

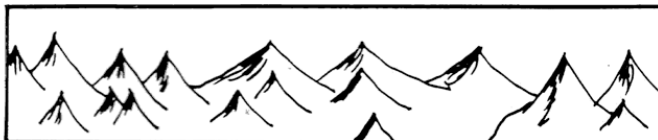
ADIRONDACK  
ALPINE  
JOURNAL 2

March 1984

## SKIING OFF THE HIGH PEAKS

by Bob Hey

2



In winter, distances shrink when traveling on skis in the Adirondack High Peaks. Remote summits and hidden slides can be reached in a single day.

First there is the aerobic output of the approach ski over hiking trails. It is possible to reach any of the four shoulders of Marcy by skiing in over miles of gradually rising terrain. The trails are usually just wide enough to herringbone up over hummocks, yet rounded and sunk for the fast gliding on return runs. Bright, snow-capped summit cones skim over the treetops as you ski.

The biggest and brightest, Mt. Marcy, and its environs are best reached via the Indian Falls route. In a good snow year, at treeline above Indian Falls, the temptation to ski through glades may bring you off trail voluntarily.

Now you are camped overnight, picturing the next morning's ski descents. Or it is late morning and the downhill is about to begin. There are three groups of mountain formations to ski, one of which you are eyeing with a bit of drool on your lip.

If you seek exposure and panorama, ski the summit cones of Mts. Marcy, Alogonquin, and Skylight. Marcy has possible descents of 400' with a current 4 - 5' snow base. The Indian Falls approach brings you up under the

North snowfield, but any of the other sides of the cone should be explored, for they can also be skied. The east side facing Mt. Haystack is a gem, (begin just right of the elevation marking on the ADK topo map, the one provided with the hiking guide). The classic ski loop, however, brings you down the cone on the west side, contouring to the left of Gray Peak through the "funnel". Then a glade run starts and floats you down to Lake Tear of the Clouds. A brook can then be skied down towards the hiking trail to Lake Arnold. Please refer to the Foray Planner.

An alternative ski from Lake Tear takes the trail down towards Panther Gorge, turning right to climb to the summit of Skylight. This stretch is a great place to overnight, for the rest of the tour is demanding. Best skied in the thick March snow, the tour traverses the summit cone of Mt. Skylight, down the south side and into broken treeline on the col between Skylight and Mt. Redfield. This is a wild place and careful, aggressive skiing is required. Ski down to tiny Moss Pond and either follow the outlet stream down or contour around Redfield to a prominent west-facing ridgeline. Descend via this beautiful glade run to Uphill lean-to, one of the highest lean-tos in the High Peaks. The loop continues to Lake Arnold

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David Flinn  
Robert Hey,  
editors

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and thus onto the Adirondak Loj and a warm fire.

On the northeast side of Algonquin is a 200' open ski descent. Approach via the yellow Wright Peak - Algonquin trail from Adk Loj. Explore the whole cone thoroughly for a surprise!

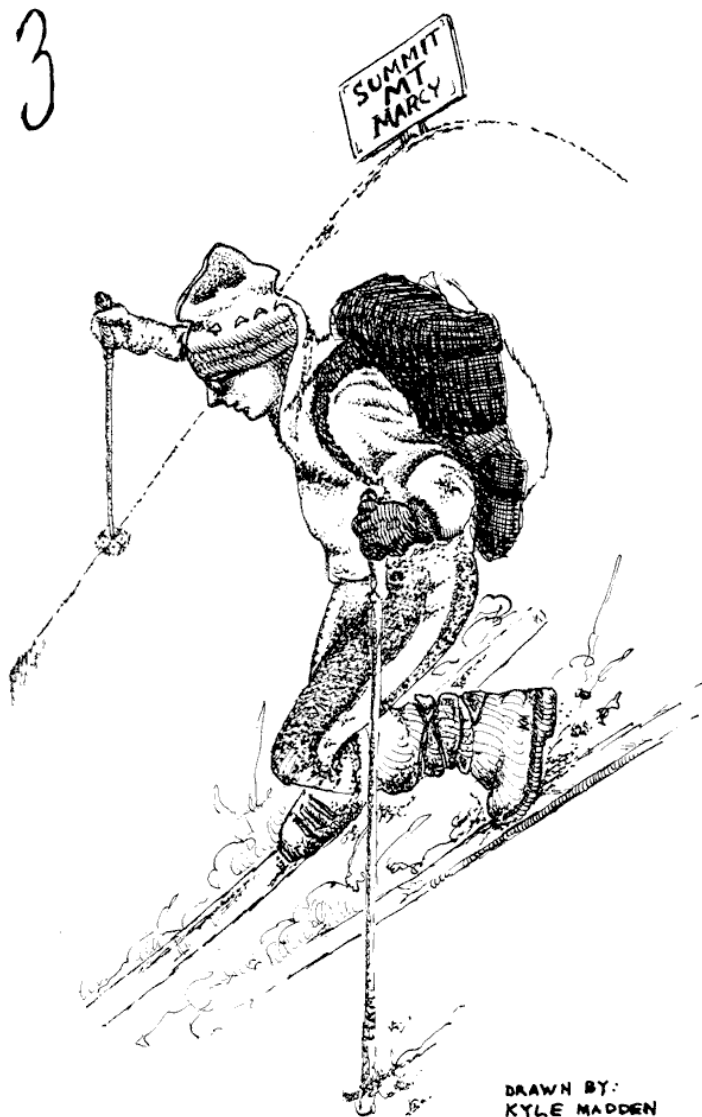
Skiers have toted in downhill equipment for the cones, but the high summit snowfields make linked telemark turns or jump parallel turns easily attainable on Nordic gear. High cut, three-pin boots that fit well are a must.

Also try skiing the Garland turns, which involve traversing back and forth across the slope.

When vegetation falls in a giant swath down an Adirondack Mountain, rock slides of anorthosite, (moon-rock), are exposed. These slides offer extensive but steep ski descents into little-traveled, rugged kingdoms. High above remote Panther Gorge, one of the three great gorges of the Adirondacks, is a 600' slide called the "Pipeline". Mountain Phelps guided a trip during the summers of the 1870's that started on the Ausable Lakes and climaxed on the Pipeline. Skiing down this slide is dangerous. Skiers have just been saved from a long fall by flying into clumps of trees in the middle of the slide. Start from the summit cone of Marcy and contour around to the south side. Descend the slide to Marcy Brook, then climb over Bartlett Ridge on the hiking trail that leads to the northern tip of Upper Ausable Lake.

