

# CMH NEWS

January 2006 Issue 50

**PRIME SEASON SPACES FOR 2006!**

McBride, March 4 - 11.  
Galena, March 25 - April 1.

See page 3  
for more availability.

## Winter Dispatch



Walter Bruns, President

Well, we are up and running – and our winter is off to a wonderful start!

Fall was busy: we met, we planned, we promoted, we built, and we trained. It was intense.

We re-stated our core values: **safety, passion, excellence, accountability** and **sustainability**. We identified areas for improvement. Area management teams met with administrative departments one-on-one. We snazzed up our materials and hit the road with a snappy new movie in six language versions. Audiences around the world were stoked!

We asked our staff via a comprehensive survey what they were thinking. They told us! So then we got busy and acted on their feedback. We also welcomed 70 dynamic and skilled new staff this fall – they are as pumped as the veterans to get on with the season.

Our training becomes ever more rigorous. More than 100 guides train together in three separate sessions. The house managers, chefs, pastry chefs, bartenders, shop technicians and many others cover specialized topics in separate groups. The same thing happens with the pilots and engineers over at Alpine Helicopters. Then, all staff in each operating area re-assemble for another five days of training and orientation before the first guests arrive.

On the ground, a number of projects are complete. Galena is now entirely supplied by our first hydropower installation. The Gothics and Adamants expanded their stretching/games rooms and other areas to increase comfort and add space.

All the planning, preparation and renovation is for one thing only: to make it better for you, our guests. Are we ready or what?!? Are we excited? You bet!

Now it's up to you. Have a look at our Web site. The full range of newer and shorter trip options is laid out. Space availability is posted. Pictures showing conditions in the areas are updated almost daily. And if you are already thinking about your vacation next summer, it's all there, too.

If you're not booked yet (or not booked on enough trips yet!) and something interests you, CALL US! Our reservations team can give you the latest and slot you in. I urge you to CALL US because, quite simply, WE want to engage YOU in a relationship. A Canadian Mountain Holiday is a profound, shared experience that defies being packaged or sold on-line. Thousands of guests and hundreds of staff, who have become friends, will attest to that.

If you're on your way to join us, you'll be welcomed by this tight-knit group of keeners, doing what they love to do. Our core values will be thick in the air. If for some reason they're not, please call me directly. And please fill out our comment card; share your thoughts and ideas – we are always learning, together.

Here's to a great season!

*Walter*



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# ROKO'S SKI TIPS



BY ROKO KOELL, DIRECTOR OF POWDER INTRO

## Timing the Turn Movements in Powder

Compared to the quick turns we often make while skiing hard-pack, skiing deep snow feels much slower. The additional resistance of deep, soft, and/or heavy snow requires comparatively prolonged turning movements. These exaggerated movements create the sensation of slow motion, which is what makes the powder experience an effortless, ongoing stage of nirvana.

Patience and persistence are crucial factors when turning in deep snow. You need to push your feet gradually and continually against the snow in order to complete each turn. If you give up on your turning movement too soon, your skis will accelerate and run away from underneath you, resulting in an incomplete turn, the dreaded backward lean, and loss of control.

*Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet.*

To make nice round turns in the powder, count slowly to yourself "One, two, turn." Be patient when beginning the turn and assertive when completing it. Resist the urge to force your turns to happen too soon, as this causes you to over-rotate. Over-rotation allows your skis to become unequally weighted, which disturbs your balance and prevents you from building up a solid platform within the soft mass of the snow. You need this platform to support the upward push that frees your skis for the next turn. So, initiate your turn and steer toward the fall line. When in the fall line, hold your skis for "the count" before completing your turn by rolling your knees toward the inside of the next turn.

# WOMEN ONLY HELI-SKIING TRIP

## WHO SAYS it's just for the guys?

### A CMH Heli-Skiing Trip for Women Only

Soar – and ski! – to new heights with Canadian Mountain Holidays' first ever Women Only Heli-Skiing Trip. Experience the exhilaration of skiing wild, untouched places in the Bugaboo Mountains April 1-5, 2006. Each day our chopper whisks us off into the hills where, together with our guide, we revel in the joy of skiing fresh pristine powder – run, after run, after run! At the end of the day, we fly home for a well-deserved soothing massage; a relaxing hot-tub soak; a cozy, crackling fire; a sumptuous dinner; and an unforgettable evening spent with new and soon to be "forever" friends.

