Ski club takes students to Yawgoo slopes

By Adrienne Downing

Thanks to the Lawn avenue ski club there are 45 fewer middle-school students watching TV or playing video games on winter Wednesday afternoons.

The club, in its third year, gives students in grades 5-8 the opportunity to spend one afternoon a week skiing or snowboarding at the Yawgoo ski area in Exeter.

"It ties in really well with our health and wellness program," Principal Kathleen Almanzor explained. "Anything that promotes outdoor activity is a great thing for the students and they seem to be enjoying themselves."

Although the program is not funded through the school, it definitely has Almanzor's support. "We are very lucky to have a program like this and a parent to run it. Without her, it wouldn't happen and I would like to thank her for being so willing to run it. She (Robin Tregenza) is doing a great job," she said.

Tregenza took over the program this year after learning that there was no parent volunteer to run the club.

"We had just moved here last year and my son, Jack wanted to go to ski club. I didn't even have any idea where Yawgoo was, so I wouldn't let him go," Tregenza explained. "This year, I heard that they were going to cancel it and he really wanted to go. I thought it was a shame to cancel such a popular program, so I said that I would do it."

She points out that she was concerned it would be difficult to get enough chaperones, but has been pleasantly surprised that she has had more than enough help every week.

"We need to have one chaperone for every 10 children. There is one person that stays in the lodge to give anyone help that they might need and the rest are out skiing with the group," she said.

Many families tend to stay indoors during the cold weather, so Tregenza notes that one of the big positives to the program is that the students are getting exercise and fresh air at the same time.

"I would say the other big strength is the camaraderie among the students. They are helpful to each other, they share food, they are out there helping each other on the slopes," Tregenza said. "It really promotes school spirit and team building."

Even after a slow start this year, with the first three weeks being cancelled because of warm temperatures and lack of snow, the kids are enthusiastic about going every week.

James D'Allessandro, a sixth-grader, is in his second year with the club. "I have been skiing since I was four, but I would probably be inside hanging out with my friends if it weren't for the ski club," he said.

Sixth-grader Rainey Aberle, a snowboarder, said that she took lessons a few years ago at Yawgoo, but this is her first year on the slopes since then. "I think that the kids that don't come are missing out on a lot of fun," she said.

The best thing about Yawgoo, skier Rachel Bryer said, is that the area is small enough that she can do the jumps and not worry about falling. Classmate Gage DeVellis agreed with her, adding that he just learned to snowboard this year and that the area is a good place for him to practice his skills.

"Gage had skied before, but had never snowboarded and it has been great because now it has opened up a whole new sport for him and turned into a family thing. They go as a family on days when there is no ski club," Tregenza points out.

The biggest success story this year could be seen in the smile of fifth-grader Evin Barrett.

He started the year with only one lesson and after working with chaperones, was able to ski the length of the mountain without falling.

"That was the best thing, to watch him ski down that hill without falling and to see the smile on his face from that accomplishment," Tregenza said. "To watch the confidence it gave him was amazing."

No program would be a success without support and Tregenza said that the school and parents gave plenty of it.

"I would like to thank the parents for being so great. They were very patient waiting for the snow to come this year and bringing the kids out every week," Tregenza said.

One of the reasons that the club is only open to middle-schoolers is because the students are responsible for dressing themselves, being responsible for their equipment and carrying their own gear. Ski equipment is not permitted on the Jamestown school buses, so students must be dropped off at the school with their equipment.

Tregenza says that the process has gone smoothly and that she is looking forward to running the program again next year.

"It is a fabulous program and with a resource like Yawgoo so close, it is a bonus for the kids," she concluded. "The kids have been great, very well-behaved and they have really represented the town well."

John Tregenza and Evin Barrett head into the warming hut after a successful run down the slopes. Photo by Adrienne Downing

Baseball deadline approaches

Jamestown baseball registration period continues. Players can register by picking up forms at the Recreation Center or at Baker's Pharmacy. Forms can also be downloaded at http://www.jamestownri.com/ (click on "Community Organizations, and then on Jamestown Baseball). Remember that both boys and girls are eligible to play in our Cal Ripken divisions and their ages must range from 5-years through 12-years old, as of April 30, 2007. Older boys, ages 13-15, as of April 30, 2007 are eligible to play Babe Ruth. Copies of birth certificates are desired at registration and will be required the week of April 23. Opening day is scheduled for Saturday, April 28. The following important deadlines should be noted. Babe Ruth registrations are due by Friday, March 23. Majors registrations are due by Friday, March 30. All other age group registrations are due by Friday, April 20. These deadlines are final.

The next baseball committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 14 at 7 p.m. at the Jamestown Police Station. The parents meeting, originally scheduled for March 15 is being postponed to Thursday, April 5 at 7 p.m. in the Melrose school Multi-Purpose Room. All parents, especially parents of first time players, are asked to attend.

Windy day a challenge for frostbite sailors

By John Horton

Frostbite sailing is risky business on a blustery day.

The sunny sky and 40 degrees were great. However, the swooping westerly wind gusts gave frostbiters second thoughts about racing in boats. "Shall we go directly to the coffee shop or sail?" The sailors decided to sail. Then a gust of wind overturned and swamped John Horton's boat dockside. (The boat was pulled out, overturned and emptied, and re-launched.)

The Race Committee of Dick Allphin and George Rice set a windward-leeward course close to the beach. Surviving the day was an exhilarating success in itself. It required good seamanship skills and everybody made it.

After five races with a fleet of seven boats the scores were close. Four boats tied in points requiring two tiebreakers to determine the finish order for the day. John Horton won the day with four firsts and a second for 6 points. Martin Keene was second with 10 points; Winston Knight was third with 22; Henry Siegal was fourth with 22 (tiebreaker used); Terry Jones was fifth with 24; Joe Logan was sixth with 24 (tiebreaker used); and Gary Fischer was seventh with 33.

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