

CRAZY EIGHTS

By Steve Motta

Way back when I was a kid, the options available for my Mom to calm "four out of control kids" were limited. The iPad would not be introduced for another 45 years. Her preferred option was always "Go play outside." However, if it was raining, number two on the "calm down" list was "Let's play cards."

After a few rounds of Fish we always moved on to Crazy Eights. We loved it for the opportunity to spite each other with strategically timed: suit changes, pick-up twos and miss your turns. A well-timed spite play could make your neighbour CRAZY.

At the time we had no idea that the game was named after the United States military designation for the discharge of mentally unstable (CRAZY) soldiers, Section 8. So what does this have to do with skiing at Castle Mountain?

Well... it turns out, there is an equally fun version of Crazy Eights played by mentally unstable skiers and boarders here at Castle Mountain. Except it's called "Powder Eights."

I was first introduced to Powder Eights in 2002 and have never stopped playing. Here is my story:

It was a blustery day at the top of the Red Chair. I had just ridden single with some twenty- something dude who was experiencing his first day at Castle. The snow was good, but not excellent. Until ... opportunity knocked.

After sliding off the lift, Tom Tataryn, the CMR general manager at the time, waved me down and said, "You have to compete."

I said, "In what?"

He said, "Powder Eights."

I said "Why?"

He said, "Because Havey's has been closed all week and the snow is 18 inches deep."

I said "Who will I ski with?"

He said, "How about the dude you just rode with?"

I said, "We're not registered."

He said, "No worries."

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER Opening Day! 5 Boarderline Takeover DJ, Films, Special Drinks Movie Night at the Lodge Warren Miller "Sno-Ciety" CMCA's Ski Season Opening 13 Potluck Ugly Christmas Sweater Contest 17 Ski With Santa 25 Night Skiing on Green 31 New Years Eve Fireworks 31 New Years Eve Day Lodge Party 31

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Fifteen minutes later, twenty-something dude and I are at the top of a deep and uncut Havey's Dream making up our strategy. He will go first. Nice round turns. Medium fast speed. I will be a full turn behind him. The snow is deep. The pitch is steep. Who cares if we finish, we've already won.

Typically Powder Eights skiers are judged on style, symmetry, speed and the quality of the eights they leave behind. I think smiles should be added to the judging criteria. It's super fun!

After a qualifying run up high, we were asked to return an hour later for the finals on an uncut lower Havey's. The dude and I swung by the cabin for a grilled cheese and a beer. Back at Havey's we laid down a second run, equally fun and good enough for second place.



I've not competed since, but regularly play Powder Eights all over Castle. Here are some of my favourite experiences:

Guest Eights - teaching our house guests how to play.

Stealth Eights - eighting the turns of my buddies without them knowing it.

Groomer Eights - usually on Huckleberry or High Noon first thing in the morning.

Selfie Eights - no partner, just two back to back solo runs on a quiet midweek day.

Cookies and Milk - they go equally well after Crazy 8's or Powder 8's

And my best Powder Eight experience ever: Mid-week in 2013 I boarded the kilometre long natural half pipe called OK Corral top to bottom, through the gully in 10" of uncut fresh pow. After riding it, I had to go back for seconds. Once there, I found no one had touched my first tracks... top to bottom... they had to be eighted... CRAZY FUN, CRAZY EIGHTS!



Steve Motta

Skier, boarder, Castle passholder since 1999. I was less grey when this was taken...

WANT TO BE A BETTER SKIER? WORK ON YOUR FEET!

By Alecia Williams, Head Coach and Certified Fitness Trainer at WILDR Fitness

One hundred and thirty. That's how many days I had on snow in 2010. And I'll be honest... it was amazing. To spend over a third of the year skiing is a dream many skiers have, and I was no different. I was feeling on top of the world, until I tried to do a simple bodyweight squat in the gym. This seemingly simple movement was impossible. The first time I tried, I nearly fell over.

While those 130 days of skiing were amazing, wearing the equivalent of a plaster cast around both ankles 4-6 days a week had some serious unforeseen consequences.

