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Akron Beacon Journal 3

They Pray All Week Long

By FRANCES B. MURPHY

The sign at Boston Mills Ski Area says: "Pray for snow."

It's a popular admonition at skiing slopes whenever winter threatens to disappear.

In the last decade Ohio has acquired ski spots where none existed before.

I never anticipated that people would be skiing at commercial areas within a few miles of my home in Northern Summit County.

But there they are, weather permitting, at Boston Mills Ski Area in Boston Twp. and Brandywine Ski Center in Sagamore Hills Twp.

A dozen or more ski ventures have been started in Ohio. Most still survive. Such sports centers thrive on cold temperatures, snow and more snow.

Even with snowmaking machinery, many ski areas have a touch-and-go time. Those which depend on natural snow need the most powerful prayers.

Over the holidays it dawned on me that I hadn't kept faith with my own preaching. I keep telling people to look at interesting things in their own locale but hadn't really checked the ski facilities near my own home.

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Over the years I have enjoyed off-season visits to Sun Valley, Idaho, Red Lodge and Whitefish, Mont., Stowe, Vt., and Mount Pilatus in Switzerland. Yet I'd never walked inside the ski lodges next door.

So I talked a Boston Heights cohort, Carol Chamberlain, and her mother, Oma, into visiting our own "resorts" last Sunday night.

We found both areas pleasantly populated though the



BRANDYWINE SKI CENTER IN SAGAMORE HILLS TWP.

... icy creek curves between ski patrol house and beginners' slopes

warming trend was beginning to take a toll of the snow. By Monday the rains had washed out skiing.

It was the same story throughout the area early in the week. Punderson Lake State Park west of Burton was swamped with skiers over the Christmas weekend, then just swamped this week. Atwood Lake ski area had an 18-inch snow base when the rains came.

Most ski areas have telephone numbers where operators or recordings give ski condition reports. After intermittently calling Mount Chalet for five hours one day, I figured it would have been easier to drive to Chesterland.

The Ohio Development Department in Columbus maintains a statewide reporting service Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a. m. to 5 p. m. at 611-469-2138.

The same department has a free pamphlet available on "Winter Sports in Ohio" from

Box 1001, Columbus, O., 43216.

The areas and counties usually listed are Boston Mills and Brandywine in Summit, Mount Chalet and Alpine Valley in Geauga, High Hopes and Atwood Lake in Carroll, Snow Trails and Clear Fork in Richland, Valley High in Logan and Sugar Creek in Greene.

The Snow Bowl outside Cadiz in Harrison County evaporated last season. The bills piled up but not the snow so it went out of business.

Last March my sister in Southern Ohio introduced me to the Alpine Ski Resort near Morrow southeast of Lebanon. We had a pleasant meal near the lodge's fireplace but I

wondered how much skiing anyone had managed in Warren County.

At Boston Mills Ski Area the Chamberlains and I discovered we could have a steak dinner on Saturday nights. Katie Kennedy, who supervises the lodge's food concession, told us a band also plays from 9 p. m. Saturdays.

Tucked around the chalet-style building are nooks for ski instruction, equipment rental and lift tickets. A poster advises, "Don't turn blue — keep loose clothing and long hair under control."

A fireplace, open on four sides, drew man and beast. Skiers warmed themselves and a beagle called "Little Don" curled up on the edge away from the logs.

Boston Mills Ski Area is north of Peninsula and the Ohio Turnpike's twin bridges. Its runs are easily visible from Riverview rd. North of W. Boston Mills rd. They go from a low beginners' slope with rope tow to steeper inclines with T-bar and chair lifts.

Brandywine Ski Center is more secluded and as a friend observed "more European looking." The lodge and ski rental facilities are on opposite sides of a bridge over Brandywine Creek. Last weekend the lights of the ski slopes reflected in the ice-encrusted creek to make a sparkling scene.

My neighbors and I drove North on Riverview rd. from Boston Mills to get to Brandywine. Entering Cuyahoga County we turned right on Vaughan rd. at Jalta, a one-time company town. Not far from where Vaughan rd. becomes Highland rd. in Summit County we found Brandywine's stocking-capped pixie on the welcoming sign.

Most Akronites head to Brandywine via Ohio 8, turning left on Highland rd. near I-271, zig-zag north and west with the road to the entrance. A winding drive goes back into the ski area through woods where one sign warns, "Watch for Deer."

The ski center's mascot is a long-legged canine called "Brandy." The ski trails have similar names — Bourbon, Burgundy and Champagne

In our wanderings we noted that both Boston Mills and Brandywine have buildings with cots and first aid equipment and ski patrols which aid persons injured or needing help. Each ski area has food and bar facilities.

Skiing is a spectator sport for me but an Akron friend figured she would ski enough to warrant a season ticket. The state-owned Punderson was the only place I found with a free rope tow. Most places have lift fees of \$2 to \$6.

For anyone who wants to see or ski, here are places to go when the snow is OK in these parts:

Alpine Valley — (Phone: 1-729-9775). Four miles east of Chesterland on U.S. 322. Chair lift, T-bar, three rope tows. Open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 4 to 10:30 p. m.; Wednesday, from 11 a. m. to 10:30 p. m.; Saturday, Sunday and holidays, 9 a. m. to 10:30 p. m.

Atwood Lake — (Phone: 1-735-4545 or 1-735-2211 ext. 381). Area adjoining Atwood Lake Lodge near Delroy, reached via I-77, Ohio 212 and 542. Double rope tow. Open 10 a. m. to 10 p. m. daily.

Boston Mills — (Phone: 1-657-2334). Between U.S. 21 and Ohio 8 at Riverview and W. Boston Mills rd. north of Peninsula. Chair lift, T-bar and rope tows. Open Monday

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for the
FUN
of it



CATCHING A RIDE ON T-BAR LIFT

... at Boston Mills Ski Area, Boston Twp.

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On The Cover

Impromptu game of "crack the whip" appears about ready to start at the Cascade skating rink. The young lady at left checks to see if she will be in the line of fire.

Picture by Akron Beacon Journal photographer Lew Henderson.