

## **Council Tracks**

The newsletter of NJ Ski & Snowboard Council  
January 2012

Happy New Year to All - We can breathe a sigh of relief that the infamous 2011 is finally over! There's no need to rehash the devastation caused by Irene and the autumn snowfall because it's all too recent. I say goodbye and good riddance to 2011.....welcome 2012!

**Unchained** - Thankfully the company I work for gives us the week between Christmas and New Years off to relax and enjoy family and friends. This is the first company I've worked for that does that and I have to tell you it's a welcome change from my past employers. My hiatus began on Friday 12/23 when I hopped an early morning flight at EWR and flew via Atlanta to Arizona. My son and his family moved to Tucson early last summer and this was my first visit. It was kind of weird to leave NJ in late December and step off the plane in sunny Arizona. Notice I didn't say warm because Arizona was experiencing a cold snap. It had been 35 degrees in the early morning but by the time I got there it had warmed to 50ish. As the week went by, the temp rose to a spring-like 60-65 degrees and stayed there. Funny how things go, I left NJ with no snow on the ground and five hours later I'm one hour's drive from Mexico looking at snow capped mountains. Yep snow, not the man made kind but real snow in real mountains 9,000 feet high. My son's house is in a golf community and the scene from his living room is a golf-green and fairway, saguaro cactus 3 times taller than I and the Santa Catalina mountains about a mile away. All the peaks didn't have snow but those at the higher elevations did. Now for the real kick.....a ski resort.....yep a bonafide ski resort one hour from Nogales, Mexico. Mount Lemmon ski resort sits in the Coronado National Forest, home to saguaro cactus, mountain lions and more kinds of rattlesnakes than I knew existed. Back in the Northeast we're biting our lips waiting for snow and Arizona of all places is skiing!!! The day after Christmas we packed the kids in the car and up ..up....up we went, all the way to Mount Lemmon Ski Valley. I saw it all: bobcats, cactus, mountain lions, rattlesnakes, boarders, skiers and snow in ARIZONA! When you have a minute log onto: <http://www.skithelennon.com> and you can visit Mt. Lemmon Ski Valley in Arizona.

**New Years weekend:** At the end of the week I flew east and like a number of you, headed to Vermont because surely Vermont, of all places would have snow. I sat out Thanksgiving weekend due to fog and soggy snow but thought the ski resorts would finally be in shape for the Christmas-New Years week. There was snow but again I was greeted by foggy soggy conditions and once again my freshly tuned skis stayed freshly tuned skis and I didn't make any tracks in the snow. However some of my clubs younger and more eager members didn't let the slush prevent them from having fun and headed to Pico (10 trails) and Killington (40+ trails). All reports were that the snow was soft (no duh) and trails were partially covered. I heard reports of exposed dirt along many trails, and having to walk over bare spots and dodge rocks.

After the goings on of Irene I really feel for the people of Vermont. No snow means no skiers and no dollars coming into the local economy. However, there was some relief because a lot of people were in-country and while driving around I noticed that the parking lots of local bars were filled. Apparently people were drowning their drowned spirits with alcohol rather than drowning in wet snow! In one sense anyway, dollars changed hands and hopefully some local merchants made some money.

**Ski season:** It's HERE, at least according to the calendar it is. I am a little late getting this months issue out but maybe that's a good thing because since returning from Vermont the thermometer has taken a nose dive making for prime snowmaking temps all week. Today is the 1/6/2012 and I just checked the websites of Hunter, Camelback and some other local mountains. Checkout the webcams and you'll find that everyone has had their snow guns going full tilt since Monday when the temp went down. I checked the seven day forecast and it's supposed to be cold for the rest of the week. I spoke to 3 people who skied locally over the New Years weekend and was told that Hunter has 50% of it is area open and Camelback while it didn't have a lot of trails open, those that were are in good shape. This Saturday 12/7 is supposed to be a bit warmer but after a full week of 24 hour/day snowmaking I am sure all the areas will be able to add six to ten new trails. That will be a welcome addition to what they have now and should make for good conditions this weekend. My advice is GET YOUR BUTT OUT THE DOOR AND SKI this weekend!!!

