



### **On the Trails with the La Ronge Ski Club (January 15, 2012)**

Great trail conditions and skiing weather have ushered in the New Year, and the swishing of happy skiers on the trails hasn't stopped. With the exception of a freak rain storm, the weather has given us little excuse not to get out and get working on those New Year's fitness resolutions. Cross-country skiing provides a total body, calorie burning workout that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and fitness levels, so why not join us on the trails this year.

On Wednesday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, almost forty skiers from Atoms to adults got a good start on the New Year with an evening ski on the well-lit Nut Point trails. Andrew Urton of SkiFitNorth provided La Ronge Race Team members with some great pointers on classic technique, while the Jackrabbits were put through their paces by Sid Robinson and Jody Laliberte. The ski club meets every Wednesday evening, from 6:30 to 8:30, at Nut Point and welcomes newcomers of any age to join us for a ski under the lights. The trails at Nut Point are well maintained and are open to all throughout the ski season.

The Jackrabbits were out in full force at the Don Allen Ski Trails at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. Healthy skiing, hot chocolate, games, and the chicken dance were enjoyed by all who attended. Children from four to fifteen are welcome to join the Jackrabbits, so if you know someone who is just jumping to join, contact David Sampson at 425-2940. If you don't have skis, your local community school may have equipment you can borrow. Gordon Denny Community School is offering a Learn to Ski program for students and their families on

Thursday nights.

On Sunday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, Ski Team members were back on skate skis, honing their skills on the trails at Don Allen. After a time of instruction, it was time to test skier's metal in a Free Technique Race. The following skiers finished first in their class: Alexis Halland (Atom 1km); Taylor Harrington (PeeWee Girls 2km); Cheyanne Broussie (PeeWee Girls 3km); Zac Halland (PeeWee Boys 3km); Michio Green (PeeWee Boys 5km); Madison Abbott-Halland (Midget Girls 3km); Kaila Larson (Junior Girls 5km); Dylan Stryde (Juvenile Boys 10km); Evan Stryde (Junior Boys 10km); and Donald Erikson (10km).

Be sure to cheer our kids on at the School Championships, hosted at Don Allen Trails on Friday, February 10<sup>th</sup>. On February 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, Ski Team members will be competing at the Sask-Man Cup in Flin Flon, and on February 25

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, will ski against the best in the province at the Saskatchewan Provincials to be held at Sturgeon River. If you are looking to test your metal against the trails, be sure to sign up for the Saskaloppet. With distance categories to suit skiers of all ages, this is the best loppet in the province!

If you would like to become a member of the La Ronge Ski Club, or would like more information about events, activities, or club membership, check out our website at <http://www.skilaronge.ca> or find us on Facebook under La Ronge Nordic Ski Club.

### **On the Trails with the La Ronge Ski Club (January 2, 2012)**

On the evening on Dec. 22, a panorama of stars and a blanket of fresh snow greeted some 30 skiers as they enjoyed almost perfect conditions for our annual Solstice Ski to the Summit at Don Allen Trails. In less than an hour, most participants had completed their leisurely ski and were back at the main lodge, enjoying the crackle of a warm fire, a mug of hot chocolate, and the company of fellow skiers. The Solstice Ski is an open event for all ages and abilities annually hosted by the La Ronge Ski Club, so if you missed it this year, be sure to mark it on

your calendar for next year!

Cross Country ski trails in the La Ronge area are in great shape this year and the relatively mild temperatures mean that conditions have been almost perfect! With many trails in the south experiencing less than favourable conditions, there has never been a better time to get out and enjoy some of the best trails in Saskatchewan, right here in our own backyard.

Lac la Ronge Provincial Park, in co-operation with the La Ronge Ski Club, maintains over 50 km of groomed cross country ski trails. The Nut Point Campground has 5 km of lit trails, while the Don Allen Trails, 20 km north of La Ronge, have 17 km of trails and a variety of terrain. For current trail conditions, call the La Ronge Park office at 425-4234.

If you, or your family, are interested in cross country skiing, there are programs available for all ages. The Jackrabbit program (David Sampson, 425-2940) provides instruction for children aged 12 and under. Adult ski lessons (Sid Robinson, 425- 2502) are also available for those new to cross country or those with dusty skis. For families without skis, local community schools often make skis available to students and their families.

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### **On the Trails with the La Ronge Ski Club (December 2, 2011)**

### **On the Trails with the La Ronge Ski Club (March 17, 2008)**

Despite the cold winter, it has been a busy season for the La Ronge Ski Club. Our Club hosted its annual Ski Show & Swap on November 2, a Sask Cup race on December 15, the Western Canadian Championships from February 21 to February 24, and then the Don Allen Saskaloppet on March 1.

