



UPSLOPE



Newsletter of the NORDIC Ski Touring Section of PATC

Visit Us On the WEB at <http://www.patc.us/chapters/ski/>

January 2014

UpComing Attractions In Winter UPSLOPE

- Updates to Ski Trips
- YOUR Ski Trip Reports

Smiling Snow Gods and Keeping the Faith at Laurel Highlands

by Greg Westernik

On departure day, 1/17, the forecast called for 1-3 inches of snow overnight with no accumulations listed on Saturday thru Sunday, a new clipper on Saturday night and no snow base. We all knew the ominous news that Brian O'Konski had earlier cancelled his STS trip to this same destination for this same week-end. However, six of us (2 instructors and 4 beginners) kept the faith and were rewarded with enough snow, notwithstanding, to deliver and receive 2 days of XC ski instruction during this Learn-to-XC Ski trip.



New skiers at Laurel Mountain photo by Greg Westernik

While Laurel Ridge State Park Ski Touring Center was closed on Saturday, we found the ungroomed blue, green and flatter parts of the red trails quite ready for our teaching and gliding pleasure. The high for the day never exceeded 16° F, we hardly felt the 20 mph winds in the trees and another ½ inch of snow that fell during the daytime to refresh the trails. We started Saturday with 4-5 inches on the ground with no base, and my waxable skis were in fine form. The orange trail section closest to the warming hut was not suitable for working on slope skills, but we tried anyway, found the snow snakes and headed back to the flats. We enjoyed having the warming

(Continued on page 3)

Inside this issue:

(blue links are live)

Your STS Officer Contacts	2
From the Slopes	2
Snow Gods (continued)	3
PATC-STS Schedule	
If I Didn't Know Better...	4
Embrace the Wobble	5
If I Didn't Know Better (cont)	
Snow Rollers	6
Polar Vortex Canaan Valley	7
New Hampshire (cont.)	8
Random Shots from The Past	9

CROSS COUNTRY SKIING IN NH's White Mountains

By Rob Swennes



All photos by Rob Swennes

Fifteen Ski Touring Section members enjoyed 3.5 days of winter sports fun in the White Mountains of NH over the holiday weekend. Most of the group did 2+ days of skiing and a day of snowshoeing. Fresh snow yesterday and this morning made for pleasant skiing. Photo was taken January 19 along the Ellis River Trail at the Jackson Ski Touring Center.

On Friday the group skied up at the Prospect Farm portion of the Jackson Ski Touring Foundation's network of trails. We had never been to this part of the Jackson complex before. It was much higher than the town but had been recently groomed. Things were icy on the main trail network in town, but here conditions were much better. So long as one stayed to the flat and gently rolling terrain, the skiing was fine. But some of the steeper elevations were challenging, particularly for skiers without steel edges on their skis. I took half a dozen falls that day on descents, including one that had me leaving a blood-dripped trail for some time. Wow, a one-day crash course (literally) in

(Continued on page 8)

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FROM THE SLOPES – Chair Notes

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Nordic skiers are ever optimists. Once the weather turns chilly (as it has now in the Washington metropolitan area), we expect that each week will deliver a good layering of snow so that we can strap on the x-country skis that have been waiting so patiently in the corner or closet for this morning to arrive. Of course, the actual weather conditions do not always meet our desires, but they will . . . in time.

Well, that prediction made a couple of months ago has proven to be true. We are in the midst of a real winter in the mid-Atlantic region, not like the wimpy, warmish winters of the previous two years. Though there is plenty of cold, the snow has been more modest. I suspect there has been some good skiing out on the Manassas battlefield, so long as skiers are able to avoid the periodic significant winds in exposed areas.

Other nearby areas are faring well for skiing also. Received an email from friends who claimed conditions were great last weekend at White Grass. Have also received several inquiries about where to rent Nordic skis in the Washington area. Such inquiries are always a good sign that we're having weather that encourages folks to get outside on the skinny skis. But as most of you know, there are no longer any good rental options in the area. Traveling out to Canaan Valley and renting and skiing at White Grass (or New Germany State Park) is generally the best information you can give folks. That will give people the whole experience.

If you have not received or scheduled your ski fix for the season, check out the list of remaining STS ski trips in this issue and see what may still be open for you. For singles looking to ski, there are a few remaining slots available on trips otherwise full. For instance, there is still room for one additional male on the Section's trip to Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons which launches February 8th. This is a major trip (11 days) to an incomparable location. But there are a few slots still available on mid-Atlantic trips as well.



