



THE PENNSYLVANIA NORDIC SKIER

The Pennsylvania Cross Country Skiers Association

December 2014



Join the Yellowjackets!

Since 2010, PACCSA has been teaching kids how to cross-country ski through the Yellowjackets youth development program. Children between the ages of 5 and 15 can take advantage of the program, which teaches skiing skills through fun activities and games.

Skill sessions are held on most Saturdays in January and February at the Laurel Ridge State Park XC Skiing Center. Experienced coaches guide beginners through basic skills such as falling and rising, diagonal stride skiing, turning, and hill-climbing techniques. As children progress through the program, they will learn more advanced skills, including the skating technique. Fun competition opportunities are also available with neighboring youth programs in Erie and Cleveland.



Registration for the Yellowjackets is open NOW! The program fee is very reasonable (\$30 for ages 5-6, \$40 for ages 7-13) and includes a Yellowjackets team hat, an instructional workbook with stickers, and hot chocolate after each session. Also, this year the Yellowjackets secured a grant from the Birkie Foundation which enables us to reduce the cost of seasonal ski rentals for every kid that joins. Don't miss out on this opportunity to introduce your children to the joys of cross-country skiing!



PACCSA Recognized by National Ski Patrol

On April 13, 2014, National Ski Patrol member Ann Rahn presented PACCSA with a certificate of appreciation recognizing PACCSA's efforts in the Laurel Mountain Grooming Project. The award specifically acknowledges PACCSA's expert trail grooming, as well as the Laurel Mountain Webcam, both of which enhance the public's use and enjoyment of the Laurel Mountain trail system. PACCSA thanks the national Ski Patrol for their continued service, and also all of the dedicated volunteers who have made the Laurel Mountain Grooming Project a reality.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Page 2 *President's Letter, Fundraising Update.*
- Page 3 *Laurel Mt. Project.*
- Page 4 *"MeetUp" Group.*
- Page 5 *Trail Clear Update.*
- Page 6 *Featured Ski Area: Osceola-Tug Hill.*
- Page 7 *"Local" Race Schedule, Member Benefits.*
- Page 8 *Membership Form.*

To view our Webcams and find information about skiing in our region, check out our website!
www.paccca.org

Letter from the President

So, I'm riding my mountain bike the other day in Forbes State Forest and find myself thinking; this would make a great cross country ski trail! I do enjoy biking in the off season but that's just it, it's the off season. Cross country skiers are always looking for ways to extend the season and explore new trails. Sheila and I have finished off our season for many years by traveling to Vermont for spring break. You can't swing an old ski without hitting a Nordic ski center in Vermont and New England.

Every Fall we start getting nervous and ask, "Is it going to snow this year?" "Will it be a good ski season?" "Should I get new skis or use my old ones again?" "Are the trails ready?" Somehow it all comes together and we have a great winter of skiing again. The 2013/2014 ski season was no exception, and there's no denying that we had a great year! January, February, and March were spectacular. Thanks to a growing network of volunteers, the cross country skiing trails in the Laurel Highlands were the best they have been in years. If you are one of the volunteers, PACCSA thanks you. If you haven't gotten involved, then maybe this is the year.

Keep checking in with us on our website (PACCSA.org), our FaceBook page, and our new MeetUp group. We will keep you informed of events and other activities. Rest assured we continue to work hard to make sure 2014/2015 is the best cross country ski season ever!



See you on the trails,

Bruce Cox, PACCSA President

Fundraising Update

Over the past several years, PACCSA has continued to grow as an organization. Examples of ways PACCSA has supported and improved Nordic skiing in Southwestern Pennsylvania include the Laurel Ridge and Laurel Mountain webcams, our informative website, the Yellowjackets youth skiing program, and the trail work that PACCSA performs at publicly owned skiing facilities. In this edition of the PACCSA Newsletter, you'll find articles about recent grooming equipment purchases, webcam improvements, volunteer trail clears, and more.

None of this could be done without your memberships and contributions. Every year, PACCSA faces grooming equipment maintenance costs, expenses for webcam internet access, and from time to time, things simply break down and need to be replaced. We need your continued support to keep these projects alive.

PACCSA is currently in the middle of a membership/fundraising drive to raise operating funds for the 2014/2015 season. Seven Springs Mountain Resort has helped PACCSA kick off this drive by donating two tickets to its snowtubing hill. If you join PACCSA or renew your membership by December 19, 2014, you'll be entered into a drawing for the snowtubing tickets which will take place on December 20th. Good luck, and thank you for supporting PACCSA's programs!



Your PACCSA Donations at Work!

The 2013/2014 ski season proved to be a busy period for PACCSA, and our hard work continued through the off-season. As a result of your generous donations, membership dues, and a charitable grant from the Laurel Highlands Visitor's Bureau of Somerset County, PACCSA was able to make a number of new purchases to further our mission.

