

Otaihape Alpine Club

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www.otaihape.org.nz

May 2010

Hello everyone

The autumn chill is in the air and here's hoping the 2010 snow season will be a good one.

Work party 2010

The weather gods well and truly smiled on the club's annual work party on 10/11 April. The fine, still weather meant we were able to get plenty of outside work done on the hut including finishing replacing the old roof nails with screws, painting the roof and lower story, re-staining the front wall and replacing the back door jamb.

Inside, the ceiling above the wood burner in the kitchen was replaced (no more rattling chimney), purlins in the roof were z-nailed down, and the hut given a good clean out ready for the busy winter season.

Thanks to everyone for their hard work – especially Paul and Yvonne who supplied the spray unit allowing the roof to be painted in a fraction of the time it would take to do with brushes.

AGM

Booking officers Kim and Alison joined the group for the AGM. The minutes of the AGM are attached with this newsletter along with the latest financials.

Peter Fletcher has stepped down as president. Yvonne Holcombe was voted in as new president.

2010/11 office holders are:

President, Yvonne Holcombe
Immediate Past President, Peter Fletcher
Treasurer, Jenny Mower
Club Captain, Neil Ranford
Vice Club Captain, Jude Hamblyn

Secretary, Jon Torgersen
Booking Officers, Kim & Alison Duncan
Patrons, Johan Bonnevie & Selwyn Sawyer

Committee

Geoff Sawyer, Garry Hawkins, Philip Oliver,
Kari Torgersen, Don Stratton.

President's piece

Hello everyone

Thank you Peter for your time and energy as president. During your tenure, our lodge went from very behind in maintenance as a result of the financial burden of the sewerage scheme, to many projects completed to bring it back to a sound (on the outside anyway) state.

RMCA meeting – Neil Ranford and I attended the Ruapehu Mountain Clubs Association meeting on 24 April. This was a very worthwhile learning exercise and networking opportunity with other clubs on the mountain. Some items discussed at the meeting were:

- Proposed fire fighting plan
- Process to allow 'snow taxi' services (snow groomers not skidoos)
- New Early Detection System for volcanic activity
- Lodges not permitted to let bunks to commercial users.
- Iwikau Village community plan
- RMCA looking for new secretary/treasurer – paid position (See details on www.rmca.org.nz)

Finances – Not only our club, but many others are experiencing issues with meeting increased costs, the electricity supply being the biggest issue.

I urge you all to think of ways we can bring in some extra income – encourage new memberships, tell your local high schools about us, put up posters and flyers in ski shops. I am requesting clubs with closed memberships to refer membership enquiries to Otaihape.

Yay! Our lounge/kitchen is being re-decorated. Club co-patron Johan Bonnevie has made a very generous donation for refurbishment of the main lounge/kitchen area before the next AGM. Work has already begun and I am sure you will all be delighted with the new look. We have tried to stay within the donation amount and not impact the club income, but we are a little short. Would you like to contribute? If so, send your donation in with your subs (please mark the donation amount so that it can be allocated to the refurbishment fund).



Paul (foreground), Lorraine and Neil hard at work.

I have donated four new bread boards to the club – it brought me immense joy throwing out the oldies. The committee have purchased some good kitchen utility knives. However, I don't see the point in spending club money on things you may have at home but no longer need. The kitchen could do with some nice second hand bits if you have them spare. Mugs (especially) – wine glasses – bowls – etc. Please feel free to bring them up

Here's to a great ski season ahead. It's looking like the new café won't be ready until August – lucky we have our own kettle on the mountain.

Yvonne

Hut fees and subscriptions

Increasing fixed costs – especially electricity line charges – are a challenge for the club and its viability. Unless we get more members the only options are to significantly increase membership fees and subscription and/or a radical change in the way we use energy at the club. The possibility of poor winter snow and reduced hut usage is not a pretty thought given our high and increasing fixed costs.

To cover these increasing costs, there has been a modest increase to annual subscriptions, maintenance levy and hut fees. Subs have gone up \$10, hut fees by \$2 for adult members and \$1 per night for under 18s. Maintenance levy has gone up by \$50 per year. For more information see the website www.otaihape.org.nz.

Invoices for subs will be sent out soon via email or mail for those without email.

Desperately seeking new members

We desperately need more members to keep the club viable in the face of rising costs. Pre-season is a great time to encourage family, friends, and colleagues to join the club. Otaihape has lots to offer prospective members – we are one of the friendliest clubs on the mountain and offer ski-in, ski-out accommodation.

Poster Email Judith_hamblyn@yahoo.com for a copy of a poster (you can change the contact numbers to yourself for calls in your local area) to use on work/community notice boards/local ski shops or direct people to the website www.otaihape.org.nz.

The Auckland University ski sale is on at the Snow Centre in Newmarket on 20 May. We are looking for some teenage volunteers to hand out flyers at the door during the days of

the sale – call Yvonne 021 939 003 if you can help out.

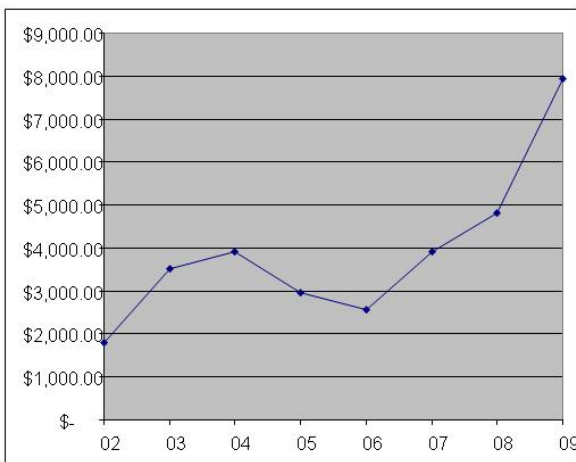
Business cards are also available at the hut – stash a few in your pocket to give out to people you meet on the lifts. Word of mouth is still one of the best ways to increase membership.

A small sub-committee has been formed to increase membership and look at other fundraising options. If you have any ideas or would like to be involved in the email communications - please email Yvonne at yvh@xtra.co.nz or Jude at Judith_hamblyn@yahoo.com

Energy efficiency

Electricity costs on the mountain have skyrocketed over the past three years, largely due to a change in charging methodology by the local lines company. “The Lines Company” (TLC) have instigated an unusual “maximum demand” charging system instead of the more usual “pay for what you use” system used by other lines companies for domestic and small commercial users.

This means that the amount of line charges we pay for the entire year is determined by our highest peak use over the winter. This has seen our combined electricity/line charges go from an average of \$3,000 per year prior to 2006 to a high of \$7,950 in 2009.



TLC has indicated that they will put in maximum demand meters which will

accurately measure our peak electricity usage, which the current meters do not do. Potentially this will increase our electricity/line charges to \$10,000 of which \$7,000 will be line charges.

The lines charges are a fixed cost for the club. To minimise significant increases in our subs to cover this cost blowout, a sub-committee has been formed to look into energy efficiency/alternative energy options.

Extra insulation and double glazing have been installed over the past five years to help reduce heating demand. The heaters and stove are still high energy consumers and contribute significantly to our peak electrical demand. The sub-committee is investigating alternatives to these appliances.

The most cost effective options are heat pumps for space heating and a gas oven/cook top run on bottles. Installation costs are estimated to be about \$25,000. If these options are accepted by the committee we will be seeking funding from various funding bodies.

We will keep you informed of progress.

Neil

Contributions welcome!

This news letter is for all club members. If you have any news and/pictures you'd like to share please email Judith_hamblyn@yahoo.com