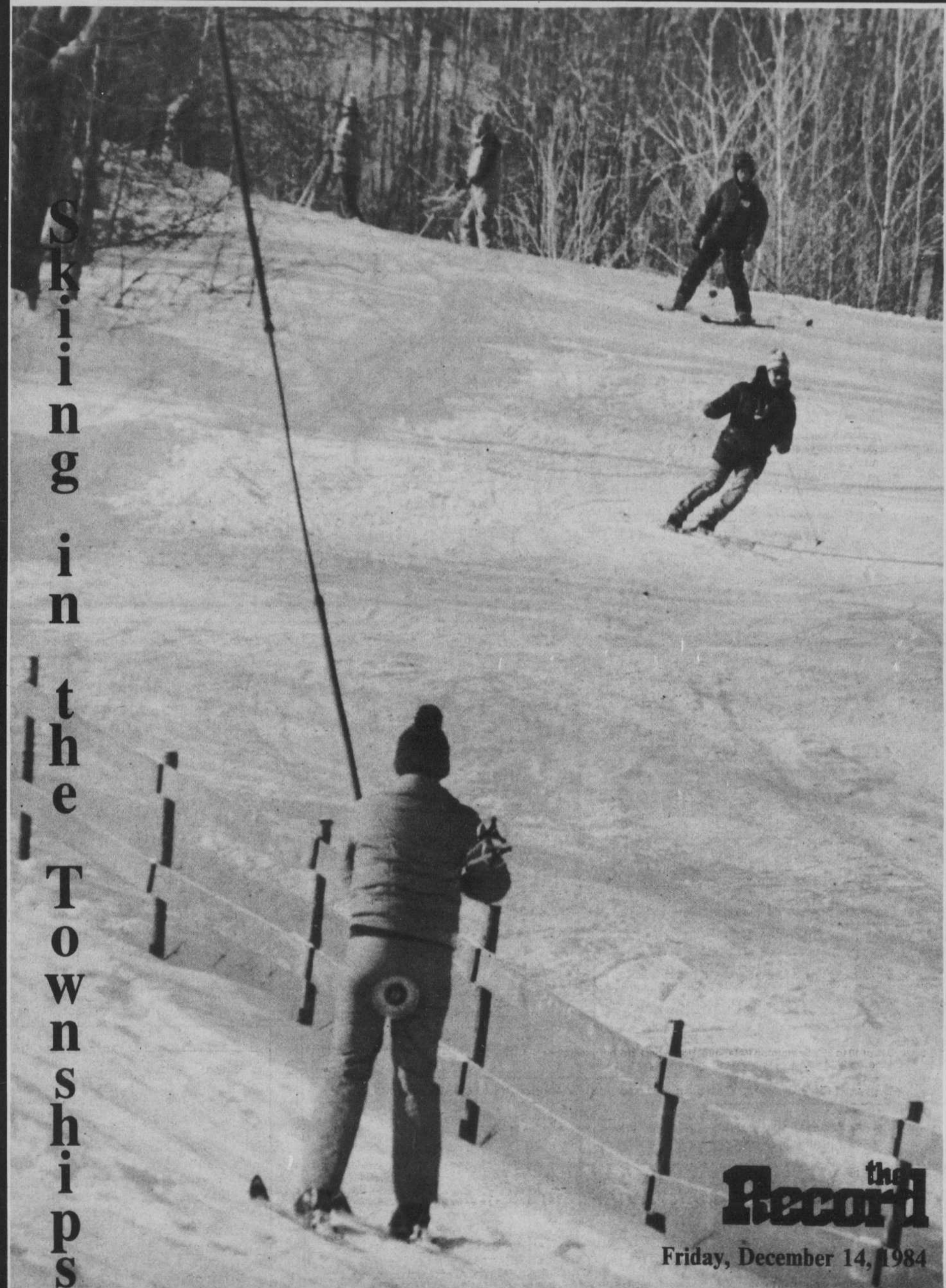


Skiing in the Townships



**the Record**

Friday, December 14, 1984

# The Townships: Ski us for the fun of it

**T**his winter you can stay inside, watch it snow and wish for spring, or you can join the ranks of those who enjoy it and look forward to it every year. Inside the next few pages, are some facts and figures about several of local ski hills and the people who run them.

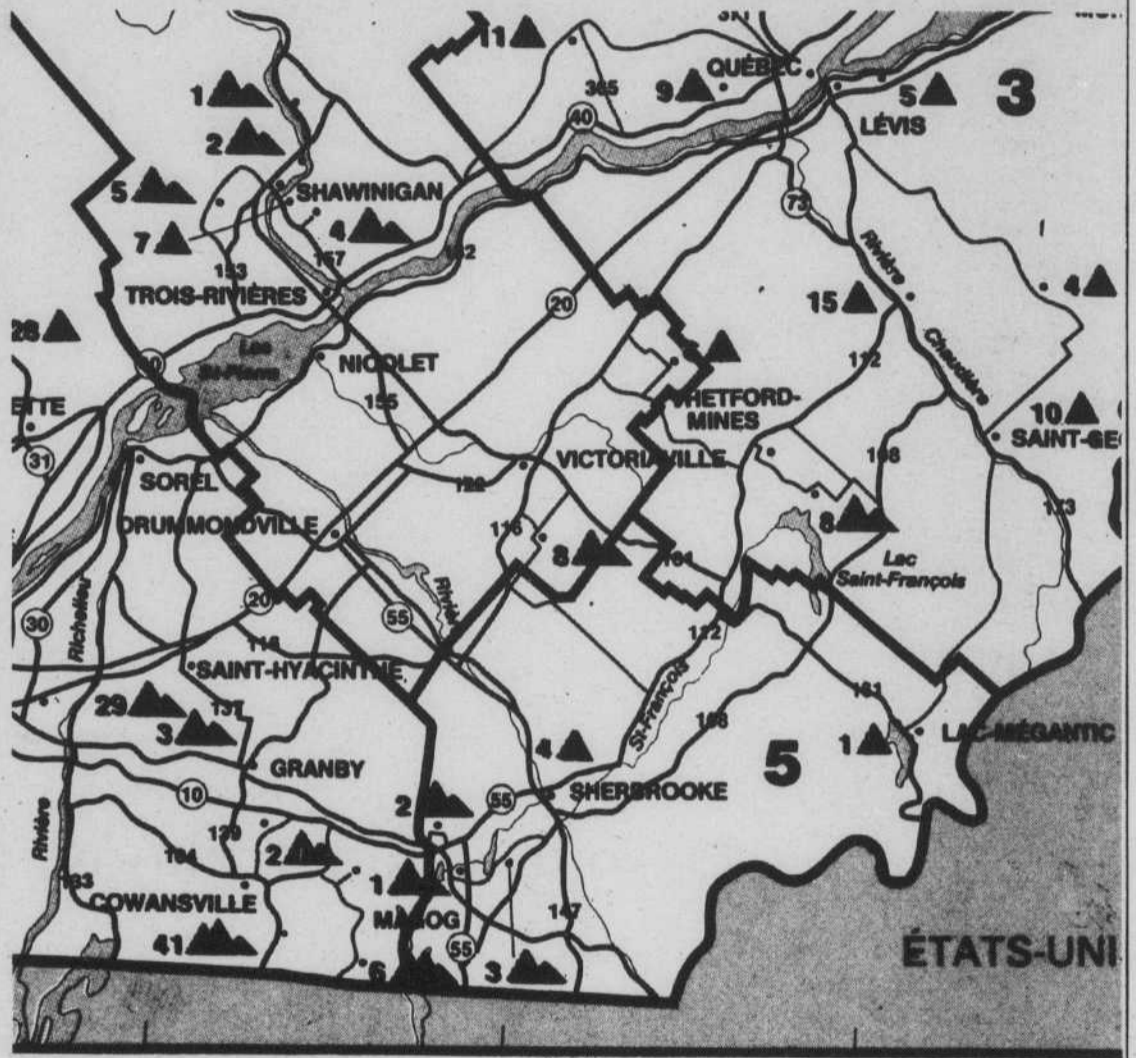
Each one has something different to offer and each one has one main objective: to attract old skiers, and make new ones. Most have reasonable programs for beginners and qualified instructors to help you learn the sport and glide through the winter with poise and grace.