PACCSA remains committed to the **Laurel Mountain Grooming Project**, which has brought free and expertly groomed cross country ski trails to DCNR's Forbes State Forest. PACCSA recently purchased new grooming equipment for the effort, including a state-of-the art **Roller/Compactor** and a new **Gooseneck Hitch** for the TiddTech grooming sled. These upgrades promise to make the groomed trails at Laurel Mountain even better in 2014/2015!



PACCSA's New Roller/Compactor



Gooseneck Hitch for Groomer

PACCSA volunteers also erected a **new building** at Laurel Mountain and installed an updated webcam. The new building shelters PACCSA's growing roster of grooming equipment. The **new high resolution webcam** features a vastly improved view of the trails, allowing everyone instant access to how much snow has fallen and whether the trails have been groomed.



Equipment Building



Improved Laurel Mountain Webcam

PACCSA would like to thank all of its members and donors for making these worthwhile improvements possible! We hope to see everyone enjoying the ski trails at Laurel Mountain during the 2014/2015 season!

Check Out the Pittsburgh Cross Country Skiers “MeetUp” Group!

Want to meet other people to ski or carpool with in the Pittsburgh region? Go to Meetup.com and join our Pittsburgh Cross Country Skiers group. Joanna Barr, who recently joined the PACCSA Board, has been coordinating this “MeetUp” group for many years. For the 2014/2015 ski season, PACCSA is sponsoring this endeavor.

The Pittsburgh Cross Country Skiers “MeetUp” group is a great place to find other people to ski and travel with. There is no cost to join, and members receive e-mail updates of scheduled activities and outings. For more information, go to our “MeetUp” page, or contact Joanna Barr at Board@PACCSA.org.

PACCSA Yellowjackets



Ski where the action is... Join the swarm!

**Cross country skiing for kids 5 to 15
Skiing Saturdays Jan and Feb in Laurel Highlands, PA**

**Lessons with games, obstacle courses, and cocoa
Develop skill, speed, agility, and teamwork
Races and ski-fests with neighboring teams**

www.paccca.org



PACCSA Volunteers Support Laurel Ridge Trail Clears!

PACCSA teamed up with the Laurel Ridge Ski Concession for two pre-season trail clears this year. The first trail clear took place on October 18th under a rainy setting. Although it was a dreary day, eleven hearty PACCSA volunteers braved the wet and chilly conditions to remove fallen trees, large limbs and other debris from the trail system. The second trail clear took place on November 16th with a light blanket of snow covering the ground. A record total of nineteen PACCSA volunteers made the trip to the Laurel Highlands to participate in this event, which focuses on stacking firewood for the warming huts, clearing drains and culverts of debris, and sweeping the trails one last time.



PACCSA Trail Clear Experts James Fenn and Matthew South

All together, PACCSA members provided 157 volunteer hours towards maintaining DCNR's Laurel Ridge XC Ski Center. To reward their efforts, Andy Smith, Erica Smith and Bob Ruppel from the Laurel Ridge Ski Concession provided hearty lunches to PACCSA's volunteers, courtesy of the Lucky Dog Café. In addition, everyone who participated earned a free trail ticket to Laurel Ridge, and was entered into a prize drawing for helping out.

Now that the trails are ready to go, all we need is a big dump of snow! PACCSA sincerely thanks the following volunteers for making these events a resounding success:

Jim Anglin, Bill Askin, Kevin Craig, Amy Dana, Neal Dana, Norb Duritsa, James Fenn, Kate Fissel, Dave Helwig, Naomi Jarvis, Brian Joly, Hop Kruper, Kelly Kruper, Chuck Nash, Gene Parsons, Christina Price, Kelly Rosche, Bill Rosche, Sally Smales, Jim South, Matthew South, Traci Torrence, and George Wolf.

Bringing in the New Year

New Years is a holiday full of tradition. New diets, new work-out regimes and new attitudes abound. While these things occupy most peoples minds, I head north, to bring in the New Year with winter activity. Diana Edwards and myself have brought in the New Year on the Olympic speed skating oval in Lake Placid. And we've skated in the new year in Barrie, Ontario, Canada after skiing at Hardwood Hills.

The past 3 years though has found us in the wintry wonderland of Tug Hill with our favorite wintry friends Joe and Terrie Young. Tug Hill is a 2000 foot plateau in Western New York that gets more than it's fair share of snow. It averages 300 inches a year. Last year in particular we were treated to a bounty of snow on New Year's eve's day: a solid foot and a half from 4 pm on. Osceola Tug Hill is the place to cross country ski in the Western Adirondacks. Owner Hugh Quinn has been grooming snow and renting skis on his 225 acres of land for 34 years. Hugh is a former Phys Ed teacher from the Rochester area that fell into winter and skiing. It took over his life and he runs a smooth operation out of the first floor of his house on 1486 Osceola road just out of town.