On the backside of Mt. Colden, facing Mt. Marcy, a 900' slide starts right below the summit. It has a lower angle than the Pipeline and is thus becomes more sane. It is preferable that the approach be made via Avalanche Pass and the Trap Dike for reasons of adventure. Slides can be icy. Be sure of the conditions before committing yourself.

Looking at the High Peaks map, it becomes clear that mountain watersheds are natural trails. Streambeds abound; however, a certain mental additude is necessary for runs down these



narrow chutes. The line of descent has to be picked out every few meters. Turns must be planned, short drop-offs skied, and places to stop sighted. But the challenge is worthwhile for the best skiing in a good snow year on these natural lines of weakness on a mountainside.

One excellent combined ice climb and ski tour begins at the Garden in Keene Valley. Ski to Orebed Brook Lean-to and stay the night. The next day, follow the trail towards Saddleback and Gothics, turning left one-half mile past the lean-to onto the first stream that crosses the trail. Take a right at the first tributary, a left at the next, and climb to the left side of the North Face of Gothics. After a

1000' mixed ice and snow climb, unlimber the skis at the top and tour the range to just below the summit of Upper Wolfjaw. Ski down the northern side of Upper Wolfjaw about 800' through the woods to the Wolfjaw streambed. The Orebed Brook lean-to will be another 600' below on your left as you intersect the trail.



### THE KLONDIKE TRAIL

All of these High Peaks tours are intermediate to expert in difficulty. A broken leg ten miles from a trail-head in winter means a bivouac. Be a Boy Scout about your conditioning and planning.

Skiing this high back-country is superb training for ski-mountaineering in other parts of the world. Dramatic outdoor adventures on skis have been made by people who learned on the East's established ski areas and in its back-country. Vermonters have skied down Mt. McKinley, traversed the New Zealand Alps and Mt. Everest on skis, and explored Peru's rugged mountain ranges on three-pin equipment. Whether you aspire to become a great ski mountaineer or just wish to test yourself in rugged country, the Adirondack High Peaks offer a challenge and education on skis.

Thanks to Don Mellor, Dave Hough, and the Ski-To-Die Club for route descriptions. They were invaluable and are concerned for the reader's safety.

An honest intermediate ski of ten miles is best in new snow on top of a three foot base. Since the two endpoints are The Garden in Keene Valley and South Meadows Road, (turn left at the trail sign about one mile before Adirondak Loj), two cars are recommended. If shuttling is not desired, have two groups start at each terminus and pass each other in the middle, swapping return vehicles.

From the Garden, ski in over short, rolling hills that level out quickly and then climb gradually to the ranger cabin at 3.07 miles. Snow-laden John's Brook will be on the left during the next stretch. After 3.50 miles, most of which will probably have been tracked, turn onto the red Klondike trail to Yard and Big Slide Mtn after passing the John's Brook Lodge. If you wish to do extensive ski mountaineering from this area, contact Adk Loj about renting one of the cozy cabins nearby.

Climb moderate and short steep grades up the Klondike trail for two miles to the top of the notch. The Yard Mountain turnoff is passed about a mile from JBL. Now ski the better part of 3.5 miles down variable but stable gradients. You are in a beautiful white birch forest. Use the low-crouch I'll-ski-anything style over bumpy sections. Practice telemark turns around switch-backs, jump parallel turns on the wide straight aways, and don't forget to stop at the car.

Truly a tale for your grandchildren is to do the trip in the reverse direction. This brings a moneagrie of tight, sharp turns.

- Bob Hey



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## A DAY IN THE LIFE

by Dave Flinn

5

It was a sluggish beginning. A yawn and a stretch led to motivation and the ritual of dressing: a step into the polypropylene, followed by wool pants and a sweater. I go downstairs for something to eat and a conscious thought of food for the trail. Into the pack goes my rope, a few tubular webbing slings and carabiners, an ice piton, 60 cm ice axe, North Wall hammer, and crampons. Gore-tex parka, more clothes and especially water follow. Don't forget the headlamp. Finally a trundle into the ole automobile and on the road to the Giant Mountain trailhead.

I lace up my new Koflach double boots as the air is broken by the sounds of cars passing on the nearby road. Quickly I begin my trek, away from the cars, the road, and people. I sign in at the trailhead register, noting only one name scribbled in the last week. I follow his tracks up the trail, enjoying the quiet echoes of Roaring Brook. My trail weaves away from the river, but we will soon meet again.

It is November 30, my second forage into the Adirondack snow and ice this year. The past week has been full of rain and a few days of bitter cold has caused a rapid freeze in the High Peaks. So here I am, off on a solo ascent. I had decided that Giant Mountain could be ascended via the Eagle Slide with these interesting conditions.

I hear the gurgle of Roaring Brook and realize that now I must leave the easy going trail and follow the snow, boulders, and alders which line the waterway. I hike three miles, constantly crossing glazed Roaring Brook,

dodging trees and rocks, avoiding the energy-drain of post-holing, up and up to the Slide. I try to keep a constant pace, all the while watching the cirque of Giant's West Face open up before me.

I find myself next to the river on a steep slope covered with ice. I look down and realize my precarious position. Quickly I pull out my ice axe and scamper up the icy slope. Now is the time for crampons.

The sides of the stream tower 20' above my head. I notice huge boulders lodged in the walls. Why have they not begun thundering down on my head? I put my helmet on. Soon the stream becomes ice and I see Eagle Slide open up in front of me. All alone at the base, with frost covered trees incased in ice, I begin my climb up the 1000' of snow and ice. With no partner for a belay, I search above for a place to regain my breath. The slide has many juniper and cedar outcrops where snow has been trapped. These places I come to and rest, off of the ice, breathing, consulting my predicament.

The slide has been covered with about 2" of ice, but there are pockets of snow in small level basins. It is not very steep, but I have both hands full with ice tools for balance. I must keep a rhythm; a fall now would be a disastrous 600' down the ice. And there, in a heap, 4 miles from the road, I would be in big trouble. Plant, step, plant, step, I climb on, reaching a snow basin, placing my terror behind me. There is no room for panic. Concentration on my skill replaces my fear and enjoyment continues.