It took me years to understand and overcome the tightness and weakness in my feet, ankles, and calves, but solving this problem didn't just fix my squat; it actually improved my balance, reaction time and power on snow as well.

What Skiers Neglect The Most: Foot and Ankle Function

Fifteen years later, I'm now help-

ing skiers get ready for their best seasons ever through at-home strength-training programs and, of course, mobility.

When I start working with a skier, the first thing we assess is their ankle and lower leg mobility.

Try this right now (even inside your ski boots).

Can you lift your big toe and press all the little toes down?

Can you switch? Big toe down, little toes up?

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Can you lift your arches without "eagleclawing" your toes?

Can you squat without your heels coming off the ground?

In my experience, most skiers struggle with these micro-movements.

Our feet are incredible. There are over 20 muscles that act on the foot, helping us to balance, to absorb force when landing, to jump and run and walk without us even thinking about it.

Although our range of motion through our feet and lower legs are reduced while we're in our ski boots, our feet are still moving inside. That's why it feels so good to take your ski boots off at the end of the day!

Those 20+ muscles are all influencing movements up the muscular chain (i.e. quads, hamstrings, hips, glutes). When you have decreased ankle, foot flexibility, and strength, you're demanding

more from the rest of your body, actually making skiing harder.

The BEST thing you can do after a day on snow is spend five to ten minutes working on your foot strength and flexibility. Think of it as giving your feet a thank-you for helping you enjoy a day on the slopes.

Pop this simple combo into your routine:

- 1. Roll the bottoms of your feet with a ball for two minutes.
- 2. Stretch your ankles with a toes to nose stretch and a toe pointing stretch. Our ski boots restrict these actions, called dorsi and plantar flexion.
- 3. Strengthen your feet.

Try spreading your toes apart as far as you can. Once spread, lift your big toes and press your little toes down. Then switch.

Here's another exercise. Try to lift your foot arches without scrunch-

ing your toes... it's harder than you think!

Even if you can't do the above exercises, just by trying, you're making progress. All these little muscles take time to "wake up" after being stuck in your boot.

While recovery for the rest of your body is vital as well, a little time spent thanking your feet can go a long way to making your season longer, and you, a better skier!



Alecia Williams is the Head Certified Coach and Fitness Trainer with WILDR fitness, where she helps

skiers, hikers, and runners from across the world find more joy in the sport they love through fitness. After all, training in the gym shouldn't take time away from the sports you love... it should increase your capacity to interact with the world around you.

Find out more about her training programs, including her online 8-Week Pre-Ski Fitness program, as well as free resources and tools at www.wildr.ca.



WEEKDAY POWDER

What could beat powder Not cash, not cake, just one thing A Weekday's powder

Graham Czibere

SECOND ANNUAL **CMCA FAMILY** CARNIVAL

Saturday, February 14 | 6:00-10:00 PM

The lodge will be bursting with excitement for our Family Day Carnival! Join us for an evening full of games for all ages, great prizes, and plenty of laughter and antics... It's an entertaining, skill-testing, rivalrysparking night you won't want to miss-fast becoming a true community tradition!



PHOTO BY MICHELE FRASER

CMCA PRESIDENT'S REPORT - WINTER 2025-2026

By Tim Luke

Welcome to another exciting winter at Castle. There is so much to look forward to this season with the opening of the Stagecoach Express and the 60th Anniversary celebrations.

We have a full line up of CMCA events this year starting with the Warren Miller Movie on opening weekend, Potluck on Dec 13th, Fireworks on NYE, King and Queen of the Castle on Jan 18th, and the Family Day Carnival on Feb 14th. Our Hot Choc Team will be out again this year, and I believe the Easter Bunny will be arriving on April 5th. I am always

amazed at how our community comes together to make these events happen. If you would like to join our team of volunteers, please let me know.

At the AGM, I was proud to share that the CMCA donated \$5,000 over the past year to support our local clubs and charities. Each year, our goal is to give back as much as we can to the community that supports us. If you know of a charity or organization that could benefit from our support, please send me a brief outline we'd love to consider adding them to our list.

The other big news at the AGM was the awarding of the Dieter Award to Kevin Finn and Michele Fraser and the Mother Goose Award to Marie Cameron. There was not a dry eye in the crowd. We are all so fortunate to have such incredible humans here at Castle.

