



U P S L O P E

Newletter of the NORDIC Ski Touring Section of PATC



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February 2022

From the Editor: This EXTRA edition has two purposes:

- * *To let you know about remaining openings in our trip schedule;*
- * *To report on ski activity so far this season.*

You've responded magnificently to the good snow conditions in the Mid-Atlantic so far this season. Three individuals, spotlighted here, have submitted trip reports on successful STS ski trips. Keep up the good reporting!

Ralph Heimlich

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It's Not Too Late: Sign Up for Maine Snow



There's 16 -30 inches of snow on the ground in the mountains of Western Maine, and more is on the way. The Rangeley Lakes Trails Center is reporting a 15 inch base on their trails, and the trails at Sugarloaf are open, too. Besides the Nordic centers, there's the groomed trails and backcountry huts of the Maine Huts and trails system as well as lots of other backcountry ski and snowshoe tracks. The Nordic centers also have fat-tire bikes available. For the more adventurous, the newly re-opened Saddleback downhill ski area has a system of "uphill trails," that is, classic mountain touring.

Come join a crew of STS winter sport enthusiasts in early March to enjoy the last bit of winter. The trip leader will arrive on the afternoon of March 3, and skiing and snowshoeing are planned for the 4th, 5th and 6th, departing on the 7th. In accordance with our Covid protocols, there is no club charge for the trip, as participants are responsible for their own travel, lodging, and food. The leader will send a list of lodging opportunities in the area. Proof of Covid vaccination is required. Participants must be PATC members. For more information, contact Joe Bachman at joseph.bachman@verizon.net.



Skiers at Sugarloaf Nordic Center photo by Joe Bachman

TRIP REPORT: BLACKWATER FALLS State Park SKI TRIP

By Ed Johnson

- * DATES: Jan 25-28 (3 nights lodging) Tue-Fri
- * LOCATION: Blackwater Falls SP cabins 29 & 31
- * Each 4 bedroom & 2 baths, full kitchen, fireplace and laundry room.
- * CONDITIONS:



Bela Mariassy and Yvonne Thayer celebrate their success with some WV moonshine. Summit of Bald Knob via White Grass Lodge Photo credit Shae Metcalf



Ed Johnson and Bela Mariassy stand at Pase Point overlook, Blackwater Falls SP Photo by Ralph Heimlich

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FROM THE SLOPES – Guest Notes

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ULLR, the Norse Snow God, must have known it was a Winter Olympics year because he's dumped plenty of white stuff on the Northeast generally, and the Mid-Atlantic specifically in February. Like the dumping snowfall, I've been inundated by the gentle falling snowflakes of STORIES from STS skiers as well.

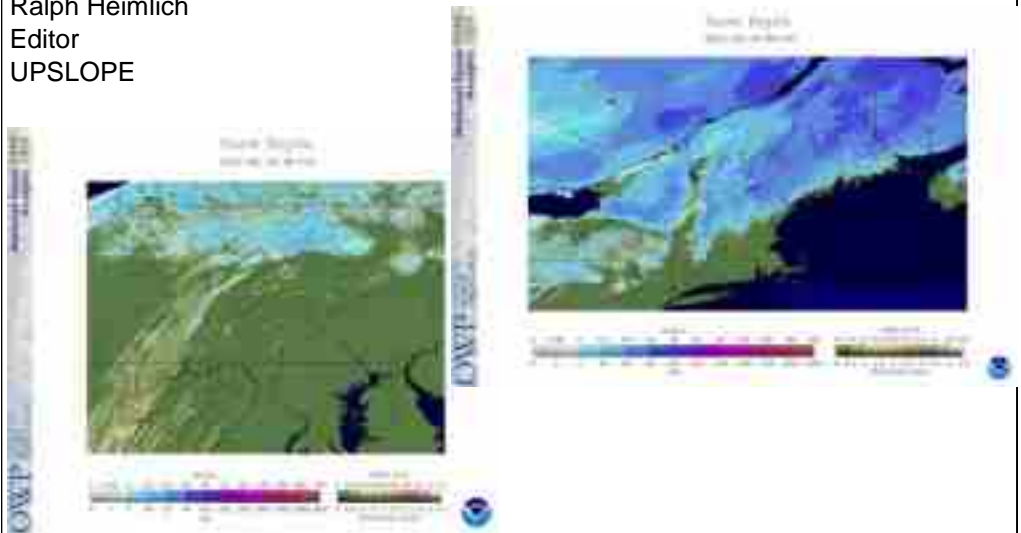
Thanks to authors Ed Johnson, Shae Metcalf, Greg Westernik and Valerie Matthews/Izabella Zandberg for the great stories in this issue covering the territory from Canaan Valley to Laurel Highlands, to the ADK.