Some skiers are torn about the possibility that their desire to ski may be frustrated by poor weather and they will have to hike instead (see p. 4). This risk may be more acceptable to you if you broaden the possible recreation options to ski -- snowshoe -- hike. As noted in the report in this issue on the Section's recent successful ski trip to New Hampshire, snowshoeing can be a highly satisfying (and at times challenging) addition to your winter recreation choices when waiting for that next big snowstorm to arrive.

Get out and enjoy this winter weather. It will all be gone in another month or two, and the crocuses and other spring flowers will start appearing. When we have our annual après-ski party in the spring, will you have great stories to tell regarding this winter's skiing, or will you have to give an internal sigh, having missed the opportunity once again?

Rob Swennes
 Chairman



Snow Gods (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

hut to ourselves most of the day. After après ski and dinner on Saturday night, all we had left by 10 PM was to hit the sack.

Overnight, the snow gods smiled again and another 2+ inches fell, so Laurel Ridge STC was open for business on Sunday. We headed instead over to Laurel Mountain, near the warming hut. Again the winds were howling, we stayed in the trees and paid no mind. However, on this day the sun broke out and the high temperature for the day was a whopping 28° F. We headed for the groomed trail. On Loop trail, on Lippos, on Towhee, on Bill Alberts I did a lot of double-poling, and did not miss those snow snakes on the rest of the Laurel Mountain trails. When we got to Laurel Summit road, I could not resist. It was time to scratch the SKI SKATING itch....excellent! No snowmobilers, no snow snakes, no dog mushers on Sunday...too bad, so sad, what a country.

Alas, there were no more beginners to teach either, as they had had enough. So we called it a weekend. Many thanks to co-instructor Bonnie Markle and our merry gang of newbies.

As we left all that snow I heard some of the other trip members say, "We gotta come back here again soon and do the rest of these darn trails!" Good luck....so many trails and so little time! I will be leading another trip back to the Highlands on January 31-February 2. I expect



The Not-Rockettes Scientists photo by Greg Westernik

some folks on this trip to reup for my 1/31 trip as well. Payback time?



Where the power to XC ski comes from (pink, who knew?) photo by Greg Westernik



Riding the glide on Lippos' loop photo by Maarten Lemken

Still Time to Renew Your PATC-ST\$ Membership

I am appreciative of all PATC-ST\$ membership renewers out there, but have some points to convey that will smooth the renewal process for all concerned:

- (1) When filling out your checks, please pay to PATC-ST\$ (NOT to PATC or to me personally).
- (2) Please circle the membership class (one year, family, etc) desired; this designation is often omitted.
- (3) If you are a renewing member, and (i) indicate no personal information privacy requests, and/or (ii) indicate no newsletter delivery mode preferences, unless I check with you personally I can only presume no changes from your last previous requests.
- (4) Finally, please write legibly, especially e-mail addresses which cannot be logically / reasonably deduced by any means!

Thanks to all,
Doug Lesar
PATC-ST\$ membership coordinator and recordskeeper

STS Schedule 2013-2014

Several trips so far this season have been cancelled because there was no snow. Let's hope the weather for the rest of the season cooperates! I advise those who haven't signed up for trips to do so. Most of our trips will be cancelled if there is no snow and your check will be returned. Don't wait until the last minute to sign up. This creates problems for the trip leader.

Don't forget to check the trip schedule information on the STS web site: <http://www.patc.us/chapters/ski/trips.htm> for any changes.

Think SNOW!
Kathy Brumberger
Trip coordinator

Date	Place	Leader
Jan 31-Feb 2	Blackwater Falls, WV FULL <i> Cancels if no snow</i>	Ralph Heimlich
Jan 31-Feb 2	Laurel Highlands, PA <i> Cancels if no snow</i>	Greg Westernik
Feb 6-9	Blackwater Falls Deluxe Cabin FULL <i> No cancellation</i>	Kathy and Elliot
Feb 6-11	Stowe, VT CANCELLED	Peggy and Steve
Feb 7-9	Laurel Highlands, PA <i> Cancels if no snow</i>	Greg Rudl
Feb 8-19	Yellowstone/Grand Tetons 1 Male Slot <i> No cancellation</i>	Rob Swennes
Feb 14-17	Ski Dance, Laurel Highland, Camp Sequanota <i> No cancellation</i>	Eliot Applestein
President's Weekend		
Feb 14-17	Blackwater Falls, WV FULL <i> Cancels if no snow</i>	Laurie Welch
President's Weekend		
Feb 21-23	Laurel Highlands, PA FULL <i> Cancels if no snow</i>	Ralph Heimlich
Feb 27-Mar 3	Upstate New York, (Lake Placid/Adirondacks/Tug Hill) <i> Cancels if no snow</i>	Greg Westernik
Feb 28-Mar 2	Oakland, MD <i> Cancels if no snow</i>	Brian O'Konski
Mar 6-17	Estonia <i> No cancellation</i>	Adir Aronovich

If I Didn't Know Better...