The LiftLine Team is always looking for stories. If you have an idea for a person to spotlight or a story to be told, please share it with us. See you on the slopes.



Tim Luke







FIRESMART COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT REPORT WE ARE NOT THERE YET

By Carolyn Armstrong



PHOTO BY CAROLYN ARMSTRONG A fuel nightmare!

Date of Assessment Walk-Through: September 12, 2025

Conducted by: Nicole Boissoneault (FireSmart Officer PCES, Local FireSmart Representative), and Iris Reed (FireSmart Officer PCES) and, Glenn and Carolyn Armstrong (FireSmart Focus Group)

Purpose of the Assessment:

As part of FireSmart Canada's Neighbourhood Recognition Program Requirements, our team conducted a walk-through of the entire community and resort to evaluate wildfire risks and identify areas needing improvement. The Wildland Fire Hazard Assessment Report plays a vital role in helping us understand these hazards and how to effectively reduce them.

Assessment Findings by Nicole Boissoneault

Our neighbourhood is adjacent to wildlands with accumulated fuels.

What We're Doing Well

- Over 75% of homes have fire-rated roofing materials (metal, clay, or asphalt shingles).
- Over 75% of homes have non-combustible gutters, with roofs and gutters kept clean.
- 50-75% of homes have non-combustible or ignition-resistant siding.
- Over 75% of homes have tempered or multi-pane windows.

Where We're Falling Short

- · Less than 5% of homes have non-combustible decks with no combustible materials underneath.
- Only 5% of homes have treated the Intermediate Zone (5-10m from structure).
- Only 5% of homes have treated the Extended Zone (10-30m from structure).



PHOTO BY CAROLYN ARMSTRONG
Dense conifers both living and dead, with no limbing done, dry grass leading straight up into the trees – our community and resort doesn't have a fighting chance to survive a wildfire if this is part of our neighbourhood.

Nicole's Comments:

"Even though some work has already been done, the fire risk in the area remains high. One of the biggest concerns is the current location of campers [trailers]. Once they are moved to the new location, a good clean-up in the area is recommended. Thinning and trimming the trees, along with cutting the grass, will significantly help reduce the risk.

Another key concern is the 0-1.5 metre zone around each structure.

... We need to address the other fire hazards in this zone, such as stored firewood piles, dead and or dying trees, tall grass, and nearby shrubs. All of these factors increase the risk, not only to your own home but to the entire neighbourhood.

Other hazard risks include:

Combustibles are still being stored on decks and/or below decks.

Abundant mature conifers within 25m of buildings are untreated, branches reaching the ground and/or touching buildings.

Remember the work that has been done and that is being done must be maintained on an ongoing basis."

Why This Matters and Dispelling the Myth: "No matter what I do, I can't save my home and community from wildfire."

Up to 90% of homes lost in wildfires are ignited by embers, not direct flame contact. This means that

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communities burn from within due to vulnerabilities close to homes.

FireSmart Practices Dramatically Improve Home Survival

According to the latest (2024) findings from the Catastrophic Loss Institute of Canada, applying FireSmart mitigation practices can increase a home's chance of survival by 80-90% — depending on how thoroughly the measures are implemented.

These findings highlight the powerful impact that proactive preparation can have in protecting homes and communities from wildfire threats.



PHOTO BY CAROLYN ARMSTRONG Primed to burn!

What You Can Do Next

Clear the 0-1.5m zone around your home of all combustibles.



PHOTO BY CAROLYN ARMSTRONG TRAILER PARK We did a thorough clean out of this area 2 years ago, the only evidence anything was done was the limbing up of the trees. It doesn't amount to much when combustible debris piles create the perfect bonfire conditions to reach more than 2m up off the ground.

Remove dead trees, dry grass and shrubs near structures. Trim lower tree branches up 2 meters.

Avoid storing combustibles under decks or against buildings, properly store firewood

Treat the Intermediate (5–10m) and Extended Zones (10-30m) around your property, and maintain defensible space.

