

## **Fine orienteering at Morgan Arboretum**

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Young and old are invited to take part in an orienteering event set for March 2 at the Morgan Arboretum in Ste. Anne de Bellevue.

The sport of orienteering, in this case on either snowshoes or cross-country skis, has people follow a course using a detailed map to find check points on their way to finishing. The March 2 event is being organized by the Ramblers Orienteering Club, which is run by Montrealer John Charlow, who first participated in the sport in 1967.

"It's an activity that attracts people who are very bright," Charlow said, adding you need to think on your feet as you check your map and compass. "We seem to have more professors than students. It's for people who like problem solving — and exercise."

"'Navigation' and 'endurance' are two key words" in this sport, Charlow said, adding a fast competitor will complete their course in an hour but an average time is about 90 minutes. Participants, who can range in age from toddlers to seniors, can either follow a competitive course/map or one designed for beginners.

One Pierrefonds family, with two little boys, took in a recent orienteering event at Bois de Liesse Regional Park.

Denise O Briain said she and her husband, Jeff Secours, like to take part in the more competitive courses but have taken their sons around on the basic-level ones the last two times. She started the sport while in high school when she lived in Victoria, B.C., and then years later introduced it to her husband. They became members of the Ramblers club about six years ago.

"It can be a great family event," O Briain said. "There are a number of courses and levels."

As for herself, O Briain said she excels at map reading and using the compass on the course.

Long-time orienteering enthusiast Karen Oljemark, a Dollard des Ormeaux resident who teaches physical education at John Abbot College, said the sport is a great physical activity but "it doesn't feel like exercise" since participants are busy concentrating on maps and looking for control spots on the course. "It's also very rewarding," she added. "Finding the controls gives you very immediate satisfaction."

Oljemark takes her JAC students out on orienteering courses in the fall and spring as part of their gym program. "We sometimes have 40 to 50 students out there," she said.

The Morgan Arboretum has hosted several orienteering events over the years. "The location is ideal," Charlow said. "We usually have one fall and one winter one there."

The Ramblers club usually has two or three winter events plus about eight spring/summer ones (for walkers/runners). While a compass can be rented from organizers, participants must bring their own skis or snowshoes. For more information, call Charlow at 514-733-5561 or check [www.orientingquebec.ca](http://www.orientingquebec.ca) .



