with the changing texture of snow to welcome those tiny spiders that signal the closing days of winter. The sparkling brilliance of crusted snow reveals that the humidity of the air is now at one with the snow. All these images invade my spirit, unfolding as sequences of light, of hills, of valleys, crystallizing in my dreams.

Pleasant moments of silence and contemplation, in unison with my strides in the company of my friend Winter. Vague memories of a winter that gives birth to spring, where the once-delicate flakes are resorbed and are melted into melodious streams: tireless cycle of the seasons, never ending renewal.

Benoît Roy
2005