Prices start at \$3,980 per person. To book your space on this inaugural trip, call CMH Reservations at 1.800.661.0252.



# Prime Heli-Ski Spaces still available for the 2006 season!

Check out the new format of our ski space availability on-line. It will be updated twice each week and we will break down available space by lodge as well as by date.

Here are just a few highlights of what is available as of January 2:

### SHORT & SWEET

For those guests that are short on time but passionate about skiing, these Heli-Ski teasers should fit the bill.

Area:	Dates Available:
Kootenay 3-day	February 11 - 14
Kootenay 4-day	February 14 - 18
Kootenay 5-day	March 18 - 23
Revelstoke 5-day	April 3 - 8

### HIGH SEASON PRIVATE GROUP SPACE

A rare opportunity to experience a private Heli-Ski trip — exclusive use of the lodge, guides and helicopter for you and a small group of friends — is now available to you for three or more days during the following windows:

Area:	Dates Available:	Maximum Group Size:
Silvertip	January 21 - 28	10
Revelstoke	February 11 - 18	4
McBride	March 4 - 11	10
Valemount	April 15 - 22	10

### PRIME SPACE FOR 7-DAY TRIPS

Once word gets out of these incredible prime ski spaces, they won't last long! If you've ever skied with CMH, you'll know that March brings awesome snow conditions and long, long days of Heli-Skiing!

Area:	Dates Available:	Spaces Available:
Revelstoke	March 4 - 11	18
Gothics	March 11 - 18	13
Galena	March 25 - April 1	17



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## Proactive about Passports

CMH encourages all guests to travel with passports, including those travelling to Canada from the United States. As part of the US government's Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, effective December 31, 2006, Americans will need a passport or other yet to be defined "secure documents" to enter or re-enter both Canada and the US.

We suggest that you be proactive and update your travel documents with plenty of time to spare!



Enjoying another spectacular day in the Monashees!

It's about skiing through the most beautiful mountain wilderness you've ever seen...

# Of Course You're Good Enough: Heli-Skiing Demystified

BY G.D. MAXWELL, (REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION)

I understand. You're scared. You're uncertain. You're a good, solid intermediate skier. You enjoy the sport.

But heli-skiing? For you? Isn't that for thighs-of-steel, lungs-of-leather macho skiers?

Thank heavens, no. NO!

Sure, some of those dinosaurs are still around. Fortunately, most good heli-ski operators send them to remote lodges, feed them raw meat and let them indulge their fantasies far, far away from those of us simply out for the best ski experience of our lives.

How do I know you're good enough? Because the first time I went heli-skiing, I shared your fears. This is what I found.

## Helimyth #1: Everyone's going to ski better than I ski.

Wrong. It didn't take CMH long to realize the double black diamond market is too thin to build a business on. Many who come, most in fact, ski just like you, assuming you're a fit, intermediate skier. Those who like to ski faster and harder ski with a stronger group and ski more challenging lines. But you'll ski with people remarkably like yourself, ski comfortable lines appropriate to your skills and ski at your own pace. This isn't about extreme, Warren Miller cliff-jumpin' skiing. It's about skiing through the most beautiful mountain wilderness you've ever seen... your pace, your pitch, both feet firmly on the ground if that's the way you like it.

## Helimyth #2: I can't ski powder.

Maybe not on the gear you usually use. But I'll bet you can on the special skis CMH will put you on. If you're an otherwise strong, balanced intermediate skier, you'll be amazed how easy skiing powder is when you're on specially made powder heli-skis. They keep you from sinking deep into the snowpack

and make controlled turns nearly effortless. After a run or two on them, you'll be skiing powder like you've done it all your life. One of the nicest things about a heli-ski trip is you only have to bring your own boots: skis and poles are provided.

And if you're really uncertain about your ability to tackle powder, consider treating yourself to one of CMH's *Powder Intro* weeks. Each small group skis with two guides specially trained to instruct in the finer points of powder skiing. They'll help you master the deep and fluffy in no time and slay all your heli-fears.