As I near the top, I encounter short 20' headwalls. I clamber over three of them, praising my Charlet-Moser ice hammer for it's security when the ice under my crampons shatter to reveal rock. Adrenalin pushes me up the final snow slog into the stunted



spruce/fir trees on the summit ridge. I turn around, and am struck by the vista which opens before me between the swirling mass of snow and wind.

At the top, everything is encased in ice from the rain storm. I take off my crampons and search for the descent trail. Quickly I find it and start down because the dark and the cold is beginning to settle. I may have made the climb, but the descent is just as tough, even on the trail. Down I go, sometimes stumbling or sliding, struggling with my tired limbs.

What pursued me to go on this venture I do not know, but I remember the peace and solitude I felt, all alone on the mountain's slope. I guess that is the whole point: an inner peace and calm amidst a seemingly hostile environment.



IN MEMORY OF:  
STEVEN HILT  
KEN LEVANWAY,  
FEBRUARY 8, 1984

6  
SELECTED 1983-1984 ICE ADDITIONS  
to CLIMBING IN THE ADIRONDACKS

Cascade Lakes Region:

(Moving left from Cascade Cliff)

CASCADE ICE DANCE NEI 4-200'

This is the most attractive line on this side of the lake. It is the rarely formed, (good this year), drip of steps and short walls high in the valley just left of the Cliff. Two pitches. As climbed and described by Don Mellor and Mark Ippolito.

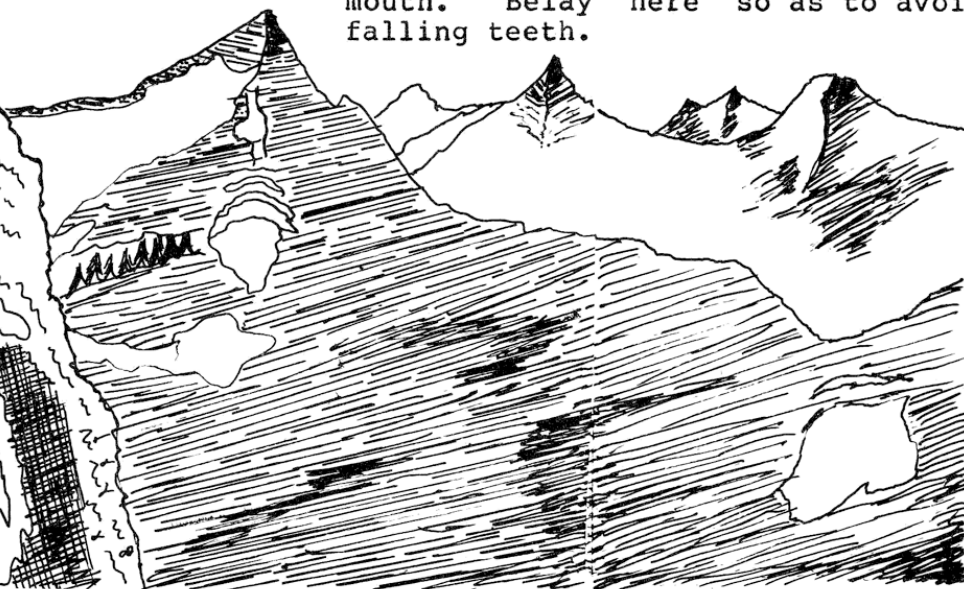
WETFOOT NEI 4 250'

This is the longest continuous ice line on this side of the lake. It lies right of the Jaws overhang, (obvious dripping icicles on a large roof 80' up and left of Ice Dance). Belays are at trees. Pitch 1 is continuous 80 degree ice. Climbed and described by Bill Dodd and Alan Hobson.

JAWS NEI 4, A3 160'

Hopefully this will ice up every year as good as it has this season. A classic in one climb, this line features a gingerly aid out a rock roof onto the delicate fang in the center of the Teeth overhang.

P.1 Climb 25' to a sturdy fused icicle at the far left of the mouth. Belay here so as to avoid falling teeth.



P.2 Traverse right and gain roof. Aid 10' out onto free standing fang, (do not tickle, it is liable to sneeze). Climb to top on steep ice.

Bring a mixed rack for aid section: Knifeblades, #2 friend, medium wires, #11 Hex. F.A. Jim Cunningham.

North Face of Pitchoff:

RED HOUSE RAMP NEI 2+ 200'

From the rock boulder on the trail, the large 40' wide ramp on the rock buttress is obvious. Walk up, a thrash through the woods, until one reaches the area underneath the ramp. Belay from 5" birch beneath 12' rock slope. Climb up slope and enter ramp. Climb past cedar and up to second cedar.

Belay here. Continue up ramp, in mixed rock, ice, and snow until gaining the top. Belay on big bomber birches. F.A. Jim Cunningham, Bob Hey 12/83.

Chapel Pond Region:

BIG BROTHER NEI 5 300'

This is the pencil-thin pillar which hangs from a rock wall 200' right of Power Play. The wall is severely overhanging. One long pitch over mixed terrain leads to the very obvious pillar. The pillar can be done in one or two pitches, (ledge halfway). The protection should be anything but ice screws.

Pitons (one fixed) in the rock wall make the crux safer. Perhaps the most spectacular climb in the Adirondacks. F.A. Don Mellor, Chuck Turner.

THIN AND CRISPY NEI 3+ 100'

Climb up to the descent route on Bob's Knob. Find a series of ledges that traverse right around the Knob towards the north descent gully. Climb thin ice to cedar tree, then up better ice to 10' headwall. Over this to the top. As climbed and described by Jim Cunningham and Andy Helms.

EMPEROR SLABS NEI 3 600'

In rare form with 5" of ice, with good tree belays on the steeper upper pitches. There are a multitude of variations. The best lines tend to the right or far left. As climbed and described by Jim Cunningham and Dave Flinn 12/83.

Wilmington Notch Region:

BOMBICICLE NEI 5- 140'

This is the all too obvious icicle that hangs from the middle of the cliff left of Multiplication Gully. Since the icicle hangs from a thin crack on the large, overhanging wall, a belay was established with two fixed pins and fixed rappel biner from the top. First ascent was done as two unconnected pitches due to the thinness of free hanging ice connecting them. Rappel from the high point and approach from a ledge left of the icicle. Pitch 2 is an absolute classic vertical 75' pitch. Rappel off the climb on the fixed system. F.A. Don Mellor and Mark Ippolito.



