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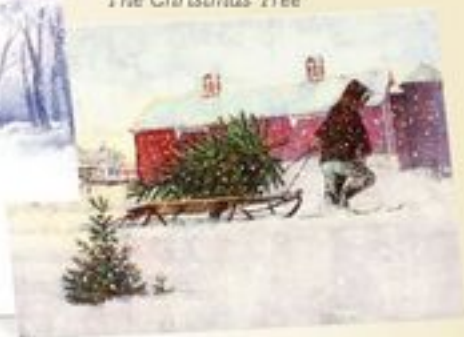
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FIRST TRACKS

BY RON BERGIN

JUST FOR THE RUN OF IT

Here's hoping your fall training is in full swing and you are progressing well toward a great season on the trails. And if you haven't actually gotten around to it yet, here's hoping that you are gradually coming to the realization that winter is not far off and you've at least been "thinking about training."

For me, training is something I've always done as a secondary benefit to a primary experience. In other words, I rarely train for the sake of training; I strive to accumulate the benefits of exercise and "training" by virtue of simply engaging in an enjoyable outdoor athletic experience. And of late, that experience has been trail running.

Never one to labor in the gym or work out on any of the various mechanical devices we have at our disposal that simulate athletic experiences, I prefer the real thing. And while I'm at it, I prefer to actually

go somewhere and see things while I am also exercising.

I realize roller skiing is as close as you can come to gaining ski-specific conditioning and its benefits are indisputable. Be that as it may, it's not something that I've ever seriously taken to; I prefer to be in the woods on the trails.

My current passion for trail running was fueled by an enthusiastic return

Just having concluded its eighth annual running, the Birkie Trail Run has blossomed from 150 runners to 750 people this past year and is on track to break 1,000 in the next couple of seasons. The Trail Run is fast becoming one of the largest and most popular events of its kind in the region. With the American Birkebeiner Ski Trail as the centerpiece, the event attracts runners from around the Midwest and this year drew from eight states. It consists of a wide assortment of events: individual full and half marathons, 13-mile trek (Nordic walk), three- and six-person marathon relay and a 5 km run. Visit www.birkie.com for more info.

to the sport following a year's hiatus that was precipitated by a nagging IT band issue, which prevented me from getting far enough down the trail to even get warmed up. However, utilizing a few key stretches and a long, measured re-entry this year, I soon found myself gradually increasing time and distance on the trails until I began surpassing what I previously thought were my personal limits.

I had other incentives as well. My wife Kathy, an avid runner, had fallen in with a group of manic trail runners collectively known as the Wolf Pack. Very early in the season she began racking up double-digit Saturday morning runs. Some of the pack went far beyond that, but that was a result of ending up hopelessly lost on the myriad ski and bike trails that populate our area (and that's an altogether different story). She quickly realized that she was on track to run the Birkie Trail Run Half-Marathon in September. She kept the mileage up, running with as many as three different groups weekly, taking full advantage of her summer furlough from teaching.

I was extremely pleased to see her progress, and inspired as well. We



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FIRST TRACKS

CONTINUED

ran together on a fairly regular basis, but initially I was intimidated by the distance she had been logging. That is until I made the leap and found myself inching past my previous comfort zone.

Despite never having run a half-marathon in my life (dozens of 10Ks in my road running heyday some 30 years ago), I soon began to harbor the notion that I just might be able "join in the fun." My strategy was that I would continue to closet train and see how it went. If I made reasonable progress, at the last minute I'd enter. I visualized surprising Kathy by taking her to the start and when I pulled off my jacket, revealing a race number.

She saw through my ruse however, so I was out of the closet. I joined in on the regular pack runs, enduring some mean 10-milers on the hilliest parts of the Birkie Trail, satisfied in the knowledge that I was actually going to be able to do this thing.