**Snow Report:** I know all of you reading this are computer literate or you wouldn't be reading it but here's a quick rundown as of tonight to save you surfing time:

Resort	# of trails	% open	Base*	Conditions
Camelback	18	50%	18-36"	packed powder (PP)
Elk	11	37%	18-24"	PP
Hunter	33	59%	0-50"	Granular & PP
Windham	20	49%	8-30"	Granular & PP
Mt. Snow, Vt	24	34%	12-24"	Machine groomed
Stratton	49	43%	11-19"	MG, variable
Killington	49	43%	20-32"	MG, loose granular
Sugarbush	48	43%	8-24"	Loose & frozen granular
Stowe	54	46%	16-26"	Machine groomed

\*Base depths depend on elevation. The higher depths are at the higher elevations.

**NOTES:**

- 1) As of 12/4 Stowe has had almost 15" of natural snow in the previous seven days!!
- 2) The local areas appear to be in fairly good shape, most have 50% terrain open.
- 3) Vermont was above freezing over New Years but the temp dropped Monday Jan 2nd so snow making is in full swing at all areas. Five days of 24 hours snowmaking should make a significant improvement in all the Vermont areas.

**Council Trips:** NJ Ski & Snowboard Council has a number of trips coming up soon.

- Sunday River, Maine - Jan 29<sup>th</sup> to Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> (\$400), lodging, lessons, lifts
- Park City, Utah – Feb 25<sup>th</sup> to March 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Mount Tremblant, Canada – March 25<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> (approx. \$700, lodging. Lifts, breakfast.

**Racing:**

- Wednesday night race league begins
- State Race, Pico in February 4th
- Consolation Race, Hidden Valley –TBD

**Tech Talk:** Last month I reviewed boot fitting and shared my thoughts about alignment and stance in one's boots. This month I'd like to discuss the numbers on your skis (one in particular) and what it means. Ski manufacturers have been playing with ski shape and edge cut for years but now they have greatly upped the ante in those areas. The past couple of years have seen incredible changes in ski design. Years ago we heard the term, "radical sidecut" when in reality there was nothing radical about it. The only radical thing 20 years ago was that it was more sidecut than the good old boys from Europe were used to. Old ideas die hard and Euro ski designers held on as long as they could. For all except those who drop from helicopters and ski huge mountains, gone are the days of monster GS turns. Today's skiers makes faster, shorter radius turns and only occasionally ride really big turns. The sidecuts on skis 20 years ago are old fashioned and largely outdated. For those of you who don't understand sidecut here is a simple explanation:

*Take your finger and draw 2 arcs in the dust on your big screen TV. Make one with a long gentle curve and the other with a sharper (tighter) curve. Look at the two arcs; obviously one has a wider curve than the other. Now go down the basement and look at your skis or snowboard. Lay the tip on the floor and while holding the tail of the board or ski near your face and sight along the edge. Unless you need glasses you'll see that the edge has a real curve to it (especially skis) and the edge is concave in the middle. You are looking at the sidecut of the board or ski which is expressed by one of four (4) numbers printed somewhere on your ski. I'm not a boarder so not sure if snowboards have such numbers.*

Normally there are four (4) numbers located on a ski. Three of them are grouped together on the top of the ski behind the rear binding or at the end of the tail or along the edge of the ski. In some cases they may actually be on the side (edge) of the ski. Wherever they are there will be 3 and in most cases a lone fourth # somewhere else. As most skiers know, the 3 numbers are the width of Tip, Middle & Tail. For this discussion the mystical fourth # is the most important and it may be a found somewhere other than with the first three.

In the good old days and still to some extent it can be a number like 19, 20, 21 possibly higher (but hopefully not). It can also be a number like 14, 13, 12, 11 and these lower numbers REALLY are radical. This one number is the radius of the sidecut expressed in **meters**. Don't let a metric unit scare you, this is easy to understand, just read.....

