



THE PENNSYLVANIA NORDIC SKIER

The Pennsylvania Cross Country Skiers' Association

November, 2011

Trick or Treat?

PACCSA's annual trail clear at Laurel Ridge State Park was scheduled for Saturday, October 29. That gives us plenty of time before the snow flies to get firewood stacked, maintain the trails and get the web cam fired up...or so we thought. We happily arrived at the Ridge that Halloween Saturday to find a wonderful treat. More than six inches of snow! Thanks to Jim South and Bob Mazur for getting the web cam going so we had proof!



Laurel Ridge Trick or Treaters—Oct 29, 2011



Laurel Mountain Warming Hut—Oct 29, 2011



Laurel Hill Summit—Oct 30, 2011



LHHT near North Woods—Oct 30, 2011



Pictures provided by Sheila Confer, Bruce Cox, Naomi Jarvis, the Laurel Highlands Nordic Ski Patrol and the PACCSA Web Cam. Thank You!

2012 Pennsylvania Nordic Championship Race

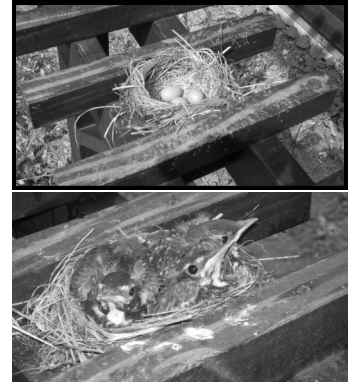
By Dave Jenkins

This winter promises to bring plenty of snow and excitement to the Laurel Highlands. One of winter's high points, if not indeed THE high point, will be the Pennsylvania Nordic Championship race, Sunday, February 5 at Laurel Ridge. The race will again offer events for all ages, from senior citizens to kindergartners, and for both classic and skate skiers. As usual, there will be awards for the top finishers in each category and overall winners. But you don't need to be an elite athlete to enjoy this day. I'm a pretty bad skier myself, having learned cross country skiing only about 10 years ago, at a much-too-advanced age. But I enjoyed the race every time I entered it—it was a challenge I could plan my training around and look forward to, a reason to go to the gym or work out on our trails when the weather suggested staying inside instead. So join us, February 5, and enjoy the fun of racing over some of the loveliest trails in this part of the country.

But if you just aren't the racing type, why not volunteer to help during race day? PACCSA could use a few extra hands to take registrations, hand out bibs, record race times, and other duties. If you're interested, we'd love to have your help. Contact racedirector@paccsa.org for more information.

Summer Use of a Ski Rack

Thanks to Bob Mazur for the pictures!



You can see all of these pictures, and more, in color on our Facebook page! Search "Pennsylvania Cross Country Skiers' Association (PACCSA)"

PACCSA is Going Green!

In an effort to reduce costs and our impact on the environment, PACCSA will now offer members the option to receive their newsletter via e-mail in PDF format.

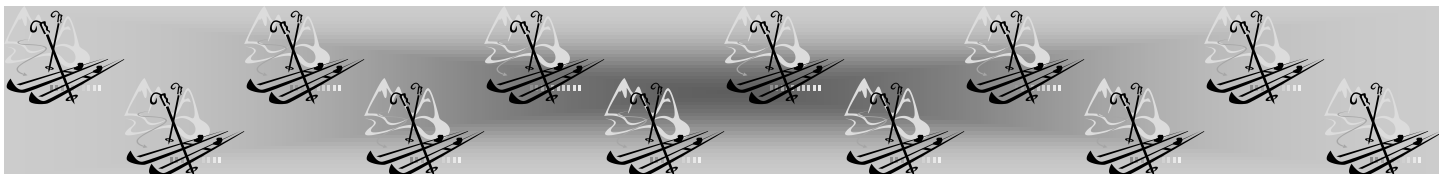
We know everyone isn't ready to let go of their paper copies so we will happily continue to mail newsletters to those of you who do not opt for the electronic option.

If you are renewing your membership using the renewal form in this newsletter, please indicate on the form if you would like to take advantage of the electronic option.

WANTED:

Assistant Webmaster

E-mail newsletter@paccsa.org if you are interested or want to know more.



