



# The Easy Glider

Kick 'n Gliders Nordic Ski Club

Editor: Bill Stine

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## Trip Reports

### Tug Hill Tourathon

by Nancy Kauh!

Try-It Races - January 16, 1999

"Five minutes to go for the 25 km race .. one minute to go .. five .. four .. three .. two .. one .. GO!" and nearly 100 racers, including David LeRoy and Fred and Tanya Richter, start kicking and gliding into the forest down Wart Road. Fifteen minutes later, the skis and poles of a smaller group of racers, including Nancy Kauh!, started churning as the 10-km race begins. These races are for the serious and not-so-serious classic style cross-country ski racers. They are held on the Tug Hill Tourathon trails in the Winona State Forest, a wonderful system of over 50-km of wooded trails near Pulaski, New York. Since these trails are ten miles from the eastern end of Lake Ontario, they get lots of lake-effect snows. As of January 16, 1999, record snowfalls (over 170 inches this season) had "blessed" the area. Over 18 inches fell on Thursday before the races and another 4 inches Friday evening. In fact, the races were delayed an hour so the snowmobiles could pack the snow on the trails for the race.

The four Kick 'n Gliders who raced enjoyed the conditions. Being in a race, one loses some of the trepidation normally felt at the top of a hill and, especially with the blankets of fresh powder this weekend to soften the landing if we did fall, we tore down the hills. Unfortunately, some of us aren't as quick on the uphill as we'd like to be, so we did not finish the races in time to get awards. But we finished with good times and we weren't last! It is exciting to hear the cowbell and cheers when you cross the finish line.

On Sunday, the group went to Selkirk Shores State Park on Lake Ontario to see the lake and ski on some of the trails that wind though the park. The lake was

spectacular! The beach area was buried beneath piles of built-up snow and ice. The waves crashed into these piles, undercutting them and sending waves back out to crash into later waves with huge sprays of water. In a few places, there were "thunder holes" where the waves would send geysers of water up through openings in the ice.



### Garnet Hill

by Jamie Hackman

January 15-18, 1999

The skiers who made it through the ice, sleet, rain, snow, etc., to Garnet Hill included Sally Eberly, Jamie Hackman, Jeremy Martin, Bill & Kay Pickering, Nan O'Donnell, Bernie Webber, Al Hoch and Perry Kaufman. Because of so much interest in this trip, Fred Burgess rented a second house and filled that one, too. Participants in house #2 were Beth Kaszuba, Jan Diehl, Dave & Beth Risser, Bill Engle & Peggy.

After the treacherous driving conditions, we were pleased to find approximately two feet of snow at Garnet Hill. We had two days of sunny, fun-filled skiing. We even skied down Skullbuster this year. And, although Bill was a little disheveled, none of us truly busted our skulls! We also visited the pigs, goats and llamas and warmed up at the Sugar House. Conditions were great and the weather was fairly warm.

We had Ping-Pong tournaments at the Steckroth House, and some of us chose to spend Sunday afternoon watching the playoff game between the Vikings and the Falcons. Sunday night we invited Fred's house over for dinner and enjoyed an evening of socializing. Thanks to Perry for making the chili!

## Calendar of Events

Wed, February 17, 7:30  
Member Dinner Meeting  
TGI Friday's (652-4227)

Sun, February 21  
Day Trip to Laurel Ridge  
Dennis & Beth Major, 432-7068(H)  
(Please call by Wednesday, 2/17, if interested)

Feb 26 - Feb 27  
Extended Trip to Black Forest / Happy Acres  
Waterville, PA

Sat, February 27  
Day Trip to Crystal Lake  
Jim Brandon, 761-3920 (H)

Tue, March 2, 7:00  
Member Meeting  
Wildware Canoe Shed

March 12 - March 15  
Extended Trip to Tug Hill / Pioneer Lodge  
Turin, NY

Wed, March 17, 7:30  
Member Dinner Meeting  
Chi-Chi's (558-8377)

Tue, April 6, 7:00  
Member Meeting  
Election of Officers & Trip Planning

Wed, April 21, 7:30  
Member Meeting  
Location TBA

## Crystal Lake Camps

by Roberta Strickler

January 22 - 24, 1999

After winding my way out of Crystal Lake Camps through Pine Tree Road and a series of other local roads that bypassed flooded areas, I came home to see the Golden Globe Awards. So, with that inspiration, here is the Trip Report for the 1999 Laughlin Lodge at Crystal Lakes.

Location: The 13-inch snow base remained in place through all of Friday and Saturday, proving again that you can't predict the ground conditions at the top of Crystal mountain while looking out the window in Harrisburg.

Producer: Mother Nature gave us a never ending show of rain, fog, wind, fresh air, running creeks, hemlocks & dark tree trunks shrouded in mist, and even some technical combinations of shale, clay, sand, gravel, and rock.

