



VOLUNTEER WALL OF FAME

Jim McCarthy, ON



1. What type of organizations do you volunteer for?

Most of my volunteering in recent years has been for Cross Country Canada (CCC) as a member of the Board of Directors, and for Nakkertok Ski Club as an event organizer.

2. What is the most rewarding part about volunteering?

Regarding CCC, the national sports organization, the most rewarding part is having kept the organization focussed on delivering its mission & mandate, and to have helped it avoid distractions, many of which were caused by people issues. Given that this is a somewhat political role, this is necessarily a matter of perception - certainly my own perception - since others may not share my own view of how I played my role.

Regarding event organizing, it is easier to respond. I have played critical roles at my home club as Event Chair or Competition Chair (or both simultaneously) on seven CCC-sanctioned competitive events from 2001 to 2012, including five Eastern Canadian Championships, most of which have played host to up to 600 athletes. It is enormously satisfying to pull off a successful major event, and even more to do so repeatedly. In the case of the 2013 event, where I had to withdraw for health reasons, I was able to see the people I had trained and mentored over the years pull off the most successful event ever.

3. What do you have to say about all the volunteers who make events possible?

I am constantly amazed at the numbers of people who put themselves forward for what are often quite dull and repetitive (or even unpleasant) roles, often year after year. At the other extreme, some of the tasks are very demanding and complex, and people show up year after year. Success of these events depend very heavily on a very small cadre of volunteer coordinators, who create volunteer lists, and are unafraid to ask people to donate their time and energies.

4. Finish this sentence: I volunteer because... if I (and others) don't volunteer, things won't happen! My initial volunteering was intended to ensure that there would be activities for my own children. However, this only really works if it is done on a collective and cooperative basis. The cooperative volunteer spirit and philosophy are enormously important in the success of my home club, and clearly in other clubs as well - and it ultimately drives CCC as a whole.