Let's Work Together to Stay **FireSmart**

Let's work together to make our community and resort FireSmart, safer, and more resilient because wildfire defense starts with all of us.

For more information, visit: https://firesmartcanada.ca and https://firesmartalberta.ca

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

IA	NUARY
Alpenland Demo Day	3
Yoga in the Day Lodge 6:3 SkiMo Races	0 4
	9-11
Century Party (Dress as 8	30 14
years older you) King and Queen of the Ca	etle 10
Trivia Night at the T-Bar	
	RUARY
Karaoke in the T-Bar	1
Torchildht Parade	/
Family Day Carnival	14
IIIVia III liie I-Dai	เบ
Night Skiing on Green	15
IFSA Big Mountain	20-22
Competition	
	MARCH
Karaoke	1
International Women's Day	Trivia 8
Night in the T-Bar	
Western Day	14
Movie Quote Game in the	
WCSC U16 Western	16-20
Championship	
St. Patrick's Day	
Beats in the Base	17
(Tentative Start)	
Tom Tatryn Race	21
Beats in the Base	21-23
Hawaiian Day	28
Beats in the Base	28-29
Beats in the Base Karaoke Roulette in the T-	Bar 29
	- APRIL
Rail Jam	4
	-
Retro Day Beats in the Base	4-5
Easter Egg Hunt	5
Laster Lyg Hullt	Ú

Tentative Closing Day

6

CASTLE SNOWBOARD CLUB

RIDE TOGETHER, PROGRESS TOGETHER

We're a youth-focused, team- spirited snowboard club where riders of all levels can improve their technique and share the love of snowboarding in a fun and supportive environment.

Our first day on snow is Saturday, January 10, 2026, kicking off nine Saturday sessions full of learning and laughter.

For details, email us at: castlesnowboardclub@gmail.com



CASTLE MOUNTAIN LEGACY FUND

By Karen Harker



The Castle Community Legacy Fund (CCLF) is about honouring the legacy of past generations and building upon that to create a strong and positive legacy for current and future generations of the Castle Community. The intention of the CCLF is to maintain and enrich a quality experience for all those living, working and recreating in and around our community.

This endowment fund has already

reached \$59,000 in donations with accrued interest of \$2.800 available now for initiatives that will support mental health and physical well-being in our community. Watch for more information on a speaker/doer series during the 25-26 ski season that involves community members and staff coming together to enjoy each others company while learning, listening and/or playing.

Would you like to be a part of this initiative? To donate to this legacy fund, contact the Community Foundation of Lethbridge and Southern Alberta at 1 (403) 328-5297 or office@cflsa.ca.

If you have ideas for the speaker/doer series coming this winter season, please contact Karen Harker at kgharker@gmail.com



PHOTO CREDIT: NORBU LAMA, NEPAL Karen has been a Castle local since the early 80's. Favourite run is Drifter, especially on a sunny powder day.





WESTCASTLE SKI CLUB

By Litisha Miller



PHOTO BY PAM KEATING

The 2024/2025 season was a successful one for the Westcastle Ski Club with 58 athletes from U6 to FIS. The club hosted a U14 race in January and held a fun end of year club relay for all age groups. Every age group attended several races around the province and in BC earning many medals and having lots of fun with their teammates and coaches while racing and exploring new terrain.

This year, we're proud to have Westcastle Ski Club and Castle Mountain Resort hosting the **U16** Western Championships from March 16-20, 2026.

https://albertaalpine.ca/calendar/?M=3&Y=2026#null

This event will require an army of volunteers to be available for mid-week races with the potential of over 200 racers competing each day from AB, BC, SK, MB and YK. There will be events running simultaneously on different parts of the hill each day (Lone Ranger/Sidewinder and

Jelly Roll/Whiskey Jack). There will be both on-snow and off-snow volunteers required (sign-up links will be shared in the future). Please note that those wishing to volunteer for on-course positions are required to have at least their Officials Level 1 certification through Alpine Canada and be registered with one of the Provincial organizations (i.e. Alberta Alpine).

There will also be volunteer help needed in preparation leading up to the race. If you see club members moving or maintaining b-net, don't be afraid to ask if they could use a helping hand.