"I felt as though I were embarking upon a life of unbridled license, and for some years I suffered from periodic spasms of guilt which caused me to envy my friends in their normal pursuit of settled security. I had yet to learn that to become an expert in any field, however outlandish, can open the most unexpected doors..."

- Eric Shipton  
- That Untraveled World

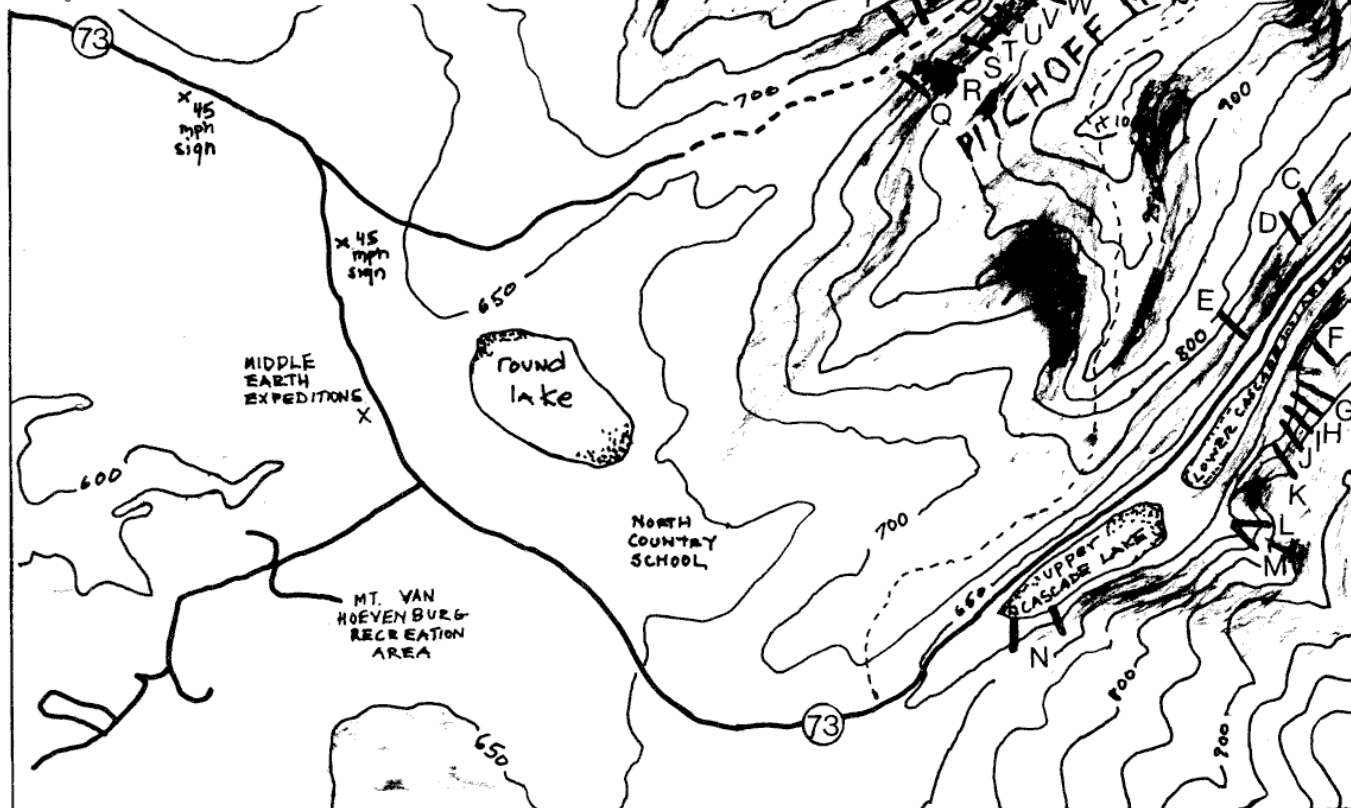
FOR SKIING OR CLIMBING, ENJOY

## Pitchoff Mountain

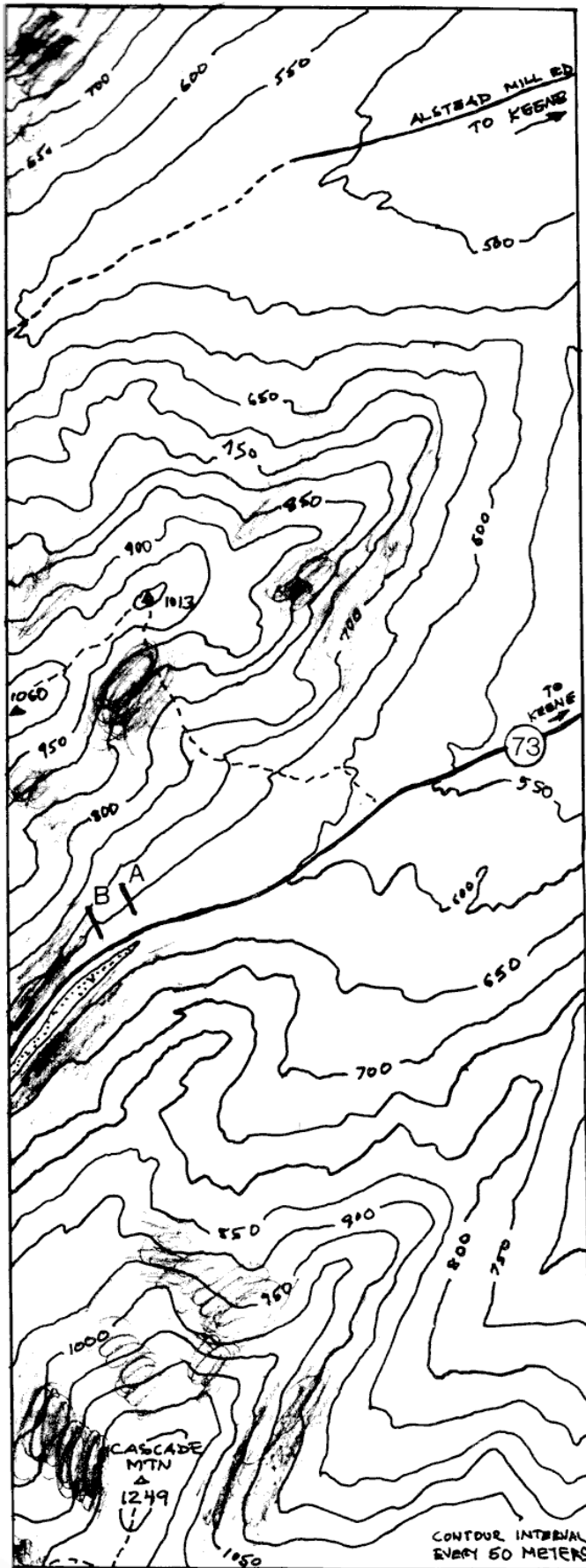


Of all the easily-accessible areas in the Adirondacks, few can offer the individual both good skiing and ice-climbing. The north face of Pitchoff Mountain is the best in the area. For the skier, this area presents an enjoyable afternoon of moderately difficult terrain; the refreshing notion of being alone in the woods, and some beautiful scenery. To the ice-climber, Pitchoff abounds with ice. No other region has as much; especially nice is that it is so quiet and rarely crowded. No automobiles to rattle your concentration. All in all, whether for skiing, ice-climbing, or better yet both, the north face of Pitchoff is a worthy adventure.

No matter your intention, enter this area via the Old Mountain Road; erroneously labelled "Old Military Road." Driving from Keene, past the Mt. Van Hoevenberg recreation area, you will find yourself heading down a hill. You will notice a 45 m.p.h. sign notifying a curve to the left. At the bottom, Old Mountain Road makes a 120° sharp intersection on the right. From Lake Placid, you will pass the Cascade Inn and other motels. Here again you will notice a 45 m.p.h. sign. Look for Old Mountain Road on your left. Park your car one hundred yards up the road from Rte. 73. If you plan to only ski, you must either park another car at the end of Alstead Mill Road or plan to hitchhike back to your car. You can ski the entire trail and then re-trace your tracks, but from Keene back to your car is almost all uphill.

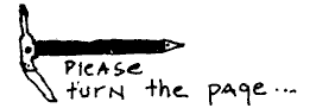






For a more detailed ski description we highly recommend Northern Adirondack Ski Tours, by Tony Goodwin.

The ski starts with a moderate hill for a quarter mile and then one continues up and down rolling terrain until reaching the "end of the road" sign. Now the track thins and you must continue single file. After one-half mile, you will come to the beaver pond. You will know you are there when you see the impressive ice cliffs surrounding you. Even if you are not an ice climber, you will stare in awe at the beauty of your view. If you have lugged all the hardware, off come your skis and on with your crampons. The ice grades are at NEI 3 or 4, (North-East Ice; a grading system for the severity of climbing, where 1 is simple and 6 a major epic). Please refer to Climbing in the Adirondacks by Don Mellor for route descriptions.



#### THE ICE CLIMBS

- A) Pitchoff Quarry Wall
- B) Pitchoff Right
- C) Pitchoff Left
- D) Sisters
- E) Practice Area
- F) Three Flows
- G) Quasi Climber
- H) Jaws
- I) Wet Foot
- J) Killer Whale
- K) Cascade Ice Dance
- L) Green Gully
- M) Cascade Waterfall
- N) Top of the Lake Gullies