If you think skiing is too expensive, the introductory packages offered by these hills are well worth looking into.

Most are participating in a program called 'Iniski'. With this program, you can learn to ski for \$10. You participate in a group lesson and receive your equipment and lift ticket free. Reserve your place in advance, though.

All the centres have nurseries if babysitting is a problem and most have special rates if you ask.

So don't wait for spring. One of our most valuable tourism and employment assets is waiting for you. Ski for the fun of it.



Joan McCoy Ling



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# Bromont: Making a big deal out of a little snow

By Joan McCoy Ling

**BROMONT** — It was a good idea, a real money maker: to develop Bromont and make it one of the most profitable ski resorts in the province. There was only one little problem.

No one knew that Bromont was an area of little snow.

This is what *La station touristique Bromont* manager, Robert Desourdy found out in his first winter here. In his first year there were only 22 skiing days and a lot of scratched skis.

But young Desourdy learned quickly and every year since then, more investment has gone into snow making. Now the snow making covers 70 per cent of the hills.

Once called Ski Bromont, the name has changed to La Station Touristique Bromont because the area has year-long attractions. Winter season includes tubing, cross-country skiing (15 kilometers of cross-country ski trails which are free).

Marie Dubois, manager of public relations, said that every weekend after Christmas had a special event planned. "We always have many contests: splash contests, and we always have something special on St. Valentine's too," she said.

Night skiing is the activity that Bromont is pushing more this year. "We now have the longest lighted trail in the world," Dubois stated.

Bromont has been under renovations. The chalet itself is 1,000 square feet larger and a few attractions have been added. The cafeteria, aside from serving its regular meals, will now include Italian and German food to broaden the interest in taking your meals where you ski. At the top of the mountain a restaurant is specializing in French cuisine.

Dubois attests to the quality of the food. "Every day the staff has been invited to sample the different foods that will be served during the ski season."

Other than food, Bromont is offering daycare this year. Children under seven are invited to ski free of charge on Mont Soleil, one of the hills that make up La Station Touristique Bromont. The other hill is called Mont Brome.

To attract new skiers, a Monday special includes free use of equipment from 3 p.m. until midnight. Bromont has one of the largest ski rental shops, featuring 1,000 pairs of boots and 700 pairs of skis.

A new machine is in use this winter. The BR400, made by Bombardier, breaks up hard snow and ice and turns it into a fine powder, making every day a good skiing day at Bromont.

A total of \$1.5 million was invested at Bromont this year to enhance attractions. \$545,000 was by means of a grant from the provincial government.

The old trails have had work done to them as well as the addition of two new trails: La Brosard is an intermediate and the St. Bruno is for beginners. The old Cowansville trail has had a

facelift. It has been lengthened and recreated as an intermediate trail, and it is now lighted from one end to the other.

"We're offering night skiing," Dubois said, "and we're so close to Montreal — only 45 minutes — that we expect people to come after work to ski."

Bromont is the smallest mountain in the Ski East Association of four, but has a large staff of over 250, many of whom will be employed all year. Bromont has developed its summer activities to include golf, a water slide — which was very successful this past summer — and in the coming year an alpine slide will be in operation.

La Station Touristique Bromont features a vertical drop of 405 meters, seven beginner trails, 19 intermediate trails and five expert trails. Three double chairlifts have a total lift capacity of 5338 skiers per hour. It includes snow-making, night skiing, a ski school, rental shop, ski boutique, daycare and fine dining.

## Desourdy had to choose and skiing won the toss

**BROMONT** — Robert Desourdy had to choose between building and skiing: he chose to build up a ski area.

Ski Bromont has always been owned by the Desourdy family, but Robert Desourdy is going into his seventh year as manager of the 22-year-old operation. The same family owns one of the largest construction companies in the area.

"I had to make a choice between tourism and the construction business," Desourdy said. "I started to ski very young and I liked it a lot. My choice was to be in the public."

And so he went off to college in Michigan and took two years of ski resort management, then became the manager of Bromont.

Desourdy credits the success of the mountain to the people who run it. "We're like a big hockey team," he said. "We need a defense, a goaler, a coach to make it run. Perhaps I'm the coach, but my real job is to find the right people to work here, and to create new ideas to keep the skiers coming. One reason we're able to have the best people work here is that we employ them on a year-round basis."

Desourdy explained that there are 15 departments that make Bromont operate. "Our marketing department is very important," he said. "Once we get the skiers here, then the other departments like food and beverage, ski school and rental shop and the boutique do their work to keep the skiers happy."

The ski school is very important too, he added. "They create new skiers, and new skiers create our future."

Desourdy believes that the population of Bromont are proud of their hill: "We employ almost 300 people, including 70 instructors. Many of them have work all year. We also employ a lot of students. The people in the area are happy because their children have work."

Renovations on Bromont were started late in the season, around



Bromont plans to put night skiing at its marketing forefront

the first of October. "One person told me he didn't believe how fast we could do things," Desourdy said.

"We feel we are the most aggressive ski area in Quebec. We can't say that there is no competition among the nearby ski centres. We have our market and they have theirs but some of the market is common to us all. We feel we're ahead by being ahead of the times. We keep doing new ideas to attract new business."

Desourdy predicts that Ski East will be the most prosperous ski region in the province in a very short time. "The Laurentians are popular now, but they're 30 years older than Ski East. We in the Townships are updating our facilities and modernizing the chalets. The facilities in the Laurentians are getting older and older every year. I think that people will prefer the modern."

One reason Desourdy cites for the Laurentians' popularity is that it took a long time for people to realize where the Townships is. Six years ago Desourdy did a survey and found that many Montrealers thought that Bromont was a ski resort in the Laurentians.

"We do a lot of surveys," Desourdy explained. "We do one every winter to ask our skiers what they like and what they would like to see. We don't always listen, because most people don't

understand the business, but we try to satisfy the average skier."

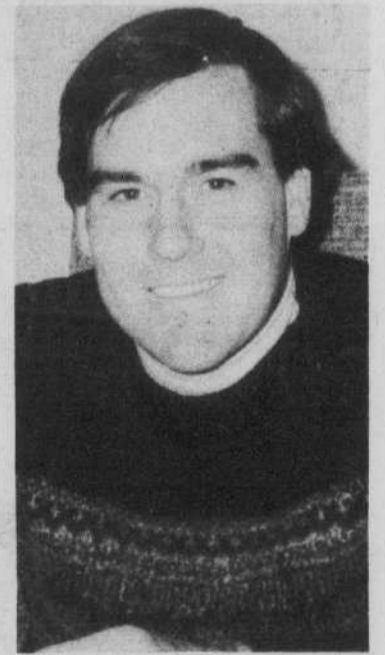
Skiing is becoming an increasingly expensive sport but Desourdy says that Bromont has more skiers every year. "We had 350,000 visitors last year, including our summer activities. But it's going to be a lot more."

"This year we're pushing our night skiing," he said. "Because we are so close to the major centres, people can come after work. We believe that if you have to drive more than an hour, it's not worthwhile. Therefore, this program should be very successful."

Added Desourdy, "Our location is also good for our school programs. School children from all locations ski here. We have other activities for children other than skiing that entice them to come here also."

Desourdy explained that most people are unaware of the potential of the city of Bromont, "It's a city going upward," he said. "The future is here. It's becoming a city of high technology. There's more work in Bromont than there is in Cowansville, and it's close to all major centres."

