

## NORDIC NEIGHBORHOOD

Daryl, Daryl, And Harry?

By Jonathan Wiesel

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Hmm, I think I wrote recently that XC operators may be a little too sobersided. After hearing about changes at **Viking Nordic** in southern Vermont, maybe I'd better revise that assessment. Actually, no "maybe" about it.

Viking aims to be Number One with kids. Yeah, they're adding a trail or two for everyone and they've upgraded furnishings in the Guest House (802-824-3933, [skiandstay@vikingnordic.com](mailto:skiandstay@vikingnordic.com)). But more importantly, managers Malcolm and Dana McNair have created a full entertainment menu for kids, whether they're skiing or snowshoeing. In particular, they're expanded the terrain park, put up wind chimes as snowball targets (great "dingggg!" sounds), and continued their cookie reward game.

"Harry" debuted last year in the terrain park. He's a friendly blue eight-foot-tall snow creature who'll be joined by two brothers (could be twins) this year. Malcolm McNair says, "Since they don't talk much, we'll be asking our skiers to help name them – maybe Daryl and Daryl?"

The terrain park (maybe they should call it a "Blue Monster Park"?) is located right off a huge sun deck and features a Viking ship, flags, snow creatures, and piles of snow sized for kids to climb up and ski down.

What else is new? Snowball target ranges are located out on the trail system at natural rest areas, such as a top of hill. "We want to give skiers, especially young ones, a fun way to rest, catch their breath, and enjoy winter," says McNair. With a decent snowball toss, you can ring the chimes hanging from nearby trees; and if the toss goes astray, voilà! a snowball fight.

Viking cookie reward game gives skiers 12 and under the chance to earn a free goodie by skiing to stations out on the trails. If you visit five snowflake stations, all reachable by a very young skier, you get a homemade cookie. The program is popular with parents too since it encourages kids to venture a little farther, at least until they've earned their treat.

This all sounds amazing for kids, but now what are they going to do to keep adults entertained?