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## December 2014 Newsletter

### Sandpoint Nordic Club NEWSLETTER

Volume 1 Issue 3: Dec 1, 2014

Hope

you're ready to ski! Here's what's happening:

#### Monthly

**Member Meeting** Tuesday, 12/9, 5:30-7:00, Laughing Dog Brewing in Ponderay.

**Annie Pokorny Clinic** scheduled for Fri/Sat

– Dec 19/20. See Vicki's write up.

**Schweitzer Winter Trails Day** 1/10. Aka. Learn

to Ski Day. We need volunteers to help run this thing. See Rick's announcement.

<http://www.schweitzer.com/events-activities/winter-trails-day-2015/>

**Schweitzer**

**Nordic Ski Clinics** 2/6-2/8 <http://www.schweitzer.com/events-activities/nordic-ski-clinics-2015/>

**Explore**

**Schweitzer** 2/22 <http://www.schweitzer.com/events-activities/explore-schweitzer-2015/>

## **Monthly Member Meeting**

At Laughing Dog Brewing, 1109 Fontaine

Dr., Ponderay, on Tuesday, 12/9, 5:30-7:00. This is an open member meeting at which President Vicki will report on Club doings and you will have a chance to meet and converse with other Club members. See you there! – *Bob Love*

**Annie Pokorny Visits Sandpoint**

Annie Pokorny is a 22 year old professional skier who grew up through the Spokane Nordic program and is now competing on an international level. Back in Spokane, Annie raced for the Pacific Northwest Ski Association and Intermountain as a junior skier before moving to Vermont to race for Middlebury College. She now races for SMS T2 in Stratton Mountain, VT. Annie trains and races with a competitive group of US Ski Team members and Olympians. Her racing accomplishments both domestically and internationally continue to increase, achieving podiums at both national and international championships.

Annie will be visiting Sandpoint on Dec 19 & 20 and will be leading several ski sessions. Schedule is as follows:

Friday, Dec 19, 10:30-noon – Women's Intermediate & Advanced Skate

Friday, Dec 19, 3:30 – 5pm – Junior race team skis with Annie

Saturday, Dec 20 – Beginner skate

Watch for more information on the website to sign up and participate, no cost for SNC members. – *Vicki Longhini*

**Learn to Ski Day**

Our biggest outreach day of the year is coming up Saturday, January 10. SNC, with support from Schweitzer Mountain Resort, will be putting on our annual Learn to Ski Day. There will be sessions in the morning and the afternoon with free ski rentals and free group lessons for beginner skiers. It all takes place on a trail that will be groomed at the round-about just before you get to the resort. For club members, this is a great day to show off why we love this sport. We have gotten a hundred new people comfortable on skis each of the last several years. Club members who want to help for all or part of the day should contact Rick Price at [sandpointprices@frontier.com](mailto:sandpointprices@frontier.com). If you have friends that you have been wanting to get on skis, pay attention to our web site or the Schweitzer web site. Details will be coming soon as to how to go about reserving gear and lesson space. – *Rick Price*

## **Volunteer Coaches for YSL**

The Youth Ski League “on-snow” training starts in December! This year there are 32 kids enrolled in divisions of Nordic Kids, Development Team or the Race Team. The Nordic Kids division is for kids who are new to Nordic skiing and is a non-competitive, high fun factor group. The Development team is a mix of kids who have some Nordic ski experience, want to maintain their fitness through the winter and may be interested in racing Nordic in the future. Our race team this year includes 6th – 9th graders who will compete with fellow athletes from all over the Pacific NW region. We’ll be training 2-4 days a week and often racing on weekends. All our coaches are volunteers. We are always looking to add to our coaching staff. Please contact the club email if you are interested in helping – [sandpointnordic@gmail.com](mailto:sandpointnordic@gmail.com). – *Vicki Longhini*

## **Trail Survey**

Do you care about trails in Bonner Co? Ski trails, road bike trails, hiking/walking trails, mountain bike trails.....Wish there were more? Wish more of them connected? The city of Sandpoint's Trail Mix committee wants to hear from you. If you want a say in the type of trails and where trails should be, take the online survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/bonnercosurvey>