The cold weather did cause the cancellation of the Saskatchewan School Ski Championships held annually in La Ronge. The event had been set for February 1, but a morning temperature of – 41 degrees C. caused a postponement to February 8. By February 8, the temperature had climbed to – 30 degrees C., but it was still too cold to race. Next year, we will explore the possibility of moving the School Champs into mid-March when temperatures should be milder.

The Western Canadian Championships were a real highlight of our season. Three years of planning and hard work by Club volunteers allowed well over 100 of the top skiers from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, BC and the Yukon to compete during three days of racing. The event's Technical Delegate, Alan White of Ontario, and visiting skiers were all impressed with the Don Allen Trails and our stadium area. Warm weather arrived just in time to give skiers optimum race temps, and all races ran smoothly. Event Chair Scott Boyes and his army of volunteers were pleased with how things went.

This year's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary Don Allen Saskaloppet also had good weather with the temperature climbing up to – 7 degrees C. in the afternoon. Best of all, when loppeteers were heading home across Lac la Ronge, they had a good tail wind at their backs. But that tail wind was blowing in a change of weather. By the time the Saskaloppet banquet was wrapping up at the La Ronge Hotel & Suites on Saturday night, it was snowing heavily outside. By morning, we had blizzard-like conditions on the lake. Mother Nature had been kind to us the day before!

Both the Western Canadian Championships and the Don Allen Saskaloppet benefited greatly from our new Club website at <http://www.skilaronge.ca> which became operational this year. The website promises to be an excellent way for our Club to advertise news and events. Our thanks go out to Adrien Hounjet of Gargamel Designs and our Club's Communications Rep, Rusty Gardiner, for their work on the website.

Since the Saskaloppet, there have been other ski happenings. Whit Pointon and Natasha Boyes of our Club have just returned from participating in the Cadet National Biathlon Championships held at Val Cartier, Quebec from March 11 to 14. Natasha won a bronze medal in the Junior Female Relay, and a gold medal in the Junior Female Pursuit. Good shooting and good skiing, Natasha!

Our Club has three skiers—Keewetin Trottier, Sekwan Trottier and Ragnar Robinson—racing at the Cross Country Ski Nationals being held at Whistler Olympic Park in Callaghan Valley, BC from March 16 to 23. They will each compete in four events with Keewetin in the Junior Men category and Sekwan and Ragnar both in the Juvenile category. They will be racing against the top racers in Canada on the very same trails that will be used in the 2010 Olympics. We expect Keewetin, Sekwan and Ragnar will all come back with stories about killer climbs and scary fast downhills.

Closer to home, our Club's Jackrabbits and the La Ronge Nordic Race Team had a combined

wind-up at the Don Allen Trails on Sunday, March 16. The day was blustery, but over a dozen young Jackrabbits and a number of racers came out for the afternoon.



Skiers divided up into three teams for a "number hunt" game that calls for both math skills and skiing ability. Jodi Laliberte's team came in first, Kelly Gale's team came in second, and Kelly Haydukewich's team came in third. After the game, everyone came into the chalet where a hot dog lunch and drinks were served. There were also draw prizes, and our Club's Jackrabbit Co-ordinator, Jennifer Mirasty, presented the Jackrabbits with badges to recognize the skill levels they have achieved this year.

Members of the La Ronge Nordic Race Team also received awards for their accomplishments this year. A total of 24 active team members earned points through the year for their participation in 11 team sprints, extra practices, 4 Sask Cup races, 3 Western Championship

racers, and the Don Allen Saskaloppet. The top 5 points winners were Dylan Stryde (94), Donald Erikson (86), Evan Stryde (85), Ragnar Robinson (82) and Brayden Gale (79). Other racers earning points included Kurry Cook, Haley Robinson, Natasha Boyes, Emma Smallwood, Sheridan Hamilton, Aaron McKenzie, Evan Roberts, Yves Anderson, Kaila Larson, Conrad Ulriksen, Gabrielle Anderson, Tristan Durocher, Brandon Elderkin, Sara Anderson, Whit Pointon, Derek Jacobsen, Ethan Gale, Taryn Hamilton, and Ewan Schuring.

Although the Jackrabbits and the La Ronge Nordic racers have had their wind-up, skiing is not over yet. Arnie Santos, in charge of the Saskatchewan Environment trail crew, advises that official trail grooming is over for the season. But the trails will be still in great shape for the Easter long weekend, and the very best ski weather is still to come. Hope to see you on the trails!

*Sid Robinson*

*La Ronge Ski Club*