



# RASki Club

## September 2011

"friends to be with and ski with"  
"Des amis(es) avec qui se retrouver et skier"



SNOWPHONE : (613) 736-6235

www.raski.ca

### 2012 DOWNHILL WEEKLONG TRIP WINTER PARK, COLORADO

Feb. 4-11, 2012



#### About Winter Park:

65 miles from Denver, Colorado, USA,  
3060 feet vertical  
143 trails  
22 ski lifts, 17 of which have a green run  
Longest run 4 1/2 miles.  
Plus many RASki friends to ski with

#### Cost:

Double occupancy - **\$1500 pp.** Single occupancy - **\$1720**  
Non-skier, deduct \$185 Land only, deduct \$630  
Payment by Visa or Mastercard, add \$45  
6th day ski pass, add \$40

#### Price includes:

- Round trip air transportation from Ottawa
- Motor coach transfers
- 7 nights accommodation ( Vintage Hotel)
- Complimentary 1 hour wine and cheese party
- \$15 per day meal voucher valid at all Winter Park owned restaurants
- 5 out of 6 day ski pass. (for 6th day, add \$40)
- Complimentary mountain tour
- Current flight taxes and fuel surcharges

#### Not included:

- Meals
- Baggage allowance



Vintage Hotel, Winter Park

#### REGISTRATION OPENS SEPT. 22:

The first 25 places go on sale at 7:00 PM on Thursday Sept 22nd in the *Courtside B* room of the RA Centre. First come, first served. The remaining 5 spaces are reserved for sale beginning at 7:00 PM at the RA Ski Open House, Nov 2.

**Registration Package:** Available on our web site [www.raski.ca](http://www.raski.ca). Please download and complete the Tour Registration Form (the last four pages) in preparation for registration on Sept 22. See below.

**Registration Deadline:** Friday, November 4, 2011. After Nov 4th, space may still be available. However, acceptance of registration then is conditional upon suitable roommate combinations or payment of the single supplement.

**Travel insurance** is required. Skican insurance is available at \$106 (double occupancy), \$132 (single occ.) and must be purchased at time of registration, or you must provide proof of your own travel insurance.

**Passport:** Passport must be valid for at least six months after your return.

**Information session:** A week before registration opens, there will be a trip information session held in the RA's Bytown A room on Sept. 15 at 7:00 PM. A draw will take place for a \$50.00 coupon from Skican which the winner can apply to this trip or any Skican organized trip during the 2011/12 season.

**Bill Danson & Roger Duffy, Weeklong Co-Chairs,**  
[weeklong\\_2012@raski.ca](mailto:weeklong_2012@raski.ca)

### -COLORADO WEEKLONG INFO NIGHT - TALK: THE AMAZING RA SKI CLUB

**When:** Thur. Sept. 15, 7:00 - 8:00 PM

**Where:** Bytown A, RA Centre (east end of building).

We'll have a short slide show entitled, "The Amazing RA Ski Club", and give you info about the upcoming weeklong trip to Winter Park, Colorado.

A pub night follows.

### RA SKI OPEN HOUSE WED. NOV. 2

**When:** Wed. Nov. 2, 7:00 – 8:30 PM

**Where:** Clark Hall, RA Centre, 2451 Riverside Dr

Complete information (prices, accommodations, dates) about club destinations and activities will be available in November at RA Ski's Open House. Get your Trip Info Newsletter with our complete 2011-12 program. There will be door prizes and presentations on all the RASki Club's programs. Win ski tickets to ski hills! The Open House will be combined with a pub night.

### SNOWPHONE

Get the latest updates (reminders, additions or cancellations.) Check the **SNOWPHONE** at **(613) 736-6235.**

### SKI-MAIL E-MAILS

Get the latest news and added events! Subscribe to our weekly Ski-Mail e-mails. To subscribe, go to our web site at [www.raski.ca](http://www.raski.ca), and click on "E-Maillist" on the left.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

### WELCOME BACK SKIERS/SNOWBOARDERS!

Ski conditions this past winter gave us a chance to get in some good skiing and the season was long enough that we could enjoy our sport until April. The highlights of Val David, Mont Ste-Anne/Le Massif weekends for both cross country and downhill skiers saw record numbers of participants and the fabulous weeklong trip to Val Gardena, Italy was also a sell out that everyone who went absolutely loved! This August, ten skiers have enjoyed going to Chile to ski and do some sightseeing.