I hope these skiing tales inspire you others who have gotten out on the slopes to enjoy the newly fallen whiteness. I would still like to hear from more of you, perhaps farther afield in the West, or up in icy New England.

If you have only been watching the action on TV from Beijing (on a lot of fake snow), you still have a chance to get out on the real deal. Joe Bachman's late season trip to Maine is still taking participants, and there is still plenty of snow in the ADK and more coming down each week in Canaan Valley and Laurel Highlands.

Get out there and get your skis wet!! Click on images for current snow depth.

Ralph Heimlich
 Editor
 UPSLOPE



BUT, If you DO use Groups.io...

The groups.io platform is great, but has an Achilles Heel that promotes cross chatter that irritates some subscribers. When people reply to a posting sent to their email account, replies always get sent to THE WHOLE group. To access the ability to reply only to the sender, you have to log into your groups.io account. As an admin I do that without thinking but I surmise that most people don't; hence the recent TRIP SPECIFIC postings about trip check receipt, driving distances, what motel, etc. 240 people don't need this chatter.

For trips, or any topic that doesn't need to be shared with the UNIVERSE, please EXPLICITLY DISCOURAGE groups.io as a communication platform. I ENCOURAGE use of traditional email using people's private addresses rather than the group address. BTW, the "mute conversation" feature of groups.io can be used to suppress perceived spam, but again you have to log into your groups.io account to exploit this.

Doug L
 Benevolent PATC-STC groups.io tyrant

Blackwater Ski Trip (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

- * Past- <http://data.canaanmtnsnow.com>
- * Record cold: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2022/01/22/canaan-valley-low-temperature-record/>
- * EVENINGS:
- * Charades & Balderdash (Shae Metcalf)
- * Fishbowl (Dave Norman)

My wife Donna and I are new members to PATC-STS and conditions were near perfect for us to experience our first PATC-STS trip. We met while skiing in West Virginia the winter of 1975/76 and over the years we've learned that January skiing in Canaan Valley and surrounds is never a guarantee. Snow conditions for this trip were SUPERB!



Donna and Ed Johnson, Dave Norman, and Sophie Troy pause to discuss the merits of the [diglot weave](#) during a game of Balderdash *Photo by Shae Metcalf*

Canaan Valley is a popular trip. A mere 3-hour drive from DC, the area offers outstanding recreation including two WV state parks (Canaan and Blackwater), Monongahela National Forest, Dolly Sods National Wilderness, two alpine ski resorts (Canaan and Timberline) and the famous White Grass Ski Touring Center (see links at the end).

January 2022 snowfall in the area exceeded 50 inches, the greatest January total since 2010/11. The cold temperatures (including a 35-year record breaking -31° F, 2-days before our arrival) ensured our snow base of 6-18 inches or more. We received about 2-4 inches of new snow during our trip and temperatures ranged from a morning low of about 0 ° F to a high of +30° F.

Our leader, Ralph Heimlich, was one of the reasons I chose this trip to be our first with PATC-STS. Ralph is a methodical planner and a great communicator and tour guide. He secured lodging in two cabins at Blackwater Falls State Park, each with wifi, gas

fireplace, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, a kitchen, laundry, dining room with adjacent living room. The trip was full at 16 people (Yvonne Thayer, Shae Metcalf, Ed Johnson, Donna Johnson, Andria Legon, PJ Gudac, Bela Máriássy, Leigh Máriássy, Marcie Schubert, Doug Schubert, Debbi Winsten, Sophie Troy, Lee Greathouse, Dave Norman, and Ralph Heimlich. John O'Keefe Barry Weston lodged elsewhere, but joined us for skiing and some meals.)



Shae Metcalf (L) and Yvonne Thayer (R) greet the famous Chip Chase, the heart and soul of White Grass Ski Touring Center

Blackwater Falls SP has many miles of free trails, most skiable, and some accessible right from your cabin door. Trails include forest and meadows. Some trails are cut through dense growth of rhododendron and mountain laurel and others offer spectacular views of the Blackwater River canyon.