– *Vicki Longhini*

## **Wednesday Ski Group**

Are you tired of skiing by yourself? Schweitzer Wednesday ski group started several years ago with a group of friends getting together to ski for fun. The composition of the group changed on a weekly basis as new friends of friends showed up to ski with the group and others had other commitments that day. You can think of the group as a “no drop bike ride” on skis. If you are looking to meet other likeminded skiers to enjoy the trails with, we meet at 9:10 AM Wednesday at the clock tower. Many skiers ride the 8:30 bus and get more acquainted with others in the group. We may skate or classic ski depending upon snow conditions. We will be developing an E-mail list of skiers and will be

advising skiers early in the morning as to whether skate or classic may be the choice for the days conditions. If there is enough interest we may break into several groups to accommodate skiers of different abilities. This ski group is not a lesson or a training session however we may throw in a drill or two during a ski session. If you are looking for more friends to ski with we'll see you at the clock tower on Wednesdays at 9:10.

Questions? Contact Bill at [btrego2811@msn.com](mailto:btrego2811@msn.com)

– *Bill Tregoning*

## **Would you like to ski with other Club members?**

The Club is surveying to find out if there is interest. The proposal is this: The Club would match skiers of similar abilities and interests to start ski groups with regularly scheduled outings. If needed the Club will try to provide an experienced skier to act as guide. These would not be lessons but an opportunity to get into a regular routine, build your skills and have some fun. If you're interested, send an email telling what you would like in a group to [sandpointnordic@gmail.com](mailto:sandpointnordic@gmail.com) – *Bob Love*

## **The Pole Length Mystery**

Pole

length seems to be another one of those Nordic mysteries. If you've asked 3 people for their opinions, you likely got 3 different answers. You may have

heard things like, “Your poles should be up to your armpits when standing on one leg with medium lift heels while facing north.” Or maybe you heard, “Your poles should be up to that little cleft between your upper lip and the bottom of your nose, but only that long if you can V2 all the way to the end of Cloudwalker in December.” Well the truth is, the theories about pole length have changed a bit over the years. With skiing at the elite level relying more and more on upper body strength, there has been interesting research on the amount of propulsion archived thru poling action, especially for skate skiing. Elite skate skiers now generate about 70% of their propulsion with their poles! How do they do that? It’s rather simple physics. They simply apply more force to the poles over more distance. I know, easier said than done. So what can we recreational skiers do? Yes, we could train harder year round. We could also make sure we have the right poles. Why? Because our ability to affect the distance thru which we apply the force is somewhat a factor of having the right length pole. Imagine if we had really short poles, say to your navel. Would you be able to pole strongly? Conversely, if you had really long poles, maybe a foot taller than you. Again, would they be useful? The current thinking is trending toward longer poles for skating. Think “tip of your nose.” Classic skiing has been around much longer than skating, so pole length theory seems to be more stable. Think, “top of your shoulder.” Frankly I think an easier way to determine pole length is simply mathematical. For classic skiing, poles should be 81 – 84% of your height. For skating, your poles should be 89 – 92% of your height. Generally speaking, if you have a strong upper body and great technique, then use the upper end of the range. Newer skiers may prefer the lower end of the range. One suggestion for buying poles is to get poles at the upper end of the range and try them out. If they feel too long simply have them cut down. Good luck if you buy them too short and want to have them cut longer. – *Ross Longhini*

## Preparing Your Skis for Snow

I like to put my skis to rest during the summer months with a layer of Toko LF red or Swix LF 6 or 7. The wax is melted onto the ski and left there. This layer of wax keeps your ski bases from drying out and helps protect them. When the first tracks are set down, all I need to do is scrape, brush, and ski. Those wax choices usually work well with early season snow. If you put your skis in hibernation without a layer of wax, there are a few steps you can take to get them ready. First of all, I would suggest waxing the skis with a layer of very soft wax such as Toko yellow or Swix CH10. Melt the wax on the ski and move the iron from tip to tail 2-3 passes, scrape the ski while it is still warm with a sharp plastic scraper (don't forget the groove). This will help remove some of the dirt and grime buildup from the base of the ski. Next, apply another layer of the same soft wax and let it cool in a warm dry place. You want this layer to absorb into the base. Once the skis have cooled, scrape and brush the skis. You want to remove all excess wax from the structure pattern of the skis. The final step is to apply the wax for the day (quite often Toko LF red or Swix LF 6 for me), cool, scrape, and brush. Now you're ready to hit the trails.