This summer was hot, steamy at times, and mostly sunny, and we've managed a lovely spring hike, some good Meet 'n' Cycle days to try to stay in shape, as well as a mid-week golf day and theatre in the park. Now we look forward to hiking both on weekends and mid-week and the always popular SkiFit program this fall to get our legs ready for our skiing.

Your hard-working executive has met over the summer to plan this year's program and we hope you'll enjoy some fun ski outings and socializing in the upcoming season. We'll have the monthly pub nights just to socialize, and RA Ski Open House, where you can get all the details, sign up for trips, and have a chance to win interesting prizes just for being there. We will also have an information night on September 15th to let you know a bit about what the club did over the past year, and to give you details about our trip to Winter Park, Colorado this winter. With the loonie doing so well and the US dollar not so well, the rising cost of airfares to go to Europe, we decided to try a western US destination for the weeklong. We were able to obtain a fantastic price for Winter Park, a great ski resort not too far from Denver, so we should have great snow and a lot of enjoyable skiing once again this year. The mid-January car-pool trip to Val David which was so enjoyed last year is a repeat, staying at the same hotel. Our three day weekend bus trip will be to Sugarbush, Vermont.

We are hoping to boost our membership as always, and we'd like you to help. Tell your friends about RASki and bring them along on trips, or even better, encourage them to join up. Talk up RASki at work and at your other clubs and sports events. Tell them we're the friendly club with year-round activities. Become an ambassador by encouraging new members to join our fantastic Ski Club.

Please stay tuned to our amazing web site ([www.raski.ca](http://www.raski.ca)) and SNOWPhone for the latest news.

*Doris Dallaire, Chairperson, [chair\\_2012@raski.ca](mailto:chair_2012@raski.ca)*



**Doris Dallaire at Portillo, Chile**

## OTTAWA SKI & SNOWBOARD SHOW

**When:** Saturday Oct. 29 – Sunday Oct. 30.

- Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
- Sunday 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

**Where:** Lansdowne Park

**Cost:** Admission is free!

Come visit the RA Ski Club's booth at the Ottawa Ski Show!

## RA SKI EXECUTIVE 2011-2012

<b>Chairperson</b> <i>Doris Dallaire</i>	<a href="mailto:chair_2012@raski.ca">chair_2012@raski.ca</a>
<b>Weeklong Co-Chairs</b> <i>Bill Danson</i> <i>Roger Duffy</i>	<a href="mailto:weeklong_2012@raski.ca">weeklong_2012@raski.ca</a>
<b>Treasurer</b> <i>Linda Anderson</i>	<a href="mailto:treasurer_2012@raski.ca">treasurer_2012@raski.ca</a>
<b>Downhill Weekend Co-Chairs</b> <i>Jaime Impey</i> <i>Chuck Bain</i>	<a href="mailto:dhweekend_2012@raski.ca">dhweekend_2012@raski.ca</a>
<b>Secretary</b> <i>Sue McMullen</i>	<a href="mailto:secretary_2012@raski.ca">secretary_2012@raski.ca</a>
<b>Cross-Country Co-Chairs</b> <i>Mike Ryan</i> <i>Jean-François Mélançon</i>	<a href="mailto:xc_2012@raski.ca">xc_2012@raski.ca</a>
<b>Downhill Day Chairperson</b> <i>Andrea Conway</i>	<a href="mailto:downhill_2012@raski.ca">downhill_2012@raski.ca</a>
<b>Member-at-Large &amp; SkiFit</b> <i>Marian Barton</i>	<a href="mailto:skifit_2012@raski.ca">skifit_2012@raski.ca</a>
<b>Publicity Chair &amp; Webmaster</b> <i>Glen Campbell</i>	<a href="mailto:publicity_2012@raski.ca">publicity_2012@raski.ca</a>
<b>Social Co-Chairs</b> <i>Louise Cameron</i> <i>Jane Rau</i>	<a href="mailto:social_2012@raski.ca">social_2012@raski.ca</a>
<b>Membership Chair</b> <i>Bill Buck</i>	<a href="mailto:membership_2012@raski.ca">membership_2012@raski.ca</a>