Director: Our trip leader, Roberta Strickler, was pretty well laid back, considering that 50 percent of the people on the trip were engineers. Everything went along in an orderly way. Amazing combination.

Best Picture: A tie between Wild Rice Lake shrouded in fog and Catfish Swamp running full with grasses of every color of orange, yellow and red against catfish colored water.

Best Location: Laughlin Lodge with its huge fireplace, 8-branched candelabra, wrap porch, trophy animal heads, rustic stairwell, enhanced by a modern furnace.

Best Actor and Best Actress: These awards are given for performances in our spirited game of Raunchy Trivial Pursuits: To Kim Lausch for her remarkable insights about male anatomy and to Charlie Cole for knowing what women like best.

Lifetime Award: To Joan Short for her remarkable restraint in channeling her all-out energies into the kitchen capers and making the feast come off so effortlessly.

Dutiful Award: To Nan O'Donnell who called to see what conditions were like and responded to Dottie's classic answer: "It depends on how much you are willing to support your club."

Best Appearance: A tie between Nancy Kaulh for her svelte, new look and Wanda Knuth Cole for her placid demeanor as a married woman.

Best Rookies: Steve Seidl and John Lippert for starting from scratch on this sport under the most difficult of conditions, seldom falling, and never giving up.

Why is it that you remember longest those imperfect trips when the sky is a little less than blue, the snow is a little less than granular, and the sense of laughter and companionship emerges all the more?



## Trip Status Reports

Black Forest / Happy Acres, Waterville, PA

2/26 - 2/28

Full, but Bill Stine has reserved another nearby cabin to accommodate additional skiers. Call him at 392-1675 if you are interested.

Tug Hill / Pioneer Lodge, Turin, NY

3/12 - 3/15

Eight people have signed up so far. There is still plenty of room for additional skiers. Call Dave LeRoy if you are interested.



## Trail Survival Skills

Meeting Program, Feb 2

Don Ebright

Don has been a member of the National Ski Patrol, Nordic Division and has taught Wilderness survival skills for many years. He gave an excellent presentation to the thirteen club members who attended the meeting.

I will try to summarize the high points of Don's presentation. He noted that, because cross-country skiers commonly venture far into remote areas in often inhospitable weather conditions, they are more likely than most to actually need survival skills. However, these skills can be applied to any

situation in which you need help and cannot easily get it.

Don divided survival skills into a series of components. They are:

- Accepting ultimate responsibility for your own survival
- Preparedness, both mentally and physically, to survive.
- Attitude ... "I will survive."
- Specific skills

He presented a diagram called the web of survival, used to represent the degree to which a person is equipped to survive. The point of the "web" was that few people possess a high level of all the components. However, if more than a few are absent, the chances of survival lower considerably.

- **Responsibility:** Before you leave, notify someone of your plans and then stick to the plan to increase your chances of being found if people need to search for you. Be willing to admit it when you are lost. If you are lost, make it easier to be found by searchers by staying put. Make yourself visible using fire, aerial flares, signal mirrors, criss-crossed skis or a whistle.
- **Preparedness:** Get into good physical shape. Make sure your equipment works correctly. Make sure the "ten essentials" are in your pack (see below). Consider your own logistics and what you can do to help yourself in a survival situation. For instance, consider packing extra survival gear in your car in case you are stranded near or in your car. Practice the rules of etiquette (printed in the back of the annual trip guide). Learn the special skills that are likely to help you survive like orienteering, skiing, first aid, shelter building, etc.
- **Specific Skills:**
  - First aid
  - Shelter building
  - Fire building
  - Leadership
  - Map and compass
  - Search and rescue

**Ten Essentials:** Don stressed that you should make sure you know how to use this stuff before you need it, so practice with it when conditions are benign.

1. Waterproof matches
2. Fire starter (candle, lint)
3. Shelter (tarp, tube tent, blanket)
4. Sharp knife
5. Cord (parachute, avalanche)
6. Compass and area map
7. Mirror (for signaling)
8. Whistle
9. High energy food
10. Extra gloves



## Waxing Your Skis

*This article was copied, with permission of the author. It was authored by John "J.D." Downing, founder of Cross Country Ski World, a XC ski web site at <http://www.xeskiworld.com/>. The page on which it appears is sponsored by Royal Gorge Ski Resort.*

### Waxing

Both kick and glide waxing are considered art forms in cross country skiing primarily because of all the subtle additions and variations that can be involved. With volumes of literature and sales pitches available, a beginner can easily get intimidated by all the information and choices. Never fear! Waxing can be an easy and enjoyable part of the XC skiing experience if you have a few pointers and practice a few times. Here a beginner will find some useful tips for getting started in waxing and a familiarization with the waxing process.