Race day arrived and we were ready. My goal was two hours: optimistic, but not unreasonable. It was going well and I was totally on track to make my mark with maybe as much as 10 minutes to spare. But at about eight-and-a-half-miles disappointment struck. After gutting it through

the toughest part of the course and cresting the last of the monster hills I figured I was home free. Over the next half mile or so, a knot in my left calf suddenly manifested into a full-blown pulled muscle and my running was done. Needless to say, I was bummed.

I tried to run every so often, but couldn't manage more than a few painful strides. Walking wasn't pleasant either, but I managed to hoof it in and finish the event.

In the end, I did enjoy myself and thoroughly enjoyed the time leading up to the event. My disappointment was tempered by the knowledge that I had indeed accomplished something that I had never attempted before, even when I was much younger and regularly running as much as 40 to 45 miles a week. And like my personal challenge with regard to skiing a sub-three-hour Birkie, I now have another challenge to meet. I fully expect to be back trying again knowing that I can hang with the Pack and hopefully run the entire half-marathon.

I hope your training experiences this year have been successful and that the time put in during the summer and fall translates into a lot of fun time on the trails this winter. For me, that is my ultimate goal. **CCS**

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Every winter we scramble to get a family ski photo to use as our holiday greeting card. We don't always have great snow in December, which can make this a challenge. Then I need to figure out what to wear so I don't look exactly the same as the year before and the year before that and so on. Most people will look at our growing kids, who are now both on skis, and hopefully not notice my predictable black pants and blue coat.

Yes, I've acquired new ski clothing over the years, but people have favorites for a reason — they are comfortable. Typically, I alternate between my black Swix pants and my black Sporthill pants. When I wear my Swix pants, I hardly notice them. They are light and silky and the front horizontal pockets accommodate kick wax, a cork and a car key. My Sporthill pants fit entirely differently. They are closer fitting but stretchy. I can put these on and be warm without wearing long underwear underneath. I also wear my Sporthill pants early in the season when we have to hike first to get on snow.

If you have favorite ski clothing of your own, chances are that you'll want your kids to ski in something similar. Unfortunately, in the U.S. we don't enjoy all the choices in junior Nordic apparel as other countries. For example, Bjorn Daehlie and Craft make junior Nordic clothing but do not distribute them here.

Despite a little less variety, we still have some great options for juniors. Swix junior apparel is designed for ages 6 to 14 and features the same technical makeup and design as adult wear. You often see the junior sizes in Nordic ski centers and local sport shops. Another option is to look to some of your favorite makers of adult Nordic ski wear and get the smallest sizes. Sporthill, for example, makes an extra-small that roughly equates to a kids size 12 and the small comes close to a kids size 14.

Dressing kids appropriately for Nordic skiing can be tricky. A common mistake is to outfit them in the same snowsuit they wear for recess or on the alpine slopes. A snowsuit works for a very young child and may work for

a child that moves along slowly without generating much heat. My 6-year-old got overheated in her snow pants last year. We then tried all-purpose wind pants and a shell, which worked okay as outer layers, but they lacked breathability, water repellency and freedom of movement. So, we bought her a Swix jacket and pants. She was so excited to be dressed like her parents. Though we were not exactly excited about the price (pants and jackets retail at about \$100 each), we knew she'd be more comfortable in better clothing. She is skiing along efficiently up and down hills and she is a furnace. Our 4-year-old skis in the wind pants and windbreaker combo, but she is not out for a very long time. She is also too small for the junior sizing. Since her wind pants don't wick water completely, layering is especially important.

Skiers of any age should follow the adage about dressing in layers. The base layer, which is closest to your skin, should be made of a synthetic material that can wick moisture. On cold days, you need a mid-weight layer. My kids wear a light fleece pullover while I usually wear a polyester/spandex top. Then comes the lightweight jacket to serve as a barrier from wind and precipitation, but hopefully with ventilation to let extra heat escape.

My kids also wear a mid-weight, tall, synthetic sock from brands such as Smartwool, Darn Tough, Wigwam and Thorlo. Gloves or mittens are chosen depending on the weather. My older daughter also loves her hat with a visor as it shields her eyes from the sun and from some blowing snow.