## NEWSLETTER DELIVERY OPTIONS

The Trip Info Newsletter (issued in November) contains everything you need to know about our ski program for 2011-12. You can pick up your copy at the RA Ski Open House, Nov. 2nd. To save money on postage, we're not mailing that newsletter out to all our members. If you're not at the open house, we are offering the following delivery options:

### Electronic:

- Download from our website ([www.raski.ca](http://www.raski.ca))
- Via email: Send an email to [publicity\\_2012@raski.ca](mailto:publicity_2012@raski.ca). The TIN package and any subsequent newsletters will be delivered electronically in PDF format.

### Paper:

- In person:
  - Pick up the newsletter at RA Ski Open House.
  - After the Open House, from the RA East Desk.
- By mail: If you want a copy mailed to you:
  - E-mail your name to [publicity\\_2012@raski.ca](mailto:publicity_2012@raski.ca)
  - Leave a note to "Publicity, RA Ski Club" at the RA West wing desk.

## RA SKI PHOTOS ON THE WEB

1. Go to [www.raski.ca](http://www.raski.ca), and click on "photos" on the index on the left-hand side.
2. Click on "flickr".
3. Click on the set you want (DH, XC or Biking/ Hiking),

### To see individual photos:

4. Click on "detail" to see larger photos.
5. To see the photo in its largest size, double-click on the photo, then click on "Actions" and "View all sizes."

### To see the photos as a slideshow:

4. Click on "slideshow" to cycle through a large version of all the photos in the set.



## DOWNHILL DAY TRIPS

We have a full schedule of downhill ski outings this year. Two weekday bus trips are being organized: one to Mont St.-Sauveur in January and a second to Mont Blanc/Tremblant in early March. We are also planning a mid-week day trip (carpool) to Val Morin in mid-February.



### Feb.10/11 Meet'n'ski at Mont Sainte-Marie

Mid-week Meet "n" Ski outings are scheduled from December until early April, alternating days and hills throughout the season. One evening and one weekend Meet "n" Ski is being offered for the working folk, should interest be expressed. Watch the newsletter and call the SNOWphone for updates.

*Andrea Conway, DH Day Chair, downhill\_2012@raski.ca*

## CAMP FORTUNE / MONT STE-MARIE \$109 PASSES

We will again coordinate groups of four to purchase the weekday/weeknight season passes to Camp Fortune or Mont Ste-Marie. If you wish to join a group for either hill, or need someone to complete your group, email your name and phone number to membership\_2012@raski.ca. We will try to put you in touch with three others who want similar passes. Check the resorts' websites for details of the passes, and be sure to let us know which type of pass you would like.  
**Purchase deadline: Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>.**

*Bill Buck, Membership chair, membership\_2012@raski.ca*

## 3-DAY WEEKEND AT SUGARBUSH & STOWE, VT

**Thur. Mar. 1 – Sun. Mar. 4**

We're going to Sugarbush Vermont for a three-day, weekend trip. Downhill skiers will ski at Sugarbush Friday & Sunday, and at Stowe Saturday. Cross-country skiers are welcome to join us. Close to Sugarbush is Ole's XC Centre ([www.olesxc.com](http://www.olesxc.com)) with 30 miles of trails, and for the day at Stowe, XC folks can ski at one of two excellent XC centres: Stowe Mountain Resort and the Trapp Family Lodge.

Sugarbush has six distinct peaks of unleashed potential. Two uncrowded mountain areas, and 2,000 acres of backcountry in the Slide Brook Basin. It's no surprise Sugarbush was recently ranked #1 in terrain variety by Ski Magazine, and the area was named "Best Ski Town in the East" by Outside Magazine.

**Registration:** opens at the RA Ski Open House, Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>.

*Jaime Impey & Chuck Bain, DH Weekend Chairs, dhweekend\_2012@raski.ca*

## MID-WEEK DH/XC TRIP TO EASTERN TOWNSHIPS

**WHEN:** Tues. Feb. 21 – Thur. Feb. 23

A mid-week car-pool trip to the Eastern Townships with accommodations central to a couple of downhill ski areas, and near Mont Orford Park, which has 13 XC trails totalling 50 km. Find out all the details at the RA Ski Open House on Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>.