A Letter from the President

Quoting the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, "The only thing constant is change". Those who know me well will hear me say, "Why does everything have to change"? "Why can it stay the same"? Life would be so much simpler if everything stayed the same. Well reality is that everything does change constantly. PACCSA is changing constantly and trying to improve on the good thing we have going. We are constantly expanding our knowledge on Nordic skiing to better promote the sport of cross country skiing. For example, several of our members have taken courses to be certified Nordic skiing instructors. When we give free lessons you may very well have a certified instructor. Yellowjackets instructors are also certified so youth skiers will be taught correct techniques from the beginning. I and two other PACCSA members attended the CDS Outdoor School Wilderness First Aid classes last fall. This gives us basic first aid knowledge for backcountry or wilderness areas defined as over one hour from emergency help. I and another PACCSA member attended the DCNR chainsaw training and safety class. This certification is required by DCNR to operate a chainsaw on state forest land.

The face of PACCSA is changing also. Our FaceBook page continues to grow and at last count we have over 200 likes. You may have noticed changes to our website, paccsa.org and we plan to make additional improvements. Thanks to PACCSA's participation in the grant at Laurel Ridge, the parking lot is bigger, the dsl line is buried, and a new UTV has been purchased. This project is going forward and construction of the red trail extension should begin next spring. The contract for the concession was up for bid last year and although it continues to be the same operator we can expect to see some changes there as well. PACCSA work crews helped improve some trails at Boyce Park and Laurel Mountain to improve conditions for Nordic skiers. We hope to continue to expand our grooming efforts at these and other areas.

With PACCSA's encouragement and assistance, 7 Springs and DCNR are developing a trail from the Laurel Ridge Nordic center to the Sporting Clay lodge. This trail will be shared with our snowmobile friends so please be courteous. This trail is approximately 5 miles across.

PACCSA outings will include night skis again this year so stay tuned for locations and times.

All of this allows us to stay true to our mission to promote Nordic skiing in PA and the tri-state area.

Now let's get out there and ski!



About Bruce

Bruce Cox is beginning his second year as PACCSA President. Bruce is an avid skier and enjoys backcountry, classic and skate skiing as well as some occasional downhill skiing. During the snow free months Bruce enjoys cycling, both mountain and road, and competing in local triathlons.

Little Known Fact

Bruce has been playing the guitar for over 45 years and plays and sings in an acoustic duo called *uncommon* with his partner in life and crime, Sheila Confer (PACCSA Board member and Newsletter Editor). They play local open mic nights and coffeehouses around the Greensburg area. They even played a house concert in Stowe Vermont in Sept to raise funds for the flood victims.

Rollerskiing: The Best Way to Get Ready for Winter (part 1)

By James South

The weather man was right. You wake up, glance outside, and see a beautiful white blanket on the ground. So, you gear up and race out to make the first tracks of the season. However, shortly after strapping on your skis, reality sets in. You feel like you're laboring and going incredibly slow. You think, "I don't remember skiing being this hard!"

Most of the nordic skiers I know are exceptionally fit and active. In the summer, they enjoy running, cycling, hiking and swimming. Nonetheless, when it comes to those first few outings on snow, they feel tired and sore after only 5 kilometers of skiing. The problem? A lack of specificity. You can be in the best shape of your life, but if you haven't been working ski-specific muscle groups, the transition from summer-sports to skiing can be quite difficult. The best way to make a smooth transition into the ski season is to ski year-round. That means adopting a training plan that in-



No, I'm not in this photo, but I think I once had a pair of those shorts!



A typical pair of skating rollerskis. Note the skinny wheels. These are prepped with fast polyurethane racing wheels. However, most rollerskis come with rubber wheels that mimic the pace of snow skiing and are perfect for training.



A photo showing various models of classical rollerskis. As you can see, the wheels are much wider than those on the skating rollerskis in the previous picture.

James South was born and raised on cross country skis in the Adirondack region of New York. He is a member of PACCSA and NYSSRA and skis competitively for the NYSSRA-sanctioned Hudson United Racing Team ("HURT"). He currently lives in Uniontown, PA and wishes it would snow year round.

Want to give it a try before snow flies for real? Do you have questions? James welcomes your e-mails at

south2027@hotmail.com.

cludes roller-skiing. Roller-

skiing has been around for decades. The earliest rollerskis looked a lot like snow skis with wheels attached. To the right is a vintage photo of some chaps rollerskiing.

So what do you need to get started? If you have snow skis, you already have most of the equipment needed for rollerskiing. Your current poles will work just fine, though you'll want to replace your snow baskets with a set of road ferrules. Also, you can use your winter skiing boots for rollerskiing. Yes, they'll be warm in the summer months, but believe it or not, boots specifically made for rollerskiing are only a very recent invention.