Below is a sampling of junior items available from Swix, followed by items from Sporthill that can fit the middle or high school skier. I've chosen to preview Swix and Sporthill as they are brands that I have been training in for years with great satisfaction. Naturally, you can look to other ski brands for small adult sizes to accommodate your older or bigger junior skier. The focus here is on jackets, pants and gloves/mittens for training and recreational use. Though base layers and hats are available in Nordic brands, you can also look to other popular outdoor manufacturer such as Under Armour, Patagonia and LL Bean.

SWIX

Star Advanced Jacket Junior

This jacket is deemed the "ultimate bestseller" in the Swix catalog. It is a light, all-around microfiber warm-up and training jacket made of 100 percent polyester with a



durable water repellent finish. Stretch panels (9 percent spandex, 91 percent polyester) are located in the back, under the arms and along the sides for better flexibility and air circulation. The lining is polyester mesh for breathability. The jacket is wind- and water-repellent and has reflective piping for visibility in the dark.

Star Advanced Pant Junior

The companion piece to the Star jacket, these pants are ideal for high-performance training and for warm-up use. They have water- and wind-repellent microfiber in front and a knitted panel in back for better breathability and movement. They come in a medium-fit cut with a knee-length zipper. Swix also makes a Universal Junior Pant that is geared more to the recreational skier with a slightly different fabric composition and with different style features, including a full-length side zipper and two front pockets.

SPORTHILL

Sporthill products are designed according to temperature zones. The Nordic outerwear is classified as a zone three for cold, windy days from 0 F to 40 F.

Sporthill XC Pant

These pants are made of Sporthill's unique 3SP fabric, which is 85 percent polypropylene and 15 percent spandex. The fabric is known for its ability to dry quickly. The Sporthill fabric is also moisture-wicking, breathable, has four-way stretch and is windproof. The XC pant has a non-roll elastic waistband and an internal drawcord. There are two side on-seam zippered pockets as well as 12-inch offset ankle zippers.

Sporthill Symmetry Jacket

This jacket is lightweight but feels warm when you put it on. It is 100 percent polyester microfiber with a durable water-resistant coating. It has vertical back mesh vents for ventilation and reflective insets for visibility with a bonus feature: a packable hood.

Sporthill InFuzion Splice Top

Here's one look at a mid-weight layer — in fact, you might just get to wear this layer all by itself if the weather cooperates. This top is 90 percent polyester and 10 percent spandex. The two materials make up a continuous-contrast side underarm panel that reduces bulk and increases range of motion, plus thumb holes on the sleeves. There is a 10-inch front reverse coil zipper with zipper garage.



GLOVES & MITTENS

The wrong choice in gloves and mittens can lead to sweaty hands, calloused palms or frostbitten fingers. I've had my problems with the latter. This changed last season when I borrowed my husband's Toko Artic Mitts. I didn't buy any for myself because I thought they would be too bulky. Turns out that they weren't too bulky but they were toasty. A little extra room at the end of the mitt turned out to be good thing, too. So, I adopted the mitts and my husband purchased a split mitt for himself.

Thermal mittens or split mittens — also known as lobster claws — are a necessity for any young skier who gets cold hands. The claw is a cross between a mitten and a glove and makes a great option for juniors. Fingers are next to each other for warmth, but the separation allows you to grasp the pole with less bulkiness than a mitten. On milder days, a basic ski glove is fine. Swix carries junior gloves in a variety of styles and weights and also carries thermal mittens and split gloves. Sporthill offers gloves in the same fabrics it uses for outerwear, including 3SP.

As for hats, my kids have tons of them in varying weights and brands, thanks to presents from family. My husband likes to buy himself a new one each fall to get psyched up for skiing. I'm definitely due for a new hat and I plan on wearing it in the holiday photo. Who knows, I may even look for red pants. **CCS**

Heidi Hill is the author of "Fit Family: The Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Years" (Vitesse Press, 2008). She lives with her husband, Tom Thurston, and two daughters, ages four and six, in Waterbury, Vermont. Their family enjoys skiing on the trails at Trapp Family Lodge.