### Part One: Glide Waxing

#### Why?

Both Classic and Skate skis periodically need to be glide waxed for optimal glide and performance. Classic skis are glide waxed above and below the wax pocket while skate skis are glide waxed the entire length of the base. Glide waxing both protects a ski base and "customizes" the base to the conditions. Without periodic waxing, bases literally "dry out" (oxidize) whether they are used or not. A dry base eventually starts to slow down and without attention, can become a permanently damaged ski. Glide waxing maintains the "health" of the base by filling pores in the base and preventing excessive drying. In order to maximize the durability of glide wax, the wax is heated into the base using an iron with the excess wax scraped off.

#### What you need

The first step in glide waxing is to find a good place to heat the wax and a good support system for the skis. A well-ventilated area is essential which we will explain in the "Safety" portion. The bare-bones approach in the house is to just lay down some newspaper with some pillows or books underneath to support the tips and

tails. You can also use a workbench or two sawhorses outside or in a garage. This kind of makeshift set-up is fine for heating in wax for beginners and scraping can be done anywhere shavings aren't a problem or where they can easily be cleaned up.

If you move past simple hot waxing into actually structuring skis or if you are working with high-priced performance equipment you really should make or purchase a profile bench. These are wood or metal forms that fit the bow of a ski with a clamp in the middle. Profile benches allow for much more precise ski work and generally protect a ski while waxing, scraping, or structuring.

The only tools you REALLY need are:

- a good iron with an adjustable heat control (no holes are the best)
- a thick plastic wax scraper
- a rounded groove scraper (clean klistler paddles work great!)
- some wax

You can usually find cheap irons at thrift stores but new models are coming out in ski shops and catalogs that are well worth the extra money. Scrapers and wax you can find at any XC ski shop or area.

### How to Hot Wax

Heat your iron to a point just hot enough to melt the wax you will be using. If the iron smokes it is way too hot! For beginners, simple paraffin waxes are all you need to worry about and they melt at a very low temperature. (Note: Fortunately, paraffin waxes are also cheaper and are easier to apply than high-end waxes.) The most efficient application method is to rub the end of the block or stick of wax on the iron face and then crayon the heated end of the wax on the base of the ski. By crayoning on semi-heated wax you use up less wax than by the old method of dripping wax from the iron tip. You just need enough wax to cover the base with a thin layer...any more will simply be wasted. Remember, you never touch the grooves of a waxless ski with any kind of wax and you only glide wax outside the wax pocket of a Classic waxable ski.

Once you have the base covered, gently warm the wax into the pores of the base by moving the iron up and down the glide wax areas. Keep the iron moving until you have clearly melted all the wax. NEVER let the iron touch a bare ski base. Let the ski cool completely before scraping.

### How to Scrape Wax

If you are doing this without a profile bench, make sure to support the ski with your body and your free hand as much as possible. Always work on skis from tip to tail using gentle, fluid motions with the scraper. NEVER use a metal scraper to

scrape wax! Even with a plastic scraper you should be very careful and take your time. Try to angle the scraper towards the direction you are scraping and use your entire hand to hold the scraper since they often slip creating little nicks and base cuts. I often prefer to clean the groove first but just make sure it also gets scraped. Try to get as much wax as possible off the surface for superior glide. A good nylon brush is an excellent finishing tool to really leave a ski clean but it is not necessary for beginning skiing. Now you are ready to go!

### General Glide Waxing Tips

Selection of glide wax is actually pretty easy for beginners. Just follow the temperature ranges on the package and you'll always be in the ballpark. In purchasing wax, a beginner's best bet is a combi package with several colors in one package. Glide wax stores very well as long as you keep the wax in cool areas away from heat sources or direct sunlight.

Forget about the high-end waxes until you have mastered at least intermediate technique and you are on performance equipment. Just to provide some perspective, I've used up \$50-70(US) worth of wax on just one pair of skis for major international competitions. You can buy a pair of used low end skis for that much. Save your money for more ski lessons until every little second starts counting...and for most folks it'll never be that important!

Once you learn the basics of hot waxing and scraping skis, it'll be useful to learn the basics of structuring skis to further improve the performance of even low end skis.

Remember to leave a layer of glide wax on your skis whenever you will be traveling a long distance or when you won't be using the skis for several months. The wax protects the skis from drying out and from the rigors of travel. Protect your investment!

### Safety

Recent research in North America and Europe has proven that waxing fumes do represent a certain amount of health risk--particularly the high-end fluorocarbon waxes. Most researchers conclude that cheaper, paraffin waxes burn fairly "clean" but still advise heating waxes in well ventilated areas and limiting exposure. For a beginner that hot waxes skis one-three times a year, all you really need to do is make sure to open the windows when you wax or better yet, heat waxes in an open garage or even outside. If you have a good organic vapor mask (used in painting and other industrial uses) go ahead and use it but don't make a special trip just for low-end paraffin waxes.