There's plenty of skiing to be had here without leaving the park. However, a short 20-minute drive puts you at the famous White Grass Ski Touring Center, where \$25 gets you access to groomed and ungroomed trails of varying difficulty. For the adventurous an uphill climb from the lodge to Bald Knob will give great views of Canaan Valley and your choice of a gentle or steep downhill return to White Grass lodge perhaps with a stop at a warming hut stocked with free snacks and moonshine.



Doug and Marcie Schubert ski the Water Tank Trail at Blackwater Falls SP *Photo credit Ralph Heimlich*

White Grass offers rental skis and snowshoes, beginner and advanced lessons including instruction in the telemark turn. Skiers and non-skiers alike will enjoy sitting by the outdoor wood fire with a warm drink and a hot meal from the famous White Grass kitchen.

Donna and I arrived two days early to alpine ski at Canaan Valley Ski Area. We joined the rest of the group on Tuesday for the 4pm cabin check-in. Wednesday morning, Ralph, Bela and I did a 4.5-mile ski tour from the cabins out to Pase Point lookout on the north side of the Blackwater Falls Canyon. Others in our group took different trails within the park and some went to White Grass. In the afternoon Ralph and I drove to the main lodge (closed for renovations) where we parked his truck and skied 5.5 miles roundtrip to Lindy Point lookout, on the south side of the river, where we had great views and could see our morning ski tour route.



Dinner! Seafood Mac and Cheese, Pineapple Cole Slaw, Sourdough Bread and Carrot Cake *Photo by Ralph Heimlich*

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Laurel Highlands Ski Trip Report

By Greg Westernik

Nine STS ers (including Maryanne Sacco, Mark Lidd, Sandra Pinel, Anne Masters, Adir Aronovich, Tamara Walsky, Sarah Teagle, Gabrielle Czaja, and Greg Westernik) ventured in search of enjoying PA's Laurel Highlands at the height of 2022 omicron infection. The snow conditions for this last weekend in January 2022 trip were very skiable, but not the best I have seen in the last 7 years. Another participant in our group, Sandra new to skiing in the SW PA Highlands but not to XC skiing, put it this way:

"The snow was the best I had skied in for 10 years and both Laurel Ridge and Laurel Mountain were full of interesting trails where one could spend several days! I enjoyed meeting new women friends and passionate skiers like Adir [Aronovich]! The region is absolutely lovely - with winding roads and farms that remind me of New England! "

During both days, small amounts of new snow fell to refresh the trails for our pleasure. Another common refrain mentioned on this trip can best be summarized by Gabrielle Czaja: "The snow was magnificent, and the highlight of the trip was making new friends."

Trip camaraderie was better than most of us expected. Six of us carpoled. Indoors we practiced distancing and maskup due to Covid; however, as Maryanne stated "...We were still able to have camaraderie and eat our take-out food in the spacious indoor lodging lobby while socially distancing" . It was nice to eat lunch outdoors in single digit F temps after a morning ski, walk to nearby takeout meal joints, make new ski buddies and catch up with past ski buddies not seen in years. Maryanne and I found ourselves acting silly during lunch on Saturday, sometimes at my mistakes!



One of the Fire & Ice sculptures still standing after 2 weeks photo by Markl



Adir Aronovich waxing up for his next ski at Laurel Ridge STC's small warming hut Photo by Maryanne Sacco

Several STS ers on this trip were impressed (and pleasantly surprised) during walks in the business district of downtown Somerset to still see the Somerset Fire & Ice sculptures placed outdoors on the thirteenth still glistening with no worse the wear for their 2+ week residence.

While larger warming hut of two was closed at Laurel Ridge Ski Touring Center, STS ers in our group and the locals XC skiing did manage to use any available warming huts. Skiers appeared to spend less time in huts and I recollect that most users wore masks while indoors. Here is a picture of STSer Adir Aronovich waxing up for his next ski at Laurel Ridge STC small warming hut thanks to MaryAnne Sacco:

Alas, my physical conditioning was unprepared for much more than 4 hours of skiing each-day. I kept rolling up and down past the snow-laden hemlocks, spruce, rhododendrons, laurels, hardwoods, streams, and bridges while seeing a few other skiers younger (and older) than me pass me on my less-frequent trail routes.