Of course, you'll need a pair of rollerskis equipped with bindings that will work with your winter boots. Rollerskis come in both skating and classical versions (there are also "combi" rollerskis that can be used for both techniques). Skate rollerskis have short shafts and skinny wheels that look a lot like those on your kid's scooter.

Classical rollerskis tend to have wider, more stable wheels. The wheels are ratcheted to allow for a nice positive kick. Classical models often have slightly longer shafts than skating rollerskis, but are still much shorter than a typical snow ski.



In the past, rollerskis were much more expensive than a pair of snow skis. These days, prices start at around \$150 for skate rollerskis and \$200 for classical models. Bindings cost extra, but if you have an extra pair of bindings lying around, most retailers will pre-drill holes for your bindings for a nominal charge. (continued in the next newsletter...)

News From The Trails

By Bob Mazur and Sally Smales

Free Lesson Update

By Sally Smales

Laurel Mountain

Lippo's Loop had a lot of fill added to raise the trail and dry up wet areas. Material was also applied to parts of Towhee trail to eliminate a wet area. Work was done by a youth group and Laurel Mountain Volunteer Group.

Laurel Ridge

New Beginners trail

This past summer a new connector trail was added between one of the Green trails and the Blue Trail. It is primarily for beginners and is shorter than the Blue Trail (about 1k).

New Red Trail Extension

The new red trail extension will be started next spring. Engineering is being done by PACCSA member, Scott Rugh. The trail will be a little over 1k long and considered for upper intermediate. Part of the trail will also serve as an easy way to the orange trail by bypassing the steep Orange Hill down from the concession and should be ready for the 2012-2013 ski season.

Northwoods

The Laurel Mountain Volunteer Group put new steps on the Shafer run warming hut as well as built a new wood bin next to the warming hut.

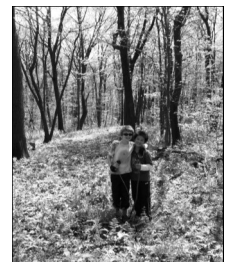
Wilderness Lodge

Several PACCSA members made a weekend trip to Wilderness Lodge for their annual Ski Swap and trail maintenance day. We spent two days lopping branches, widening and clearing trails. Trails are in super shape and there will be even more kms of groomed skating trails this year.

This upcoming ski season, PACCSA will again offer free xc-skiing lessons!!

Be sure to check our website in early December for the dates and times for lessons in January and February.

Contact Sally Smales at secretary @pacsa.org if you are interested in helping out as an instructor or if you would like to know more about lesson logistics.



Two Yellowjackets after a day's work on a new purple loop at Laurel Ridge

Nordic Ski Patrol News

By Sheila Confer

Have you ever thought about joining the National Ski Patrol? The Western Appalachian Region of the National Ski Patrol is looking for new members for the Laurel Highlands and Laurel Hill Nordic Ski Patrols. These patrols are all-volunteer professional organizations and components of the National Ski Patrol. Their mission is to provide outdoor emergency care, rescue, and other safety related services to Nordic (cross country) skiers and other outdoor enthusiasts, while promoting the enjoyment of winter recreation in the wilderness environment.

Patrol candidates are required to complete the National Ski Patrol's medical training course, Outdoor Emergency Care. This course is offered annually at Hidden Valley (usually in the spring) and at 7 Springs (usually in the fall). The courses generally involve about 12 evening sessions, and there is a nominal charge for registration and a very detailed textbook. The OEC credential is equivalent to that of EMT-B, and OEC technicians are recognized by the state of PA as Emergency Medical Responders--formerly referred to as First Responders.

Candidates who have completed OEC spend the following winter shadowing experienced patrollers on the trails, working to fine tune their skiing skills in all manner of conditions, and acquiring practical experience with other rescue skills.

Please go to www.WAR-Nordic.org to learn more and if you would like more information should contact our NSP Regional Nordic Advisor, Jerry Timcik at Timcik@Yahoo.com

Also consider participating in one of the upcoming courses, clinics or other events sponsored by WAR. Here is some information on the next one, but much more information is available at www.WAR-Nordic.org.