## SKIFIT EXERCISE CLASSES

**Oct. 13 until Dec. 15**

**WHEN:** Thursday nights from 6:35 to 7:20 PM

**WHERE:** RA second floor gymnasium

**COST:** Full Session (10 weeks). Add HST.

- \$45.00 RA Ski Club members
- \$8.00 Drop in for a workout

SkiFit is the Club's intensive Fall conditioning program designed specifically for skiers. As a gradual progression from the sedentary to the more challenging, it will get you fit and keep you fit until you're on the snow. These weekly workouts will be led by a qualified instructor from the RA Centre's fitness staff.

SkiFit will strengthen core muscles, improve balance and upper body strength, increase your lactic acid threshold, and make you supple and resilient. Whether you cross country, downhill, telemark or snowboard, you will enjoy the snow season much more without as many pains and strains, if your body is ready for the demands of your chosen sports. Even if you never ski, SkiFit will make you look and feel like you do!

The RA Ski Club promotes cross training as a year round lifestyle choice called SkiFitBeFit. Members are actively encouraged to maintain their fitness level all year. Members are provided with SkiFit exercise classes and with off-season group fitness activities. For Autumn activities, please refer to the hiking dates on the web calendar.

Please register at the RA Centre East Wing desk in advance of October 13 for the ten classes. Note that there is also a drop-in rate of \$8.00 for single classes. Persons attending a "drop in" class must register with the RA and bring proof of registration to the class which they wish to attend.

*Marian Barton, Member-at-Large/SkiFit, skifit\_2012@raski.ca*

## SKI-FIT WEEKDAY HIKES

All hikers should meet **at the West Wing of the RA centre** at 9:15 AM for a 9:30 departure. Please be sure to bring a snack and water. Please have ID with you that provides an "in case of emergency" number and name of someone who could be contacted on that day, in case of injury. All participants will be expected to sign in before participating in the hike. Participants will share gas costs. We will probably stop at a local pub in Chelsea for a snack before returning to the RA.

In case of inclement weather, a hike may have to be cancelled. If in doubt, please check the SNOWphone at (613) 736-6235. It may not be possible to reschedule an alternate day.



### Oct. 2/10: SkiFit hike around Pink Lake

This is a wonderful opportunity to meet "Friends to be with, friends to ski with" during the upcoming winter season. Hope to see you at the RA West Wing lobby.

#### Weekday Hiking Dates

- **Mon. Sept. 26:** P16 Pine Road to Herridge or Healey cabin
- **Mon. Oct. 3:** Around Pink Lake
- **Thu. Oct. 13:** Keogan parking lot to Western cabin
- **Mon. Oct. 17:** P11 to Wilson Carbide Mill and Meech Lake
- **Mon. Oct. 24:** P12 to Western
- **Mon. Oct. 31:** P7 to Keogan

*Marian Barton, SkiFit, Member-at-large, skifit\_2012@raski.ca*



## SOCIAL

### FALL BIKE RIDE – Sat. Sept. 10

This bike trip will be a remote-start bike incorporating the Ontario Doors Open program along the Saint Lawrence between Long Sault and Cornwall. We will be riding on the bike path to Cornwall, where we will then ride on city streets to some interesting places. See [www.cornwalltourism.com/doorsopen](http://www.cornwalltourism.com/doorsopen).

Please meet at the RA Centre West wing parking lot at 8:45 AM for a 9:00 departure to the start point, the town of Long Sault. We'll carpool and assume there will be enough cars with bike racks who will be willing to bring a passenger and bike. Bring your helmet, water and a picnic lunch. A Pub n' Grub finale will also be fitted in at the end of the ride. If you would like to meet us in Long Sault, we should be there between 10:00 and 10:15. Check the SNOWPhone and web site as the date approaches for more specific details or changes.

The entire route is a leisurely 30-35 km on flat paths and roads. Keep in mind that we are a ski club that bikes, not the other way around.

### GOLF – Sat., September 24

We will book a few tee off times at Pine View Executive golf course and have a fun golf day. Green fees are \$36 for 18 holes. It is best ball and, if you can hold a golf club in your hands, then you can join us! You can also join us for refreshments after we're done. This would be an afternoon tee off time. You must notify Doris at [chair\\_2012@raski.ca](mailto:chair_2012@raski.ca) by Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>.

