

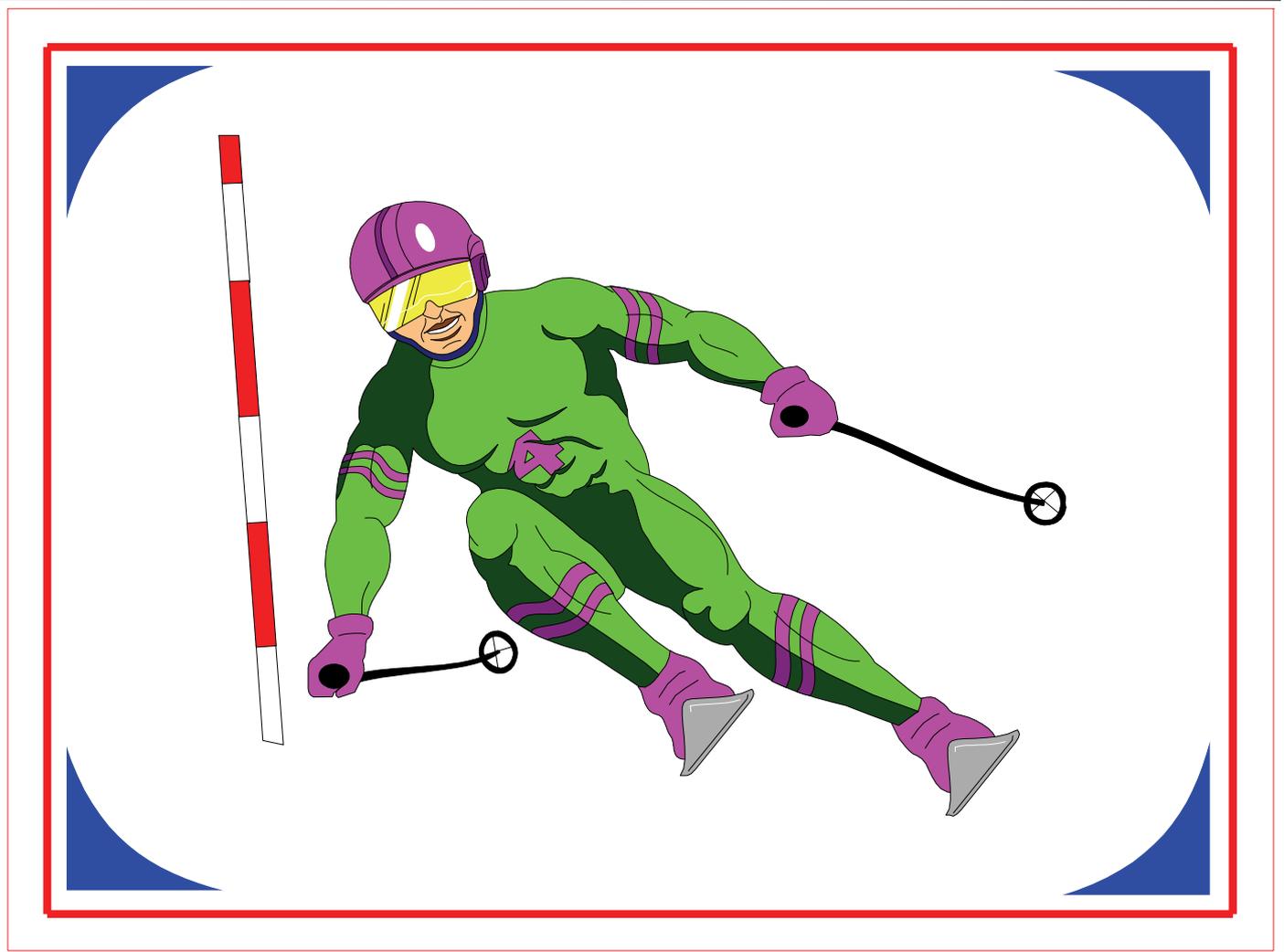


# RASCAL NEWS

Winter 1995

Newsletter of RASCAL INC

## Winter 1995 Edition



Please note RASCAL phone, post box and key pickup details:



**(06) 285 4214**



**PO Box 99, Curtin, ACT, 2605**



## RASCAL CONTACT DETAILS

Please direct all general inquiries and accommodation bookings to the booking officer. Suggestions and complaints may be directed to the Committee, but PLEASE, only call between 7 and 8 pm on weeknights.

