

2. What You, Your Family & Friends Can Do To Be Winter Green

Release The Child In You

Remember . . .

- jumping off the back deck into fluffy, deep, new snow;
- playing “Wayne Gretzky or Tretiak”, complete with running commentary, on the local outdoor ice rink with your new hockey stick;
- pretending to be “Torvill and Dean”;
- trying desperately to build a quinzee in the back yard;
- spending an entire morning building the “ultimate snow fort” just to destroy it in an afternoon snowball battle;
- skiing on Christmas morning, followed by a warm cup of cocoa to warm up the fingers and toes;
- the first time you skated the whole Rideau Canal and back;
- trying to scare the neighbours into believing that the “king kong” footprint in the front yard was real; and
- of course, making the “anatomically correct” snow people on the deck..”

Personal stories . . .

Story #1

There was a time when I had a pathway to shovel. What better way to keep an energy-packed teenager busy! For a number of years my brother and I took turns making sure the pathway and stairs didn't accumulate feet of snow. So long as we kept on top of our duties Mom and Dad wouldn't spend time reminding or hounding us. One evening, however, I had reneged on my responsibilities letting oh-so-much snow pile up outside the door, and I got a warning. Waiting until morning to clear the way would only mean more snow to clear at an unbearably early hour!

So, out I went, into the pitch dark of night. More and more snow was falling from the sky making my job almost unnoticeable! I thought to myself that it is too late to be shovelling, I'm tired and there's a show on

TV that I could be watching, there are some calls I want to make too; we need one of those snow-blowers, all of my other friends don't have to shovel, and certainly not at this hour, what am I crazy or something?

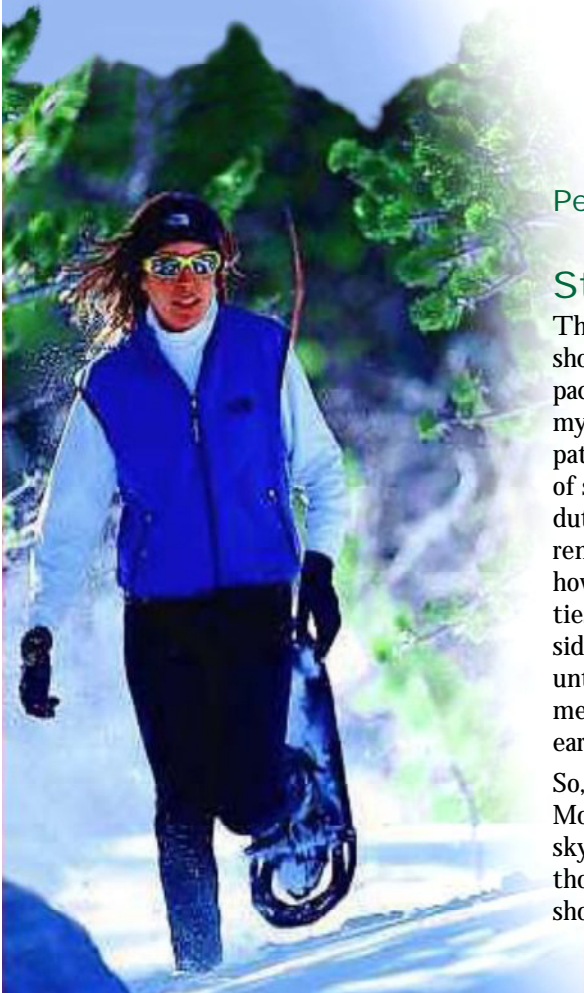
It wasn't long before I had worked up a sweat. Stopping for a moment to assess my progress, I was shocked. Not by the quality of work I had completed, but by the obvious and astounding silence that surrounded me. I looked around at the sleeping homes, the snow-lined trees and the glow that came from the snow-filled scene all around.

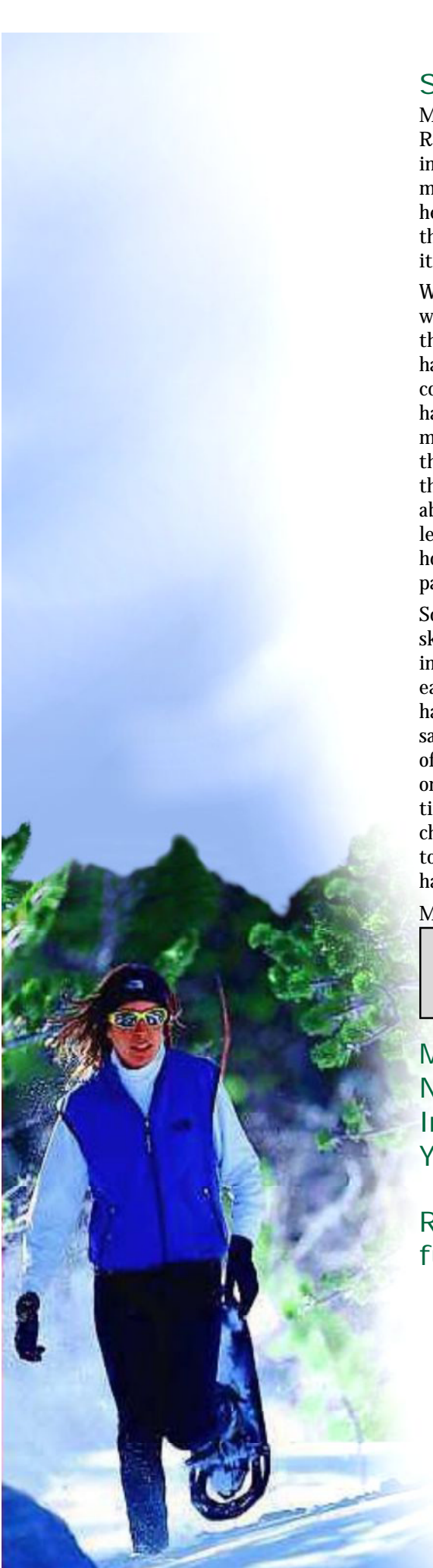
This was a first for me and I was most affected by this experience! I couldn't help but enjoy the quietness, and not to mention I had just completed a work out and that is a great feeling in itself! My job was done, the path and stairs were clear of most snow. I could go in now, make some phone calls, watch the TV, go to sleep. Amazingly enough I didn't want to. Although I would never have admitted it to my family, I was enjoying the winter scene in which I had found myself! Just then I noticed that our yard was without a snow angel. I turned around, took a few steps backwards into the snow, and let myself free-fall onto my back. I stopped when I was satisfied the angel was complete. Looking up at the sky, I opened my mouth and let the snowflakes fall on my tongue. I watched my breath fill the air above. I listened to my heart beating. I filled my lungs with the cold night air. I am lucky, I thought. Then, more satisfied than I had ever been after shovelling the pathway, I got up to go inside.