### FALL HIKES

We will again do some Fall hikes, where we can enjoy the changing colours, good company and fresh air. For hikes in Gatineau Park, we carpool, leaving from the SE corner of the Supreme Court Building on Wellington St., usually meeting at 9:45 for a 10 AM departure. We may stop after at a local establishment to eat. Hikes to other destinations may have a different departure point and time, as noted.

**Note that SkiFit is running some weekday hikes as well, with a different meeting point.** (See "SkiFit Weekday Hikes".)

#### Sat., September 17 – Lac Philippe to Lusk Lake:

Starting from the parking lot at Breton beach at Lac Philippe, we'll follow the Lusk caves trail through the forest past Lusk caves, then turn right and continue up the hill to Lusk cabin on Lusk Lake, where we'll stop for a picnic lunch. We'll return via the road (XC ski trail #54) to our starting point. Round trip: 8 km. We'll stop at a restaurant in Wakefield on the way back.



May 1/11: Hike up King Mountain

#### Mon., October 10 – Lusk Falls to the fire tower:

From the parking lot near Luskville, we'll climb up the west side of the Gatineau Hills, past Lusk Falls, to the fire tower at the top. A great way to work off some of your Thanksgiving dinner. Bring a snack and something to drink. After the hike, we'll stop at a restaurant for a late lunch. Since it's a holiday, we'll start later than usual.

**Meet at 10:15 for a 10:30 departure**

#### Sat., October 22 - Meech Lake to the Capucin Chapel:

This time, we'll start from the northeast end of the lake at O'Brien beach. This is a fairly easy trail and skirts the lake most of the way. We'll make a brief stop at the Capucin Chapel. The chapel is hidden from the trail but well worth the short trek through the woods.

#### Sun., Nov. 6 – Meech Lake to Western Cabin:

We'll climb from parking lot 12 up to the ridge and into Western Cabin where we can enjoy the awesome view of the Ottawa Valley. Don't forget to bring a lunch to eat at the cabin.

#### Sat., Nov. 19 – Pine Road to Healey Cabin:

The wide open views at the start of the trail are beautiful in late autumn and the path through the woods is wide and easy with just a few rolling hills. Bring a lunch to eat at Healey Cabin.

For details and cancellation notices, check our web site at [www.raski.ca](http://www.raski.ca) or the SNOWPhone (613-736-6235.) For the hikes, always bring along plenty of water and a lunch, and wear good sturdy shoes and clothing appropriate for the weather.

### PUB NIGHTS

Pub nights are in the Fieldhouse at the RA Centre:

- **Thurs. Sept. 22:** Meet in the Fieldhouse any time after 7 PM. This is the night that registration for the weeklong opens.
- **Thurs. Oct. 13:** This is "Meet the Executive" night. Join us at 7:30 PM and meet up with your old and new ski buddies.
- **Wed. Nov. 2:** Right after the RA Ski Open House
- **Thurs. Dec. 1:** Last Pub Night for 2012. 7:30 PM.

*Jane Rau & Louise Cameron, Social co-chairs*  
[social\\_2012@raski.ca](mailto:social_2012@raski.ca)

## RA SUMMER ACTIVITIES

The summer social scene started off with a pot luck dinner where RA skiers' cooking talents were enjoyed by all. The hiking season was officially kicked off in early April with an urban hike in old Ottawa east. Unfortunately two of our spring hikes were cancelled due to ice and rain. Several bike excursions followed, with rides to Aylmer, Shirley's Bay, Lac Leamy, the Aviation Museum, and a remote start ride in and around Merrickville. In August, we spent a day exploring some trails in Algonquin Park near the Barron River Canyon.

A mid-week golf afternoon was held in June.



Sept. 25/10: Golfing

On the cultural side of things, RA skiers laughed at the antics of the Company of Fools as well as the Odyssey Theatre during their stage productions at Strathcona Park. We also enjoyed a late afternoon of music at the Black Sheep Inn after one of our Gatineau hikes and a pleasant day exploring some Doors Open in the Prescott – Brockville area.