...I'd think the Snow Gods had it out for Bela Mariassy and I. This is the second year in a row that we organized a cabin trip to Blackwater Falls on the second weekend in the New Year, and the second year in a row that the entire snow pack in Canaan Valley could be easily shoveled into the trunk of a Miata. I think next year I'll aim for a different weekend because, third time would definitely NOT be charming.

Despite the lack of snow (and the presence of rain...Oh, did I mention the RAIN?), it is hard not to enjoy a relaxing weekend away from the flatlands at Blackwater Falls. The new deluxe cabins on the north side of the canyon are truly de luxe (nice kitchen, 4 bedrooms and 2 full baths, gas fireplace, wi-fi, satellite TV, etc, etc).

On Friday night, all 12 of us enjoyed a pot-luck chili and corn bread meal and got to know each other. Afterwards, several carloads, organized by Al Larsen, headed out for the Purple Fiddle and The Hillbilly Gypsies, a local bluegrass band. While Catherine Payne and several others played some nifty new board games.

We decided against a Bataan Death March on the 9 miler from Canaan to Blackwater and opted instead for a couple of short hikes on the



A Miata-load of skiable snow photo by Suzanne Farace

(Continued on page 6)

Embrace the Wobble and Six Other Lessons of a Novice Cross-Country Skier

Two and half years ago, Hannah Ettema moved to Montana. During her first winter she discovered cross-country skiing. Now in her third Big Sky winter, she passes along some cross-country wisdom gathered thus far.

Embrace the wobble—It's a shaky sport. You'll be gliding down the smallest of hills, a bump really, and all of the sudden you sense sudden doom involving you and a certain pile of snow ahead. The key to it all? Be OK with the wobble. Bend your knees and absorb the bumps and you'll be fine. Or you'll still end up in the snow.

Accept that you will fall down—I have heard of no one, no one, who hasn't fallen down while cross-country skiing. Heck, I fell down last month while standing still and I've been doing it for three years. The best part? Most of the time you'll fall into white fluffy stuff.

Groomed trails are your friend—Now I know, some people are far more adventurous than I and more power to them. But as someone who is still early in their cross-country career, I love me a freshly groomed trail with tracks waiting to take me away. Do a bit of research ahead of time about the state of the trail and you'll be glad. Note - some cross-country skiers take their sport very seriously; be sure you're skiing the right direction of the trail. Sadly, most groomed trails don't permit dogs, so leave Fido at home for this adventure.



Hannah of Montana



Bless you, groomed trails!

Be prepared—It's very possible you've heard this more times than you care to, but really, it's true. When cross-country skiing, it's easy to take a wrong turn that puts you on a longer trail than you were prepared for. Or maybe it'll start blizzarding. It happens. Bring water. For the love of winter, bring snacks. An apple or sandwich on the trail will be the best apple or sandwich you've ever had. And bring layering options. You'll easily get very warm and then bitterly cold.

Downhill skiing and cross-country skiing – not so similar—While they both include the word skiing, don't let that deceive you. For downhill, you are locked and loaded with your skis. They are an extension of your body. It's a beautiful thing. Cross-country is more akin to wearing tennis shoes that are tied to two long toothpicks. Don't get me wrong, I love it. But as a lifelong downhill skier, I was expecting more crossover between the two.

Hills you encounter are equally fun and terrifying—Unless you happen to stumble upon a perfectly flat trail, you will encounter some ups and downs. And that first down is more than a little frightening. But remember tip #1 and you'll be fine. And once you make it down (one way or another) you'll be ready and excited for the next one. Hopefully.

Be ready to be exhausted in the best way possible—Cross-country skiing provides one of the [best full body workouts](#) you can get. What makes cross-country skiing stand apart is how much your upper body plays a role and the combination of "pulling" and "pushing" muscles you'll use. You may not feel it whilst in the white winter wonderland, but your body is working hard. Schedule some time to take it easy, especially after the first few times of the season.

From the [National Forest Foundation Recreation Blog](#) thanks to Peggy Alpert

Are You Already Part of YAHOO GROUPS? Facebook? MEET UP?

If you haven't joined Yahoo Groups, make sure to do it. Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PATC-STS/> Ask to join the group. You will get a confirmation message in your email.