One of the lessons some of us learned on this trip was don't forget to carry a spare ski pole, after Maryanne lost one of her 120 cm poles to a "snowsnake" that ate her basket plus the bottom fourth of the pole. She had to make do with a 155 cm spare pole of mine in order to ski on Sunday. It still was a challenge NOT TO BE MISSED driving down partially plowed Laurel Summit Rd then icy Laurel Mountain. Those car snakes (ditches) were just waiting for us to slip too close to the sides of road.

Info on Groups.io Listserv

Given the continuing COVID-19 pandemic situation challenging the operation of social groups of all stripes, staying connected with the aid of internet-hosted tools and platforms is more important than ever. Fortunately, PATC-STS successfully migrated from the dying Yahoo groups platform in early 2020. Our new "listserv" is hosted by groups.io, which offers a less clunky user interface than Yahoo and has operated smoothly for us in almost a year (your MEMBERSHIP DUES help to pay for it ... it isn't free).

The STS group is reachable at the address <https://groups.io/g/PATC-STS>. The user interface has, apart from one exception discussed below, all basic operations front and center. "Log In" and "Sign Up" appear upon first entry, and "post", "subscribe" and "unsubscribe" are handy buttons on the "home" dropdown. Postings are available for perusal via the "messages" dropdown.

The one function that gave subscribers trouble during last season was the classical "reply to all" versus "reply to sender" choice, a matter of group mailing list etiquette that occasionally leads to subscriber annoyance. At the bottom of any posting, see the options gathered under the heading "Groups.io Links": "You receive all messages sent to this group. View/Reply Online (#797) | Reply To Group | Reply ToSender | Mute This Topic | New Topic | Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe"

Particularly note "reply to group" and "reply to sender". "Mute this topic" is also helpful. If you simply execute an emailclient reply, your response goes to the whole group and you may not intend and/or want that.

Doug Lesar

Blackwater Falls Trip (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

On Thursday, several in our group drove to White Grass to ski and take lessons. Conditions in the White Grass lowlands were groomed (corduroy) with machine laid tracks. The weather was again sunny and in the 20s, beautiful for skiing and views of the valley. I took a telemark lesson.

We all gathered as a group for dinner each night. Ralph's meal planning and execution of dinner preparation was superb. On the menu were White Bean Turkey Soup, Spaghetti, vegetarian or with sweet or spicy Italian sausage, and Seafood Mac and Cheese with shrimp and crab. Post-dinner fellowship took the form of games – charades and Balderdash (led by Shae Metcalf), and Fishbowl (also called *celebrity* led by Dave Norman). Nobody turned the TV on at all.

Friday check-out time was 10am. Donna and I checked out an hour early and skied out the groomed trail to Lindy Point before starting the drive home. Ah, it was a good trip. We made new friends, and we are looking forward to the next adventure.

White Grass and Chip Chase:

https://www.fauquier.com/lifestyles/a-canaan-valley-legend-founder-of-white-grass-ski-touring-center-widely-known-and-beloved/article_5326803c-2fa0-11e9-89f9-6f8c1f395022.html

<https://whitegrass.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/History-of-White-Grass.pdf>

For an upbeat video of our Blackwater Trip, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNGgD-doKg0>



Allegheny Mountains at Lindy Point Blackwater Falls SP Photo by Ralph Heimlich

Snow Heaven in the Adirondacks' Lapland Lake

By Shae Metcalf

Who knew when Ralph Heimlich posted the Adirondacks trip last November that he would pick the unrivaled Xcountry snow week of the season? With 15+” of packed powder, temperatures in the 20's deg F, and a fresh topping of snowfall each morning, our four days in [Lapland Lake Nordic Ski Center](#) turned out to be snow heaven on earth.

From the moment we arrived on Monday, February 7, our intrepid group (Ralph, Bela and Leigh Mariassy, Ed and Donna Johnson, Yvonne Thayer, Shae Metcalf, and a welcome visit by STS member and ADK resident, Jen Bine; Doug and Marcie Schubert were scheduled to attend, but derailed by a last-minute family crisis) were ready to hit the trails. We had [55 kilometers of well-groomed flat and hilly paths](#) to ourselves with only an occasional passing ski skater to slice through the snow. That included a lit trail from our house to the Woods Lake shore, and skiing under the stars on the deeply frozen lake.