"Our goal here at La Station Touristique Bromont is to draw more people in the summer than in winter. I believe that will happen within five years. The reason is that more people are on vacation in the summer months. We



Robert Desourdy... Keeping skiers happy

want to attract more tourists from the States. And we intend to keep Quebecers vacationing in Quebec, and out of the States. With the improvements we're making, the airport in Bromont, the artificial lake that the town of Bromont is making and with the lodging facilities that are going up, I believe that we will see it happening in the very near future."

Joan McCoy Ling



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En face du Lac D'Argent près des Monts Orford et Owl's Head.

# Glen pair 'doing what's best for the community'

By Joan McCoy Ling

KNOWLTON — You just don't realize what you've got 'till it's gone. Just ask the folks around here.

"People found out three years ago, when we didn't have any snow, how important the mountain is to the town," said Dick Shea who, with his partner Pat Cote, have leased Mont Glen for the past two years. Actually situated in the town of West Bolton, the people at Mont Glen and those around them consider it a part of the Town of Brome Lake.

Shea and Cote had both worked at Mont Glen before leasing it. Shea operated the restaurant and Cote ran the ski shop. Both worked on a concession basis.

"Two years ago, when we heard that the hill wouldn't open that year," Shea said, "we decided to lease it." Shea and Cote will be buying the business as soon as there is a clear title from the courts.

"I think we all feel we're doing what's best for the community," Shea said. "When we took it over, it wasn't going to open. That would have been the worst thing to happen for everyone."

## GOOD LITTLE BIZ

Mont Glen has been in operation for 22 years. Shea and Cote will be its fourth owners. "I think that's due to bad management," Shea said. "It's a good little business, if you treat it that way."

One way Shea and Cote cut back on expenses is by doing a lot of work themselves. "One of our new features this year is night

skiing," Shea said. "Most of the work to put that lighting system in, we did ourselves."

The two partners painted all the lifts and built a new balcony for those who like to soak up the sun. They also worked on the trails.

"A lot of the work that we've done is things that people don't notice. The chairlifts were five different colors; now they're the same. There was no sequence to the numbers on the chairs either; now there is. These things people don't notice once they're fixed."

"A lot of the work is just general maintenance, which has been neglected over the years," Shea said.

## WE DID IT

The two partners are particularly proud of the fact that they manage the hill themselves. "We get no government subsidies," he said. "We do it ourselves."

"We try to be involved in the community as much as possible," Shea said, "with the Brome Lake Carnival, donations to different projects and the work we do with the children of the community."

"In a way we grow our own skiers," Shea said. "John Perry, a physical education teacher in Knowlton, teaches skiing to children of both French and English schools. He does this free of charge and we let them use the hill at no cost."

This year's new features to Mont Glen are the night skiing — two trails lighted from top to bottom, a pony lift for children, and seven kilometres of cross-

country ski trails for which there is no charge to use.

"We want to keep the business here," Shea said. "If the kids want to down-hill ski and the parents want to cross-country ski, we have it all right here."

Future plans of the two include an artificial snow-maker, possibly as early as next year.

"Mont Glen has always been a poor mountain," Shea stated. "A lot of people gave up the sport because it was so costly. But with our mid-week skiing price of five dollars, the cheapest price anywhere in Canada, many are taking up the sport again."

Shea said their mid-week business had increased by 2,000 per cent. "It doesn't cost us any more to run the lifts for 200 or for two," he said.

## FAMILY HILL

The people at Mont Glen also pride themselves on being a family ski hill. "We encourage family participation in skiing through different events," Shea said. "There are family races every Sunday."

A specialty race at Mt. Glen each year is a jump designed to be particularly hard to do. When the competitor does not succeed, he lands in a pool of gelatine.

Mont Glen employs some 60 people, including the ski instructors and the maintenance team. "We have one man that has been here since the beginning 22 years ago," Shea said. "His name is Peg Barnes and he's from Mansenville. If anyone knows this hill, it's him. He's actually teaching



With a new balcony on its lodge, Mont Glen has had quite a facelift.

us. We wouldn't know where we were going without him."

Mont Glen may be a poor mountain money wise, but it has its share of famous skiers. Gold medalist skier Lucille Vaughn skis Mt. Glen, along with Brian Gallery, mayor of Westmount, and a few famous French singers who like skiing without being bothered.

Mt. Glen features three t-bars and double chairlift, a ski school with certified instruction, a ski shop for rentals and repairs, bar and restaurant, and babysitting service.

The t-bar and lift capacity is 2,100 skiers per hour. The vertical drop is 330 meters (1,050 feet). You'll find Mont Glen on Route 243, near the town of Knowlton.

## Shea: Wanted challenge

KNOWLTON — The two partners who run Mont Glen together are as different as night and day.

"That's probably the reason that this partnership works so well," Shea said. "Pat likes to be with the people, party and have fun. He's quite extroverted. I'm the opposite. I like to stay in the background and run things from behind the scene."

Shea said he had never been on skis in his life. "I've waterskied a few times; that's a whole different thing."

Cote, on the other hand, is an avid skier. "He's always been into skiing and racing," Shea said of his partner. "For a young man of his age, he knows exactly where he's going."

Cote is single but planning to be married this spring. "He's originally from St. Bruno," Shea said. "Before coming to Mt. Glen, he had a ski shop there."

Shea originates from Florida where he spent 30 years as owner

of a midway. "We travelled with carnivals all over the States and New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario," he said. "My wife is from Granby, and I liked this area very much and wanted to stay home more. So I quit the carnival business. I also wanted a challenge. I always knew in the carnival business that I would get up in the morning, go on the road and it would make money. This is part of the reason I quit. I needed a new challenge."

"People in small towns are very tight-knit," Shea said. "Some people around still refer to me as 'That American'."

Shea's wife, four sons and a daughter all work with him at the mountain. "We try to keep it a family-run business for family-type skiing," he said. "We try to get to know our clientele. That's why people enjoy it here so much — because it's more personal."

Joan McCoy Ling



In addition to the slopes, Mont Glen features a restaurant, bar and babysitting service.

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# 'Maxi' mountain Orford hits trails, covers tracks

By Joan McCoy Ling

ORFORD — Mont Orford is rapidly becoming an international tourist area.

Fernand Magnan, owner of the site, and the Quebec government have just spent \$4 million to make sure it of it. The money was used to make new trails, buy a snow making machine, and a multiple chairlift, and to do a few renovations.

Mont Orford ski resort is actually made up of three mountains: Mont Orford with Mont Giroux on one side and Mont Alfred Desrochers on the other.

The new snow-making machine will be able to cover 50 per cent of the ski area. The system operates on 150 pounds per square inch: stronger than any system now installed in Quebec, ensuring a ski season of mid-November to mid-April.

One of the new trails called the new 'Maxi', located on Orford, has a total length of 4000 feet and covers 11 acres of land. The total new ski terrain is about 20 acres and there are 30 operable runs.

### CHAIRLIFT UNIQUE

"The new triple chairlift is the only one its kind in North America," said Pierrette Rivest, marketing manager of Mont Orford. "We believe it will attract more skiers from out of the area, from Ontario and the United States."

Construction will start in April on condominiums at the base of Mont Giroux. Model units will be open this winter to encourage sales.

The work will continue in 1985 with a new ski area on the east side of Mont Giroux and that will be linked with the existing trails. Renovations inside the chalet include rearranging the cafeteria and bar/restaurant, and relocating the ski shop.

