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## The founding of a Ski Club

### *A courageous beginning*

Few of today's PMSC members are familiar with the humble beginnings of our ski Club... originally called the BC Hydro Ski Club. Examining it's long history is beyond the scope of this newsletter, however, I have come across a report written by its first President Walter Mark and I felt compelled to share it with you in abbreviated form. I am sure it will give you some idea of the many challenges that were overcome by those individuals who made our club possible. These pioneers, as we may call them, had the foresight and talent to put together the right group of people to get this club off the ground.

It all started 35 years ago when then BC Hydro Social Club President Harry Winter suggested to Walter Mark (a Social Club Member) to form a committee with the purpose of starting a Ski Club. Questionnaires were circulated, information distributed, and promotions undertaken. The idea was well received. On December 5, 1965 a general meeting was held and the Ski Club was launched. A constitution was proposed under which the Club would operate. Ski lessons were to be given, social activities and ski trips developed. Following a number of noon hour meetings, various decisions were made including the planning and construction of its first chalet on a lot leased from the Department of Lands. The construction required a sum of \$18,000. No doubt a substantial amount of money at that time. How to get these funds posed a major problem. BC Hydro Staff Services Division was first approached for a loan, but unfortunately

the Executive Management Committee turned them down.

Alternative sources of revenue had to be found rapidly. Plans were therefore revised in response to these difficulties. The new proposal was to build the chalet with less expensive materials and design changes were made so it could be built in two stages, as money became available. The water was to come from a creek, and sewage disposal was to require a large septic tank and disposal field.

At an extraordinary meeting of September 26, 1966, the membership adopted the revised construction plan for the construction of the first stage, which was to be financed by the sale of 150 debentures at a value of \$130.00 each. They carried a coupon of six nights of accommodation for a club member and were to be recalled by the club at face value as soon as possible up to a maximum of 20 years. Sales were conditional on a minimum of 94 debentures being subscribed in order to cover the cost of material for most of the stage one building essentials. It was also the intention of the Club to perform all the construction work.

On January 27, 1967, the debenture sales target was reached. Following the General Meeting of April 28, 1967, steps were taken to start construction on the chalet.

Work began on May 13, 1967. The task was divided into defined portions with group leaders taking charge of the various aspects of the construction. Participation was total. Everybody got involved from pouring concrete to insulation. One should also note there was no road access or water, obviously a major handicap. The various work teams had

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to be coordinated, as many people had very little experience in construction. In spite of all the shortcomings the level of workmanship was good but it did take longer than originally expected. By November 1967, construction was almost complete and the chalet was occupied by Christmas of that same year. Parking was next to Highway 99, with ski equipment and food, all having to be carried on a trail to the chalet. The heating was operational, and the privy was 60 feet away. Club members managed the operation on a rotating basis.

By April 25, 1968, the Club Executives reported a good year with excellent participation by members. Cash flow was reported to be \$1,190. Only \$38.00 remained in the building fund. With the building still not finished, more debenture sales were required. Difficulties were encountered, however, as debentures were first offered to BC Hydro Social Club members, and proved slow. In view of this situation, the constitution was amended in June 1969 to open up associate memberships to friends of all members. At this point the Club membership shifted away from being mostly BC Hydro employees, to include many new members from the general public.

By the spring of 1970, more amenities were added to the chalet including a temporary wood-burning fireplace (to be made infamous later). By that time the chalet could accommodate 46 persons. The second stage of the construction plan was still to come.

Unfortunately on January 19, 1980 a fire originating in the temporary lounge destroyed the chalet. Fire fighting access and fire hydrants were not available in the club cabin area. Luckily there were no casualties or injuries. This fire

motivated the village of Whistler to build a road and add fire hydrants. With the insurance proceeds, a new debenture issue, and some bank financing, the present Fireside Lodge was built. Construction was completed in 1983.

After 35 years, regretfully, only a few of those brave hearts are still with us today to remember and cherish their accomplishments. We must continue to follow their example and keep on working together to meet new challenges. Time has passed but the spirit lives on. Today's members are most grateful to be part of the continued success of this ski club. It's our responsibility to keep, preserve and build on what together we have accomplished for future generations of skier (and boarders).

Thank you to John Mouser and Walter Mark for sharing this important piece of history.