FACEBOOK: Please sign on to the STS Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ski-Touring-Section-Potomac-Appalachian-Trail-Club/226549600733615> and "Like" us. You can easily locate it by putting the phrase "Ski Touring Section" into the search box at the top of the Facebook page. "Likes" are critical for getting status on Facebook and thus for helping others find us when they want information on Nordic skiing.

MEET UP: We are also on Meet Up Groups at <http://www.meetup.com/> Our group name is: Nordic Skiers of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club

If I Didn't Know Better (continued)

(Continued from page 4)

trails leading over the dam and out to Pase Point, overlooking the canyon of the Blackwater. Later, we hiked another loop on the Balsam Fir Trail.



At Lindy Point photo by Suzanne Farace

The weather must have been atrocious, and since the crew had headed out to White Grass Café for lunch, we cocooned in the cabin for another pot-luck dinner on Saturday night.

The rain let up finally on Sunday morning (even had a few feeble snow showers), so we packed up and did the now obligatory hike down to Lindy Point, then skeddaddled back to the flatlands, from whence we had come.

Many thanks to Bela Mariassy, Suzanne Farace, Marilyn Fischer, Linda Witkin, Mike Cohn, Catherine Payne, Al and Ann Larsen, Isabella Zandberg, Susan Beffel, and my long suffering wife, Beth Heimlich for being good sports and sticking with the plan.



Soggy skiers at Pase Point, Blackwater Canyon, WV photo by Ralph Heimlich

Ralph Heimlich

Snow Rollers

Just when you think you've seen everything the winter world has to offer, something new (at least to me) comes along. These are from central Ohio, and are called "snow rollers" or "snow doughnuts".

In order for a snow roller to form:

- * The ground must be covered by a layer of ice,
- * The ice must then be covered by wet, loose snow,
- * The temperature needs to be near melting, and
- * The wind has to be strong enough to move the snow rollers, but not blow them apart.



You can see more, including video, from NBC 4 Ohio at <http://www.nbc4i.com/slideshow?widgetid=102564>

POLAR VORTEX LITE" IN CANAAN VALLEY

STS Canaan State Park Cabin Trip, Jan 23-26 2014
By Doug Lesar

Although "Alberta Clipper" might be a more appropriate term for the blustery and snow-squally winter weather systems that hit Canaan Valley just before and during our STS outing, the result was a carpet of fluffy, powdery snow that provided dreamy skiing even with a razor thin base. The STS group that chipped in for a three-night no-cancel Canaan State Park deluxe cabin rental got more than their money's worth during the post-MLK weekend, finding as much skiing as they had energy for. The group traversed nearly all of the Park's trail system, mostly on day one, and joined in the always-festive atmosphere at White Grass and environs on day two, completing a long tour of the northern Cabin Mountain trail loop with minimal icing and exposed water issues.

Although the group carpools all did their own thing on Sunday, Joan and I joined long time STS member Jack Kangas for another White Grass adventure tour, seeking shelters that still had operating stoves and going all the way up the mountainside to Shenandoah Loop, one of the more remote trails in the White Grass system resembling a magical pathway through Narnia.

When not skiing, the group enjoyed home cooked meals in the evening courtesy of the awesome culinary talents of the many STS members who can turn a mean spoon in the kitchen. Also enjoyed was a decadent Friday lunch in the Canaan Park dining room, a welcome refuge from the deep cold and an experience in pampering by a wait staff that had no other customers at that time.



Cold day at Whitegrass photo by Nathan Caldwell



Its better to ski photo by Nathan Caldwell

Finally, the trip was educational for many, as a number of lessons were learned concerning skiing and dealing with serious cold:

- (1) Hand and toe warmer packets are the BOMB when temps approach zero and wind chill bites the extremities,
- (2) Base layer garments that DON'T wick moisture as advertised are a misery (the affected party was SO glad she had packed an extra, blessedly dry top), and
- (3) If you feel like you are walking rather than gliding / skiing, consider your ski poles as well as your overall technique; those poles might be a bit short for you!



Terri Fischer all bundled up photo by Nathan Caldwell

New Hampshire (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

refreshing the ski skills that had lain dormant for the previous 10 months!

On Saturday, the group opted to snowshoe since no significant new snow had arrived yet. We chose a trail that began only a 10-minute walk from our main lodging on a hillside in Bartlett, NH. Most people had brought their own snowshoes with them, but any needing them were able to rent locally. Snowshoeing is a delightful experience and has its own challenges. But falling is not normally one of them. We had a great early “walk in the woods”, but then the trail began some fairly serious ascent. Some folks prudently decided to seek a terrain more to their liking. The rest trudged onward and upward, with the nagging notion in the back of their heads that they would at some point have to descend again the same way. We finally reached near the peak of Mt. Stanton and enjoyed our lunches there. The views were well worth the climb. On the descent there were some mildly terrifying moments for some, but no one took a fall. An exhilarating experience!