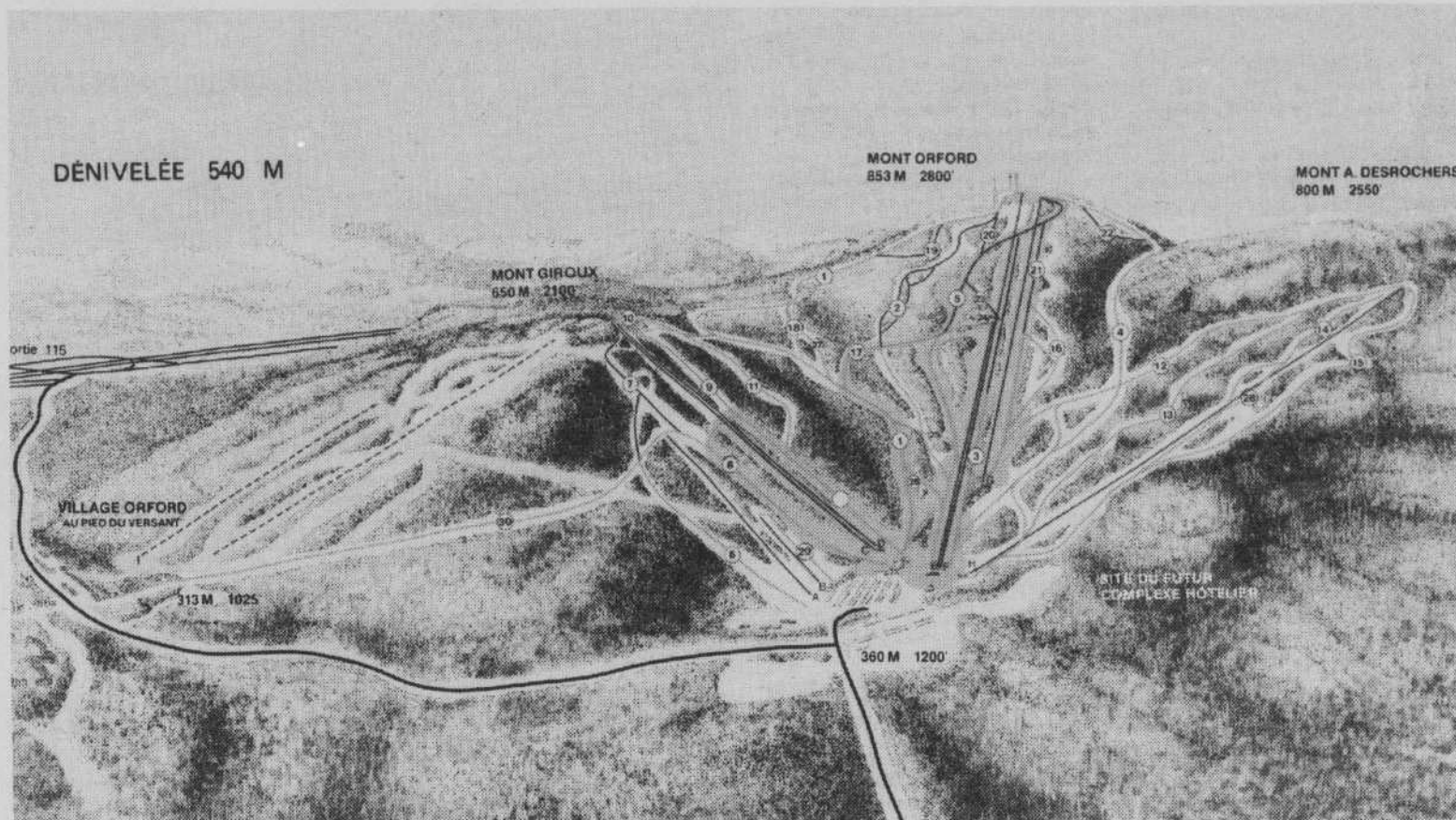
Mont Orford has been in operation since 1938. Fernand Magnan is in his fifth year as owner. Before Magnan, the mountain was owned by a corporation.

"I bought the last of the shares two years ago," Magnan said. "It was very hard to do anything before. With many people having a few shares, it was hard to have a decision made. It's better with one person in charge. Seasons are difficult to predict; in a ski season you have to move fast."

Mont Orford has 150 employees during the ski season. Some of the operators have been there for 20 years. "We're attracting more people for the winter and the summer season," Magnan said. "Construction on the condos might create more work for the local people in the spring."

### BAND TOGETHER

Magnan said that he is not in competition with other ski areas nearby, but works with them. "When I came here, Orford was not in good standing with Ski East (an association of four mountains: Owl's Head, Sutton, Bromont and Orford), he said. "I reintegrated with them. If any competition exists: it's Ski East banding together against the



It's big, it's bold and it's brassy. With its three mountains, new triple chair and snowmaking equipment, Orford is becoming one of the Townships' biggest ski attractions.



north."

The association works together for ski week and other activities where out-of-province business is concerned.

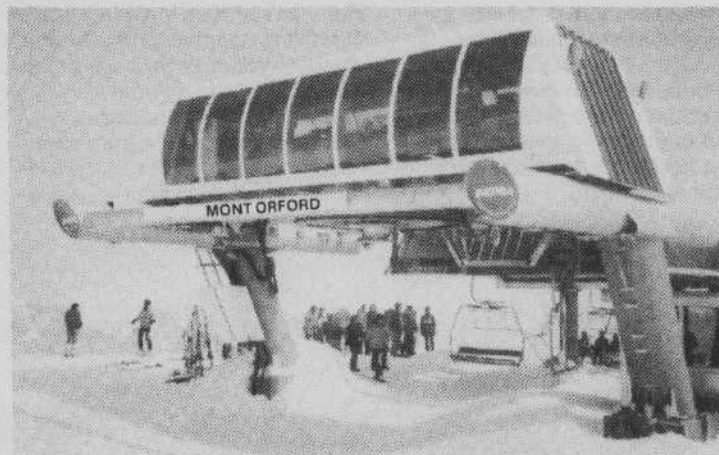
"Of course, every mountain has to develop its own facilities, but the team works much better now. Desourdy and Boulanger are both friends of mine. We often exchange information."


"One mountain alone will not attract people," Magnan said. "But the four mountains together as an area will. I believe that Or-

ford will be very competitive, but any improvements we make will also serve the others."

Famous skiers of Mont Orford are Francois Cousineau, Clemence Desrochers, daughter of poet Alfred (after whom one of the mountains is named), Montreal journalist Yves Letourneau, and a few government officials.

Orford has a vertical drop of 540 meters (1772 feet), 30 trails, and a lift capacity of 7,400 skiers per hour.





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# Fernand Magnan: A do-it-yourselfer with a mountain of plans

ORFORD — It was almost like the movie.

Fernand Magnan came to Mont Orford in 1980. "I developed the other side of the mountain," he said.

"I liked the area a lot and I knew that the resort area needed improvement. I thought that with my experience it was possible to build something."

Magnan was born in Drummondville, had his primary education in Granby and later worked in Montreal. His profession is architecture.

Magnan's credentials are impressive. He has masterminded many multi-million dollar projects including the Drummondville Penitentiary, the University of Quebec at Montreal, and the Scientific Complex of Quebec in Ste-Foy, among others.

