

Meet you on the slopes

Whether you are an experienced skier, a novice, or perhaps you have always wanted to try skiing but never have, the Lafayette Ski & Snowboard Club welcomes all interested participants to join them.

But if lift tickets and the thought of steep mountains sound intimidating, the club encourages anyone who is interested in skiing and other winter sports to give the club a try.

“We really make an effort to promote downhill skiing to non-skiers and those who like snowboarding,” says Brian Olehy, vice president of the Lafayette Ski & Snowboard Club. “We want people to join the club even if they have never been skiing.”

Each January, the club takes a Learn-to-Ski day trip to Swiss Valley in Jones, Mich. Membership, which is normally \$25 for one person and \$40 for a family, is not required for this trip, and all are welcome.

“You can learn how to ski and snowboard even if you’ve never done it before and learn it in a very supportive environment,” says Frank Arnold, who leads the Learn-to-Ski trip each year. Arnold has been a member for seven years. “Kids as young as 3 years old can attend, so it’s family friendly—and kids learn fast!”

Lafayette Ski & Snowboard Club gathers for winter sports and fun.

Bartek Rajwa, Dick Horswell and Jenifer and Brian Olehy at the top of Aspen Highlands ski patrol building.



“Skiing is just more fun in a group.”



Skiing with the group also reminds those who know how to ski to improve their skills.

“We encourage everyone to take a lesson every once in a while even if they have been skiing for years,” says Olehy. The club also is trying to generate interest among experienced skiers in Lafayette—those who would like to take ski trips with others and meet new people.

“We have members from all walks of life. Singles, couples and families are all part of our club,” Olehy notes. “Skiing is just more fun in a group.” Participants get discounted rates on the trips, which is a consideration with the high cost of travel today, he adds.

The club works with tour companies to get the best price for travel, such as Winter Ski & Sport and Ski the Rockies, based in Downers Grove, Ill. Winter Ski & Sport arranges group travel and Ski the Rockies arranges individual and family trips.

While the focus is usually on downhill skiing, the club wants cross-country skiers to join, too, because most of the resorts have cross-country trails, Olehy says. And if you like winter activities—but not skiing or perhaps you don’t want to ski every day of the trip—then most resorts offer snowboarding, snowmobiling and snow-shoeing.

Ski equipment has changed a lot in the last 10 years, Olehy notes. Boots are a more comfortable design, but the most significant change are the skis, which are no longer long and straight, but parabolic.

“It’s actually kind of an hour-glass shape to the ski as you look at it,” he says. “The front of the ski is a little wider than the middle and the rear of the ski is slightly wider than the middle.”

Some members buy boots and rent the skis so they don’t have to travel with bulky equipment, Olehy explains. Many of the members shop for winter activity equipment ▶▶



Mike Panich racing in Michigan.



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“learn it in a very supportive environment”



Brecken VonTobel after riding the indoor ski slope at Snowcrest Ski Center in Crestwood, Ill. Brecken is one of the youngest members of the club.



and clothes at Snowcrest Ski & Snowboard Center in Crestwood, Ill., he adds.

Adaptive programs are available for people who might not be able to use the standard ski.

For example, someone who doesn't have use of their legs can sit in a chair on a mono ski, and they ski down the hill with outrigger polls that have skis on the end of them.

If you are dedicated to spending all day on the slopes, there's still a good chance you'll be able to find what you want at the stores in the resort area without actually going shopping, explains Gail Thayer-Copeland. She often goes shopping for group members during the trips and says she enjoys shopping and looking for bargains.

"I find unusual items and locally made gifts when we travel, with the club or by ourselves," she says. "If people are looking for some particular item on a ski trip, they give me the specifics, and I'll keep those in mind as I wander the town, reporting back with business cards

and prices." She joined the club when she married her husband, John Copeland, six years ago.

Aside from the discounted group travel and the ability to make new local friends with similar interests, racing is one of the main attractions of membership, says Mike Panich, who has been skiing since he was 7 years old.

"It consumes a lot of my personal time, and a lot of my family time we spend skiing," Panich says. His son Blake, 7, has been skiing since he was two and racing since he was three.

Racing with other members makes you a better skier, notes Panich. You don't have to be an accomplished skier to participate in a race.

"Most of the members of the group that you race with will give you hints and tips," he says. "You can be competitive against yourself, and try to beat your own time and improve your technique."

Lafayette Ski Club members enjoy lunch on the mountain at Snowmass, Colo.



The club's members are looking forward to another great season of travel, exercise, camaraderie and relaxation.

"We encourage people to come check us out," Olehy says. "It's cheaper to go with us than to strike out on your own, and we do the planning. We ask people to sign up for the trips early because once the trips fill up, we have waiting lists, but it doesn't always mean we can get more space." ❄️



Dick Horswell and Bartek Rajwa at the top of Breckenridge.

Upcoming ski trips

The first trip of the Lafayette Ski & Snowboard Club is to Summit County, Colo., January 18-23. Those traveling with the group can ski three different locations on the same lift ticket.

The club also is planning a trip to Lake Tahoe March 14-21. The trip includes four days of skiing and snowboarding at Heavenly Resort and a day of skiing and snowboarding at Kirkwood Mountain in Kirkwood, Calif.

For more information

Contact The Lafayette Ski & Snowboard Club, P.O. Box 2275 West Lafayette, IN 47906
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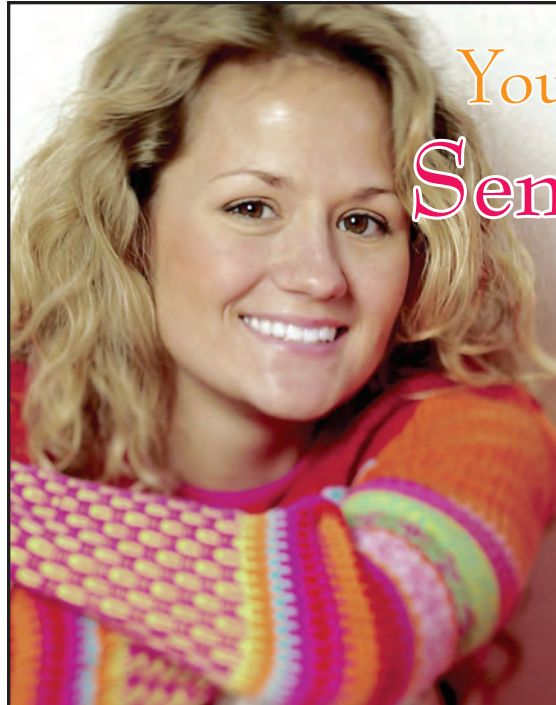
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