

The following individuals were recognized at the 2009 CCC AGM for their outstanding contribution to promoting and supporting the sport of cross-country skiing in Canada.

DAVE REES AWARD (Blair Dunbar, AB)

Nominated by: Mike Argue and Sarah Daitch

At this year's AGM of Cross Country Canada, Blair Dunbar was awarded the Dave Rees Award for long-term volunteer commitment to cross country skiing in Canada. The award is given annually by CCC to deserving candidates who are chosen by the Women on Skis Committee which is charged with soliciting, receiving and vetting nominations.

This year's recipient began his involvement almost 40 years ago in Inuvik when he and his new bride, Linda, moved from Vancouver to begin their northern adventure which ended only a few years ago when they moved south to Canmore, Alberta. In 1971 Blair, then new to skiing, jumped right into the melee of race organization by taking on the task of Chief of Timing for the Top of the World Ski Championships, an international event drawing competitors from Europe, United States and Canada. He continued as a key organizer with the Top of the World Championships until 1974 and was involved in many other smaller competition events in the delta and surrounding communities doing all jobs required to put on events from snowshoe packing of race trails to freezing his thumbs on stop watch duty.

At this time the Territorial Experimental Ski Training (TEST) program, hatched in Old Crow Yukon by Father Mouchet in the mid 60's and subsequently based out of Inuvik starting in the early 70's, was in its infancy and Blair, along with Peggy Curtis, co-chaired the group administering the program after which Blair alone took on the chair and proceeded to secure the necessary funding and programming. His help contributed to the successes of the many young skiers (the Firths, Allens, Bullocks, Cooks, and others) who went on to national and international acclaim culminating in Olympic participation. From his experience around the TEST program and Inuvik he eventually moved up to be Chairman of the NWT Ski Division.

In the mid-70's he moved to Ft. Smith and continued to help with the local ski club and co-founded the Ft. Fitzgerald to Ft. Smith ski marathon, an event still in existence today. The late 70's saw Blair and Linda move to Yellowknife where together they instituted the Yellowknife Ski Marathon, a two day overnight event to a lodge and back. Blair continued to learn from the various courses and events put on by CCC and the NWT Division all the while increasing his official certification levels. He continued his race official involvement in a large way as Chief of Competition for the 84, 90, and 98 Arctic Winter Games, all international events involving the circumpolar nations. He featured large in the 93 and 03 Western Canadian Championships in the north as well.

Finally, Blair and Linda moved to Canmore and with retirement from an ADM position with the NWT government, Blair has taken off in the arena of race officiating. Recently, he has been Chief of Controllers and Chief of Stadium at the 05 and 08 Canmore World Cups respectively and will be Chief of Stadium again for the Canmore 2010 WC. Working out of Canmore he was Chief of Competition for the Western Canadians as well. Now Blair is heavily into TD and officials training work as a member of the Events Committee of CCC. His TD assignments are voluminous – Arctic Winter Games 2000 and 2002; NWT Championships 2001 and 2006; Western Canadians 2002, 2005 and 2006; Eastern Canadians: NorAms 2008; Alberta Winter Games and so on. He has organized officials training in Hinton, Hay River, Yellowknife and locations in Alberta.

Blair's voluminous involvement has not gone un-noticed by others as well. He was named the NWT Official of the Year in 2000, NWT Contributor to Sport in 2003 and Cross Country Alberta Official of the Year in 2005.

Throughout all of these years of being a front line volunteer, Blair has been supported by his wife, Linda, (a consummate, long-time volunteer in her own right) whom he called up to the front for recognition after having received his award. Dave Rees, on site this year to present the award, said it was a great pleasure and honour to be able to personally present the award to Blair.



(Credit: Mike Neary)

Photograph: Blair Dunbar receiving the Dave Rees Award from Olympian Dave Rees, for whom the award is named. The painting is done by one of Blair's favorite artists.

FIRTH AWARD (Co-winner: Jean Bristow, ON)

Nominated by: Jean Funk

Jean Bristow has been an active volunteer in the sport of cross-country skiing since the early 1980's, initially as a youth (Jack Rabbit) leader and club executive member, then progressing as a Division Representative and Chair of the Women's Committee for Cross Country Canada. She currently serves as CCC's Chair of the Clubs and Memberships committee. Jean continues to race at the Master's level, spending part of this past year training and racing in the World Master's races in Europe.