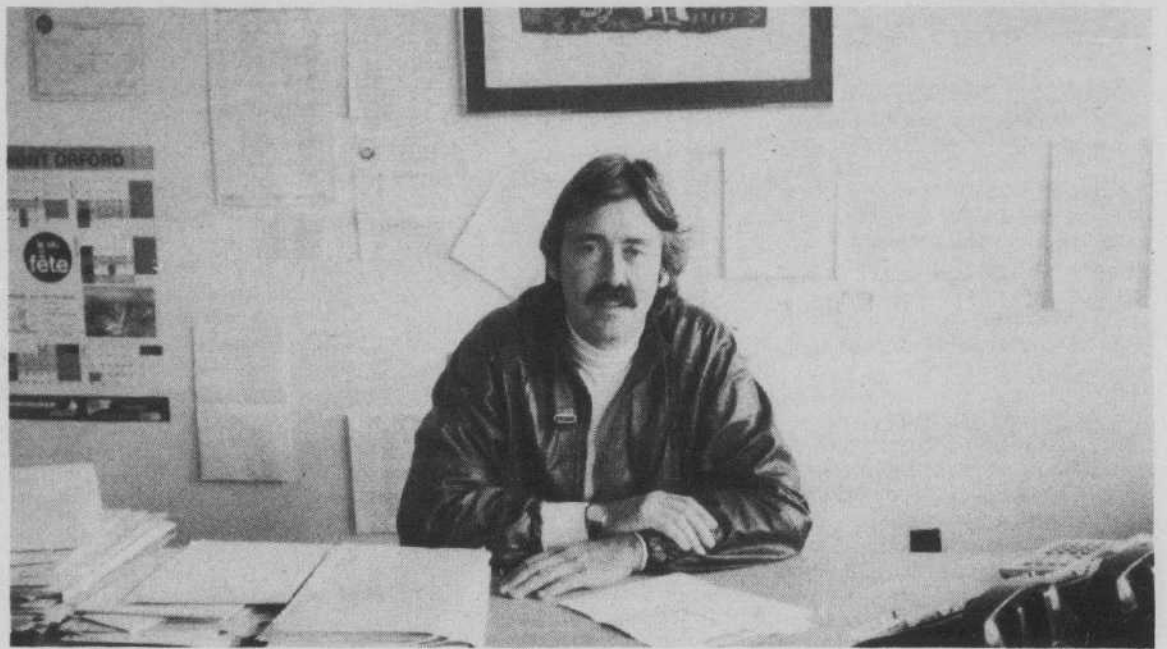
"I made the expansion plans for Orford myself," Magnan said, pointing out the books of intricate

draftings of the mountain. "We're reorganizing every detail," he said. "But this is only the first step. The company is in very good health. In the four years I've been here the revenue of Mont Orford has tripled."

There was some doubt whether Orford would be ready on time but Magnan is confident that it will be. "We started late because government grants were late," he said. "We didn't get going till late July. We knew from the beginning that it would be tight, but we know now that everything will be completed on time."

Magnan believes that the local people are happy with the work going into Mont Orford. "Many people will benefit from it. The construction might create jobs in the area. The local lodges will be full," he said. "I think the people of the area are happy that someone is in charge."

Joan McCoy Ling



Fernand Magnan came to Orford four years ago to develop 'the other side of the mountain.'

## Orford entrepreneur Magnan lays it out — phase by phase

By Richard Petersen

ORFORD — "Right now Mont Orford is the principal year-round attraction in the Magog-Orford Tourist region."

This is according to Fernand Magnan, president and director-general of *Cie de gestion Orford*, speaking before a meeting of the Magog-Orford Chamber of Commerce.

The reason: 55,000 people attending the *Festival de blé d'inde* and the hangliding exhibitions, 25,000 golfers at Orford golf club, 30,000 arts centre visitors, and 80,000 campers at the base of the Montain.

And that's the summer.

In the winter, Magnan said, 130,000 alpine and 100,000 cross-country skiers arrive to enjoy

skiing Townships-style. With this foundation already laid the resort has introduced a long-term plan to make Mont Orford an international four season resort.

### PHASE 1 ROLLING

With \$4.6 million invested so far this year out of a total of more than \$14 million for the entire project — as much as the 'mega-

resorts' Mt. Tremblant and Mont Ste. Anne have ever spent — phase 1 is underway.

Snow-making has finally come to Mont Orford and will cover 50 per cent of the centre's skiable terrain. The ski season will be extended through the dry periods on runs such as *super, passe partout*, the lower part of four kilometres and the entire *trois ruisseaux*, which Magnan describes as one of Quebec's most popular runs.

As well, the intermediate and novice slopes of Mt. Giroux, *pente douce* and *bowen*, were covered by man-made snow at the beginning of December.

After having seen 400 truckloads of earth unloaded onto the summit, extensive cutting and much blasting, the director-general is obviously proud of the new and improved runs at Orford.

The main new slope is called *maxi*, 4000 feet long and covering 11 acres and with the completely overhauled *trois ruisseaux*, Mt. Orford offers for the 1984-85 season "30 runs, improved terrain and more skiing enjoyment."

### STAR ATTRACTION

With all of this, the star of the initial development is clearly the new triple chairlift. Magnan notes that "it is the only one of its kind in Quebec and will give 1250 skiers per hour access to all of the mountain's runs; a substantial improvement."

Phase 2, towards which \$800,000 has already been

committed, will feature a first for Orford: a complete winter/summer holiday village (between the base of Mt. Giroux and the golf centre) called *Au pied du versant*.

With a projected 40 to 80 houses, each sold in the \$40,000 to \$60,000 range to owners who will rent them out 10 months of the year, visitors will be only a minute away from the lifts and a five-minute golf cart ride from the greens.

And Mt. Giroux will receive the first of two new chairlifts (a double) and several new intermediate runs.

### DEPEND ON SUCCESS

Phase 3, the timing of which depends upon the success of the next two seasons, consists of Mt. Giroux's second new lift (a triple chair), expanded chalet facilities and a 150-room hotel complex.

According to Magnan, "all this and more is necessary."

Mont Orford aims to compete directly with the Laurentians and New England resorts to accommodate its potential share of the 545,000 Ontario and 2.7 million U.S. skiers who leave their local areas in search of less crowded resorts and more consistent snow conditions.

Because of these new developments and "Mt. Orford's unique accessibility", Magnan is confident all phases will proceed as planned.

Much of the next phase's \$9.6 million will be spent on accommodations built on the 250 acres bordering the provincial park and owned by *Cie de gestion Orford*, and is considered a key to achieving year-round status.

"This continued expenditure," said Magnan, "will contribute much to the local economy. Beyond the direct benefit to the construction trade, improved tourist traffic will increase the present winter staff of 150 full-time and 50 in the summer gradually but consistently."

"And because \$.75 of every tourist dollar is spent in the local economy outside of the resort, the indirect benefits of the project will be clearly felt," Magnan said.

And perhaps, as Magnan hopes, the commitment to a project of this size "can positively affect investor confidence in this region."



Orford has invested \$4.6 million so far this year and plans another 10 to complete its masterplan.



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# Potton people proud of family-oriented ski resort

By Joan McCoy Ling

MANSONVILLE — Owl's Head Mountain, one of the last businesses still in operation in the Township of Potton which employs a number of people, is this area's major attraction.

"The people in the area are happy to see the improvements we're making," said Pierre Charette, director of public relations. "I think they are all benefiting from what's happening here on the mountain — the lodges, the restaurants, the stores and gas bars — they all benefit."

Charette said Owl's Head is not taken for granted in the area. "The public is very aware of the mountain. It's the major attraction."

Although Owl's Head is quite self-sufficient, Charette remarked that staff do work closely with the tourist bureau in Mansonville. "They need us and we need them," he said.

"Perhaps, if plans go through for future development, we'll be working more closely with other businesses in the area."

## 50 TO 80 EMPLOYED

During the ski season, Owl's Head employs some 50 to 80 people. "Some of those people like Stanley Pibus and Glen Bullock have been here since the early 60's," Charette said.

Snow-making was introduced at Owl's Head last year, enough to cover 50 per cent of the ski area. This year's additional snow-making will cover 90 per

cent of the trails, ensuring a ski season of December through the end of April.

A new double chairlift was installed, replacing the t-bar on the western slopes. Six chairlifts have an uphill capacity of 6,000 skiers per hour.

"That's one of the attractions of Owl's Head," Charette said. "There's almost no waiting. The time spent in driving to get here is worthwhile as compared to others slopes in the area, because there is more actual ski time."

"We're not as well known as other ski areas like Orford, because we're not near the auto-route," Charette said. "Once people discover us, they like us. The skiing is fun because there is no waiting, and the view is fantastic. Our clientele come back year after year."

## FAMILY ORIENTED

Owl's Head prides itself on being family oriented. "Families feel welcome here," Charette explained. "Often you'll see a family spreading a tablecloth in the cafeteria, and making a meal a party after skiing. People don't worry about their children either. Kids can be left to ski on the smaller trails without some crazy skier racing down those slopes."

