

# Toronto Ski Club moves in on Hockley Valley

ORANGEVILLE — In the main, the Hockley Valley near here is off the beaten track in terms of ski traffic. It's half-dozen ski areas attract moderate crowds compared to the busy Barrie and Collingwood resorts.

Some of the smaller ones don't even operate some winters, such as Eagles Nest this year and only one operates on an every-day basis.

But things are changing, particularly at Valley Schuss, a 10-year-old resort which has been more the home base for ski lift equipment dealer Lloyd Edwards than a money-maker.

The 8,000-member Toronto Ski Club has an option to buy a 50 per cent interest in the resort and will exercise the option before the year is out.

"We probably will double the business of last year," said Murray Edwards, Lloyd's son and an officer of Lloyd Edwards Equipment Ltd., a company which owns Valley Schuss besides selling and constructing Timberland Elliott lifts throughout Eastern Canada.

When TSC got involved last fall, members volunteered to help clear trails and prepare the slopes for the winter.



## Ski spots

Jim Kernaghan

Armed with chain saws and axes, they hit the slopes like so many benevolent locusts.

The immediate thinking of the Toronto club was that Valley Schuss would provide an ideal intermediate area between its two other locations. Summit, in Richmond Hill, is the home of the family and beginner skiers; the TSC property at Blue Mountain Park at Collingwood is for experts and singles, basically.

"But there is so much room for development at Valley Schuss," said Bob Birrell, vice-president of TSC and liaison man between the resort and club. "There is an expert hill at Valley Schuss that compares to the Spectacular at Blue Mountain."

Valley Schuss has a vertical drop of 350 feet and its 10 runs are serviced by two t-bars and a j-bar. Located on 200

acres at the southern side of the valley, the area has snow late in the winter.

There are plans for snowmaking next year, along with the possibility of another lift.

The sudden influx of Toronto Ski Club people was upsetting at first to the regulars but that rapidly changed. The ski school, headed by John Birrell, who led his class in a recent Canadian Ski Instructor's Alliance test, is one thing; the apres ski activities staged by the TSC is another.

One of the real strengths of the area—and the surrounding resorts of Cedar Springs, Hockley Hills and Happy Hills is the proximity to Toronto. Valley Schuss is open Wednesdays and weekends and it's close enough (55 miles from Toronto) that there's no need to stay overnight. Hockley Hills is open daily.

The runs at Valley Schuss comprise three expert tests, four intermediate runs and three for beginners; maximum length of run is three-quarters of a mile.

Access road is close to the base of the hill. Consequently, it's difficult to assess the size of the area. A number of skiers have driven away upon arrival since they see less than half the hill. The longest run starts with a steep pitch, flattens slightly, then pitches again.

Besides the widening of trails, another form of expansion is being considered on the varied site. That's cross country trails for that segment of the skiing populace.

## MTHL schedule for next week