TECHNIQUE & TRAINING

BY STEVE HINDMAN

SKIING IS MORE FUN

The diagonal stride, also called kick and glide or striding, is easy because it's similar to walking and running. It's hard because skis slip and slide in ways that shoes or feet do not when you walk and run.

Of course it is possible to walk on cross country skis, but that's about as much fun as picking your way across an icy parking lot or negotiating a slimy wooden walkway in dress shoes. Skiing on skis is a lot more fun because you get to glide. Gliding on skis starts with figuring out how to move forward instead of slipping back as you move from ski to ski. When you have that figured out, then you can add power and speed.

To move forward instead of slipping back, the ski needs to grip the snow during each stride. Fortunately, skis designed for the diagonal stride both grip the snow as well as glide. They accomplish this magic trick by being stiff enough to keep the middle of the ski (where the sticky wax or grip pattern is located) off the snow as you glide, yet supple enough that the middle of the ski can be pressed into

the snow to grip and provide traction when you push down with all of your weight through your foot and the ski.

Between each grip, you get to glide. When a ski is the correct fit (see sidebar), it requires all of your weight to press the ski onto the snow, so you need to be gliding on only one ski between grips. This takes some getting used to.

Success at gripping, gliding on one ski and adding power and speed requires strict adherence to the three common-sense maxims of sliding on skis (or sliding on anything else for that matter!)

1. Bend your ankles, knees and hips to stay in balance. This is the same position that helps you negotiate a slippery trail, address a golf ball or prepare for a tennis serve. You are relaxed yet ready, with your hips, knees and ankles bent and your hands out in front of you. It wouldn't make common sense to be all straight-legged, now, would it?
2. Move your core toward where you want to go. You can call your mid-section your center of mass, your center or, the ultra-trendy term, your core. Whatever you call it, this is where your weight is concentrate, and is what connects your upper and lower halves into one entity. Where your midsection goes, so

goes the rest of you. Common sense strikes again.

3. When moving from ski to ski, or changing directions on skis, move your body before your feet. This is how your core stays over your feet as you glide and slide. When your feet get ahead of you, you fall on your butt, right? Now that's even more than common sense. It's just plain obvious!

Pushing Down While Moving Forward

Your ski will grip the snow when you push down with all of your weight over your forefoot. Sounds simple enough, except that you are used to walking, wheregyoo roll your foot from heel to toe, with no need to worry about pushing down to make your foot stick to the ground. Try shuffling to develop a ski-specific movement pattern that keeps your foot and ski weighted as you move forward.

The Shuffle

Beginning skiers often adopt a shuffling motion while learning to kick and glide. And while shuffling is not an effective nor efficient skiing motion, shuffling does mimic the heel-down motion of moving forward on skis and can be used as the basis for beginning to learn proper technique. Start without skis on grass or a smooth floor that allows you to scuff each foot forward. Then put your ski on and try it on a level section of trail. Follow the three maxims of sliding: common sense, take short steps or strides as you shuffle forward, and keep your heel and toe the same distance above the ground or snow as you bring your foot and leg forward each time (photo 1).

FINDING SKIS THAT FIT

This magic ability to both grip and glide is why skis must fit the skier. The best way to find a ski that fits is to go to a reputable cross country ski shop and follow their advice. Failing that, a quick and very approximate fit test is to find a length that seems reasonable for your height (somewhere above your head and below your wrist, depending on the ski design and your weight to height ratio). Squeeze the ski bases together in the middle with one hand. If you can flatten the skis together along their entire length with one hand, they are too soft. If you cannot flatten them with both hands, they are probably too stiff. If you can just get the skis to touch in the middle by squeezing them with two hands, they should be just about right.

For more information on fitting skis, see the equipment chapter in my book *Cross Country Skiing: Building Skills for Fun and Fitness* available at www.crosscountryskier.com.