Charette indicated that there was no competition with other nearby mountains. "I don't like the idea of competing with the other mountains. I prefer to think that together we compete against the Laurentians and Vermont.



Additional snow-making equipment this year will cover 90 per cent of Owl's Head's runs. And owner Fred Korman (inset) started it all with a t-bar.

We're all doing things to expand... but each one of us will benefit from what the other does."

A multi-million dollar project is in the wind for Owl's Head and if completed will make the mountain a four-season attraction.

"We're hoping that it will come about next year," Charette said, "but first we're having a feasibility program to decide if we'll go ahead with the plans."

If Owl's Head does, a marina and condominiums are part of the project.

## SKI SCHOOL PRIDE

"We have a ski school to be proud of," Charette said. "Bob Richardson, a former Canadian Olympic team member, heads up

our staff of instructors. The Canadian technique has proven effective in raising students' abilities and skiing enjoyment in a very short time."

Owl's Head participates in a program with local schools in Mansonville. Children from both French- and English-language schools are bussed to the mountain for a day of skiing, sometimes as often as once a week. Many of the mountain's local skiers were first introduced to the hill in this manner.

Owl's Head has been operational for 20 years under one owner, Fred Korman. But Fred and his wife, Lillian, didn't have plans for a ski resort when they first

purchased a farm on Owl's Head.

When the opportunity arose, an estate was bought, and then another farm. Then the wheels were set in motion for Owl's Head Ski Resort, starting with a couple of chairlifts and a t-bar. The 1,200 acres belonging to the Kormans has been developing ever since.

Today Owl's Head offers 19 trails with a total length of 12 miles, six chairlifts, and the third largest vertical drop in the province — 540 meters (1,770 feet). With five miles of cross-country ski trails and it's own lodge at the base of the mountain, Owl's Head's reputation for hospitality and family-style skiing is complete.



Owl's Head enjoys a large and, owners say, happy clientele right from the beginning of December through the end of April.



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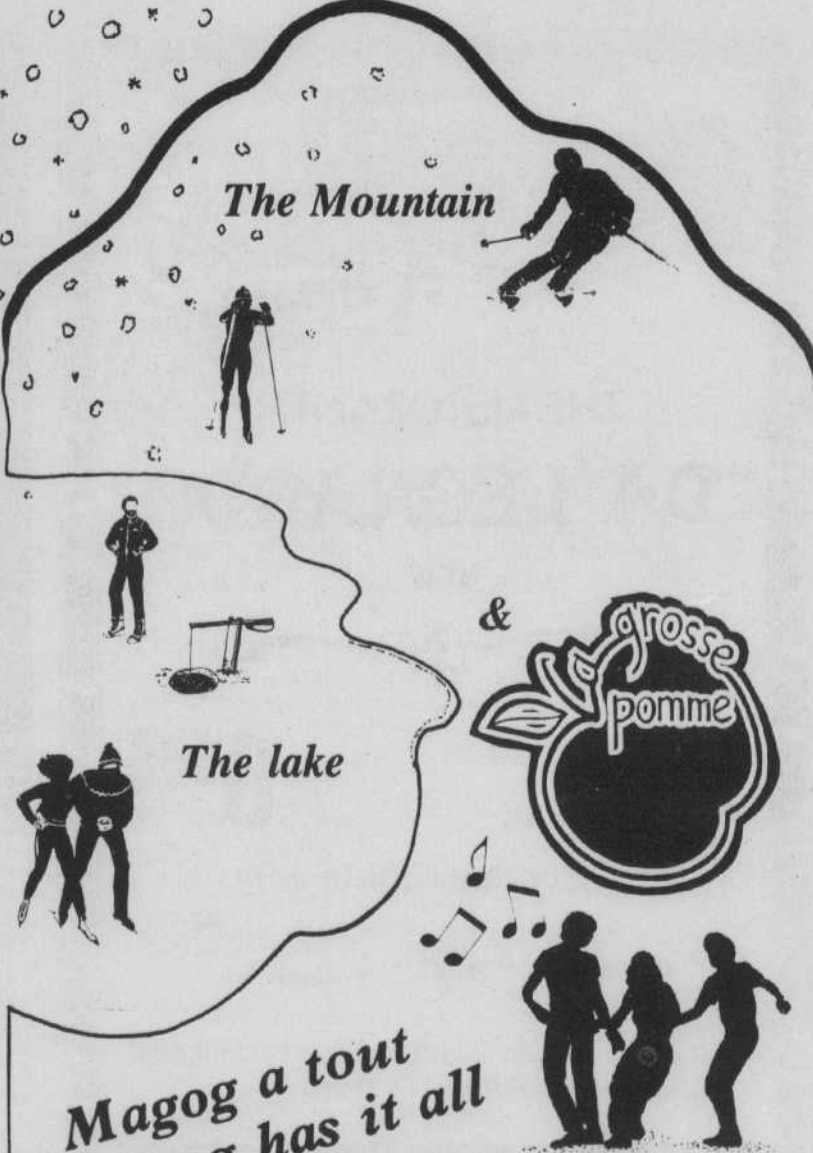
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# Shefford shakes '79 nightmare, works for future

By Joan McCoy Ling

**SHEFFORD** — Mont Shefford runs on group energy — and mathematics.

In its 22-year history, the operation has had four owners, the last of which is a four-person effort which has owned it for the past six years.

Aside from acting manager Claudette Fortin, the other three owners come out on the weekends and pitch in with the work. "They spend their weekends working on the mountain, looking after equipment, doing the bookkeeping and attending meetings," Fortin said.

They spent the past summer months making better trails out of existing ones and making two new ones. "We removed most of the rock," she said. "And the trails are more intermediate now."

The operating costs of a ski resort are much lower without the added expense of snow-making. Of course that means lower prices to the skier.

"We create new skiers," Fortin explained. "They start here because the cost is lower, and after a couple of years when they're more experienced, many prefer to go to the larger centres."

#### 1979 DISASTER

In 1979, Mont Shefford's total ski season was five days. "It was a disaster for us," Fortin said. "It's hard to say that we increase business in the area when we have no snow. But when there is snow, everybody benefits — the motels, the stores, the suppliers.

The local people are happy we're here. When it snows, they're happy for them as well as for us."

Mont Shefford employs about 75 people during the ski season, including 45 instructors. The work is very seasonal but one employee, Denis Ostiguy, has found a solution to the seasonal work. Now in his 11th winter at Mont Shefford, Ostiguy works his own sugar bush in the spring and does landscaping in the summer and fall.

Mont Shefford offers a variety of family entertainments. They have eight kilometres of easy to intermediate cross-country ski trails and 15 kilometres of expert trails going up into the mountain.

Tubing is another specialty of Mont Shefford and it always have something special planned for the weekends.

#### CANDLE PARADE

Although there are no lighted trails for night skiing, when the moon is out you can see the candle parade weaving in and out through the trails, usually following some special event like the carnival or balloon day, or some of the races.

"A ski area can't make a living without snow-making," Fortin said. "We do intend to install snow-making, but not in the near future. We bought Mont Shefford as a hobby, but we found out it was a full-time job to run it."

The other three partners in the business are Claud Fortin, Lucille Gendron and Yvon Trottier, and all hold down jobs in Montreal.



Mont Shefford may not be the biggest resort in the Townships, but its staff is working on it.

"We do have a problem here," Fortin explained. "From the highway, we have only one large trail that is visible. In the early winter and late spring, the sun hits the trail and melts some of the snow. The trail looks like there's no snow and people don't stop anymore. What they don't know is that most of our 11 other trails are hidden from view and are still in operation."

#### MID-DEC. TO MARCH

A good ski season for Mont Shefford runs from the middle of December to the end of March. "Sometimes the season is long enough, but in the past few years we've had a lot of rain. Unfortu-

nately, if there's no snow in the cities, people presume there's none on the mountains," Fortin remarked.