## Helimyth #3: I can't ski all day... and I sure can't ski a whole week!

We'll see. Chances are you'll be the one begging your guide for one last run. But don't worry, if you're tired or sore, there are frequent opportunities to fly back to the lodge during the day, relax in the sauna, indulge in a massage, lounge in peace by the fireplace or even just take a day off. And if a week sounds too long, consider a 3, 4, or 5 day heli-ski vacation. Or even a special family week at Christmas. Who said one size fits all?

## Helimyth #4: It's a man's world.

Actually, the single most civilizing development in heli-skiing — aside from fat skis — has been the increase in the number of women enjoying the experience. As recently as 1986, a scant 3% of CMH's clientele were women. That number is now 33% and increasing. This welcome change has led to a much greater focus on creature comfort. After all, this is your holiday too.

## Helimyth #5: None of my friends heli-ski.

Well, for starters, I'll bet if you bring the subject up

with your friends who do ski you'll find they're suffering under many of the same fears/myths you're beginning to understand are baseless. But suppose you come alone: what's going to happen? By the end of your first day, you'll have bonded so closely with some of the people in your group you'll be making new friends for life. By the end of the week, you and many of the people you meet, people just like you, will be making plans to all come back together next year. After all, you all share the same passion. Skiing's like that; heli-skiing's even more like that.

## Helimyth #6: I'm too old for heli-skiing.

Don't say that too loudly around the octogenarians who come heli-skiing year after year; their hearing's still as good as their skiing. It isn't about the number of candles on your cake; it's about the spirit in your soul and the spring in your legs. And if the spirit is still soaring but the legs are a little

less springy, CMH's *Powder Masters* might be just the ticket for you. Stressing quality, not quantity, you'll glide through magical mountains that'll let that indomitable spirit soar without making those legs sore.

## Helimyth #7: Is it safe? I've heard heli-skiing is dangerous.

You'll be skiing in mountainous wilderness, not a fully-controlled ski resort. There is always an element of risk playing in snowy mountains and, frankly, nothing that's as much pure fun as heli-skiing can be made 100% safe. But having spent hours with numerous guides, in fact having attended a week of their training orientation, I can honestly say the uppermost thing on their mind, from the moment you leave the lodge until the moment you return, is your safety.

From extensively testing snow stability to bombing some exposures to morning and evening meetings

discussing snow conditions and safe routes, CMH guides spend more time, effort and money on safety than any other activity. Their certification — an arduous course of study all the company's guides must complete prior to leading skiers — their years of experience, their continuing education and their culture of safety have yielded an enviable safety record. If safety is giving you second thoughts about heli-skiing, give CMH a call: you'll be amazed at the steps they take to make a wild place the most amazing playground you'll ever experience.

## Helimyth #8: Heli-skiing will change my life.

Okay, this one isn't a myth. Heli-skiing will change your life. It'll remind you why you got hooked on skiing to begin with. It'll put you in the most beautiful, natural, serene place you've ever seen. It'll be something you simply can't explain to your friends. But it'll be the most life-affirming experience you'll ever have... until you come back next year.

# Confessions of a First Time Heli-Skier

BY TOPHER DONAHUE

I must admit, skiing in the Bugaboos blows my mind. Yeah, I'd skied the notorious Utah powder, the legendary off-piste in Europe, and steep first descents in Alaska, so I figured heli-skiing in British Columbia wouldn't phase me much. Au contraire! On a per turn basis, snow is snow and it's all good, but what messes with my head in Canada is the sheer volume of fantasy-land skiing.

My maiden voyage in the Bugaboos started with a powder cycle after a big April dump. I'd been rock climbing in the Bugaboos during the summer and thought skiing the couloirs between the spires would be about the most fun a person could have, but I figured it would only happen for a photo shoot. Much to my surprise, we went to the spires straight away and ripped past the kilometre-tall faces with that dry fluffy stuff floating around our own faces and tickling our nostrils. Then, the Bell 212 easily plucked us off of a big snow mushroom and we went around for a shot through the middle of the spires. After a second blast past black-and-

white streaked granite walls, I felt like I was skiing in the ultimate video game — it couldn't be real. Chasing a bit of air, I dropped off a boulder and nearly lost it in the bottomless landing. A twinge in my knee brought me back in a snap. It was real.