TECHNIQUE & TRAINING

CONTINUED



Photo 1: new foot parallel to the ground (or snow) as the leg swings forward, new foot in position beneath the core as rear heel lifts, front ankle flexed just prior to landing and before rear foot leaves the ground.

DO: Bring your leg, hips, torso and head forward with your foot as you shuffle.

DON'T: Swing your foot out in front of your body.

DO: Land on your entire foot (forefoot and heel land at approximately the same time) and keep a flexed ankle.

DON'T: Swing your foot forward and land on your heel.

DO: Feel like you are falling forward as you shuffle. Your other foot or ski should arrive beneath you just in time to avoid a face plant.

DON'T: Start bounding or running as you increase your forward lean from the ankle to create the falling-forward feeling — keep on shuffling.

DO: Soften and flex your ankle as soon as you move onto the next foot to allow your core to continue moving forward as you heel remains down.

DON'T: Land on your forefoot and bounce off your toes and onto the next foot.

Gliding on one ski

One of the easiest ways to get used to gliding on one ski is to sneak up on it. After you feel OK shuffling from ski to ski, start to mix it up with a rhythm of shuffle, shuffle, g-l-i-d-e, shuffle, shuffle, g-l-i-d-e, shuffle, shuffle, g-l-i-d-e. If you feel like you are stuck between your skis instead of gliding on one ski, find a slower and flatter place to practice, move from ski to ski sooner and increase the bend in your ankle. This will help keep your belly button over the ankle of the foot on which you are gliding.

Timing: Start at the Beginning

The gliding ski has to stop and grip the snow before the rear leg can swing forward. If it doesn't, Newton's Law kicks in — for every action in nature there is an equal and opposite reaction — and your glide ski will slip back as soon as you try to swing the other foot forward. Although

this phase of the stride is commonly called the kick, that term leads many to believe the important part is swinging or kicking the rear leg forward. That is important, but you have to start at the beginning, which is getting the ski you are on to grip the snow and stop.

A 'late kick' is often blamed when your ski slips backward. This is another common but misleading term. 'Kicking' or swinging your rear leg through too late is not what caused you to slip. What caused the slip was failing to move forward to press the middle of the ski into the snow and make it grip before bringing your rear leg and ski forward.

To be 'on time' with each 'kick' start by quickly increasing the bend in the knee and ankle of your weighted leg. This quick flex moves your core forward. If you are gliding on one ski, it will move you over the grip zone, which is centered beneath your forefoot. Now with your knee and ankle coiled and flexed, and your weight over your forefoot, you're ready to 'kick.' The kick is a quick and impulsive push through your entire foot (keep the heel down) as you extend your leg to release the coiled energy stored in your flexed knee and ankle. This will propel you forward toward your next ski and your next glide. Swing your rear leg forward from the hip joint with the same intensity to catch you, and then ease onto that ski when it swings in beneath you.

The timing for this motion is:

- 1) ski stops (photo 2)
- 2) feet pass (photo 3)
- 3) weight transfers (photo 4).

Remember to move onto a flexed ankle with your weight spread equally over the foot. As you work on your grip (the kick), remember to g-l-i-d-e in between and to always start the next kick with a quick knee and ankle flex before extending for the next push-off.

DO: Add this flex/extend focus to your shuffle practice on dry land.

DO: Choose a slight rise while practicing this with and without skis.

DO: Push your knee forward and over your toes as you quickly increase your ankle bend to start the kick. **DO:** Lift the toes of your rear foot by flexing the rear ankle as you flex the front ankle. On skis or dry ground, this makes it easier to swing your rear leg through without hitting the ground or snow behind or beneath you. (photo 1).

DO: Move onto a flexed ankle as shown in photo 1.

TECHNIQUE & TRAINING

CONTINUED



Photo 2: Ski stops, rear leg swing forward



Photo 3: Feet pass (note that this photo is not from the same stride — the left ski is swinging forward here while it was the right ski in photo 2)



Photo 4: Skier moves onto the next ski

DON'T: Swing your foot or ski in front of your body.