- O) Harlot
- P) Deadline
- Q) Eye of the Needle
- R) Red House Ramp
- S) Central Pillar of Pitchoff
- T) Arm and Hammer
- U) Tendonitis
- V) the Blue Chute
- W) Weeping Winds
- X) Slipstick
- Y) Screw and Climax
- Z) Emerald City

Once you have filled your eyes with ice-covered cliffs, you continue up a hill for two hundred yards and then begin your downhill run. You will enjoy the next two and one-half miles of varying drops down to Alstead Mill Road.

For the ice climber, the easiest return is back the way you came. The last hill down to your car is real fine for practicing that infamous telemark turn. That is, if you have the energy.

Whatever your main interest, whether it be skiing or climbing, you cannot help but to love this beautiful area.



### BACKCOUNTRY FORAY PLANNER

#### The Mt. Marcy-Feldspar Ski Loop

Distance: 17 miles  
Duration: 8 hours  
Difficulty: Expert  
Snow: 5' needed

Mark Meschinelli, a local ski-mountaineer who has skied in Alaska, once fell into the steep, chuted Feldspar brook up to his chest in water. This trip is therefore best done in a group of four to insure safety.

Make the Indian Falls approach to Marcy's summit. Contour around west to the trench. Ski to the left of Gray Peak and into an open glade run down to Lake Tear. Follow the two mile section of the Feldspar that begins as headwater near Lake Tear. Untouched powder and 10' drops are found in the brook. Turn right at the trail to Lake Arnold. Follow this schuss until Marcy Dam. Enjoy!

10



### SKI-SHOEING !?!

by Carl Heilman



Well, there's downhill skiing, cross country skiing, skijoring, and now ski-shoeing. Ski-shoeing is'nt exactly a combination of activities at once, but rather a combination of two activities done in the same day.

Cross Country skiing and snowshoeing; each sport has its own merits. Ah, to glide along on skis over a meandering course on a crisp winter day. Skiing is great, but I find I glide right past alot of scenery I used to notice while on snowshoes. They are a great way to get somewhere fast. I find I'am more confined to the valleys though, since that's where the majority of the level, faster trails are. It's possible to climb on skis, but I find them much more cumbersome than climbing with snowshoes. Coming down those steep mountain trails on skis can also be hazardous to one's health, as well as that of the trees strategically placed on those right angle corners.

Snowshoeing, one of the oldest means of snow travel known to man, reached a state of high development here in the North American snowbelt. Snowshoes were a necessity for the natives, as well as early settlers throughout the northern snow regions. The Maine, pickerel, and wide bearpaw styles of yesteryear have been modified over the past decades to the slimmer, smaller styles seen most often today. These shoes, such as wood frame 8" x 26" Catpaws, and 9" x 31" Trailpaws, or aluminum frame shoes of similiar size are excellent for climbing, bushwhacking, and hiking. The newer bindings also work well with ski boots, so the combination of small shoes and modern bindings are perfect for ski-shoeing.

