

# EDITORIAL

The purpose of the program was to make skiing affordable for all youth and families.

## Mansonville Opti-Ski Program brings over 30 years of outdoor fun to the youth of Potton

### THE SCOOP



MABLE HASTINGS

For over fifty years now, Owl's Head Ski has been one of Potton's treasures and offers both local residents and visitors an opportunity to join together for some exercise, breath taking views and fun! The Ski hill is celebrating its 50th Anniversary and with the arrival of some much needed snow, folks are in more of a mood to celebrate.

Again this year, the Mansonville Optimist Club and Owl's Head Ski Resort are giving the youth of Potton the chance to learn to ski and snowboard at a reduced rate through the Annual Opti-Ski program for youth ages 6 to 16. The lessons follow the standards of the Canadian Ski Instructor's Alliance (CSIA).

The program started last weekend, January 10 and will run through to March 6 when there will be a friendly

slalom race, medals and a report card for the students.

On March 13, the children will get a day pass to enjoy skiing but there will be no lessons or supervision that day. Participants however will be treated to a hot-dog lunch provided by the Owl's Ski Resort.

"We could not do the Opti-Ski program without the generous contribution made by Lillian and Fred Korman who own the Owl's Head Ski Hill," said Daniel Giroux, Mansonville Optimist Club President. "This is Owl's Head's 50th Anniversary and for over 35 of those years, the Kormans have worked with the club to enable all of Potton's youth to have the opportunity to enjoy their local mountain," he continued.

The Mansonville Optimist Club was founded in 1983 with Claude Laplume as President and Pierre Giroux as Vice President. Pierre Giroux (Daniel's father), became the President in 1984-85 and the Opti-Ski program was started on January 13, 1985.



Young skiers still benefitting from the program today.

year," explained Pierre Giroux. "It truly makes me feel proud to see the program that started 30 years ago, when my sons were young, continuing and seeing my grandchildren now attending alongside the rest of the communities youth."

Classes run on Sundays from 1 to 3 p.m. and lift tickets are valid for the entire day. The Korman family also offers discount lift tickets for immediate family members of the opti-ski program participants. The program itself is very reasonable and also offers deals for families with two or more children.

The Opti-Ski program runs each year and while pre-registration is required prior to the deadline which has now passed, families should look into next year's program early.

This truly is a wonderful opportunity for local youth to enjoy the Owl's Head Ski Hill that is practically located in their back yard.

If you would like to donate to the Mansonville Optimist Club in support of initiatives like the Opti-Ski program, send your donation payable to the Club Optimiste de Mansonville at P.O. Box 441, Mansonville, Quebec, JOE 1X0.



MANSONVILLE OPTI-SKI

Youth pictured when the Mansonville Opti-Ski Program first began in 1985.

The purpose of the program was to make skiing affordable for all youth and families. The program was free of charge when it first began in 1985. "Opti-Ski is the main activity where the Optimist Club directs its money each

### Letter

DEAR EDITOR:

There has been a fair amount of controversy regarding the upcoming Public Hearings on Bill 86.

French and English school boards complained that the consultation process was not democratic. The Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) protested, as usual, the loudest.

On January 12, 2015, Marcus Tabachnick, Executive-Director of the QESBA said in *Le Devoir*, "Maybe it is time to elect someone who really knows something about education."

On the same day, QESBA President Jennifer Maccarone, in a *Global Montreal* piece, titled "English School boards want Quebec's education minister out" said, "This current education minister is very disconnected."

On February 26, 2015, CJAD reported that QESBA vice-president Suanne Stein Day proclaimed: "... it's probably time for him to move..." referring to former education minister Yves Bolduc. That story was titled, "Right time for Bolduc to quit: Lester B. board chair."

It is interesting to note, the three aforementioned names associated with the QESBA are not educators; they are politicians. They have never stepped into a classroom, except as spectators.

Meanwhile Education Minister François Blais is a former dean of a university and Yves Bolduc is a medical doctor. Both of whose boss is Premier Philippe Couillard - a brain surgeon, is behind Bill 86.

Nevertheless, from an Anglophone's perspective, I am also disappointed the government has decided to hold limited special consultation hearings, rather than a general consultation on Bill 86 - a bill that abolishes school board elections, and restructures the boards to give more decision-making power to parents.

Even though major English groups have been invited, their opinions are, generally, well known. They are critical of the government and wish to maintain the status quo, by preserving province-wide elections.

That is, simply, not fair. Here's why:

It seems there is no Anglophone group or citizen who has been invited to expose the flaws of the present elected school board system, and to explain the need for a modernization of the current setup by supporting the Quebec government.

The National Assembly's site states: "Public hearings are the high point of a consultation."

Indeed.

The government should take a closer look at the list of Anglophone invitees, and possibly add a group or name of those who are prepared to voice their opinion and be grilled by the MNAs on Bill 86.

CHRIS EUSTACE

### THE RECORD

1195 Galt East, Sherbrooke, Quebec J1G 1Y7  
FAX: 819-821-3179

E-MAIL: newsroom@sherbrookerecord.com  
WEBSITE: www.sherbrookerecord.com

SHARON McCULLY PUBLISHER ..... (819) 569-9511  
STEPHEN BLAKE CORRESP. EDITOR ..... (819) 569-6345  
SERGE GAGNON CHIEF PRESSMAN ..... (819) 569-9931

#### DEPARTMENTS

ACCOUNTING ..... (819) 569-9511  
ADVERTISING ..... (819) 569-9525  
CIRCULATION ..... (819) 569-9528  
NEWSROOM ..... (819) 569-6345

#### KNOWLTON OFFICE

5B VICTORIA STREET, KNOWLTON, QUEBEC, JOE 1V0  
TEL: (450) 242-1188 FAX: (450) 243-5155

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