DON'T: Extend up. The path of your belly button as you move forward after the kick should resemble the arc of a basketball during the first half of a successful free throw.

Although it is helpful to break down the diagonal stride into phases, flow and continuous movement is the desired result. Your core should continue forward during the entire cycle, especially as you flex and extend during the kick. This requires some faith, as you want to find yourself in the position of the skier in photo 3 — forward from the ankles and absolutely dependent on the next leg arriving just in time to avoid falling on your face.

Develop the faith required to keep your core moving forward even when both feet are behind you with quick, small strides on flatter ground. Add speed and power cautiously to avoid slipping and grunting around the trails, stuck between your skis, attempting to replace grip and glide with grit.

Skiing on skis is a lot more fun than walking on skis when you take the time to learn to both grip and glide. **CCS**

BALANCE DRILLS FOR THE LIVING ROOM

Becoming comfortable gliding on one ski takes time. Since most of us have limited time to spend on skis, here are some ideas to help you develop balance, strength and awareness.

To start, just stand up! Your posture should model the relaxed alertness of a martial artist or a basketball player at the free-throw line. Close your eyes and find where you can relax and what muscles you really need to maintain a relaxed yet alert stance. Focus on the smaller muscles of your feet, your ankles and your core. Your core is roughly the area between your thighs and the bottom of your ribcage.

Now open your eyes, stay relaxed and balance over one foot by moving your core over that foot. Raise the hip on which you are standing to move your center over your foot. Don't tip your head and torso to one side as a counterbalance. Think of aligning the button or snap on the waistband of your pants with the instep of your foot. Relax and find smaller muscles that can help. When you feel comfortable on one foot with your eyes open, close them.

Balance over one foot while you extend the other to the rear to make this exercise more ski specific. Counterbalance any forward extension with your rear leg — think of your torso and rear leg as being connected through the hip so that your shoulders lower only as your foot rises. Hold your arm and hand as if you are about to plant your pole, with the opposite hand behind you, opened as if you had just completed your pole push. Relax, and find muscles that you can relax without losing your balance.

Balance, like any skill, improves with practice. The first step is becoming aware of smaller, underused balance muscles. As you continue to refine your balance over time, these muscles will become stronger and you will become better at sensing how to stay in balance with less energy.

If you are more experienced, take a length of two-by-four and balance on that. Once that is comfortable, you can really challenge yourself by turning the two-by-four on its side. Many gyms have devilish devices like wobble boards to help train your balance and build core strength. If you use a two-by-four or any balance devices, be careful!



INTO THE WILDERNESS

BY RON WATTERS



"Hoo boy!" Bob Gordon thought to himself as he heard the rumble from another avalanche. He surveyed the wilderness scene: steep plunging canyons, snow shrouded peaks and sheer cliffs. "What a way to go."

It's a "hoo boy" ripe with meaning.

Yes, Gordon was a wee bit nervous about avalanches that day in March of 1936, but implicit in the way he tells the story years later, he's also glad to be outside, glad to be on an adventure — and was he ever getting it! The journey would come to represent a milestone in his life. When finally he sat down to write about it 70 years later, the events came back to him like it was yesterday.

Gordon and his friend Glen Burnside (Burnie) had left the day before — March 15, 1936 — on a late-winter ski trip into the wilderness of central Idaho. They had climbed up to the top of the 6,900-foot-high Lick Creek Summit, to the east of McCall, which is a cross country skiing hot spot north of the state capitol of Boise.

One winter 30 years ago, I spent a little time on Lick Creek Summit and over one 48-hour period we were

inundated with nearly 50 inches of snow. We had planned to do a little winter climbing, but with avalanches coming down right and left, and my North Face tent collapsed in a heap of bent poles, we sheepishly skied back to McCall.

Our party had followed a snowbound road in and out of Lick Creek Summit. These days there's even a yurt near the summit for backcountry skiers (see sidebar). But not in the 1930s. It was all roadless then, and from the summit, it was a hair-raising ski down, way down into the watershed of the South Fork of the Salmon.