I acted as if nothing good had happened out there, just another pathway to shovel I told my parents in a neutral tone. They knew I had learned something that night, not because I said a word about it, but because as soon as I turned around to take my boots off - my snow-covered back revealed it all!

Meredith Flannery,

Halifax, Nova Scotia





Story #2

Many people who grew up anywhere near the Rideau Canal, in Ottawa, have skated on it in the depths of winter. During the holiday, my family packed up the skating gear and headed out to see how far we could skate this year. The winter I was eleven, we made it all the way to the end!

What a wonderful feeling. Ok, I thought, here we are, let's get some hot chocolate, where's the car? It had not occurred to me that we had to skate all the way back. As far as I was concerned I was too tired to make the long haul back. As a child I had trouble pacing myself, and I had spent all of my energy on the first leg of the journey, skating ahead of the group and back over and over. I had probably skated the equivalent of two canal lengths already! My fatigue was genuine however there was no one in the group prepared to piggyback me all the way to the car.

So, my Mom announced that we had been skating uphill all the way, so that means going back is all downhill and it should be an easy skate. The adults in the group must have struggled to keep a straight face as I said Oh really?, and took off in the direction of the car! I didn't utter so much as a peep on the way back. After, with rosy cheeks and tired muscles, we sat around drinking hot chocolate feeling wonderful. Years later the topic came up, and as foolish as I felt for having fallen for her tale, I had to laugh!

Meredith Flannery, Halifax, Nova Scotia

To contribute your own
Winter Green story email it to:
info@goforgreen.ca

Make Winter Green A Natural Occurrence . . . Integrate Winter Into Your Lifestyle.

Reduce those fossil fuels

- walk to the corner store instead of taking the (fuel emission producing) car and allow the blood to circulate through inactive veins;
- before you leave, don't forget to turn the lights out and the heat down;
- hang clothes on the line and lengthen the life of your clothes.

Make an event an everyday activity

Let's take the 'events' out of winter and make them 'natural' experiences. For example; instead of having that outdoor skating party just once a year, make outdoor skating a part of your daily or weekly routine. Try your hand at making a backyard rink or ask your community recreation director about building a community outdoor rink in your neighbourhood.

Experience Winter No Matter What The Conditions- Rain, snow, sleet, or sunshine go Winter Green:

Old Tyme Winter

- put socks over leather-soled shoes to keep from slipping on the ice;
- take a moonlight winter walk in stead of curling up in front of the television;
- gather your neighbours and friends for a pond skate;
- harness the sleighs or the toboggan to anything that will pull you;
- build a family snow sculpture;
- build a snow fort so high you can stand in it;
- walk or ski quietly in the woods, watch the winter birds;
- make your own luge run;
- take your flashlight and a buddy to the park, or for a walk down the street, or better yet, take the whole family;
- look, waaaaay up, no, not at the Friendly Giant, but the winter night sky.

Make a date with your neighbour

Isn't it remarkable that we often don't see our neighbours from the time the rake is put away in the fall until the rake is pulled out again in the spring— except maybe to shovel the driveway. If you would like to have occasion to see your neighbours more often:

- have a snowman making contest— you make the rules;
- challenge your neighbour to see who can build the best snow fort
- have a winter wear fashion show contest with or without snow to see who can come up with the wackiest combination of winter outerwear;
- although garage sales are usually reserved for the spring, summer and fall, there is no reason why there couldn't be one in the winter

A Winter Green Challenge For You . . . Try Something New!

- toboggan
- snowshoe
- snow-board
- ski (alpine or cross country)
- hike
- skate
- camp
- make a snow sculpture/fort
- bike
- go bird watching
- take a walk in the park
- make a back yard rink
- go for a winter treasure hunt
- go stargazing
- recycle your Christmas tree
- make snow angels
- shovel the walk
- go dog sledding
- play snow soccer
- play snow-ball— played like soft ball
- go winter golfing
- share your favourite personal Winter Green story for our web page