Although Mont Shefford has its problems, it also has some very loyal clientele. "You can compare it to golfing," Fortin said.

"At the beginning of the season, a golfer doesn't care how many balls he loses, as long as he's the first one to play the game. Some skiers are the same way. They don't care if they have to walk up the mountain, as long as they're the first ones to ski."

"We don't have the outside tourist business here," Fortin said.

"Our clientele come from the south shore of Montreal, Valcourt, St. Hyacinthe, Sherbrooke and the local area."

Although Shefford will eventually add snow-making, Fortin commented that the work the other mountains are doing will help them also. "Not all skiers can afford to ski the large centres, she said.

"A lot of beginners will start here and as they are more experienced, will go to the larger centres. Competition among rival mountains is good," she continued. "It makes everybody move a little faster."

#### DOWN TO THREE

Mont Shefford ski school takes children down to the age of three. "At that young age, the children play games to learn skiing," Fortin explained. "They learn simple things like balancing and they are cared for all day. The parents are free to go and ski."

Special rates are given for the school programs. "We have schools from Montreal who bring their kids here to ski," Fortin said. "Our local schools also participate in these special programs."

"In the future," Fortin said, "everyone will have to go to snow-making, simply because the winters are getting milder. We have some advantages in this area. The temperatures are mild and our trails are located on the north side of the mountain. We don't get the sun 'til late in the day, so the snow doesn't melt as fast, even though it's warm. We're also close to all the big centres and there's no traffic jams to get here."

Shefford offers a ski school, restaurant and bar, ski boutique, and rental shop. Three t-bars accommodate the 12 active trails.



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Acting manager Claudette Fortin is part of the four-person team which has owned Mont Shefford for the past six years.



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# Sutton skiers have their day on the hill — first

By Joan McCoy Ling

**SUTTON** — Mont Sutton hustles for the tourist business as much as any other mountain does, but while they're doing that, they're looking after their own. Several active programs make sure the local people have their day on the mountain.

Every year Mont Sutton sells over 2,000 season passes. There are some stipulations as to who gets those passes first. Two of the rules for being first in line are: 1) they're sold first to people who live in the area and 2) they're sold to people leasing accommodation in the area.

"There are always exceptions to the rule," Denis Boulanger said, "but we stay within the limits as much as possible. We have a limited capacity, a limited number of season passes assures a variety of clientele."

Another program takes place during National Ski Week. In this period, there is free skiing for local municipalities. "We rotate municipalities, like Sutton, Abercorn, Waterloo, etc. — places that have no ski hill of their own," Boulanger said. "We want to be accessible to the local people."

Denis Boulanger is the marketing director for Mont Sutton. His father, the late Réal Boulanger, was the founder of the mountain. It's a family-run business with a few outside shareholders. Robert Boulanger is the president of the corporation, and the acting general manager. Hercule Boulanger is the director in charge of operations and Luc Boulanger is the area manager. Other Boulanger family members run the daily operations.

"Sutton is recognized as the first to open and the last to close in the season," Denis Boulanger said. "Mont Sutton is located in a natural snow belt, and artificial snow-making promises a long ski season."

"Our trails are our major asset," Boulanger explained. "It's because of the way they're made and the number of them."

## GLADE SKIING

Sutton is popular for the wooded terrain for glade skiing, one reason why Réal Boulanger was so well known. He developed the glade ski trails on Mont Sutton and collaborated with other mountains to develop theirs.

Glade skiing gives an illusion of greater speed and better skiing. Sutton's trails are intertwined in such a way that an intermediate skier and a beginner in the same family can ski together and still be on their own level of trails.

One feature that Sutton does not have is a bar on the mountain. Réal Boulanger started this policy and the Boulanger family sees no reason not to keep it up. Boulanger explained the reasons for it.

"People come to Mont Sutton to ski. If they want to drink, there are many hotels in the area who will accommodate them. We don't have lodging facilities — the hotels do. A skier taking a drink on a cold day will feel the cold more when he goes out again, so he may be discouraged from skiing more that day. If he sits and drinks, he'll go away from the mountain having spent a

lot of money, but not done a lot of skiing."

Added Boulanger, "Also for the security aspect of it. Parents will let their kids ski until five because they feel safer knowing that there's no drinking on the hill."

## MEALS ON TOP

Mont Sutton does have all the other services including two chalets at the top of the mountain, so the skier doesn't have to go down the mountain at mealtime. They have their own ski clinic with x-ray service, ski patrol and a nursery for the little ones. The cafeteria features fast food and full-course meals. Or you can take a boxed lunch if you prefer.

Sutton has increased its artificial snow coverage for this year for a total snow making coverage of 20 per cent. And for Mont Sutton that means 30 acres.

Sutton has added a new double chairlift and purchased one of the most modern chairlifts in Canada. Time ran out and it won't be installed this year, but it will be functional next season. The four-place detachable chair will decrease ride time but will also be easy enough for the most inexperienced to get on and off.

Locker space has been added to the chalet and the front has been changed slightly; instead of a straight front, it is now stepped-style.

Sutton itself has been under a lot of construction. A new water and sewage treatment system is



Mont Sutton marketing director Denis Boulanger says although he's out for the tourists, local skiers come first in his book.

See page 11



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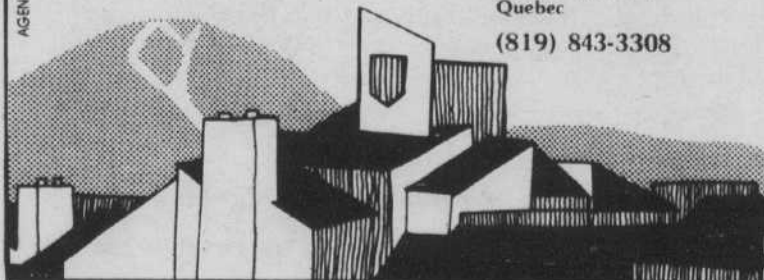
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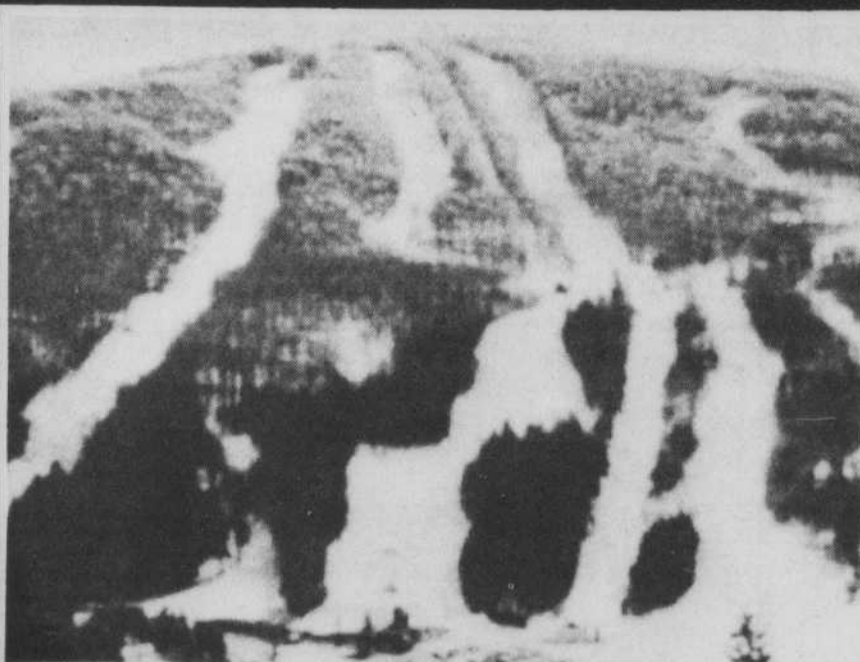


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# Boulanger: Giving alpine skiing one strong voice

From page 9

being installed and should be completed by the spring.