It was an adventure and, yes, it was dangerous at times, but mostly that long-ago journey was about two boys having fun, enjoying that brief period before adulthood. Both had recently graduated from high school. As Gordon thought about it later, the trip came to symbolize that passage from one stage of life to another.

They were fairly well-prepared with food for what they thought would be a two-week trip: 10 loaves of bread, five pounds of bacon, five pounds of oranges, three pounds of raisins, two pounds of coffee, five pounds of potatoes, two pounds of onions, four dozen eggs and five pounds of sugar and pancake mix.

Sounds a bit light doesn't it? In fact they were going lightweight. They had left out one category of foods.

"We wanted to keep the weight down, so we decided

not to take any canned goods," wrote Gordon in his narrative of the trip.

Also, in keeping with the theme of lightweight camping, they took a frying pan, pots and hunting knives. Burnside carried a World War I vintage .30-06 rifle given to him by his grandfather, and Gordon carried his dad's .45-caliber Smith & Weston army pistol. Gordon also carried an axe. Can't forget the axe!

While they were reasonably well-provisioned with lightweight food and hunting gear, they were somewhat shy when it came to sleeping bags. They had none. And clothing, Burnside's in particular, was another story. He wore a light calfskin jacket.

The night before reaching Lick Creek Summit, they sat around a campfire alternating freezing one side and warming the other side, drinking coffee and tea, trying to stay awake and keeping an eye on one another to make sure the other didn't fall into the fire pit. It was a real concern. The pit in the snow was growing larger and deeper by the hour. By the time daylight came, Gordon recalled "we had a fire pit that was about 10 feet in diameter and four feet deep."

The next morning, they clipped into their skis. Well, Gordon didn't actually clip into his skis. He rubber-banded himself into his skis.

A home-made pair, Gordon's skis were six feet long, made out of tamarack with a leather toe strap. To hold his boots to the skis, Gordon used loops made from an inner tube. He would stretch the loops from his boots over the leather toe strap, having the effect of bonding his boots in the toe piece.

The bands worked. Sort of. "Your foot, of course, kind of wobbled around," he wrote. "As long as you were going straight it was ok."

Burnside did snap into his. He had a "good pair of store-bought hickory skis," according to Gordon, "with a metal toe plate and a snap-throw leather binding." But soon after they

got started, Burnside broke one of the leather pieces and ended up having to repair it with some belting material.

That wasn't the only repair job of the journey. Gordon fell into a tree well (the depressions formed under conifer trees in late winter), and broke the tip off of his ski. To fix it, they overlapped the broken tip over the end of the ski and, using their trusty axe and some roofing nails, they nailed the two parts together. "It was about a foot shorter than the other ski," explained Gordon, "but it seemed to work ok."

Down they went from the airy heights of Lick Creek Summit, descending 3,000 feet into the deep gashes of feeder streams leading to the South Fork of the Salmon.

"We ultimately came to a snowslide," wrote Gordon. "It was 200 yards across and probably 50 or 60 feet deep. It was strewn with

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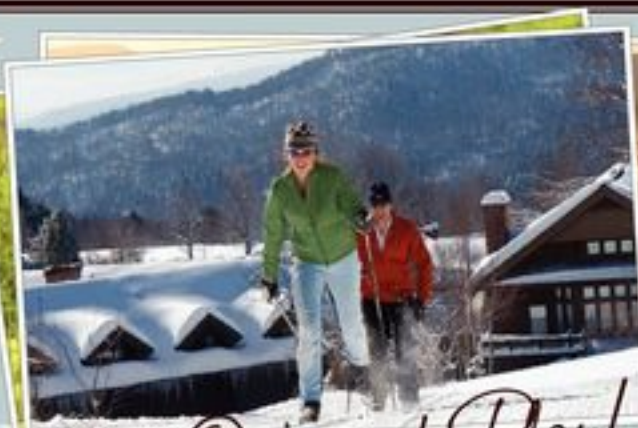
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