The sidecut in meters means that if a ski is tilted on its edge and were to carve an **ideal** turn, the turn would have an arc with a radius (from the center) of 11, 12, 13 or whatever meters. Think about that and you'll probably think it's a pretty big arc. It's a lot bigger than the arc you drew on your TV but it's not so big on a ski slope. The take-away message is that ONE number goes a very long way in defining how you will turn. The smaller the number the shorter and quicker turns you can make with a lot less effort. Numbers like 20, 21, 22 or higher are from the days of old and meant for BIG GS turns and many of us don't make those any more. For one thing narrower ski slopes as found in the East don't give us the room to make real wide turns. More importantly, if you do you make turns that wide you'll probably slam into someone. Skiing technique morphed over the years and now we make smaller (tighter) more controlled turns as a way to check our speed and stay in control on steeper trails. A good skier skis with his/her chest pointing downhill which necessitates shorter, quicker turns than would be used in a wider traverse of the slope as beginners typically do. So that is the essence of the 4<sup>th</sup> number on your skis. If you find you have a pair of skis with a number approaching 20 or over than you have a ski more intended for bigger GS turns.

If you are a decent skier and you'd like to make shorter/quicker turns you may want to demo a pair of skis with a lower number (shorter turn radius). Other factors besides sidecut make a difference but that is fodder for another discussion. Next month we'll delve more into the group of three numbers and what they mean to your skiing but for now go look at your skis and find the elusive 4<sup>th</sup> one.

**Tremblant Update:** Since I've never been to Tremblant and am giving this trip serious consideration, I am curious as to how they are doing this year. A quick look at their snow report shows that it's colder that far north than here in the colonies. Tremblant has had natural snow totaling 36 inches with 15 inches in the last 7 days! The temperature at Tremblant today (1/5/2012) is -2<sup>0</sup>F to 14<sup>0</sup>F a cold day for sure. With that kind of cold, they'll be cranking out the snow and judging from their videos, the slopes appear in excellent shape. As I write this, Tremblant is reporting 66 trails open which means they are 70% operational which is more than any area in the Northeastern US. A check of the Tremblant webcams this morning showed snow covered slopes in very good condition and lots of people skiing and boarding. Hmm...maybe a trip North.....Hey Boss, I'm not feeling so well.....

**In Memoriam:** Sadly as I was finishing this column, I got a call from a member in my club about John Capsouras, the "Master Blaster" who was the DJ providing music at the last two NJ Ski Council Jamborees. John suffered a heart attack and passed away January 5, 2012. John and his wife were long affiliated with High Life Ski Club and he provided music at our annual picnic and Christmas party for the last 25 years. Literally thousands of people danced to the tunes of the Master Blaster over the years. John and his music will be missed by many.

**Last Tracks:** The NJ Ski & Snowboard Council now officially represents snow boarders, not that we didn't in the past but with our new name we made it official that we are the Go-To place for Boarders and Snow Board clubs. In one sense, the sports of skiing and riding have merged, no longer do we think about what one has attached to their feet while sailing down the mountain. In recognition of that a new term was coined a few years ago.....The Snowsports, a word that brings us all together and one we will hear more of in years to come. Regardless of what you ride on, the goal is the same – enjoy LIFE and have FUN outdoors.

This year we had to wait too long for OUR time and the season will be shorter than in past years. OUR season is here NOW so get off your duff, get outside, enjoy winter and LIVE! If you need a push, log onto the website of our favorite mountain and view their webcam, you'll be glad you did.

Bob Zega  
Chair, Public Relations  
NJ Ski & Snowboard Council  
[rjzega@yahoo.com](mailto:rjzega@yahoo.com)  
973-599-0973

**PS:** Many thanks to Frank DeRossi for his kind words in regard to the December issue. I tried to make up for my lack of spiffy graphics with quality writing. It's nice to know someone noticed.