For run after run we hammered the big alpine. I'd skied terrain like this before, but only on a few runs that until now were the highlights of my ski career. Here we were rewriting my resume every couple of hours.

The next day a storm shut out the higher elevation skiing, so at the guide's recommendation, we hit the trees. Halfway down the first run, through the most awesome old-growth forest I'd ever skied, I stopped suddenly. In the instant silence that reigned supreme in the snow-cloaked trees around me, I realized that heli-skiing in the Canadian Rockies is one of those rare experiences where reality is better than fantasy.

A few words on the author: "My first pair of skis were a pair of my dad's old skis that he cut in half



Another convert!

and put bindings on the front part for me. I was born in Colorado, but was introduced to mountain sport with the European philosophy that it's all good. As a result, I have become a world class climber and skier and pushed my limits in 30 different countries — both on the way up and on the way down."

# DELIA'S FIT TIPS



BY DR. DELIA ROBERTS, EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

## Every Day Can Be a Great Day

The skiing is fantastic, your group is great, and you are having a wonderful time. But by Tuesday afternoon, your legs feel more like wet noodles than steel springs. What can you do to enhance your recovery so that you don't have to miss a day of skiing?

- 1. Get ready before you go.** Putting in some time building leg power, endurance, and back stability will make a huge difference in your ability to ski well all week. See the October 2005 issue of *CMH News* (available on the CMH Web site) for some suggestions on training.
- 2. Provide your body with the right fuel at the right time.** When skiing, your legs use mostly carbohydrate to perform, and the amount stored by your body is very limited. To continue performing at your top level, you need to replenish these stores immediately after skiing. Your CMH chefs will provide you with wonderful sweets and savories that will tempt your taste buds and restore your muscles with the right balance of sugars, protein and fat.
- 3. Stay hydrated.** Our bodies consist mostly of water, and even minor dehydration can result in a loss of performance and concentration. During skiing, water loss by sweating can be significant, so be sure to drink water at least every other lift.
- 4. Get a massage – relaxing AND therapeutic.** After a day of hard skiing, your muscles may be painful, indicating that small amounts of damage have occurred. A massage will increase blood flow to your tired muscles, washing out the wastes and delivering the nutrients and building-blocks for repair.

Following these suggestions will help you ski strongly all week long. For more information on recovery techniques contact Dr. Delia Roberts at droberts@selkirk.ca.

# Facing the Unexpected

## An Outsider's Look at CMH Guides Training

BY G.D. MAXWELL

"It's a simple equation. The more time you spend in the field, the greater your chances of being caught up in an avalanche."

The field the speaker referred to was snowy mountains. The audience was world-famous snow scientists and a roomful of people lucky enough to call the field their office — Canadian Mountain Holidays Heli-Ski guides.

The speaker, Chris Stetham, knows his stuff: he has been an avalanche protection consultant since 1979 for Whistler/Blackcomb and Environment Canada, among others. He's spent a lot of time in the field, teaching people to read the messages locked in snowpacks. And he's spent more time than he likes to remember investigating avalanches, answering the 'how' and 'why' questions left in their powerful wake.

I'd been invited to observe guide training and get a glimpse of what it takes to keep the world's oldest and largest Heli-Skiing operation as safe as people can make it while still giving their customers the thrill of a lifetime.

What I learned is this: Luck has nothing to do with beating Chris's equation. The combination of skill, training, and a relentless obsession with safety is the only way to best it.

I already had some insight into the skill and the obsession. But the training wasn't anything like I expected. Oh, we spent a few days digging snow pits, forming probe lines, and finding buried transceivers, incorporating the latest breakthroughs in techniques and technology. That I expected. What I didn't expect was the classroom sessions, often lasting late into the night.

I didn't expect Bruce Jamieson — who heads the University of Calgary's Avalanche Research Program — to be there, delivering his latest research on fracture propagation and resistance in weak snowpack layers. He was getting the guides' feedback on his new classification system to describe the way a column of snow breaks off during field compression tests.

I didn't expect David McClung to be speaking on the use of fractal geometry in determining snow stability. Dave and Peter Schaerer authored the seminal book *The Avalanche Handbook* 30 years ago. It's still the go-to text on the subject.