### BOOKING OFFICER

Dianne Ireland 285 4214  
(10-12am Tuesday)  
( 7- 9pm Thursday)  
leave messages on the answering machine at other times with return BH and AH contact numbers

### MAIL ADDRESS

PO Box 99, Curtin, ACT, 2605

### KEY PICKUP ADDRESS

13 Jennings St., Curtin, ACT, 2605

### COMMITTEE

(ONLY ring between 7pm and 8pm weeknights, please)

#### President

Monty Fox 288 3153

#### Vice-President/Newsletter Editor

Mike Vale 241 2351

#### Secretary

Trish Carroll 241 2351

#### Assistant Secretary

Valerie Hallin 288 9728

#### Treasurer

Steve Ahern 281 3472

#### Public Officer

Richard Emerton 286 5134

#### Lodge Maintenance Officer

Chris Acker 281 4467

#### Committee Members

John Kennard 281 3435

Alan Laird 288 4708

George Malecky

Anne Reed 294 6040

Rod Roberts 230 2436

### RASCAL LODGE

7 Banjo Paterson Crescent  
Jindabyne NSW 2627  
Ph: (064) 56 2169  
Winter Lodge Caretaker: Mark Jury

## From the Quill of the President Monty Fox



 n Canberra it's freezing. There is a pile of snow up the mountains and I'm sitting here writing. Something is terribly wrong. But there is plenty right about RASCAL this year.

Mark Jury is doing a super job as Lodge Caretaker. A member told me recently of forgetting to take wheel chains. He mentioned this in passing to Mark. In a flash Mark had made a few phone calls and arranged chains to be picked up the following morning; great work! And the member not only had peace of mind, but maximum time on the hill.

The Committee is beavering away in small groups looking at:

- \* How RASCAL can improve the way we do our business;
- \* What effect our current fees and booking arrangements have had on bookings to date;
- \* Where RASCAL is heading
- \* Ways we can not only survive the pressures that commercial accommodation in Jindabyne is putting on us, but if and how,

and by how much we should seek to grow;

- \* Options for how we can change whilst retaining RASCAL's characteristics of 'group feeling', 'family togetherness', a place 'that I helped to build' or renovate or plant or whatever you did at the last workparty.

The Committee's deliberations will not result in major change inflicted on the members. That is not the RASCAL way and it sure isn't my way. The Committee is looking toward careful deliberation to determine recommendations which will be put to the Annual General Meeting in 1996.

As occurred under the Presidency of Chris Fogarty in respect of the Constitution's changes on Membership, etc, members will be advised in advance of proposals, and given the reasons why they are being put forward.

In order to replace some blankets that walked out of RASCAL and were lost in the snow, we have bought some doonas for one of the rooms. The cost was a bit less than for blankets. I'd be grateful for feedback from members about the doonas. But don't take them home to try them out!!!

By the way, a "Junior Non Member" accommodation rate is ONLY for people aged under eighteen years of age. The Committee thinks that the Club's generous criteria for being a Junior Member should only apply to Junior Members.

# VALE'S VIEW - Mike Vale



## s the claw dead?

Has Monty Fox hung up his claws?

It looks like it. Having donned the weighty robes of high office, Monty now considers it appropriate that he maintain a level of *gravitas* in keeping with his role as President - he no longer thinks it seemly to be seen to hack and slash and has passed the role of RASCAL devil's advocate and chief possum stirrer to yours truly.

I don't have a problem with that so let me start straight in. In his notes earlier in this issue, Monty indicated that the Committee was "beavering" away on a number of initiatives.

What he did not say explicitly, but I will, is that these initiatives are designed to save RASCAL from extinction. Put simply, the Club cannot continue as it has over the last decade and major changes are unavoidable.

At the risk of labouring a point and being branded a Cassandra, let me reiterate the central problems that we are facing:

- X membership is falling
- X the Lodge is grossly underutilised, particularly in summer
- X there is a glut of commercial accommodation in Jindabyne, the summer rates for which are comparable with RASCAL's

X the Lodge is ageing and will probably require significant maintenance in the next few years.

X by modern standards the Lodge's facilities are reasonably Spartan and need to be modernised and expanded.

In short, we are entering a period of expected high expenditure, while our revenue base is reducing.

