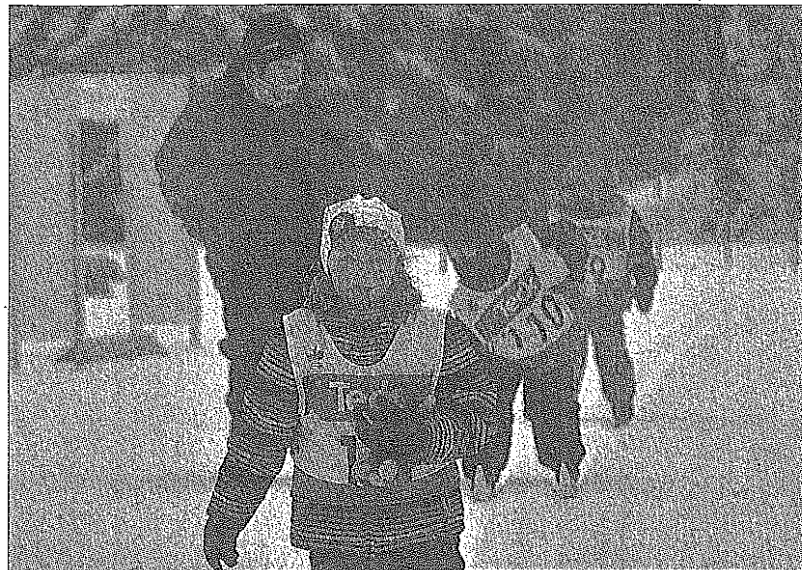
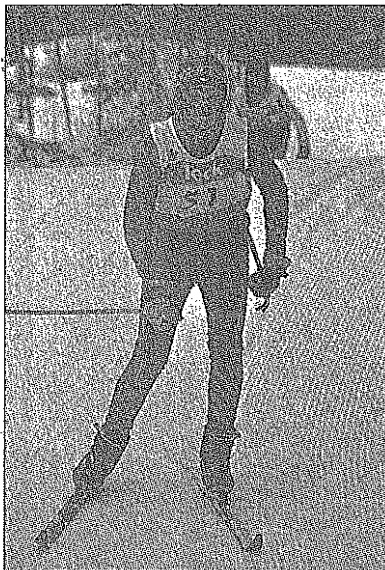


▼ COMMUNITY

Omenica Ski Club on a winning roll



WALTER STRONG PHOTOS

Ava Nealis (L) in the new Omenica Ski Club team outfits last weekend in Burns Lake. She and club racer Anna Shaffer will be competing in the Feb. 20 - 23, 2014 B.C. Winter Games in Mission. Mixed atom boys and girls (R) come into the finishing gates this past weekend for the 2014 Teck Northern Cup and Omineca Open.

Burns Lake youth racers have training and skills to take on the best of the West

WALTER STRONG

Young skiers with the Omenica Ski Club have been having a great competition season.

Ava Nealis and Anna Shaffer have qualified for the BC Winter Games this year, and will represent Burns Lake cross-country skiing at the BC Winter Games later this month.

Nealis qualified in both biathlon and cross-country, but decided to go with the cross-country event. She would have been strong competition in either event but decided to focus on cross-country racing for the BC Winter Games.

Locals Cole Bender, Nisa Hofer, Ava and Kyle Nealis had a phenomenal weekend in Prince George at the Otway Nordic Ski Centre Canadian Western Biathlon Championships.

On Feb. 1, Bender took first place in the 3.75 kilometre sprint event, Hofer took second, and Kyle Nealis took sixth. They were competing in a field of 18 competitors from across Western Canada.

Bender didn't just win his category, he dominated it. His closest male rival was in third place, more than a minute-and-a-half

off his time. Bender's greatest threat was club member Nisa Hofer, who came in 51 seconds behind Bender. Hofer's closest female rival was more than a minute-and-a-half off her time.

Ava Nealis took second in the her junior girls 4.5 kilometre sprint event.

The next day, Bender took second in his five kilometre sprint event against 17 competitors, only nine seconds behind first place. Hofer took fourth, beating all female competitors in the category by a similar margin as the day before.

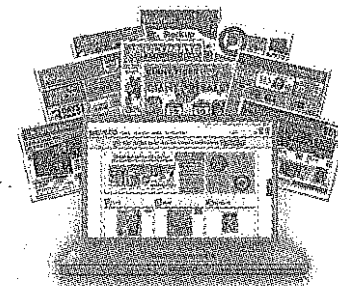
Last weekend the Omenica Ski Club hosted a Teck series cross-country event. Ava and Kyle Nealis both took first in their sub-categories at this weekends mixed category events.

A large contingent of local racers kept the Omineca club placing well in all categories. Anna Shaffer was unable to start in this past weekend's events in Burns Lake due to minor lower leg injury.

The BC Winter Games are in Mission, B.C., Feb. 20 - 23, 2014, and will bring together more than 2000 athletes and even more volunteers.

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