No matter, our comfy farmhouse lent itself to cozy nights around the wood stove and dining table—with rousing Charades performances, and shared photos with stories from previous STS trips to Maine, Yellowstone, Mt. Van Hoevenberg near Lake Placid, and White Grass. Jen ultimately won the game of Charades by guessing Ralph's hilarious version of farm animals. We only wish we had that picture.



L to R Yvonne, Shae, Bela, Jen, Ed and Ralph on the shores of Woods Lake photo by a passing skier



The cozy fire and Shae photo by Ralph Heimlich

Happily for all, Leigh and Donna took over the kitchen and created 4-star dinners every evening—including broiled salmon with asparagus, and a hearty slow-cooked beef and mushroom Chasseur stew. From cheesy appetizers to pie and chocolate cake desserts, we were a well-nourished and satiated crew.

By Day 3, Ralph, Shae and Ed decided to push beyond the boundaries of Lapland and set out on an ambitious 10 kilometer backcountry trek to Grant Lake. It turned out to be a destination too far as we soon lost direction in the deep snow-covered woods. At several points we were ambushed by snow snakes and log traps. Ed's poles took a beating as he fought his way out of a steep ravine—yet he crimped along valiantly with two er-



Lapin farm house, 4 br, 2 ba, with mini-tubing hill and skating pond photo by Shae Metcalf

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Lapland Lakes (cont.)

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gonomically bent shafts. Luckily a Northville-Lake Placid Trail marker gave us a benchmark that ultimately led us back to civilization [Editor's Note: We were never "lost"...we were "confused" for awhile]. Our backcountry saga was a good reminder to download detailed topo maps next time before setting out in uneven white terrain without GPS.



Ralph and Ed on the Northville-Lake Placid Trail [we were confused] photo by Shae Metcalf

Meanwhile, the rest of the gang found plenty to discover and enjoy around Lapland Lake's trails. Yvonne was determined to ski every single black diamond trail. And did. While Bela and Leigh took to the 15 kilometers of designated snowshoe trails. At the end of the day, we decided the Chinese Olympics with their fake snow paled by comparison. As a bonus, the Finnish-themed lodge offered a dry sauna to ease our sore muscles and a chance to chat up other stalwart guests.



Donna and Leigh in "their" kitchen photo by Shae Metcalf

For a cool video of our stay by Ed Johnson, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtnxwmxWfIY>



Lit trail to Woods Lake photo by Shae Metcalf

An Impromptu trip to Laurel Highlands;

by Valerie Matthews and Izabella Zandberg

Not all ski trips are planned months in advance. Having been unable to get away to ski on the fabulous weekend of January 29, Val and Izabella anxiously watched the weather reports for the next week in the hope of snow the following weekend (February 5-6). The forecast as of that Friday was dismal, so we planned a Saturday hike in Maryland. On returning from the hike, we saw reports that we had missed a surprise eight inches of snow that had fallen in the Laurel Highlands overnight. We quickly extricated ourselves from our Sunday and Monday responsibilities, then hopped into a car on Sunday morning.



Sunbeams in Kooser SP photo by Valerie Matthews

Upon arrival in the Laurel Highlands area, we stopped first at [Kooser State Park](#) to take advantage of the supply of trail maps for the Laurel Highlands cross-country areas as well as the heated restroom. We met two PAC-CSA patrollers who gave us some trail advice. We spent about an hour skiing the entire trail system at Kooser, which is modest and crossed by gravel-strewn roads, but highly picturesque. After that warmup we proceeded to the [North Woods area](#), where we were glad of the patrollers' advice to ski the Shafer Run Trail counterclockwise to avoid a long and steep descent. We chatted with a local skier who told us that when he was a boy one could ski from Kooser to North Woods, before the quarry was dug between them. Words cannot do justice to the beauty of the surroundings, ice-encrusted trees glittering magically in the sun.