The Committee has already taken decisive action - accommodation rates were cut significantly this year, and members were offered free accommodation to re-establish their connection with the Lodge. With the exception of July, the results have been very disappointing, with a negligible impact on the level of Lodge usage. The chart on page 5 shows a comparison of average Lodge usage over the last 4 years for the months of January through July. The figures are very consistent. The accompanying table shows an analysis of accommodation usage for 1994:

- X the Lodge is usually unoccupied for over 50% of the nights of the year: in 1994, there were 212 nights (58%) when the Lodge was unoccupied. 36 of those nights were in winter;
- X average Lodge usage over the whole of 1994 was 16%: even in August, the average occupancy was only 31% (63% on weekends);
- X virtually no one used the Lodge in summer.

The Club will probably make an operating loss this year, and while our reserves are in a healthy shape due to prudent management by past Committees, the situation is unsustainable.

*... so stop complaining and do something about it, that's why you're on the Committee ...*

OK - this piece isn't just about how tough times are, its about the program that the Committee is developing to address the problem.

The easy way out would be to increase membership fees and accommodation rates and/or impose a levy - but that would be a short sighted move that would probably just cause more members to fall away and depress Lodge usage further.

My impression is that the Committee is only interested in pursuing solutions that enable the Club to continue to provide members with excellent Lodge facilities and amenities, at rates that offer equally excellent value for money. I doubt that members would be impressed with any other approach.

So what to do as an alternative?

Here's my suggestions, which I hasten to add have yet to be formally considered by the Committee.

1. I believe we should undertake a major membership drive in 1996, targeted more broadly than just the ACT health industry. We should particularly target individuals and groups who would be interested in using the Lodge primarily during the warmer months. Attracting "summer" members would allow us to spread our costs over a higher membership base without adding to the demand for accommodation during the peak winter season. That way we all win. The Committee is looking at the production of a full colour brochure to show-case the Lodge. This could form the centre-piece of a major membership drive. Quotations are coming in and a

*(Continued on page 4)*

(Vale's View Continued from page 3)

decision as to whether to proceed or not will be made shortly.

2. New categories of membership should be introduced to cater for as broad a spectrum of needs and interests as possible. In particular, a summer only membership might appeal to those interested in using the mountains only in the warmer months, and not in winter. I know several people for whom the \$500 joining fee is a major deterrent since they are not interested in using the Lodge in winter and know that commercial accommodation rates in Jindabyne are at rock bottom in summer. Also, the Lodge is not well set up for summer use (the Committee is actively working on that). A "summer" membership, therefore, would have to have a significantly reduced joining fee and maybe even a lower annual membership fee - that is a commercial reality and we have to recognise it. On the other hand, "summer" members would be restricted to using the Lodge (at member rates) for, say, 8 months of the year. Other matters such as the voting rights and other privileges attaching to "summer" membership would also have to be examined.
3. Perhaps it would also be useful to have a category of "temporary" member in recognition of the fact that Canberra has a high floating population - diplomatic staff; people on transfer; mature age post-grad students etc. Again, the fees payable and privileges that come with such a membership would have to be considered.
4. And what about a category of "honorary" member that could be given to individuals who assist the Club in tangible ways. Instead of the Club having to pay for services rendered, perhaps we could offer an honorary membership?

Worth thinking about at least - more next issue.

***What do you the members think?***

Hearing your views is important to the Committee, whether you agree or disagree with what I have just proposed. While some of the above changes will require amendments to the Constitution (and a formal vote of members at the AGM), we would like to know where the balance of member views lies so that we can make sure that all points of view are taken into account.

Mike Vale

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**New News or Old?**

**W**inter 995 is a wonderful ski season. Perisher and Blue Cow have merged to form Perisher Blue. What a bonus - 1605 hectares of snow on one ski ticket.

A new quad chairlift - The Interceptor" connects the two resorts. You can ski from Smiggins Holes to Perisher Valley to Blue Cow to Guthega and back again without having to walk uphill at any stage. Maps have been placed in the Lodge so that all can share the experience. Have a chat with our new Lodge caretaker - Mark Jury, who is happy to help with directions.

Don't believe that people aren't using the Lodge this year - that was last year. The Lodge was full for the school holidays and weekends are booking up fast. Plan your trips now or you could miss out on all this great snow!!!!