In preparing my classic skis I follow the same steps for the glide portions of the skis (tips and tails). For the kick zone, I take a piece 100 grit sandpaper and with medium strokes, sand the base to rough it up a little. You can wrap the sandpaper around a cork. This helps the kick wax adhere to the base. I like to iron in a binder such as Toko green for my first layer. Apply several layers of the kick wax of the day and your skis are good to go. The tips and tails of waxless fish scale skis can be prepared with glide wax as suggested above, but keep the glide wax out of the fish scale area. Rub on liquid waxes are also available to help them glide more freely. – *JF*



## Thank You

Why didn't I think of this before? Those are two words sure to make the Ski Curmudgeon skip to the next article. SC is back in the tracks. Keep the questions coming! Also he was bragging up his new career in literature to a reporter in Spokane and that guy thought he would give it a try, too. Needless to say SC is miffed but the guy did a good job and I thought you might enjoy his effort. Of course he will never be an SC.

<http://www.spokesman.com/outdoors/stories/2014/nov/20/landers-cross-country-skiing-advice-from-a-nordic/>

—

*A. Friend*

## Can One Learn to Skate Ski on Schweitzer's Terrain??

Schweitzer's nordic trails are hilly and very challenging. There are evidently nordic trail systems elsewhere that are flatter, making it easier for learning to skate ski. In our vicinity, there are such easier options, but they are at much lower elevation where snowfall can be sparse. Learning to skate ski in our area will eventually require braving Schweitzer's nordic terrain. On the plus side, Schweitzer's nordic trail grooming for skating has become superb. This short article, describes my personal journey in learning to skate ski, a journey that continues.

I first started to grunt my way up and down Schweitzer's nordic trails in the 2005 – 2006 season, as I turned 65 years of age. My Norwegian born wife, Eli, had taken up skate skiing earlier and was enjoying it, so why not me? She and I illustrate the two extremes for new skate skiers. She took to it immediately (unfair genetic advantage), while I struggled. Someone claimed, "It's a lot like ice skating." As a hockey player in my youth, I soon established that claim as a falsehood. Maybe it resembles speed skating, but not hockey.

My early strategy was to carry my skis up the cat track to Cloudwalker, thereby avoiding the climb up from the Valley of Death. I did this before the lift served, alpine slopes opened, to escape encountering the downhill skiers and their scorn. I would adroitly avoid the occasional early morning Schweitzer grooming machines and snowmobiles by screaming and throwing myself over the cat track edge. Once on Cloudwalker I would don my gear and huff and puff my way to the Wolf Ridge loop (stopping to catch my breath here and there) and then return via the same route. I would even stay on my skis to snowplow down the sometimes icy and rough cat track until I reached the locker room, where I would wring out my sweat soaked clothing and join Eli who would be patiently waiting – and attempting to disguise her laughter. Nobody would sit by sweaty me on the bus back to the Red Barn. One bus driver always insisted that I ride in the under-bus equipment storage bin.

This went on for some years. I could eventually go further between rest stops on my skis. And I now even started in the Valley of Death, no longer walking up the cat track to Cloudwalker. But this was due to improving physical condition, not advances in my skating technique. Then in the fall of 2013, I went to a fund raiser at Pour Authority for the Sandpoint Nordic Club (SNC) and won a free skate ski lesson – or maybe Eli won it and forced it on me. Actually, I just went there to drink beer.

Somehow SNC recognized that I would need at least two instructors. I was assigned to Ross and Vicki Longhini as their one and only eager student. They took turns – one would give me pointers while the other would retreat to cry. Despite their near despair, I learned stuff AND eventually incorporated it into my skate ski technique. Encouraged by tangible improvement, I signed up for another lesson via a Schweitzer program. Some skate ski whisperer guru guy came over from the Methow to share his expertise. He was one of those aliens from POGSS (Planet Of Gifted Skate Skiers) who could stand at the bottom of a hill and command his skis to transport him, smoothly and swiftly, to the top. Nevertheless, he was able to bring his instruction down to a beginner's level and instill improvement.

So here I am about to turn 74, yet facing the 2014 – 2015 season with anticipation and enthusiasm. My passion for alpine skiing has dimmed, so this new fascination is timely. I have a long way to go in technique, naively hoping to improve more rapidly than I age. Perhaps, not everyone needs lessons, but they definitely helped me. I wished I had taken competent instruction earlier and hope I didn't forget everything I learned last year. – *Richard Sevenich*

## **Western Pleasure Guest Ranch**

It's first thing in the morning, you have your skis on, the air is cold and the snow crunchy. You are a few feet from your car and at the beginning of a long loop trail leading to more trails, all freshly groomed for classic and skate. It is clear, still and so quiet you can hear past the far end of the huge meadow. Quit dawdling. You're here for a workout.

This place is a real pleasure. The setting is beautiful on the lower slopes of the Cabinet Mountains with miles of trails in the two meadows. There are some ups and downs, some shorter and some longer, to make it interesting. It's the perfect place for a casual outing or to practice your classic or skate skills.

Plus the WPGR owners are working hard to reopen a version of the Big Hill trail. It was closed last year due to logging and was greatly missed. In the past it had offered terrain comparable to all but the most challenging at Schweitzer. Watch for more information on this and a revised trail map.

And there's more: This is a dude ranch with all the amenities you could ask for. It's the off season for trail rides but how about a sleigh ride? Or stop by the impressive log lodge for refreshment and to warm up or cool down depending on how your workout went. If you've made arrangements, there could even be a luncheon waiting for you and your friends. For details and to make those arrangements, give them a call.

To learn more, get a snow report or make reservations call WPGR at (208) 263-9066. They are also on the web:

<http://www.westernpleasureranch.com/fall-winter-spring/nordic-trails.htm>

and Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Western-Pleasure-Guest-Ranch/155281081045>

Information including driving instructions, trail maps and equipment rental is also available on the SNC website: <http://www.sandpointnordic.com/western-pleasure-trail-map.html>

**Need advice? Ask the Ski Curmudgeon!**

Dear  
Ski Curmudgeon,

I was skiing at Schweitzer and saw some people skiing in those weird tracks on the side of the ski trails. I always thought they were for helping me go downhill on my skate skis. They said it was called “classic skiing” and told me about the equipment for it. Since retro is cool again, I want to try this “classic skiing”, but can’t decide if I should get waxless or waxable skis. What would you recommend?  
Trendy Skater

Dear  
Trendy,

The saying goes those two grooves you saw in the snow are designed for people to pour their money into, so the obvious answer is you need both! You will also need a plethora of kick waxes and a cork. Waxable classic skis tend to be much faster in most snow conditions. Waxless skis are for the days you want to throw your kick waxes in the snow bank.  
SC

Dear  
Ski Curmudgeon,

I recently started dating a very experienced XC skier. I want to impress him and show him I can keep up. I'm a distance runner and have excellent endurance, but no technique on skis yet. How can I improve my technique? Fit and Fumbling

Dear  
F&F,

Patience "Grasshopper", if you have fitness, your balance and technique will improve the more time you spend on your skis. Tell him to yo-yo ski or better yet take a lesson or two (maybe from your boyfriend's parents). That way if he ditches you on the trails, you'll always have them on your side. SC

Dear  
Ski Curmudgeon,

I found these weird tubes of sticky goo in my girlfriend's freezer, she calls them "klister". Aside from making

an awful mess, what is the stuff used for???

Dear  
Sticky,

Your girlfriend is an extremely wise person. That sticky goo, also known as klister is an alien substance that literally has a mind of its own. It won't stay in its tube, it laughs at plastic baggies. The only way to control it during the warm summer months is to lock it in the freezer. If left unchecked, it will ruin your entire wax box. The only reason skiers tolerate it is because it gives them "magical skis" in certain icy or slushy snow conditions. It should come with a warning label because when applying it to your skis, it will end up in your hair, inside your gloves and other places I won't mention. Look for a future article on applying klister kick wax in the SNC newsletter. SC

Send your question for the Ski Curmudgeon to [sandpointnordic@gmail.com](mailto:sandpointnordic@gmail.com) The views expressed by the Ski Curmudgeon are his own and hardly ever reflect the views of the SNC.

Comments and suggestions for the newsletter may also be sent to [sandpointnordic@gmail.com](mailto:sandpointnordic@gmail.com)

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