(Credit: Mike Neary)

Photograph: A surprised Jean Bristow receives the award from CCC's Women on Skis Chair, Maureen Kershaw

FIRTH AWARD (Co-Winner: Milaine Thériault, AB)

Nominated by: Women on Skis Committee and CCC's ski team members

Milaine Thériault is a three time Olympian who continues to train and race. She continues to be an important “hero” and mentor for young athletes in Canada, serving as an inspiration for those who “dream big”. She has lead the CP Heroes and Mentors initiative over the past three years, holding sessions for young girls in Quebec City, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, and Newfoundland. Milaine was also one of the three women (Beckie Scott, Sara Renner) who travelled the country for the CP Tournaments. Milaine hails from a small community in New Brunswick, and after racing on the world circuit for over 10 years, now lives in Canmore Alberta. Milaine continues to be an active and important member of CCC's Women on Skis Committee providing first-hand experience in sharing what will help engage and encourage young women to have a life-time of involvement in cross-country skiing.



(Credit: Mike Neary)

Photograph: Thom Holland receiving the award on behalf of Milaine from CCC's Maureen Kershaw

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD (Juneva Green, NWT)

Nominated by: Richard Daitch

Juneva has been the head Jackrabbit instructor in Fort Smith, NWT for nearly thirty years at time, the only leader. Juneva has taught literally hundreds of young people to ski. Among the better known of her former Jackrabbits are Corey McLachlan, the head coach of the Yellowknife Ski Club and Team NWT and former National Team Member, Sarah Daitch. Juneva's patience and positive nurturing of young women, through her skiing instruction and mentoring, has helped give them the confidence that they can succeed in any field of endeavour. She brought both her skills as a teacher and her knowledge of skiing to the task of sharing the joys of cross-country skiing with two generations of youth.

Juneva is also the longest serving member of the Fort Smith Ski Club's executive, having a tour of duty that is in its third decade. For more information on her amazing contributions to skiing refer to the attached nomination submission.



(Credit: Mike Neary)

Photograph: Richard Daitch receiving the award, on behalf of Jeneva, from CCC's President Jim McCarthy.

SPONSOR OF THE YEAR AWARD (Canadian Pacific):

Nominated by: CCC's staff

CANADIAN PACIFIC

Canadian Pacific has been a major partner of cross-country skiing since 2005. Their involvement includes presenting status with the Girls on Track-Heroes and Mentors Program and title of the CP Ski Tournament Program both launched in 2006. As a World Cup sponsor, CP supported the first major international World Cup event at the Canmore Nordic Centre since the 1997 World Junior Nordic Championships in December 2005.

Their investment in the team has extended to hosting receptions and hospitality events at their corporate headquarters in downtown Calgary. Recently CP's support of the Olympic themed "Sea 2 Sea 2 Sea" has helped to engage Canadians from coast to coast to coast in the Olympic movement while enjoying the outdoor winter sport of cross-country skiing. After the second year running, the program now includes a total of 677 participants who have skied almost 750,000 kilometers. More than 60% of participating teams attained the silver level of 6000 kms this past year. This program has a long list of staged recognition awards. The corner stone of the program will come in Dec 09 when the CP All Canadian Ski Team will be announced. This includes a trip to Whistler to cheer on the Canada at the cross-country venue.

Accepting the Award on behalf of CP was John Anderson from Thunder Bay, ON. John is the Yard Manager for CP's Thunder Bay operations and is one of CP's 47 Olympic bound employees. John has spent many years volunteering as a coach and referee with local hockey and baseball teams. In 6 years as a civic councilor in Schreiber, he helped raise the community's profile and also helped it become the first small community in Ontario to ban smoking in locations where children under 18 could enter. As President of the Thunder Bay District Municipal League, John helped reenergize and opened opportunities for prosperity in the City of Thunder Bay and the communities and villages around it. John is also a member of the Zero Waste Action Team that promotes the reuse, reduction, and elimination of waste.



(Credit: Mike Neary)

Photograph: John Anderson and his wife Emily receiving a photograph of the CCC ski team from CCC's Dave Dyer.

MEDIA AWARD (Gary Kingston – Vancouver Sun and Terry Bell – The Province)

Nominated by: Chris Dornan and CCC's Staff

Gary Kingston and Terry Bell have been covering amateur and professional sports in Canada for more than three decades in British Columbia. When Canada was awarded the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in July of 2002, Kingston and Bell were tasked with getting up-to-speed on each of Canada's 14 Olympic and Paralympic winter sports.

Over the last four years, both of the dedicated journalists have led the national coverage of cross-country skiing in the track towards 2010. Representing competitive papers, Kingston and Bell spent the 2008-09 season covering team announcements in Vancouver, the World Cup and Para-Nordic World Cup competition at Whistler Olympic/Paralympic Park, and kept Canadians on west coast updated on the progress Canadian cross-country skiers were making at World Cup and World Championship events around the world.

Kingston and Bell are tireless workers, and extremely passionate at telling the inspirational stories of all of Canada's greatest Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

Cross Country Canada is extremely grateful for their efforts in helping to raise awareness of the sport in Canada from the grassroots level to our Olympic and Paralympic Heroes targeting the podium in 2010 and beyond.