Izabella crossing a pretty stream in Kooser SP photo by Valerie Matthews

For accommodations, we chose to eschew the truck-stop ambience of Somerset and stay instead in the tiny town of Ohiopyle, 12 minutes from Laurel Ridge and a half-hour from North Woods. We took a room at the comfortable [Falls Market Inn](#), where the coded entry system and the complete absence of other guests meant that we did not see another human being for the entire stay. The inn has a shared kitchen and laundry for guest use. Cheaper, motel-style lodging would have been

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PATC-ST\$ XC-Ski Schedule 2021-22

Date	Place	Leader
ASAP	Ski Trip Descriptions for newsletter.	Ralph Heimlich
Nov 20	Ski Fair, VA. Trip Leader Workshop	
Nov 13-14	Work Trip, Whitegrass, WV	Lynn Yates
Dec ? – Jan 2		
Dec 30 – Jan 2 New Years	Laurel Highlands Area, PA— CANCELLED NO SNOW	Greg Westernik
Jan 7/8-9		
Jan 7 – 27 snow dependent	New Hampshire— Slots Open	Robert Swennes
Jan 13/14-17 MLK Weekend		
Jan 21/22 - 23		
Jan 25 - 28	Blackwater Falls SP Cabins, WV— Slot for 1 Male	Ralph Heimlich
Jan 28 - 30	Laurel Highlands Area, PA— 2 Slots Open	Greg Westernik
Feb 4/5 - 6		
Feb 13-18	Dillon, CO— Slots Open	Robert Swennes
Feb 7 – 10	Lapland Lake, NY— FULL UP	Ralph Heimlich
Feb 11/12 - 13		
Feb 18 - 20	Laurel Highlands— Slots Open	Greg Westernik
Feb 18 – 21 Pres Day Weekend	Blackwater Falls SP Lodge, WV— Slots Open	Bert Finkelstein
Feb 25/26 - 27		
Mar 4 - 7	Maine High Peaks, ME— Slots Open	Joe Bachman

Postponed until 2023: Dates—Feb 18-21 (Friday-Monday, President’s Weekend). Ski-Dance Weekend, Laurel Highlands

NOTE: The Ski Dance Weekend is NOT a PATC-ST\$ trip but is listed for ST\$ member’s information.

Lodging—Camp Sequanota. Note: Proof of vaccination required.

Description—Cross-country, snow shoe, or Alpine ski in the Laurel Highlands of Pennsylvania during the day and contra dance at night! Janine Smith will have you moving to the music of Dave Wiesler and Mat Clark.

Leader—For more information call Bob Mathis at 240-858-9341, talibob@starpower.net.

Cost—Prices range from \$95 to \$300 depending on your accommodations.

Slots Open: Dates—Mar 4-7, 2022 (Friday-Monday). Maine High Peaks Region Ski and Snowshoe.

Lodging—Participants are responsible for their own lodging reservations in Maine’s Carrabasset Valley motels/hotels. Note: Proof of vaccination required.

Description—Skiing venues in the area include Nordic centers with groomed trails at the Sugarloaf ski area (<http://www.sugarloaf.com/activities-and-nightlife/outdoor-center>) and in Rangeley (<http://rangeleylakestrailscenter.com>). Maine Huts and Trails (<https://mainehuts.org>) has an 80-mile network of groomed backcountry trails with huts where one can stay and where day-trippers can buy a hot lunch. There are other ungroomed backcountry trails for skiing and snowshoeing.

Leader—Joseph Bachman 410-446-8501 joseph.bachman@verizon.net

Cost—\$400-450, not including airfare and car rental costs.

Impromptu Laurel Highlands (cont).

(Continued from page 6)

available at the Ohiopyle Suites. To our dismay, we found that none of the eating establishments in Ohiopyle was open on a winter Sunday evening, so we had to fend off starvation by eating most of our trail snacks.



An exceedingly polite request in North Woods. *photo by Valerie Matthews*

On the plus side, we enjoyed walking around Ohiopyle, learning a bit of its history, and viewing the powerful [Ohiopyle Falls](#). (A visit to the nearby [Fallingwater](#) house was impossible because tickets had sold out in advance). We had been excited to read that Ohiopyle State Park has a Nordic area and, according to the park website, had received eight inches of snow. We went to the park visitor center in town (which has a little museum and bins of adult and child snowshoes to borrow for use on the local trails) to ask a ranger about ski conditions, since we didn't see much snow on the ground in town. He said they had set track on the [GAP Trail](#) when the snow was fresh; unfortunately, by the time we got there it was packed solid from foot traffic. He suggested the Sugarloaf area of the park, but we decided instead to go to Laurel Ridge for predictable skiing. We are keeping Ohiopyle in mind for skiing and snowshoeing if conditions allow in the future (as well as for summer adventures: [Top Things to Do in Ohiopyle State Park, Laurel Highlands](#)) and we'll be sure to bring our own food and to book a Fallin g Water tour in ad- vance.



