

JULY 2008

# FALLS CREEK

newsletter

## Let the season begin!



photo by Andrew Gyopar

### Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of AAC Falls Creek was held at the Royal Brighton Yacht Club at 7:30pm on Tuesday 3 June. Three other AAC member projects (Anton, Dinner Plain and Niseko) met in different rooms at the same venue. The AGMs were followed by a social function for the combined projects.

### Colour Newsletters

The expense of colour printing this newsletter would be prohibitive but the colour versions copies can be viewed or downloaded from [www.aacfallscreek.com](http://www.aacfallscreek.com).

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# VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

## Introducing Noel

Welcome, for those that don't know me I have been an active member of the committee for the last four years as Treasurer and have accepted the role of Chairman for this year. I will be up at the lodge at various times in the year, so feel free to have a chat over a red wine in the evening.

## Welcome back Marg and Jodan

Marg is back from overseas and started off the year with looking after the hardy souls who came for the working bee in May. Marg spent our summer in the US winter and is again looking after us this winter. The Opening Weekend was also full and Marg looked after us all and supervised the morning ritual of breakfast and discussions of what is to be done this season.

## Vale, Dr Peter Graham

Dr Peter Graham, a foundation member of AAC Falls Creek, passed away peacefully at his Cohuna home in February. Peter was well known around the Club and his family is well represented in the AAC membership.

## Working Bee

The Working Bee went well with one major exception, we identified that the spa had a major leak and was losing about 120 litres per day. As we are always conscious of the precious water resources and we couldn't identify what part of the foundations this was flowing towards, this was a serious problem and we considered shutting the spa for the season until we could work out how to fix it.

John Harding then made it his 'mission' to ensure the spa was in working order for the season. Helped by a few other members who had an interest in the spa, John identified where the multiple leaks were and arranged for parts to be bought. They were subsequently installed at the Opening Weekend and tested perfectly. No more leaks!

Our spa is working well now, the heat exchanger is working well, the filter is new and we will need to review the timer for next year as it seems to be temperamental. Marg has a new list of instructions on how to keep the spa in tiptop shape.

The games room has been repainted with a bright new feature wall. You should check it out and then imagine what it looked like after the first coat of paint. There were plenty of comments and discussions on the colour choice over a red wine on the first night of the Working Bee.

## Opening Weekend

It was an almost a full house for Opening Weekend, but unfortunately no skiing was done. The atmosphere was jovial and relaxed. As my first Opening Weekend I had hoped to at least ski Towers but instead I took the chair to the top of Summit on a beautiful blue-sky day, and walked across the top to the Lorna Dunkley hut, then across to Cloud Nine for a hot chocolate. After a suitable rest and rehydration we wandered off towards Wombats Ramble and wandered back through the Village to the lodge. When I returned I was reminded that sunblock is still required even though its winter!

## AAC National Meeting

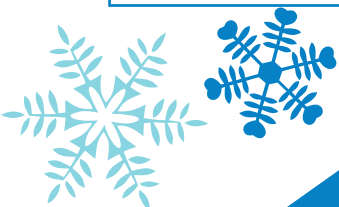
I also attended the AAC national meeting on the 14th of June. As one of the six projects affiliated with the AAC, we get together twice a year. We discuss how we are all going and agree on actions that are of mutual benefit to all projects, in light of our basic foundation principle of 'affordable accommodation for families'. The AAC National body has lent significant funds to our lodge in the past for the kitchen renovation and the bathroom renovations and currently is significantly committed to the AAC Niseko project.

At this meeting, we heard how the Niseko lodge has successfully survived its first winter and how Anton lodge at Hotham is looking to renovate and also look after the pygmy possums.