In August, we met at the Rideau Tennis Club for a short bike ride and BBQ dinner on the club deck.

The coming of fall will provide more opportunities to get together in social situations.



## CROSS-COUNTRY

The cross-country program features a full array of day trips on both weekends and weekdays as well as weekend trips to the Laurentians.

Due to their popularity last year, we have added more weekday trips to Gatineau Park to the schedule. Hopefully those who experience the freedom of skiing on near-empty trails during the week will still attend the weekend day trips!

As always, we welcome skiers of all levels. Gatineau Park does have some hills so you should ensure that you can do a snowplow stop and snowplow turn before joining us. If you want to get a head start on your fitness before the ski season, consider attending the SkiFit classes starting in mid-October.

The first few outings are on easy trails to allow everyone to ease into the ski season. As we move to intermediate trails as the season progresses, there is often a shorter or easier way to get to the same destination.



**Feb. 26/11: Skiing on the parkway between P8 and P9**

There will be a ski waxing clinic in November at the RA Centre. Details will be available closer to the date.

### DAY OUTINGS

The cross-country day trips to Gatineau Park start in early December and run until early April, depending on conditions. There are 9:00 am Saturday and 12:00 pm Sunday departures on alternating weekends, as well as various week day trips starting at 9:30 am. Participants meet at the RA Centre West Wing lobby to sign in, receive a trip briefing from the trip leader, and plan carpooling. Participants share gas costs. We ski for two to three hours and then adjourn for a meal at a nearby restaurant. Note that there is a daily trail fee to ski in Gatineau Park or you can buy a ski pass that is good for the whole season.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DAY PROGRAM

Day trips are in Gatineau Park, including a full moon night ski and Norway Day in March. This year the day trip outside of Gatineau Park will be to Pakenham.

- More weekday trips to Gatineau Park
- Ski outings on Boxing Day and New Year's Day
- Moonlight Ski, Friday, February 17
- Pakenham day trip, Saturday, February 25
- Norway Day, Sunday, March 4



**Feb. 12/11: Pine road to Healey cabin**

## GATINEAU PARK GROUP RATE XC SKI PASSES

The details of where and when you can get an annual ski pass at a group rate will be in the Trip Information Package brochure and on the RA Ski Club web site closer to the start of the ski season.

### CALLING ALL POTENTIAL TRIP LEADERS!!

We need trip leaders. If you are interested in leading a day trip, or weekend or weekday, please send an email to [xc\\_2012@raski.ca](mailto:xc_2012@raski.ca)

**Mike Ryan & Jean François Mélançon,**  
Cross-country co-chairs, [xc\\_2012@raski.ca](mailto:xc_2012@raski.ca)

## CROSS-COUNTRY / DH WEEKEND

### VAL DAVID, Quebec

Jan. 13-15, 2012

For the 14th straight year we're headed to the Val-David area. This is the largest XC ski centre in the Laurentians, with more than 100 km of groomed trails. We'll stay again at the Auberge du Vieux Foyer, right on one corner of the ski trails at Parc Dufresne (formerly Far Hills).



**Mount Iceberg at Parc Regional Dufresne**

The package includes breakfasts as well as fine dining at the Auberge on both Friday and Saturday nights. It's worth signing up just for the food!

Downhillers are also welcome and can ski either at one of the nearby hills (Saint-Sauveur is 20 km away and Chantecler is even closer), Mont Tremblant, or combine their trip with one day of XC and one day of downhill.



**Cross-country weekend at Val David, Jan. 2011**

This is a carpool trip. Space will be limited, so you'll have to sign up promptly. Registration opens at the RA Ski Open House.

Check the RA Ski web site later for prices.

**Jean-François Mélançon, XC Co-Chair, [xc\\_2012@raski.ca](mailto:xc_2012@raski.ca)**



## 2011 CHILE SKI TRIP

Ten RA skiers had the trip of a lifetime – skiing in Chile in August! Over the course of the 18-day trip, we skied on three volcanos and two other mountains:

- **Araucarius ski centre, Llaima volcano**

This is a small ski centre, 600 km south of Santiago. As conditions were windy, when we arrived the lift operator was just connecting the extension cord to the poma lift. We got two runs in before he had to shut it down due to the wind. As compensation, the owner took us up the mountain in the groomer, and we skied down the groomer's track.