Deadly projectiles from the sky in Laurel Ridge *photo by Valerie Matthews*

Conditions in [Laurel Ridge](#) were perfect. As well as skiing, we enjoyed snowshoeing on the nearby Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail which is reachable from the parking lot of the ski area. By midmorning the increasing temperature led to a barrage of ice fragments falling from the tall trees. Val got beaned by one of them and was glad her knit hat cushioned the blow somewhat. Who would think you need a helmet for Nordic skiing?

In short, our impromptu trip gave us plenty of adventures and was highly worth the effort!

Join the STRAVA Club

If any on-list skiers are interested, I've created a Strava club for sharing routes, locations and pictures.

<https://www.strava.com/clubs/1020523>

I think the best advantage of having a Strava club is to present other members with a topo map display of places skied.

Note that all Strava privacy restrictions apply (you get to control who sees what) and that Strava is actually better than other venues

*cough*Facebook*cough* at keeping your pictures from being copied by anyone who likes it.

In other words, it doesn't replace Upslope. Odometer, mapping, gear use tracking; even use it to share wax info if you like.

Oh, and if anyone is handy with graphics and wants better pics or logs, let me know.

PJ Gudac



Glittering trees in North Woods *photo by Izabella Zandberg*



Shadows in the snow, Lapland Lakes *photo by Ralph Heimlich*



Icy tendrils in North Woods *photo by Valerie Matthews*

On What XC Ski Should I Rent/Buy, or Selecting Proper XC Skis

by Greg Westernik

STSers on a XC ski trip inevitably find someone raises questions like: What length of Nordic ski do I need? or How long should my Nordic ski be? or How do I choose my XC ski length?

To me, responses to these kinds of questions are NOT as easy to generalize as one may think. To simplify my response and in hopes of getting more useful feedback from our fellow STSers on my omissions and errors, my first response will try to limit the scope as follows:

How To Select The Best XC Classic Skis / Correct XC Classic Ski—Notice I am NOT TALKING in general about: skis for other, different types of skiing such as ski skating, telemark, or backcountry skiing. Some other author will have to jump into skis for these other types of XC skiing. The right length ski is an essential factor to really enjoying classical XC skiing. Control, turning, climbing, gliding and stopping will all be more precise with less effort. Boots and bindings one selects also play a role in these matters (see last issue's disquisition [here](#)). At least the following factors need to be considered for ski length.

- * Height
- * Ability level
- * Type of skiing you expect to do
- * Your budget

There are no end to videos on choosing correct XC skis (e.g., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJ9qM-f4hag>). I am unsure if there is a specific, exact standard for skiers to reference. All tables and charts are just guidelines. You might receive a recommendation in some table that you find is not the best ski for you. But it will definitely be a starting point. You should consult the manufacturer's recommendations. Your weight will affect the amount of choices you have, leaving you with around 3-4 pairs of different lengths to choose from. Ultimately how the ski performs when you do a trial use on the snow (turning, gripping verses gliding) may best indicate what ski is best for you.

It is said that ski length has no relation to gender. The only time gender comes into play is in the flex of the ski, which needs to match the weight of a skier at a certain height. The position of the binding on the ski may also different for men and women.

Let's look at **basic length guideline** for skiers based on ability levels according to Fischer Sports. Note that skis are always sold in centimeter lengths.

- * Beginners: Height minus 10-15cm
- * Advanced: Height minus 5-10cm
- * Expert: Skier's height and up to 5cm longer

Remember, two of our critical factors are missing; and the same skier would not necessarily want or need the same length touring ski as carving ski, for example. Some authors would argue that the skier's weight is not a factor in ski length. In general, that approach claims one should choose a ski with a higher flex rating. For me, weight is a factor in skis I select, all other factors equal.

Height is a good indicator of the proper cross-country ski, because we can really narrow down what the ski is being specifically used for.

- * Classic skiing on a groomed track: Height plus 20cm
- * Classic cruising on open terrain: Height
- * Skating: Height plus 5-10cm

Body weight is also a factor in cross-country ski selection since the glide phase is so important. Relatively **heavy skiers** should add 5cm from the recommendation above. Relatively **light skiers** should subtract 5cm from the recommendation above.