Anne Reed

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# H E L P Photos Wanted

**T**he Committee wants to produce a full colour brochure showcasing the Lodge. Do you have:

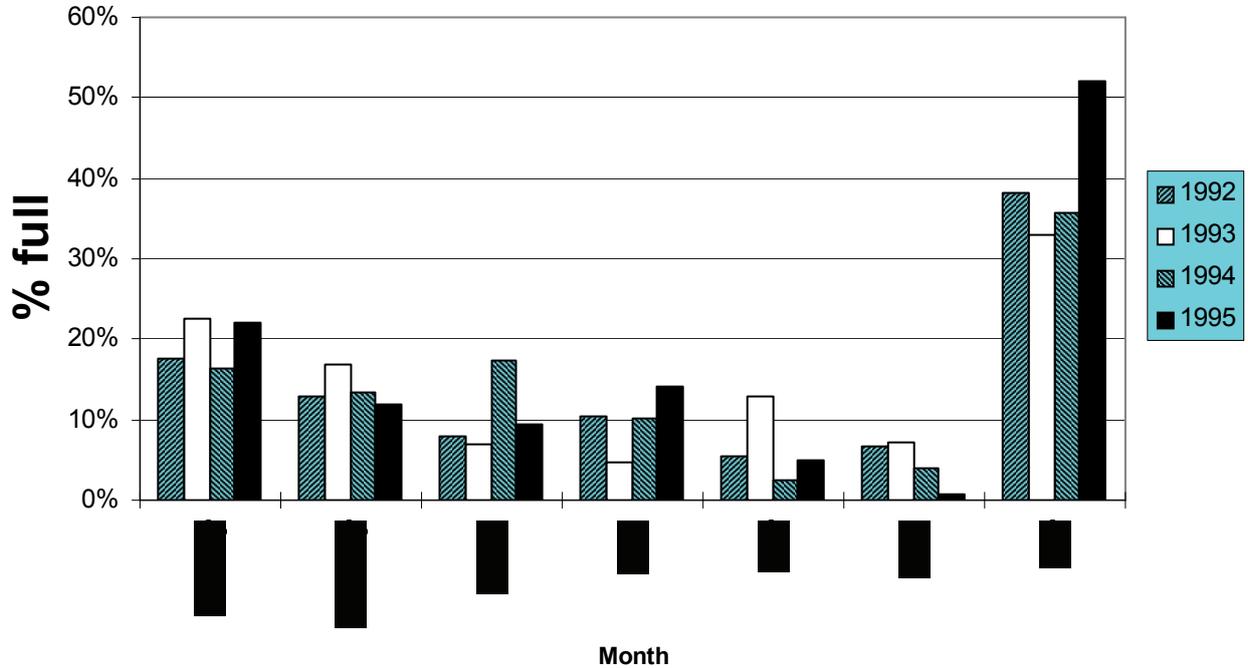
- . any interesting photos of the Lodge?
- . any interesting photos of Jindabyne?
- . any interesting snow photos?
- . any interesting mountain photos?

that might be suitable for a RASCAL brochure?

If so, please contact Mike Vale (contact details on the inside front cover).

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## RASCAL Lodge Usage: 1992 - 1995 (includes block bookings & workparties)



## RASCAL Lodge Occupancy Rates - 1994

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average
<b>Average nightly occupancy rate (%)</b>													
<i>All Year</i>	16	13	17	10	2	4	36	31	30	11	12	15	16
<i>Weekends Only</i>	25	47	38	30	10	8	33	63	33	31	38	31	32
<i>Weekdays Only</i>	13	0	10	0	0	2	37	21	28	3	2	10	11
<b>Nights that the Lodge is totally unoccupied (%)</b>													
<i>All Year</i>	61	79	68	80	94	80	16	23	0	77	67	55	58
<i>Weekends Only</i>	44	25	50	40	75	75	20	0	0	33	0	25	32
<i>Weekdays Only</i>	68	100	74	100	100	82	14	30	0	95	91	65	68

*(President's Quill - continued from page 2)*

Finally, about sharing rooms. A full Lodge is 24 persons plus the Caretaker. In periods of peak demand please be aware that you may be involved in same-sex room sharing with one or more residents. Dianne has been under long-standing direction by Committees to allocate rooms on a share basis during peak times in order to

maximise bed usage.

If Dianne proposes to allocate you beds at the Lodge in a room share situation, she will advise you by phone. If you have any reservations about this please discuss them with Dianne at that time. The Committee recently expressed the firm view that, for

example, a member could not pay double in order to ensure having a single room alone.

Monty Fox  
President

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(First Fold)

## Look what's inside your RASCAL NEWS this issue:

- ✓ **President's message**
- ✓ **Proposed membership initiatives for 1996**
- ✓ **Copy of 1995 Lodge Rules**
- ✓ **Another copy of the Booking Form**
- ✓ **Analysis of Lodge usage 1992 - 1995**
- ✓ **Photos of Lodge wanted for glossy brochure**

(Second Fold)



**RASCAL  
NEWS**

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