We also heard from our other sister projects at Dinner Plain and Perisher. As well as these projects we have representation from Southern Alps ski club which has three lodges in the NSW snowfields (Charlotte Pass, Perisher and Thredbo) where we have reciprocal arrangements. Check these out at <http://www.australialpineclub.com/> and <http://www.sasc-aus.com/>

## Lease Renewal

The current site lease expires in 2015. Falls Creek Resort Management has invited leaseholders to apply for a renewal before their leases expire. Resort Management requires a considerable amount of information concerning the leaseholder, including a business plan. A sub-committee has been formed to prepare an appropriate business plan. We would appreciate any old photos of the lodge, as the history of the Club at Falls Creek will form part of the Club's submission for a fresh lease.



# VIEW FROM THE CHAIR CONT'D

## Site lease rentals

The Alpine Resorts Coordinating Council (ARCC) is reviewing site rentals at leasehold properties occupied by non-profit club lodges at all Victorian alpine resorts. An ARCC proposal under consideration for submission to the Victorian Minister for the Environment, Gavin Jennings MLC, is for a real increase in site baseline site rentals by as much as 30%. This might mean an annual increase of about \$5,000 per year for each non-profit snowsports club lodge.

Site rental fees and other on-mountain charges are the single largest expense associated with operating snowsports club lodges. Any increase in site rentals will therefore have a direct impact through increased accommodation costs to members and their guests, diminished lodge amenities or reduced budget allocations for capital works. An increase in site rental fees would also run counter to the objectives of the Victorian Alpine Resorts 2020 Strategy' and cause a further deterioration in the competitive position of the already high-cost Victorian alpine resorts.

Strong representations have been made to the Government on this issue by snowsports club organisations from Falls Creek, Mt Buller and Mt Hotham. Victorian alpine resorts are now waiting on a decision from the Minister.

## MFS, Living and Leisure

As some of you are aware MFS is the owner of Falls Creek Ski Lifts. Due to the increased interest rates MFS as a highly geared company has had significant issues. Living and Leisure is the holding company of the lift company and it has been rescued by Arctic Capital Limited, a subsidiary of Perisher Blue owners Consolidated Press. What this means to Falls Creek in the future is yet to be determined. Be sure something will change.

## The season

After a nervous June, the snow has started falling in earnest and there is every reason to be optimistic about the rest of the season. I have confidence in our natural advantages to have good natural falls and extra man made snow ready for the peak season starting this winter. I will be heading up soon to check out the fresh alpine air and get myself some fantastic exercise, see you there!

Finally, I would like to thank Andrew Blogg for his role as Chairman over the past two years. Andrew will continue on the Committee leading the Lease Renewal Sub-Committee.

**Noel Poon**  
*Chairman*



## Harding in Hakuba

The best way to stop John Harding from talking about his Japan skiing experience is to promise to watch his DVD. John stayed with two prospective AAC members at the Blue Dragon lodge in Hakuba (which offered special deals for AAC members). Hakuba is in the Nagano area made famous by the 1998 Winter Olympic Games.

Other AAC Falls Creek members enjoying the Japan winter season included Brownyn & James Wruck and Ian & Howard Farrow, staying at the AAC Niseko lodge.



## YOUR COMMITTEE 2008 [aacfallscreek@gmail.com](mailto:aacfallscreek@gmail.com)

<b>Chairman</b>	Noel Poon
<b>Secretary/ Treasurer</b>	David Stogdale
<b>Lodge Supervisor</b>	Nigel Cowie
<b>Membership</b>	Peter Bannerman
<b>Bookings</b>	Alan Long
<b>Communications</b>	Ian Farrow
<b>Lease Renewal</b>	Andrew Blogg



### KEY CONTACTS

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### CLUB POSTAL ADDRESS

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# Members Survey

Your Committee is seeking your feedback what you want from the Club. The Survey can be accessed from [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=RodZsOqeAWVxfmboHbXb3Q\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=RodZsOqeAWVxfmboHbXb3Q_3d_3d) or more easily through the link on [www.aacfallscreek.com](http://www.aacfallscreek.com)



Queen's Birthday Weekend was great for the social activities.