"Tourism wise," Boulanger said, "major hotels and investors will be more interested in coming to Sutton because of the new system. In the past we trucked water in because there wasn't enough water per lodge and chalet. In the

long term, Sutton will be a major destination resort."

About 115 people are employed at Mont Sutton in the ski season, including the ski shop and cafeteria staff, and ski instructors. Sutton is working at developing summer activities also.

"We work hard promoting hiking in the area," Boulanger said. "We're developing more trails

each year."

The average person doesn't notice the benefits of having Mont Sutton around, Boulanger remarked. "We wouldn't have the services in Sutton that we do if it weren't for the mountain," he said.

"Take away the services and the average person would notice the difference. Mont Sutton

brings in the business."

## SKI EAST MEMBER

Sutton is also a member of the Ski East Association. "We work together when we're out of the area to promote the overall image of the Townships," he said. "But when we're in our own back yard, we're fierce competitors."

"Our main function is to give Alpine skiing one strong voice. Although they compete with the other, they also patronize the others. I personally like skiing at Mont Shefford," Boulanger said.

Mont Sutton has many special events and races. "Last year was the first year we participated in the Labatt Circuit," Boulanger said. "We took three out of five

categories and the overall trophy." This competition includes age groups of 18 to 70.

Famous skiers of Mont Sutton include Paul Boivin, from the national ski team and Andrea Bedard, who participated in the Olympics.

Mont Sutton is the largest resort in Ski East, with 35 kilometres or 22 miles of trails and a vertical drop of 460 meters (1,500 feet). Eight lifts plus the new double chairlift provide adequate uphill capacity.

And Mont Sutton has an intricate network of trails for glade skiing — sheltered runs through the trees for one of the sport's newest dimensions.

## Master planner's dream comes true

SUTTON — A master ski planner and a visionary, the late Réal Boulanger opened Mont Sutton in 1960. He transformed Sutton into a \$1.5 million-a-year ski hill and was known as one of the most skilled designers of wooded trails in North America.

Students in Toronto, at the only ski area management course in Canada, would take three days in the spring to roam Mont Sutton trails and study Boulanger's theories.

For seven years before opening Sutton, Réal Boulanger studied skiing, skied at Stowe and memorized every detail about skiing.

Real's father purchased 2,400 acres of prime ski terrain and Réal Boulanger was in business, clearing the trails and installing one lift. From a modest beginning, Boulanger built his dream: one of the most successful ski resorts in North America.

Today, the Boulanger family carry on Réal's visions, making more improvements each year, and increasing the number of trails and lifts.

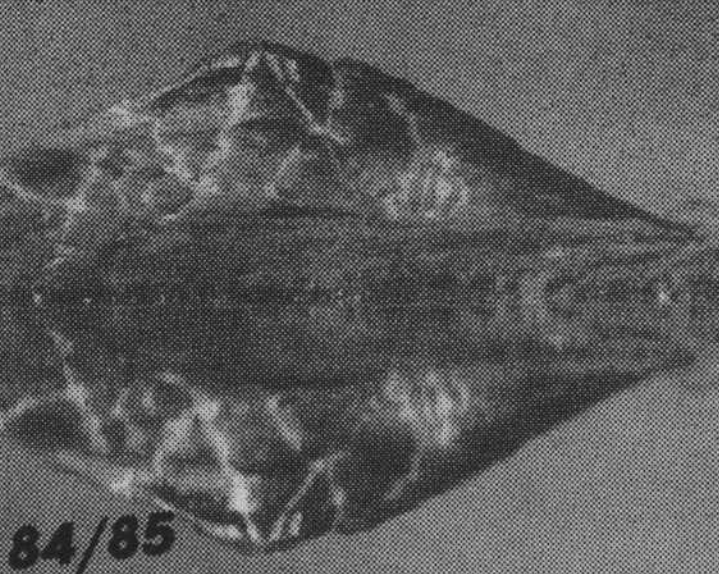
And the people of Sutton re-



Mont Sutton pioneer Réal Boulanger was known as one of North American's most skilled wooded trail designers.

member a man who loved to ski and made a profitable business out of it for everyone.  
Joan McCoy Ling

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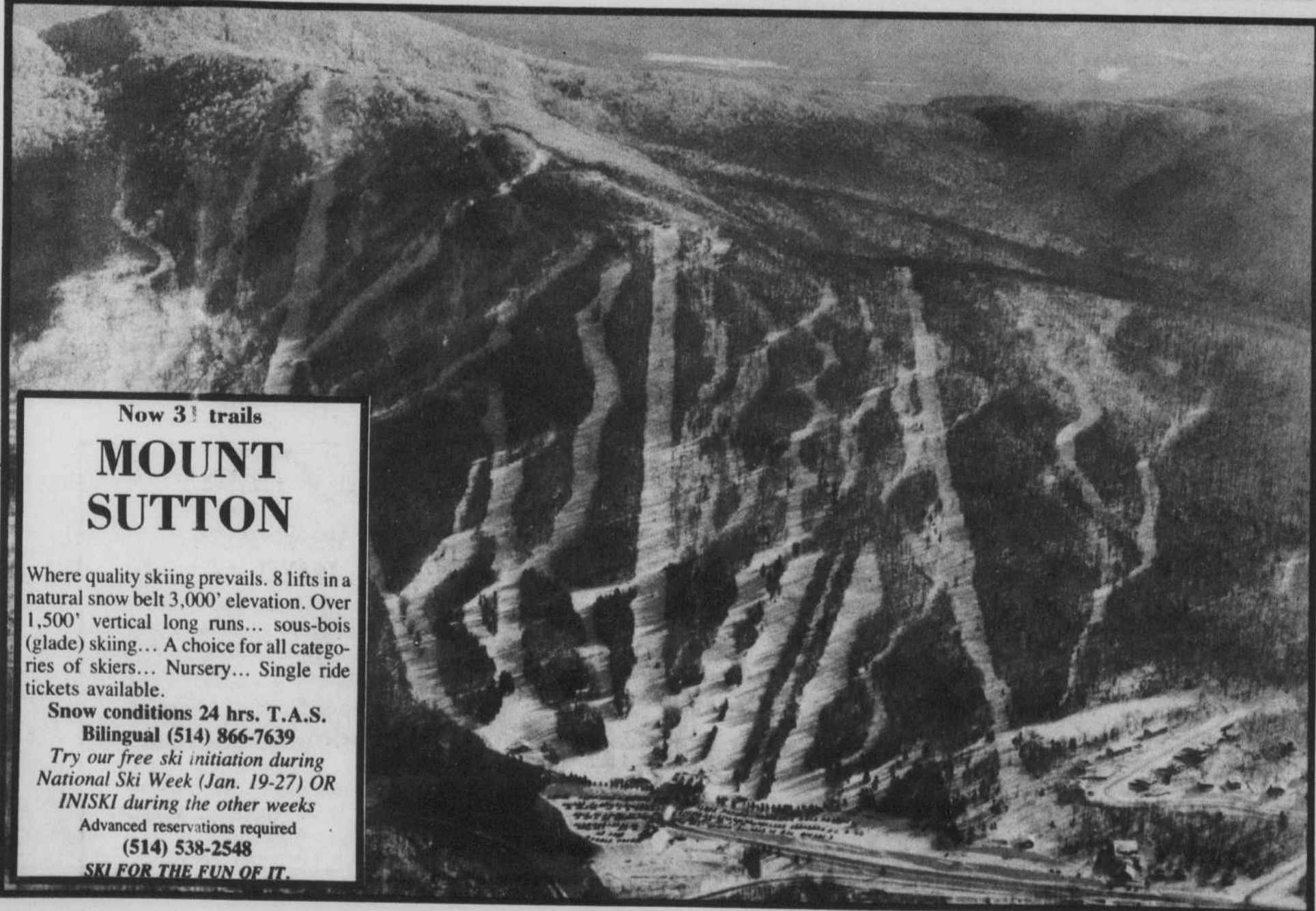
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