If you are open to renting out your cabin for the week, there are probably still clubs looking to stay on hill if anything is available.

Westcastle ski club is also looking for sponsorships to support equipment purchases of additional gates, b-net and timing equipment to facilitate this race and future training and events.

If you wish to donate time, money or rent out your cabin please litishamiller@westcascontact tle.org for further information.



Litisha Miller

Treasurer and Race Administrator for the Westcastle Ski Club. Litisha has been skiing/boarding at Castle since 2003, when

she first came to Canada from New Zealand working that season in the Ticket Office and Daylodge. Now with two boys in the club, she has been involved with the club through volunteer roles for over 10 years.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Accommodation Needed for Western U16 Event:

If anyone is interested in renting, please email Stay@skicastle.ca.

New Year's Eve party is Gatsby theme, tickets on sale soon!

Castle's 60th Anniversary Celebration

We're excited to announce a special edition Castle Beer - Deep Tracks -Light Lager in collaboration with our local favorite, Oldman Brewery. Cheers to 60 years of unforgettable turns! Available the T-bar and lodge bar.

Après Ski Live Music on Saturdays

Join us every Saturday at 6 PM for live music at the T-Bar. Expect a more mellow vibe with the earlier start—perfect for winding down after a great day on the slopes.

DID YOU KNOW?



Over the past 3-4 years, Teresa Hlady of Pincher Creeks's FLOUR has donated many dozen sourdough loaves to Michele & Kevin's opening Sunday chili fest for staff. Huge thanks to her!

AUTUMN UPDATE FROM THE MD OF PINCHER CREEK

By Dave Cox, Councillor, MD of Pincher Creek

Greetings everyone.

It certainly was an unusual summer in the MD. June's lack of rain had many of us watching the skies with growing concern, but July came through with some much-needed downpours that helped turn things around. Even so, groundwater levels remain low, and we've seen increased demand on the MD's standpipes as a number of wells have gone dry.

The dam level, while slowly receding, is still holding above the traditional intake points for the water treatment plant. The province expects those intakes to remain in water, but with conditions still on the dry side, a Level 1 water restriction remains in effect across the MD.

Despite the weather challenges, the MD's workload has been

moving along steadily. Road maintenance continues, snow fencing is going up in preparation for winter, and both weed control and grass mowing are wrapping up for the season. Several other projects are also underway as we close out the year's work.

The Pincher Creek Emergency Services Commission has been actively promoting FireSmart practices throughout the MD, with a particular focus on the Castle Mountain Resort area. Work is progressing on a proposed fireguard for the region, guided by the Wildfire Mitigation Strategy developed for the MD. It's been inspiring to see the Castle Community and Resort's commitment—both in funding hands-on efforts—to making their area more resilient to wildfire. (You can find the full Wildfire

Mitigation Strategy report on the PCESC website.)

This fall also brought local government elections. I put my name forward once again to represent Division 3, and since no one ran against me, I've been acclaimed —along with all the other MD councillors. While that means there won't be a formal candidates' forum this time, I remain fully available to residents. Please don't hesitate to reach out by email or phone if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas to share. With winter on the way, here's hoping for a healthy snowfall to support the hills and help replenish our water supplies across the MD.



Dave Cox 403-627-8164 CouncilDiv3@mdpinchercreek.ab.ca

NEW YEAR'S EVE FIREWORKS

Wednesday, December 31

with our spectacular fireworks display, a community favorite for all ages!



This event is organized by CMR, with generous support from the CMCA and the MD of Pincher Creek.

Bundle up, bring the family, and enjoy this sparkling start to the new year!

MOVIE NIGHT AT THE LODGE

Saturday, December 6 Doors open at 6:30 PM Movie starts at 7:00 PM

Join us for a cozy evening at the lodge! Admission is free, but donations are welcome to help support the New Year's Eve Fireworks and the CMR Ski Clubs.

Movie is Warren Miller's SNO-CIETY.



