



Patrick Dinsmore, 3 1/2, is one of the many area youngsters getting an early start on the downhill slopes thanks to a Kinderski program at Skyloft Ski & Country Club.



Markham and Unionville residents make up a large part of the membership of a private ski co-operative located among the rolling hills of Uxbridge Township. Pictured here are Skyloft members (from left) John Oliver, Sarah Meharg, Doug Meharg (1986-87 president), Colin Roy, Ann Lever and Rodney Lever. Families pay a yearly fee for use of a wide variety of recreational facilities. —Chris Shanahan

Family atmosphere is key to success at Skyloft Ski Club

By CHRIS SHANAHAN
Staff Reporter

Prince Andrew has skied there and American actor Lee Majors made a movie there.

Yet, Skyloft Ski & Country Club has managed to maintain a fairly low public profile at its picturesque site nestled in the Uxbridge countryside.

But a visit to the facility soon dispels any misconception that it's a low-key, exclusive operation. In fact, the private ski co-operative is a virtual hive of family-oriented activity.

A capacity membership of 200 families, many of those from the Markham/Unionville area, have access to a multi-faceted, 106-acre facility featuring 16 downhill runs and two T-bars.

There's also an abundance of prime cross-country opportunities, both on groomed club trails and within the adjoining Durham Regional Forest tract.

A clubhouse, intentionally featuring the bare essentials rather than a luxury approach,

serves as the hub of a busy social calendar. Skiers also enjoy fun events ranging from dances and game nights to cook-outs and potluck dinners.

"It's a family club," explained Markham's Phyllis Cowan, one of Skyloft's 12 directors. "You don't have to be part of a family but that is the atmosphere of the place."

She claimed there's a tremendous spirit of co-operation among members, giving the appearance that Skyloft is one big family sharing a common passion for skiing.

Each director is responsible for the day-to-day operation of a specific aspect of the club, while adults and children alike play an important support function. An executive, heading in 1986-87 by president Doug Meharg, is elected at an annual meeting.

Instruction

Instruction plays an important role in the Skyloft program, with skiers of all ages having an excellent opportunity to learn the sport in a safe and proper manner.

Two pros and a large team of qualified instructors provide lessons each Saturday and Sunday for all levels of skiers ranging from Kinderski to adult.

"We do everything we can to encourage people who can't ski to learn to ski properly," according to Mrs. Cowan, who noted that free lessons are available to new members. "And this cuts down on injuries. We make it really easy to learn to ski."

Skyloft also boasts Canada's largest Junior Ski Patrol, and there's also a senior unit comprised of adult club members. Ski team members take part

in frequent competitions against friendly rivals from other clubs such as Oshawa, Batawa, Devil's Elbow and Lakefield.

Skyloft's hills are considered major league, with the elevations of some of its runs ranking right up there with area's best.

One slope is nicknamed Last Chance after a Lee Majors adventure film shot there several years ago. And the resort also played host to a high-security visit from Prince Andrew while he was attending school at Lakefield.

History

"Skyloft, which remains one of the best kept secrets in southern Ontario skiing, has actually been in existence since the 1930s," according to an information booklet produced by the club. Back then it was known as the Dagmar Ski Club, and was used by the Toronto Ski Club.

It changed names to become Skyloft Ski Club in 1948 and functioned as a public club for the next 10 years. From 1962-1969, the facility operated on a private basis.

"At this time, 20 of the club's founding members saw Skyloft's great future as a family club and agreed to buy it by putting up \$500 debentures, and packing the hills by foot when necessary," according to a printed history. "T-bars gradually replaced rope tows, toddlers grew old enough to see their own children on Skyloft's slopes, and many new faces appeared."

"But the spirit of friendship and the love of skiing that has always spelled Skyloft will always remain."

Add Power to Your Life

JOIN Northern Karate Club NOW

3 MONTHS FREE
with every 1 year membership

Call: 294-7800

Northern Karate Club Shotokan
Located at the Iron Works Fitness Centre
60 Bullock Dr., Markham

IF YOU'RE NOT SURE WHAT YOUR CHILD WILL DO NEXT, YOU CAN RENT A BALDWIN BEFORE YOU BUY.

For only \$49⁰⁰
per mo. plus P.S.T.
Call for details
Limited Time Offer

BROOKS MUSIC STUDIO & BALDWIN KEYBOARD CONSULTANT
3 Centre St., Suite 202
Above the Royal Bank
587-4796
FREE INTRODUCTORY LESSON
GUITAR PIANO