Most of the higher Adirondack

peaks are reached by trails of at least 7 to 8 miles in length. The approach is often fairly level and skiable, while the last couple miles cover quite a steep ascent. A lot of these become accessible for day trips by skiing in as far as possible, then snowshoeing the remaining distance. Much of the Great Range, Colden, and the MacIntyre's are within reach by ski-shoeing, as well as some of the surrounding trailless summits.

Dig out those snowshoes the skis retired, and enjoy the peaks in winter. Ski-shoeing is a great way to day trip otherwise inaccessible peaks, and have the best of both worlds!



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## Facts on Wax -

### AN INSIGHT ON SKI WAXING.

There are essentially two types of cross-country skis available to the individual, waxable and waxless. Another form of definition is that waxable skis are best suited for performance and waxless skis for convenience. It all depends on the desires of the skier. A ski that has been waxed well for the existing snow conditions will almost always out-perform a waxless ski. On the other hand, a waxless ski will always out-perform a poorly waxed ski. So if you are willing to spend the time to learn and experiment, the waxable skis are worth that extra effort.

The waxing guide found on the back cover will supply information at a glance, but a little knowledge on the purpose of the wax will help the skier understand why, how, and which wax to apply.

The basics of skiing critically relies on what one skis on: snow. All the waxing systems available depend on the snow conditions. For simplicity's sake, there are two general snow conditions; fresh or new snow and old or wet snow. If it has just snowed, each individual snow crystal tends to be well-formed. As time and changes in temperature occur, the crystal slowly melts and eventually reaches the final stage seen in Figure E.

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- 1) What major city to you live near?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) How often do you visit the ADK's?  
\_\_\_ 1x \_\_\_ 3x \_\_\_ 10x \_\_\_ 20x a year.
- 3) What are your favorite activities?  
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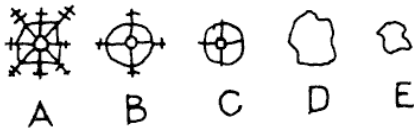
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The purpose of wax selection is to conform the wax with the existing snow crystal formation. When the crystals are "fresh" or well-formed, Figure A, the hard waxes allow the sharp points of the crystal to grip enough to allow the skier his kick without slipping, and prevent snow from building up under the ski. As the crystal transforms to Figure C, a softer wax is needed in order for the ski to stick. This is the factual theory by which the waxable ski operates. With this knowledge floating in the skier's mind, choosing the correct wax for the conditions becomes much easier.

With waxable skis, the key area is the kicker wax pocket. For waxless skis, the same area is covered with "fish scales." These, in effect, replace the wax system. The wax or fish scales are needed in order for one to gain traction when weight is applied to the ski.

Each color wax is proportional to the condition of the snow. The colder the snow, the harder a wax is needed to grip. The warmer the snow, the softer a wax is desirable. If one uses a real soft wax, ie., red, when it is very cold, your wax will stick too well and your

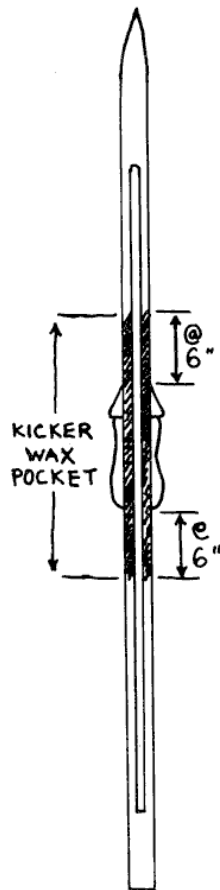
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glide will be sluggish and short. The harder wax, ie., green, will grip to the snow crystals and allow enough traction when unweighted. The waxable ski method is like a jigsaw puzzle. Only your experience will provide a reasonable solution.

Two styles of waxes are most widely used. During the months of December through March, when it snows regularly in the Adirondacks, the hard waxes, the cylinders, are most useful. In the Spring or in warm spells, the tubes of klister provide the best traction when the snow is wet and the crystals are very deformed. Both styles of wax are applied to the critical wax pocket.

If you have determined that a hard wax is today's ticket, rub it on the kicker area just like a crayon. It is recommended to use a cork afterwards to better adhere the wax to your skis. Corking helps the wax to stay on your ski longer. If you feel klister is needed, squeeze some of this toothpaste stuff in small blotches on the wax pocket. Use the spreader to smooth the sticky goop into a uniform layer; all the while avoiding getting the klister on your pants, hair, nose, mittens. Do not place gobs of the stuff on, thin layers are most effective. When it finally snows again, or you can't stand leaving the stuff on your skis, the best klister remover is white gas or gasoline. The remover sold commercially works fine, but costs five times as much.

Snow conditions and thus wax conditions can vary by the hour and by elevation. The best and most obvious method to determine this change is by your ski effort. If you find yourself slipping a lot on any uphill, you may consider a warmer wax. Simply stop



and crayon on the next warmest wax.

Sometimes, especially as the temperature drops in the afternoon, you will find yourself sticking to the snow. You should then stop and use your trusty scraper to remove the warm wax, and then apply the colder wax. Remember you can always spread a jelly (warm wax), over peanut butter (cold wax). But it is a tough trick to spread peanut butter over jelly.

The best method overall to get the knack of waxing your skis is to practice. Nordic skiers have been using the wax system for centuries and personally, this method is worth the extra effort of figuring out your wax system.

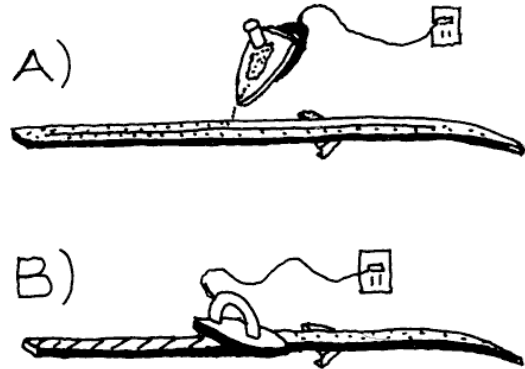
#### BASE BINDER WAXING

Most ski manufacturers recommend a base wax on their ski before any usage. This is most desirable because on the one hand, this extra layer helps to protect your ski from abuse due to rocks, trees, bushes, squirrels, etc. Also, the base wax acts as a binder; a layer which allows all your kicker wax to adhere better and longer. Your base wax also becomes a glider for your tips and tails. In other words, it's a real good idea to melt on a base wax.