2ND ANNUAL CMCA GOLF CLASSIC

By Dave Clement

After having to cancel our original date in June due to a Historic Rain Event and rescheduling for Sept. 13, 2025, we ended up with a picture-perfect day at Waterton Lakes Golf and Country Club. A total of 66 players were able to make the rescheduled date with appearances by Elvis and Yogi Bear. The goal of the event was twofold: (A) to provide a fun summer activity for the Castle community, and (B) to raise funds for the FireSmart Initiative around Castle Mountain Resort.

Thanks to everyone's participation and tremendous corporate support,

we raised just over \$18,000. From this, we donated \$1,500 split between the food banks in Pincher Creek and Crowsnest Pass, Pincher Creek Women's Shelter, and Camp Canyon in Waterton.

The remaining funds are being used to support the important FireSmart work on the hill.

Thanks again to all our sponsors who made this event so successful.

Check out the link below for a great video of the event!

(D) https://shorturl.at/Blkem



HEART OF THE RED CHAIR BY JULIE HEINRICH



Julie Heinrich, Artist

JKH.Watercolour

Julie Heinrich's art and commissions are available at the Lebel Mansion in Pincher Creek, the Beaver Mines' Mercantile, Alpenland at Castle Mountain Resort and online at JKH.Watercolour on Instagram.

SICK DAYS

Spending sick days at Castle is no lie, I'll contest
As sick has more meanings than a body's duress
Our vernacular's changed such that slang is now stressed
And "Sick" in our slang's not a viral infest
If a day is "sick" it means it's the best
So upon our bosses, sick's new usage must be impressed

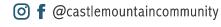


Graham Czibere

CMCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Look for the next edition MARCH 2026

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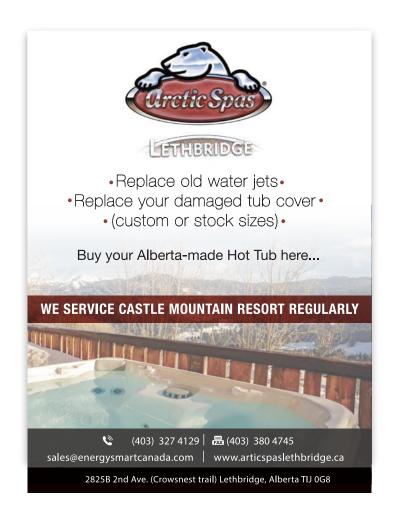
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See my website for more options

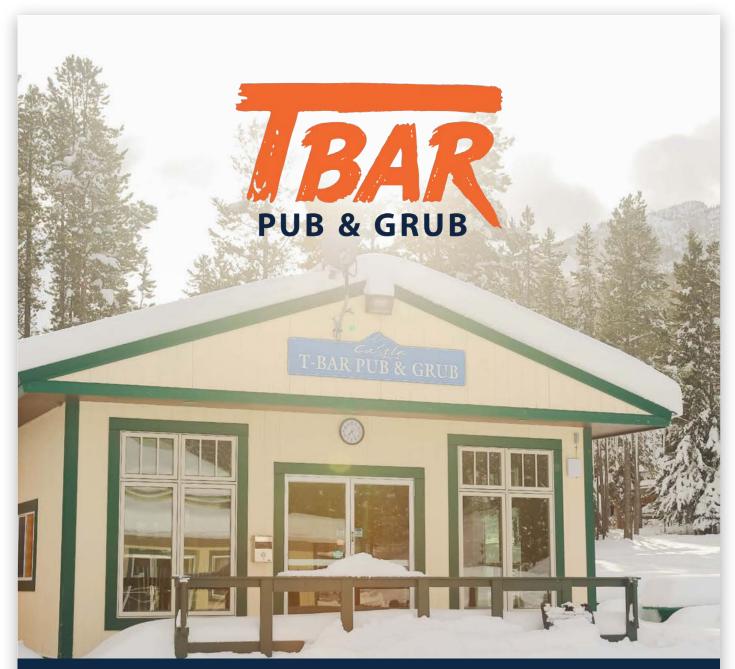
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HOURS OF OPERATION

MONDAY - THURSDAY: 3 PM - 12 AM FRIDAY - SATURDAY: 11 AM - 2 AM SUNDAY: 11 AM - 12 AM

Holiday hours vary. See skicastle.ca/hours for current hours.

VIEW OUR MENU:

