

# Ski Tracker

## BSC Getting Better Not Older!

### From the President

Mike Campbell

Greetings from the President's Office. It's been a great season so far. Skiing got off to an early start in December at the Sawmill Nordic Centre and the snow base held up well for the two weeks of warm weather we had. There is a great base now and we should be in good shape until the March break. Thanks for all the work that trail captain, Fred Scheel, and his team put in early season packing the trails and grooming during the difficult thaw we had.



Skiing at the Colpoys' Trail has been more of a challenge, we need a lot of snow and cold temperatures. We finally have these conditions and Trail Captain, Martin Kerr, has done a great job in keeping the trail open and laying down beautiful tracks. Martin works by himself in grooming the trail and would welcome any volunteers who are familiar with snow machines to lend a hand.

Activities on the trails continue this year. We have about 100 Jackrabbit skiers, which is the most we have had in many years. It's great seeing these young faces out on the trails having a lots of fun.

Our club will be hosting three fun events this coming weekend at the Sawmill Nordic Centre. On Friday is our

**Suntrail Special**  
A Freestyle X-C Ski Race  
A SOD Paraffin Series Race  
Sunday, February 12th, 2017  
Start Time 10:00 am

**Sawmill Nordic Centre**  
(1 km southeast of Suntrails, Owen Sound, ON)

**Also: Family Cookie Challenge**  
400m mass start... Cookies for all!  
Family Cookie Challenge & All skiers must register with your JIL Leader

**Register online at: zone4.ca**  
Registrations must be received by  
11:59 pm, EST, Feb. 9, 2017  
(No race day entries)  
**BSC Jackrabbits race free**

For more information go to: <http://bruceskiclub.ca/suntrail-special/>

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Year	Start year	Distance	Start	Start
2017	2017	10.0 km	10:00 am	10:00 am
2016	2016	10.0 km	10:00 am	10:00 am
2015	2015	10.0 km	10:00 am	10:00 am
2014	2014	10.0 km	10:00 am	10:00 am
2013	2013	10.0 km	10:00 am	10:00 am
2012	2012	10.0 km	10:00 am	10:00 am
2011	2011	10.0 km	10:00 am	10:00 am
2010	2010	10.0 km	10:00 am	10:00 am
2009	2009	10.0 km	10:00 am	10:00 am
2008	2008	10.0 km	10:00 am	10:00 am
2007	2007	10.0 km	10:00 am	10:00 am
2006	2006	10.0 km	10:00 am	10:00 am
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1981	1981	10.0 km	10:00 am	10:00 am
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## COMING EVENTS

- Moonlight Ski - Feb. 10**
- Awesome Adult Afternoon Ski Lesson - Feb. 11**
- Suntrail Special - Feb. 12**
- Glenelg Trail Exchange - Feb. 11 to 18**
- CWOSSA - Feb. 15**
- Bruce Ski Club AGM - Apr. 20**

Moonlight Ski and Pot Luck, then on Saturday the Awesome Adult Afternoon Ski Lesson. If you would like to upgrade you classic or skate skills this is a great event to participate in. Then on Sunday is the annual running of the "Suntrail Special" Ski Race. This is an all ages (free skate) fun event, for young kids up to senior citizens, such as myself. For adults the race is 10 km in distance. And if your are a master skier (over 30) all times are age adjusted, so you can compete against the young bucks!

I encourage all members to participate in these great events. The trail should be in great shape with all this fresh snow on the ground.

For more information on registering go to our club's web site at [www.bruceskiclub.ca](http://www.bruceskiclub.ca)

We still have lots of skiing left this season so get out there and enjoy the trails!!! 

**Tom Hakala**

A couple of milestones already have and will be hitting our club... Bruce Ski Club will be 40 years old next season! I can't believe it has been that long since those early days of three pin bindings, wooden skis and pine tar, knickers and the ever present wine skin (I don't recall ever putting wine in it). The other milestone is a sadder one, with the closing of the beautiful Rankin Ski Trail.

To commemorate these milestones some of our long standing members have come forward with ideas to preserve our history.

Our club treasurer, Andrew Howlett, felt we needed something to remember Rankin, so he has requested that BSC members, former members and friends send him pictures, stories and anecdotes about skiing and working on the Rankin Ski Trail. This is Andrew's request in his own words: *"Hi everyone. I have lots of great memories from Rankin Trail: working on the trail with friends, spotting an almost invisible white rabbit hiding in the snow, singing songs and eating chili at the lodge. Problem is I don't take any photos and I'm a terrible writer. Do you have photos or stories you can share from Rankin Trail? Please contact me at [andrew@howlett.net](mailto:andrew@howlett.net) or leave me a message at 519-376-2203. Thank you for your help."*




Meanwhile Jackie Mersich has offered to write a history of our club as a whole to celebrate our 40 years. Then charter member and nationally acclaimed writer, Laura Robinson, came up with the idea of publishing a book about the club's history.

We are still working out the details of how this will come together, but in the mean time we are asking all of you to start digging through those old snapshots or slides... You know like the picture that shows dad spread eagle at the bottom of Freetail, or your little ones in Jackrabbits. Then if you feel the urge, write what you remember about those early days. It doesn't have to be long and perfect, just say what you feel and write it down. It will be fun to read what we come up with.

To keep this simple we are asking to please send all your information and photos to Andrew Howlett. Let's repeat where to send stuff again: [andrew@howlett.net](mailto:andrew@howlett.net) or call him at 519-376-2203. Also, if you prefer to use snailmail send to:

Andrew Howlett  
217 4th Ave W  
Owen Sound, ON N4K 4V1

We can scan snapshots and slides if you can't and will return them when finished. \_\_\_\_\_ 

## Race Coordinator's Report

**Ruth Scheel**


Racing is alive and well within the Bruce Ski Club. We co-hosted a high school invitational with OSDSS - The Great Wolf Invitational - in January.



It was a great success with 260 skiers from various high schools in Southwestern Ontario participating. Thanks to our great group of club volunteers it was well run and we received good feedback from the skiers and coaches who attended.

We are hosting two more races in February - the Suntrail Special on Feb 12th and CWOSSA - the high school championships on Feb 15th. Once again a great team of volunteers will ensure that these races are well run.

If you have an opportunity to participate in the Suntrail Special - an invitational race open to all ages - or come to watch the high school races; either is well worth the experience.

We are very fortunate to have the opportunity to make racing part of the Club's activities. \_\_\_\_\_ 




# Sawmill Nordic Centre

**Fred Scheel**

The Sawmill trail has had much snow this season. We have a wonderful base and should easily ski past the March Break this season. Our equipment has stood up to what has been required so far with some minor repairs. The New Freefall has provided our groomers with some new challenges and we will probably re-design some of that section.



Our grooming guys, Harry Hong, DJ Perrin, Zane Davies and Fred Scheel have the pleasure adding 2 new guys to the team, Neil Sim (2nd year) and Ron Downie. I know our membership appreciates how dedicated these guys are in providing great skiing for our members. (PS. Zane and wife just added a new groomer to the team, should be ready in 18 years). The Snowshoe Trail seems to be generating lots of use. The fee structure for snowshoeing has been reduced to \$5 per day for non-members. See you on the trail, and enjoy, Fred. \_\_\_\_\_ 



## Colpoys Ski Trail

**Martin Kerr**

If Charles Dickens were asked to describe the ski season so far he might say, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times". Well that could be a bit of an exaggeration but it sure has been a roller coaster ride so far.

We began an early season at Colpoys with the groomer rolling out on December 15th with tracks set on most of the trails a day later. There were definitely some man killing days put in packing down the seemingly never ending string of snow squalls. The wet spots on the trail were bone dry and all was well with the world! Then came the freezing rain, the rain, and more rain. The trails were starting to take a real beating from the elements. The extended thaw saw lots of melt water swell the creek at Deer run and flood the trail at the end of the Beaver

pond loop making much of the trail inaccessible.


By the end of the month however winter had made a return and skiing was on again on a limited part of the trail system and as I write this it looks as though things will freeze up and all of the trails will be skiable by the Groundhog weekend, just in time for Willie to predict six more weeks of skiing. You go Willie!

Where has the double track gone?

You may have noticed that there is at times only a single set of tracks on Bert's Blvd. where there are usually two sets. There are two reasons for this, the first reason is that there is sometimes not enough snow covering the trail to set two tracks, there is however more snow in the middle of the trail where the rocks are not showing through to enable one set of tracks to be set. The second reason is that over the years the trail has gradually become narrower as small trees and bushes at the side of the trail get larger and the trail is just not wide enough for the groomer to put in two sets of tracks. As the base grows it becomes easier for the groomer to put in two sets of tracks. So if skiing along beside your pals and having a good gab is what you like, hang in there!

### Captain needed!


I have worked as the trail captain at Colpoys for a number of years now, but in fact I rarely ski there. I think that the trail would be best served by someone who enjoys skiing at Colpoys and would like to see the trail grow and improve. There are many club members who have put their names forward to help at the trail, and I can provide training and support to get you started.

If you think that you would like to serve as Trail captain, please feel free to drop me a line at: [ma247kerr@gmail.com](mailto:ma247kerr@gmail.com). See you on the trails, Martin. \_\_\_\_\_ 

## Jackrabbits

**Mark Avery and Jason McDonald**

We are now past the half-way point of our Jackrabbit lessons! We have had a tremendous turnout this year with 99 skiers taking part! It truly is great to see so much interest in our sport. Having so many skiers is great but also means that we need to ensure that we have enough volunteers to keep the quality of our programs high. Please consider volunteering your time either this year or next in any capacity. We are still looking for volunteers for the obstacle course, warm-ups, the Carnival and the Pot Luck. Assistant coaches are always welcome and no training is required. If you have interest in taking your coaching credentials, please ask a coach or Jason or myself for more information. Remaining events for this year include the Suntrail Special February 12th, Carnival February 25th and the Pot Luck/Banquet March 4th at the Hepworth Legion.

Be sure to encourage those young skiers on the trails- they are our future! \_\_\_\_\_ 

# Georgian Bay Nordic

Marilyn Suke

## An Approach to Grip Waxing

The beauty of a well grip waxed ski is undeniable. Solid grip and effortless glide sets the rhythm for a perfect ski. Faced with an array of grip wax choices, what is a good approach to achieving this as your goal? Some suggestions follow.

First ensure that your skis fit. It is essential that your grip zone is off the snow when you are gliding and that you have the strength and technique necessary to compress the wax pocket (grip zone) to bring your grip wax onto the snow. Grip zones should be clearly marked on the skis so that you are not guessing where to apply the grip wax.

If you are starting with a clean grip zone, prior to arriving at the trails, apply a layer of grip wax over the entire zone that is a little colder (harder) than what you think you will require. To cork this wax really smooth you can heat gently with a hair dryer or a dedicated grip wax iron. This layer should be fairly thin and very even. It will provide a base onto which your wax of the day is applied. Any bumps or waves may catch on the snow and slow your glide.



When you arrive at the trail you will need to determine the character of the snow and how it will interact with your wax. Some factors to consider are:

- Temperature
- Moisture
- Shape of individual snow grains (sharp pointed, rounded)
- Quality of the tracks (firm, soft, glazed/icy)

Then apply these to your wax choice.

Pick a wax in the temperature range of the day. If it is wet, the snow is transformed to rounded crystals or the tracks are icy you will need to pick a warmer wax than the temperature might indicate. If there is fresh snow you may need to go colder.

Apply 2 thin coats of your choice and cork smooth. Put the wax in your pocket with a warmer and a cooler wax and ski for a few minutes. Try skiing without your poles to get a real feel for the quality of your grip. Pick up a ski and look at the grip zone. A small amount of snow

should cling to the grip zone but should be easy to brush off. Looking closely you should see small dimples in the grip wax that indicate the grip wax is flexing with the snow but not allowing the individual particles to penetrate.

If snow is clinging but not releasing you need a colder wax to cover the wax you have applied. If no snow is clinging and you have insufficient grip you need a warmer wax. If the ski looks good but you want more grip apply the same wax but more layers.

When waxing a ski on the trail I find taking off my glove and rubbing the wax with the heel of my hand warms the wax a little a makes the application of more wax much easier.

### Potential Trouble

- Grip is initially good but then vanishes: This can happen if the snow crystals are sharp and your wax is a bit too soft for the day. Crystals of snow penetrate your grip wax and get caught in the wax forming a layer of ice that will not grip the snow. You will need to rub the wax with the palm of your hand to melt and release this ice. You will actually see water come out of your grip wax as you do this. Sometimes this can happen if you skied on grip wax that was warm from being inside and it will be OK if you just ski on it now that it is cool. Sometimes you need to put a colder wax on top.

- Snow clings to the bottom of your ski This usually happens on mild days with fresh snow. It can happen if you set off on a warm afternoon and then the temperature falls. Snow crystals have again clung to your grip zone and then they invite their snowflake friends to join. You can often remedy this in the same way as above after scraping off your ski.

- Grip is OK but sometimes the skis are sticking: This usually happens when there is a large difference between the quality of the snow in the tracks and on the trail. Try to stay in

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the tracks and if it is necessary to step onto the trail keep you skis moving.

- The temperature is Zero or above and you cannot get grip with the waxes in your box: This is the most challenging conditions for classic skis.

You have a number of options.

- Decide to skate instead.
- Have a back up pair of skis with mechanical grip (crowns, fishscales, zero skis, skins)
- Apply Klister - Klister is a gel like wax that normally comes in a tube and when applied in a thin, smooth layer it is a wonderful thing. It is a bit messy but there is a new way.



An applicator bottle of Klister is available from Swix that looks kind of like a shoe polish bottle. You dab it on your grip zone, rub it smooth with the sponge, allow it to dry and enjoy the grip. Amazing. Just remember that you should scrape Klister off your skis prior to putting them away as it can make a sticky mess of anything it encounters.

Many skiers feel grip waxing makes skiing just too complicated and they prefer to use a waxless mechanical grip. While the car to snow time is less, the joy of glide on a crisp winter day cannot be attained on a waxless ski. Now the new classic skis with skins may change all this but for now grip wax provides the very best ski experience. Stay tuned.

## History of the Sawmill Ski Trail

by Laura Robinson

In March of 1980 I was riding my bike through Hepworth. It's chilly enough in that month but Hepworth felt even colder. As I rode towards Shallow Lake I noticed great amounts of snow in Whispering Pines. Hmm. That summer my dog Track and I ran through the campground, and found ourselves on the trails that we now call Christmas Tree Run. The trees whispered, "Keep going. We've been waiting for you."

If you look to your left when you finish Kiwanis, you see the snowshoe trail. That was the original Grunt. Track and I ran along the ridge at the top of Grunt. We came down through the area now on the left as you fly down Freefall, and followed that ridge again until we were at the top of Cardiac Climb. Look left while skiing Side-winder and there's the ridge. We came down that ridge, bisecting the bottom of Yo-yo and back up on an even

steeper angle than Yo-yo now has—which works fine if it's July and you're wearing running shoes, but was a bit of a stomach flipper on the old skinny classic skis. Track and I came out somewhere in the GSCA forest—which was a lot newer then, and found natural pathways back to the campground. The area is the old shoreline of Lake Huron. We are blessed with early and late skiing because the surface is sand and pine needles. It needs little snow to start and keeps what it has longer.

I was living one of my past lives and had just opened Ski Haus in Hepworth. As a teenager I taught skiing at Earl Bales Park in Toronto and Torre Maggaard, the Norwegian who had the pro shop, sent a pile of beautiful Birkebeiner skis, Alfa 3-pin 75 mm boots, Rottefella bindings and wax to sell, originally, at my mother's café south of Warton.

Wooden skis were still what most people used, skate skiing was a technique a brash American named Billy Koch experimented with, while Toller Cranston changed figure skating forever with his flawless skate to the opera Pagliacci. If I skied those trails long enough, I dreamed I was Toller, flying through the forest. Neil Young sang about the Riverboat rocking in the rain, campuses were awash with protest, and Toller and Billy made me think anything was possible. Could world peace be far behind? Off I went with the energy of a religious zealot, marking routes with paint I found in the basement of the Ski Haus.

The paint went in my knapsack, the paint brush in the pocket of an old jacket. My three brothers helped mark and clear trails and assigned trail ranking: Expert trails were red for blood, long trails were blue for frozen, and yellow, they decided, was for chicken. Typical teen-age boys who also transformed Red Klister to Rudy Kliister—a mystical Norwegian who only skied our trails on warm days, while Polar Wax was Polvaar Vax, a Finn, last seen when temperatures went below -15.



One of the original trails diagonally crossed the field that is now a golf course as you head north on Hwy 6, crossing Stone School Road near the dump, and meeting what is now Kiwanis Loop. I could nearly ski out my back door.



The McCartney family, the Spencer Family, the Kiwanis and the GSCA were the landowners of this beautiful place on Mother Earth. They were gracious and generous. Classic trails wound through Whispering Pines campground before heading out to Christmas Tree Run and up onto the ridge that brought us to the Spencer property. Sheldon Spencer reminded me of playwright and actor Sam Shepard. I've had a life-long crush on him ever since--a redeeming factor when I nearly die climbing his namesake.



My brother Greg and I started the JackRabbit program in an unheated tiny trailer in Whispering Pines around 1981. I've watched the kids grow to high-school and university teams. Some have their children in JackRabbit now. I remember once heading into the woods with 15 kids and coming out

with 14. One of us went off on the first of several missions the Bruce Ski Club has had to retrieve children—most of whom have simply escaped into a time and place in the woods where there is no madness and destruction—just magic.



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Much has changed, especially with skating firmly entrenched in the sport and kids can go faster than ever--it's all wonderful, mainly thanks to the many volunteers, like Fred and Ruth Scheel, who have for years, ensured great trails and exciting events at Sawmill, along with Reg Martin and Pam Green, who are skiing in the west now. Parking on the highway by the main entrance to Whispering Pines was dangerous, thus the club and GSCA created the parking lot. The Van Dorp family, who



have given endlessly to the club, and supplied great racers too, tragically lost their son Jerry while he was camping. He is there each time we open the doors of Jerry's Place—and the love so many had for him is felt in that cabin. Ed and Margaret de Laplante also committed decades to our club. I remember the day Ed first saw Margaret—he was smitten. We lost Margaret to cancer, but she still lives on our trails, sheltering skiers and providing refuge when we meet at Crossroads.

Naivety is history this winter as a geopolitical landscape created by madness grips the world. Have we time traveled to Berlin in 1933?

Put those thoughts on hold. There are 99 little Jackrabbits this year on our beloved trails, and hundreds of children skiing with schools and families. There is nothing more delightful than meeting them on a snowy day. They balance the fear of going down Freefall with the exhilaration of the wind on their face and the snow beneath them magically allowing them to fly while staying upright. The trees whisper—come into the woods, all is

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