Mountain Travel and Rescue Level 2 (MTR2) Preliminary Session

Saturday December 17 - Sunday December 18

Mountain Travel & Rescue Level 2 (MTR 2) Prelimin Hosted by Ski Denton at Denton Hill State Park, Pa. This course provides participants with the knowledge and skills to cope successfully with winter emergencies, and to take care of themselves and others in the most adverse weather conditions. Open to Nordic and Alpine patrollers, and to anyone with an interest in mountain travel or patrolling. Advanced registration is required. Contact Regional Nordic Advisor [Jerry Timcik](#).

Special thanks to Fred Fargostein, Assistant Director of the Laurel Highlands Nordic Ski Patrol for his contribution to this article.



Race Calendar

By Naomi Jarvis and Rick Garstka

Although the PACCSA race on February 5 will be the highlight of the year, it is not the only race around. Here are some other highlights:

Jan 21-22—Ohio nordic Flurry/Lake Erie Jr Nordic Championships (JOQs) (jr Olympic qualifiers) in Cleveland.
<http://ohionordic.org/>

Jan 29—25K Mountain State Marathon - 1 pm This rolling course never gives you a needed break or settle for a shortened version. Kid's classes, and great prizes. \$20 entry fee. Fully groomed for classic or skate, sweet prizes, website splatter and personal glory. <http://www.whitegrass.com/events.html>

Feb 10-12—The National Masters Championships and the 36th Annual North American VASA <http://www.vasa.org/>

It's time to make plans to join PACCSA at the 2012 North American VASA. The VASA trail, located just outside of Traverse City, is Michigan's premier cross-country ski trail offering those of all abilities the opportunity to experience the ultimate in grooming technology amongst towering white pines and through the pristine serenity of the Pere' Marquette State forest of Northern Michigan. In February, 2012, the VASA trail will hold, in addition to the annual VASA races, the National Masters Championships, making for a very exciting weekend for skiers of all ages and abilities. The schedule is as follows:

Sat, February 11th, 2012 North American VASA 12km, 27km and 50km – Freestyle and Classic 6km Freestyle (14-19 yrs only)

Sun, February 12th, 2012 Gran Travers' 16km and 6km Classic

Feb 18 - Biathlon event at Chapin

Feb 25/26—American Berkebeiner. <http://www.birkie.com/>

Last season Wilderness Lodge had impromptu night races so stay tuned to their Facebook page and website for possible night races this season.

Watch for more information at our website <http://www.paccca.org/Events> and on our Facebook page.

About Naomi

What type of skiing do you do? "My ski preferences are skate, classic and backcountry. I love them all. Last winter my best discovery was that the local ballfield makes a great skate practice ground."

What other outdoor activities do you enjoy? "Cycling, mountain biking, hiking, a little trail running and Aorienteering. 742 miles of bike commuting so far this year."

Little known fact

"I hate summer."

About Rick

What type of skiing do you do?

"Mainly skating, since my back rebels if I do the diagonal stride."

What other outdoor activities do you enjoy?

"I used to run, play golf, softball and hockey, but now it's just roller skiing, blad-ing and running steps and lifting weights. A few PACCSA members have tried to convince me to start bike riding, but their injuries have convinced me otherwise."

Little known fact

Hall-of-Famer 'Pie' Traynor, who played third base for the Pittsburgh Pirates, once commented about my fielding ability at a tryout I had back in 1961. He said (after I threw a ball over the backstop during infield practice), "That young feller out at second base needs two catchers - one inside the park...and one outside the park". Thus ended my pro baseball aspirations.

PACCSA Membership Has Benefits

PACCSA members enjoy discounts at some of the top touring centers in the region:

- White Grass—\$5 discount
- Wilderness Lodge—20% discount

Your membership dues and donations also help PACCSA fulfill its mission to promote cross country skiing in PA through various projects including the following:

- Laurel Ridge Webcam
- Free ski lessons
- Trail Maintenance and development
- Laurel Mountain grooming project
- Additional webcam projects
- Yellowjackets
- Annual PA Championship Race. Members receive a discount on race registration.

Your PACCSA board is working with other PA ski areas, ski shops and businesses on additional PACCSA discounts. We hope to have more to report in our next newsletter.



**Pennsylvania Cross Country Skiers'
Association**

PACCSA
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Munhall, PA 15120

Find us on



Search "Pennsylvania Cross Country
Skiers' Association (PACCSA)"

"Stretch pants - the garment that made skiing a spectator sport."

Unknown

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2011-12 PACCSA Membership Form

You can also renew your membership using PayPal! Just visit www.paccca.org.

Click on Donations/Membership.

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