### Araucarius ski centre – riding up in the groomer

Doris Dallaire tells it best: "So they put me and another lady in the front, sitting on a hard thing covering the gears between the two seats and then they took out the tool box which allowed Glen, the organizer to sit in front with us on a proper seat because he has longer legs. The other three fellows had to stand on a platform at the back with our drivers, interpreter and a couple of ski guides from the hill and our skis tied with bungee cords to the side of the platform!"

"Victor the 'cat' driver had two other guys sit on the plow part at the front just hanging on as best they could with their feet propped up on the various hoses and things and away we went up the hill. It was challenging for all, including the women straddling this hard metal part in the middle, trying to hang on to whatever we could! But we all got up safely, the inside people not realizing just how bloody windy it was up there! This would not have passed safety standards back home!"

"When we got out at the top, the scenery of other volcanos in the distance was spectacular but so was the wind! We could hardly stand to take photos, our cameras shook in our hands and we were unsteady on our feet. But we got all our photos and headed down the run which was really not recently groomed and had a couple of inches or more of recent wet snow to plow through making it necessary to work hard to make our turns. What a challenge! But under normal conditions, it would have been an awesome run! I managed to get down only falling once because when the wind was behind you when making a turn, you just went faster than you really wanted to go. I have to say it was the most fun skiing in a while, certainly the most adventurous in the three times I have been here. I love this sport!"

- **Villarrica volcano**

Villarrica is another 100 km south, in the very trendy tourist area of Pucon. It was a cloudy day, so we couldn't see much, but could see enough to ski the green run between the ticket office and the ski centre, and then spent several hours on a wide, long green run on groomed powder snow.

- **Nevados de Chillan**

This volcano is 400 km south of Santiago and was our second favourite place. 3600 feet of vertical. Above the tree line. Either ski on the groomed runs or ski anywhere else off-piste. Groomed powder with an icy section mid-mountain the first day, and nothing but groomed powder the second. Our favourite run was the 13 km blue run "Tres Marias" – the longest in South America. Note to self: don't ski here on a weekend. There is only one double chair to get you up the mountain, so the lift line was 50 minutes long.



### Skiing at Nevados de Chillan Volcano

- **Vallee Nevado**

This is Chile's largest ski area, and although it is only 62 km east of Santiago, the road up is a real thriller. ("Extreme vanning", Sue McMullen called it.) The road is narrow, with a steep drop-off on one side, and has 52 switchbacks to get you up to the ski area at the 10,000-foot level. The highest point is 12,000 feet. Unfortunately, Valle Nevado had very little snow, and it was icy, so we only did a run or two before heading in for a Pisco Sour (Chile's national drink).

- **Portillo**

Located 120 km north of Santiago, Portillo has always been our favourite. Why, you ask? Because of the scenery, the perfect ski conditions, and the lack of crowds. You are skiing above the tree line between 8,500 feet and 11,000 feet, and you are surrounded by 15,000-foot peaks. Portillo had just had a big dump of snow, so ski conditions were windy and groomed powder the first day, and groomed powder with no wind the second day. A tradition for us is lunch at Tio Bob's, an outdoor cafeteria on a small plateau at the 10,000-foot level. You have a spectacular view of the surrounding mountains, and the hotel and Inca Lake 1000 feet below you. Our last day was a skier's dream, and we skied until our legs gave out.



### Skiing at Portillo

#### Sightseeing

We interspersed ski days with some sightseeing:

- A day at a thermal spa nestled in a narrow valley.
- A tour of Santiago, including a funicular ride (think of a ski lift, but you are in a box that goes up on rails) up San Cristobal hill, with a spectacular view of Santiago.
- A tour of Valparaiso, Chile's main sea port. Built on 43 hills, there are 31 old funiculars to take you up the hills, with a stunning view of the harbour.
- A tour of the coast north of Santiago.
- A tour of the coast 600 km south of Santiago.
- A visit to two wineries, one of which was a small family operation that still used oak barrels.
- A tour of an avocado-oil plant, another family operation.

Join us at the Winter Park info night on September 15<sup>th</sup>, and we'll show you a few of our photos.

Glen Campbell, Trip organizer