#### PLASTIC BASE SKIIS:

Most skis today have a plastic base. The best way to apply your binder base wax is to get an old iron and set it on a moderate temperature where the wax will not smoke. The most effective binder I have found is Polar wax. It is the coldest and hardest cylinder available. Press the polar on the bottom of the iron and allow it to melt. As the wax builds up, it will easily melt and drip off the tip of the iron. Drip the wax along the entire length of the ski, avoiding the groove.

13

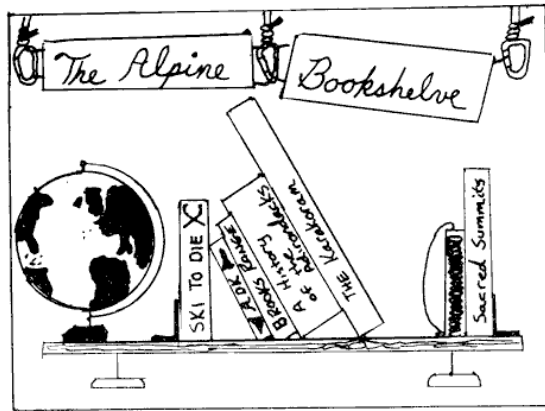


Once you have drops covering the ski, place the iron flat down on the ski. It is a good idea to have a good support system such as garbage cans, a workbench, or saw horses to work on. With the iron, proceed to melt the drips until you have a uniform layer of wax on your ski. Let it dry for a half an hour and then scrape off the excess. That's all there is to it. If you are wary of doing it for your first time, any experienced friend or ski shop will be willing to lend you a hand.

#### WOOD SKIIS:

You must have a pine tar base for your wood skis before waxing. The pine tar prevents water from entering the wood and also allows the kicker wax you applied to adhere well. There are two ways to apply this stuff, a hot method and a cold one. I prefer the cold method because I do not own a propane torch which is vital in adhering the hot method pine tar.

I use Bergendahl's Grunsmoring pine tar. It is pretty basic stuff. I have no idea what Grunsmoring means, I only know it works. On your workbench, paint this pine tar on your ski bottoms. A good, even coat works well. This stuff is effective as well as easy to apply. I do recommend someone showing you how, because even though it is simple, it never hurts to watch an experienced person. Good skiing!!



14

THE LAST STEP  
The American Ascent of K2

by Rick Ridgeway  
The Mountaineers, 1980

NANGA PARBAT: SOLO

by Reinhold Messner

Of the many books published by Reinhold, this is one of his best. Besides the usual spectacular photography, the accounts of his ventures on this Himalayan mountain are concise and well written. On his earlier ascent of Nanga, Reinhold lost his brother Gunther in an avalanche. He explains why he wishes to return and the reason for going alone. His story is easy to read and does not glorify his ascent.

Reinhold does an excellent job of capturing his emotions and thoughts before, during, and after the climb. Most notable are the descriptions of his conflicting inner dialogue with himself while on the mountain; quarrelling with the decision to go on in the face of danger or to descend to escape the overwhelming terror of being all alone in Nanga's forbidding environment.

As a bonus, he includes all recorded attempts and ascents on the 8000' meter mountain. A great book to read on those blustery February nights.

- Dave Flinn



1939. The Whermacht is invading Poland. The cigar-smoking Churchill stands before Parliament, slurring his words, calling for war against Germany.... Two men moving on a snow ridge, now stopping before an ice buttress. Neither can catch his breath. Twenty seven thousand five hundred fifty feet above sealevel, Fritz Weissner and a Nepalese Sherpa abandon the first American attempt on K2. So close. Darkness is a demon only an hour away and the cold moves with the night. No bivouac. The men plunge-step down towards the Holocaust...

1978. The fifth American attempt on K2 is made. The Last Step is a chronicle of this historic expedition. Ridgeway's prose reflects his profession as a writer. A keen observer of the harsh beauty of the Karakoram Himalaya, he also sees people living on an 8,000 meter mountain brought to their physical and emotional brinks. The clipped style of narration at the beginning of each chapter brings you through each micro-environment. The climb progresses:

Summit Pyramid. About 26,500 feet. 4:30 am. Hard snow. Wind-tortured to small crescents like the surface of the sea frozen, and a sense of time in slow motion. The sound of crampons biting hard snow, squeaking, and the sound of quick, conscious breathing. Dark. Wind. Cold. Exteme cold.

The team will spend 67 days on the mountain, most above 18,000 feet. Many of the days they will spend in tents, like moths in

cacoons.

Why even try to spread wings?

Perhaps those who risk their lives on alpine ridges and sheer faces are thrill-seekers, or misfits who cannot be without the prospect of another big climb for very long. We are all taught to cherish success. Certainly "success" and "summit" are synonymous. Is it that the only objectives that some consider worthwhile are frozen, treacherous, and foolhardy climbs to the unknown? Maybe. Or maybe some find in their dreams nothing to keep them back. There is no impossible, only the possible.

The team is small; they ferry all their own loads above Advanced Base Camp. But because their climb will be so long compared with the growing number of expeditions that are tending towards even smaller groups, light loads, and an often dangerous style of hauling all out ass up the route, the Americans are "sieging" K2. Emotions are drawn tight on siege climbs. Climbers have to control their frustrations at not being chosen for the summit teams. They must listen to each other, yell at and apologize to one another, all the while isolated as a group at extreme altitudes. The average person in such a setting grows richer from the necessity of interaction during the climb. According to Ridgeway, "ordinary people, with ordinary weaknesses" were on K2 in 1978, with only the possibility for support.