Snowshoeing in New Hampshire in January



Jan & Ron Tucker, Barry Weston, and Keith Chanon near the top of Mt. Stanton on snowshoes

By Sunday several inches of new snow had fallen, and most of the group opted to return to the Jackson STC. Several of us did the “classic” trail of the Jackson network, the Ellis River Trail. It has beautiful scenery, especially along the river, and extends for about 5 miles from the ski center. With the new snowfall, some of the steeper runs were a breeze compared to the way they would have been a day or two before.

Monday morning most of the group opted to do a short ski at the Bretton Woods STC, located adjacent to the magnificent and historic Mt. Washington Hotel. The Nancy Barton trail across Route 302 was recommended to us as having the best snow cover. I had not skied that trail in several years, so it was a delight to enjoy it again. Even better, it began to snow significantly about the time we reached the trail, so it kept getting better and better. That trail ultimately linked in to the Clinton trail at Bretton Woods, another favorite. Had just enough time to ski a section of that before we had to scurry back to the STC and drive back to Manchester, NH for our late afternoon flight back to BWI.

A great wintertime recreation trip, as it almost always is, in the White Mountains of New Hampshire!



The Jackson ski center: Dick Simmons, Adir Aronovich, Malo Bernal, Keith Chanon, Joe Bachman, Harvey Walden, Ann Hitchcock, Julie Nash and Rob Swennes



Barry Weston and Len Henzke skiing the Nancy Barton trail at Bretton Woods

Random Pictures from Past Issues—See Your Smiling Face In Here?



PATC-Ski Touring Section

c/o Doug Lesar

2507 Campbell Place



Feeding the fireplace—We did not just have to earn our turns, we had to earn our warmth! Photo by Greg Westernik

To:

PATC Ski Touring Section Membership Form

The PATC/STS provides quality services and benefits to its cross-country skiing members while promoting and supporting the PATC and cross country skiing in general. Whether a novice, recreational, citizen racer or telemark skier, STS has something for every XC skier. Imagine yourself floating on the snow, climbing across hill and dale in the quiet of winter, stopping for lunch in brilliant sunshine on a vista with a view of snow-covered ridges and valleys stretching to the horizon, and then making a descent back to home. Our membership enjoys ski touring in the hills with the comradeship and safety of a group. When you become a member, you receive all issues of the club's newsletter UPSLOPE and other useful information. UPSLOPE is published six times a year by PATC/Ski Touring Section, a non-profit, educational and recreational group of cross-country skiing enthusiasts based in the Maryland, DC, Virginia, PA and West Virginia areas. UPSLOPE provides information about STS trips and events (e.g., Learn-To-XC-Ski weekends, Telemark instructional clinics, and mini-week ski trips). One year membership runs from October 1st through September 30th of the next year. If you join in April or later, your one year membership will run through September of the next year. To insure uninterrupted membership for more than one year, you may provide advance dues for up to three years. To join, select your desired membership category and term from the table below, complete this Form legibly, and send it with a check appropriate to your membership choice (payable to PATC Ski Touring Section) to:

PATC-Ski Touring Section, c/o Doug Lesar, 2507 Campbell Place, Kensington, MD 20895

Membership Classes

<u>Membership Categories</u>	<u>1 Year Only</u>	<u>2 Years</u>	<u>3 Years</u>
Individual	\$ 9	\$17	\$25
Family	\$13	\$24	\$35

PLEASE PRINT or TYPE THE INFORMATION BELOW !!!

Name(s): _____ Request is for: - NEW Membership: _____

Address: _____ Today's Date: _____ - New Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ - Renewal: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

- Add me to Annual member directory but do not list my: Home Ph.: ___ ; Work Ph: ___ ; Email: ___; Postal Address: ___
- If checked, add me to New Yahoo Group so I can get infrequent, adhoc announcements of local XC Ski activities: ___
- If checked, send my UPSLOPE only electronically (no paper copy) to save the club copying and postage: ___

STS is an all-volunteer organization. We cannot function without the assistance of our members. If you are interested in volunteering to help STS in any of the following areas, please check the box and you will be contacted:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> STS Officer | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity | <input type="checkbox"/> XC Ski Instructor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Web Content Assistant | <input type="checkbox"/> Ski Trip Leader | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Events Coordinator |