And I certainly didn't expect Werner Munter to be there, from his home in Switzerland, expounding on his paradigm-shifting 3x3 Reduction Method for determining slope stability and making Go/No Go decisions. His method is *de rigueur* in the European alpine community but has met considerable resistance in North America.

Bruce Jamieson explained part of what was going on to me. "Avalanches are very complex phenomena and scientists are a long way from understanding them. Presenting our research to a group of people who live the phenomenon every day strengthens it."

"I think of a guide's head as a very powerful associative processor. They take what they know, including the theoretical research we present, combine it with field information, including what they feel through their skis, and consistently make good decisions... in real time! It's humbling to be in a science where the best methodology has difficulty improving on these guys' intuitive knowledge."

Humbling? Maybe. Comforting? Absolutely.

# Powder and Poker

## CMH Raises the Stakes in 2006

BY JANE CARSWELL

Join Phil Gordon, expert poker analyst and co-host of television's *Celebrity Poker Showdown*, at the Adamants April 22-29, 2006, for the first-ever Powder and Poker! Phil took the poker world by storm at the 2001 World Series of Poker championship event, where he finished fourth.

This year we have joined forces with the man who is reputed to be the greatest poker instructor in the world to offer an exclusive seven-day retreat for snow and Texas Hold 'Em fans.

Phil has developed an in-demand series of lectures on many aspects of playing Texas Hold 'Em. During the week, you'll have the chance to heli-board or ski during the days and learn the tricks of the poker trade at night. Each lecture will be followed by tournament play with a champion to be crowned at the end of the week, and all proceeds raised will go to Put a Bad Beat on Cancer, Phil's charity of choice.

This trip is limited to 33 guests and prices start at \$5,889 (approximately \$5,000 USD at current rates). In addition to the guaranteed 100,000 vertical feet of Heli-Skiing and other inclusions of a regular CMH Heli-Ski week, trip price includes a



Phil Gordon

\$500 buy-in and the winner will receive a tax receipt for the donation to Put a Bad Beat on Cancer.

For more information, contact CMH Reservations at 1.800.661.0252 or info@cmhinc.com.

For more information on Phil Gordon, visit [www.philgordonpoker.com](http://www.philgordonpoker.com).



Still trying to decide what to do for summer vacation?

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# CMH DID YOU KNOW? FACTS

BY CONNIE MACDONALD & JANE CARSWELL

Continuing from our premiere *CMH Facts* in the Fall newsletter, here are more interesting tidbits to add to your CMH trivia bank.

Did you know...

- ▲ Mike Aucoin (Revelstoke), James Vickers (Gothics) and Peter Macpherson (Bugaboos) passed the ACMG Full Ski Guide Exam in April. In recognition of their achievement, each has received an Eric King Scholarship.
- ▲ CMH land resource manager Dave Butler was awarded the Heli-Cat Canada Founders Award for leadership, performance, initiative, and contribution to the aims and objectives of our provincial association.
- ▲ Last winter we served 1,143 bottles of champagne to our guests. More than half of these bottles were enjoyed as part of our Million Foot celebrations.
- ▲ The record for the most vertical skied in one week is held by a group of Valemout skiers who logged 137,250 m!
- ▲ CMH reservations agent Maria Hawkins was one of the first athletes inducted into the Banff Sports Hall of Fame. Maria is a former national team cyclist and now competes in cross-country skiing at a World Masters level.
- ▲ Last winter, Adamants staff composted about 6,364 kg (14,000 lbs) of food waste, which yielded about 273 kg (600 lbs) of compost at the end of the season. Duane Dukart, maintenance manager/hiking guide in the Adamants and compost designer extraordinaire, continues to fine-tune his creation and recently worked with Cariboos staff to install a similar composter.

Check our May 2006 newsletter for the third installment of *CMH Facts*. If you have any questions you'd like answered, please e-mail us at info@cmhinc.com.

# CMH NEWS TEAM



CMH News team, left to right: **Ann Toohey**, Copyeditor; **Connie MacDonald**, Communications Manager; **Jane Carswell**, Editor; **Marty Von Neudegg**, Director of Corporate Services.

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