By attempting K2, Ridgeway and 13 other Americans on the 1978 expedition are trying to live a 40 year old dream. Before they return down the Baltoro Glacier, past the Trango Towers, each person will have changed. How and why they change is more fascinating to read about than the near alpine-style, oxygenless final attempts on the summit. They are people who have the courage to seek their limits, to try to turn dream into reality -- the last step that so many of us stop short of during our own lives'

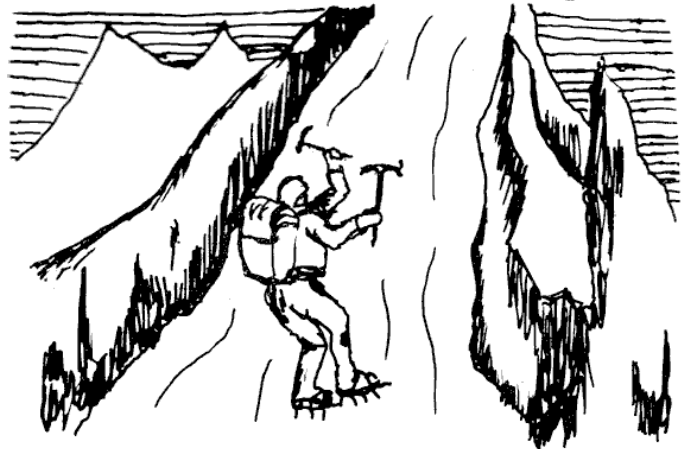
15 progress.

The late Rene Daumal wrestled with mountaineering philosophy for the last half of his short life. The title The Last Step is taken from his writings. What follows is his simple reason for climbing. It is more than once-in-a-lifetime views, and his words are applicable to any difficult effort that involves personal courage:

You cannot stay on the summit forever; you have to come down again...So why bother in the first place? Just this: What is above knows what is below, but what is below, does not know what is above.

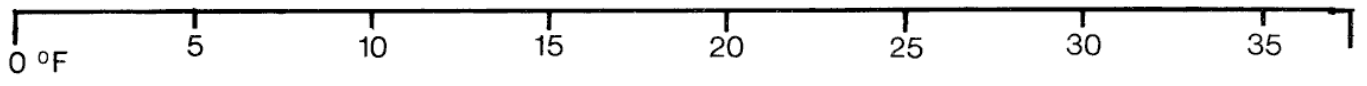
Strength comes through movement, courage through curiosity, magic through risk.

- Bob Hey



Nick Adams looked up the hill. George was coming down in telemark position, kneeling; one leg forward and bent, the other trailing; his sticks hanging like some insects thin legs, kicking up puffs of snow as they touched the surface and finally the whole kneeling trailing figure coming around in a beautiful right curve, crouching, the legs shot forward and back, the sticks accenting the curves like points of light, all in a wild cloud of snow.

- E. H.  
"Cross  
Country Snow"

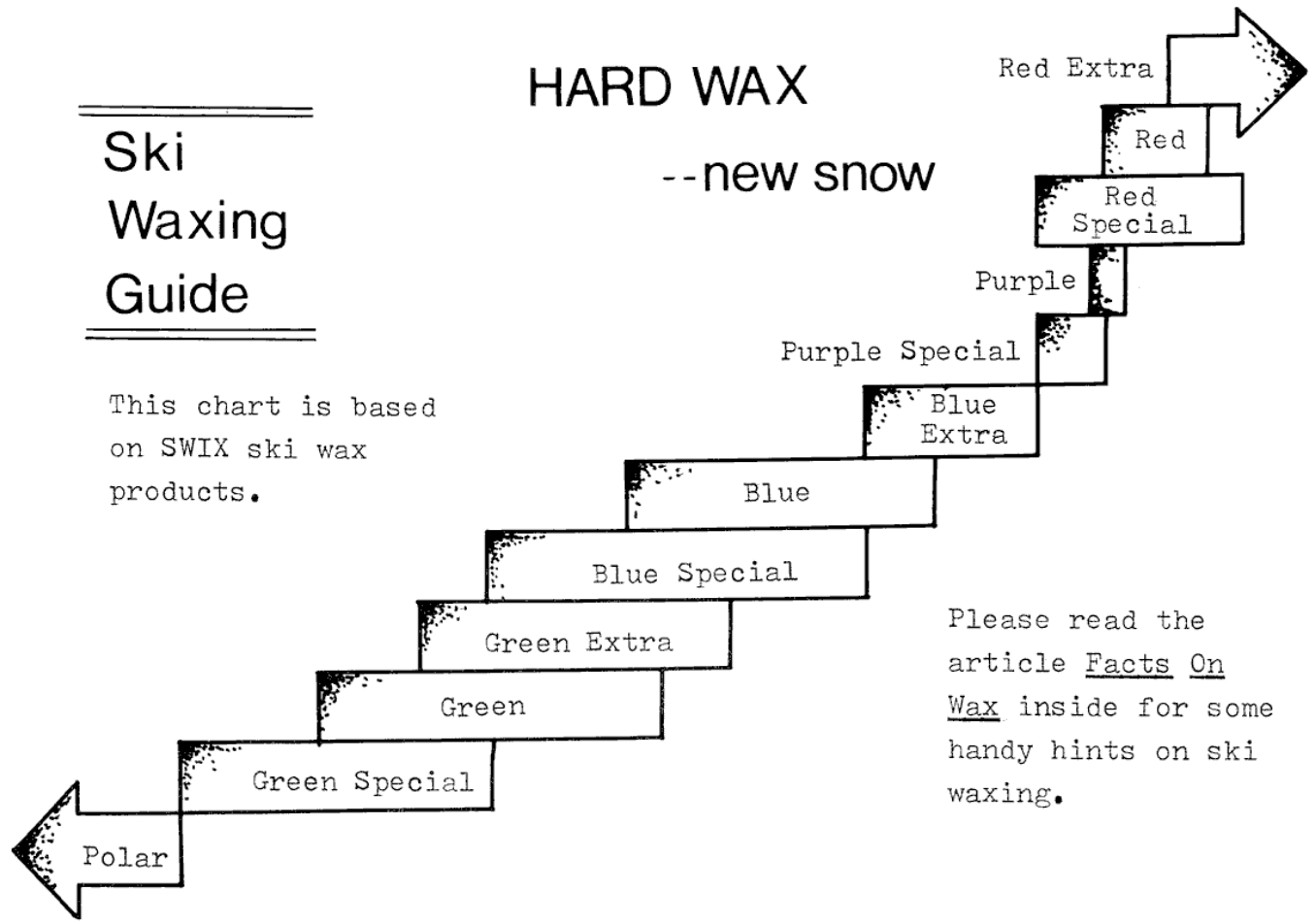


# Ski Waxing Guide

This chart is based on SWIX ski wax products.

## HARD WAX

-- new snow



Please read the article Facts On Wax inside for some handy hints on ski waxing.

## KLISTER WAX

-- old snow