Maybe you have been to the small hamlet of Osceola with your pet turtle for the World's turtle race championships at the Osceola Hotel. Or maybe your passion for old time fiddle music brought you to the Hall of Fame just one mile away. But these are summer time activities, and while fun, the best bang for your buck is a foot of snow on Hugh's 40 miles of trails. 3 years ago Hugh opened up the house across the street and began renting it out. It can easily sleep 6 and has a wood pellet burning stove and a full kitchen. The ability to roll out of bed and ski is divine.

Osceola-Tug Hill has an easy to moderate system of trails on the South side of the road. The Nice and Easy trail meanders through the woods, but many trails spur off of it and they all head uphill. Or downhill. With names like "Screamer" and "Lightning" they are worthy.

The North side of the road is just a tough 6 mile loop that is twists up and tumbles down and is worth it no matter what the conditions. I've done it with powder and ice and haven't been disappointed. Last New Years, with 18 inches of powder, Joe, Diana and I donned our teles and cut turns through the narrow trails with abandon while Hugh groomed across the street. It was a great start to the Year.

Hugh's weekend rentals and trail fees are very reasonable at \$15 and \$17 respectively. For more information, see the Tug Hill web site: www.uxcski.com.

“Local” Race Schedule for 2014/2015

In the lexicon of the Western Pennsylvania cross-country skier, local is a relative word. If it is a good snow year, it means the Laurel Highlands as well as Frick Park. But in a snow drought it includes ten hour drives to places like Traverse City, Michigan or Lake Placid, New York. Here is a current listing of races in our region. Some of the dates will change, so check PACCSA.org for more up to date information.

Ski Chase @ Crystal Lake Ski Center Central Pa's Best Venue	Sun Jan 25
West Virginia Championship @ Whitegrass Challenging 25K course with great prizes and ambiance.	Sun Jan 25 1 pm start
Pennsylvania Nordic Championship @ Wilderness Lodge 5 and 10K classic and 10 and 20K skate.	Sun Feb 8 9 and 11 am starts
North American Vasa/Gran Travers @ Traverse City, MI A well run event with some great trails.	Sat/Sun Feb 14-15
Gatineau Loppet @ Gatineau Parc, Hull, Canada 25 and 50K races with an international vibe.	Sat/Sun Feb 14-15
Art Roscoe Loppet @ Allegany State Park, Salamanca, NY A friendly low key classic race in a sweet part of the world.	Sun Feb 15
Swix American Birkebeiner @ Hayward, WI The Grand Daddy of them all!	Sat Feb 21
Winona Forest Tourathon @ Mannsville, NY Bill Koch Fest at Osceola –Tug Hill	Sat Feb 28
Lake Placid Loppet @ Von Hoevenburg Olympic Centre. Incredible 25K and 50K course. Skate and Classic	Sun Mar 1 8 am start

Membership Has Its Rewards!

Thank you again for your continued support of PACCSA. Your generous donations give PACCSA the tools necessary to enhance the cross-country skiing experience throughout our region. As a PACCSA member, make sure you are taking advantage of the benefits available to you. Members receive nice discounts on daily trail fees at top touring centers in the region, including **Whitegrass** (\$5) and **Wilderness Lodge** (20%). Members also receive 10% discounts at **Cycle Sport & Ski** in Greensburg, **Ski Den Sports** in Johnstown, and **Top Gear Bicycle Shop** in Wexford. Other benefits include 15% discounts at **Green Gables Restaurant** and **Huddleston Court** in Jennerstown. Make sure you show them your card!

As a PACCSA member, you are an integral part of the local ski community. Your membership dues, donations and volunteerism provide an opportunity to give back to your sport and community. Visit PACCSA.org for the latest news and opportunities to participate in trail work, outreach, and other PACCSA activities. PACCSA is a charitable non-profit corporation organized under Chapter 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All donations are tax deductible.



Pennsylvania Cross Country Skiers Association

PACCSA
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Munhall, PA 15120

Find us on



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Member Name(s):

PACCSA Board of Directors

- Bruce Cox** - President
- James South** - Vice President
- Rick Garstka** - Treasurer
- Sally Smales** - Secretary
- Bob Mazur** - Volunteer Coordinator
- Naomi Jarvis** - Yellowjackets, Webmaster
- Brian Joly** - Newsletter Editor, Co-race director
- Dave Jenkins** - Co-race Director
- Mike Blessington** - Fundraising
- Joanna Barr** - Social Director
- Sheila Confer** - Board Member

General comments and inquiries can be sent to: board@paccsa.org or submitted via the PACCSA.org website.

PACCSA Membership Form

You can also renew your membership using PayPal! Visit www.paccsa.org

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____ Date _____

Membership Information

_____ Single \$6/yr _____ Family \$9/yr _____ Donation Only

_____ New Member _____ Renewal

Number of Adults: _____ Number of Children : _____

Please indicate if you are interested in volunteering any of your skills:

Mail Newsletters (they will be sent via e-mail unless this box is checked)