Other Possibly Helpful Calculations:

For Classic—Your Height in Inches x 2.6 + 15 = Approximate Classic Touring Cross Country Ski Size
 For Skate—Your Height in Inches x 2.6 + 5 = Approximate Skate Ski Size
 For Backcountry—Your Height in Inches +/- 2 to 6 Depending on Skill Level, Use, and Specific Skis

Reasons to size your skis shorter, closer to your chin:

- * You are a beginner or intermediate skier
- * Your weight is lighter than average for your height
- * You like to make short, quick turns

Another Tabular Approach To Select XC skis (ala REI) with some variation for classical vs. skating vs. ungroomed touring:

Skier Weight (lb)	Ski Length (cm)		
	Skating	Classic	Touring
100 - 110	170 - 180	180 - 190	160 - 166
110 - 120	172 - 182	182 - 192	160 - 166
120 - 130	175 - 185	185 - 195	170
130 - 140	177 - 190	187 - 200	170 - 176
140 - 150	180 - 195	190 - 205	170 - 176
150 - 160	185 - 195	195 - 210	180
160 - 180	190 - 195	200 - 210	180 - 186
180+	190 - 195	205 - 210	190 - 196

(Continued on page 10)

Ski Length (cont.)

Reasons to size your skis longer, closer to the top of your head:

- * You are skiing fast and aggressively
- * You weigh more than average for your height
- * You plan to do the majority of your skiing off the trail
- * You are purchasing a ski with significant rocker in the tip

A shorter ski will be easier to turn yet not as stable as a longer ski. Longer skis have more stability and float better in snow, but they also have a larger turning radius. Shorter skis sacrifice stability (especially at speed) but are quick to respond and easier to make short sharp turns. Short skis turn faster but long skis go faster.

Ok. Let the feedback frenzy begin...



RACE SKATE		RACE CLASSIC		SPORT TOURING		COMPACT TOURING		BACKCOUNTRY		JUNIOR TOURING		JUNIOR RACE	
X-Form Frontier Skate		X-Form Front CRF-Skin		3-Year Escape		Evolve D14E		BC 120		Delta Comp Jr.		JR SKATE	
183	77+	207	77+	205	82+	193	82+	182	75+	187	43-55	X-Form WCS Sk Jr	
187	88-90	202	88-90	202	75-82	188	88-92	178	88-75	187	38-48	172	43-55
181	54-58	197	54-58	188	88-75	173	54-68	188	57-68	187	34-38	182	38-48
174	45-57	190	45-57	182	87-88	188	47-54			137	30-34	182	34-41
				188	54-61					127	25-30	181	27-38
				181	46-54					111	28-35		
				178	47-50								
X-Form WCS Jr. Skin Sk		X-Form Classic		R-Skin Ultra		Evolve XC 4E		BC 100		X-Form Venture Jr		Delta Comp Sk Jr	
188	77+	208	77+	207	77+	195	82+	180	88-92	179	80-94	185	38-45
186	68-80	205	88-92	198	85-92	185	85-92	170	58-68	180	45-55	192	38-41
181	54-58	198	34-38	207	83-77	179	54-68	180	47-58	180	41-45	183	38-38
173	45-57	191	45-57	191	54-60	185	47-54			135	30-32		
				188	45-57					145	38-41		
				191	38-42					130	32-38		
				191	38-42					120	27-33		
				198	45-57					110	22-27		
				198	38-42					108	18-22		
				198	48-54					90	13-18		
				198	47-54								
				208	82+								
				201	77-82								
				198	82-75								
				181	54-62								
				198	48-54								
				198	47-45								
				201	77-82								
				198	82-75								
				181	54-62								
				198	48-54								
				198	47-45								
				201	77-82								
				198	82-75								
				181	54-62								
				198	48-54								
				198	47-45								
				208	82+								
				202	75-82								
				200	88-75								
				185	87-88								
				180	58-67								
				185	48-54								
				208	75-82								
				200	88-75								
				185	87-88								
				180	58-67								
				185	48-54								
				208	82+								
				198	88-92								
				178	54-68								
				198	47-54								
				198	41-54								
				198	82+								
				198	88-92								
				178	54-68								
				198	47-54								
				208	82+								
				202	75-82								
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				185	87-88								
				180	58-67								
				185	48-54								
				208	82+								

PATC-Ski Touring Section
c/o Doug Lesar
2507 Campbell Place



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 3-5 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 |