

Ski cross country for fitness, serenity

By Lam Mesos
staff writer

Far from the maddening downhill ski slopes is another skiing activity that complements winter's solitude. It's cross-country skiing, and if you think it's too tame for you, consider that cross-country skiing is one of the best all-around forms of exercise.

The Presidential Sports Award Fitness Manual rates cross-country skiing as high for muscular endurance, heart and lung endurance and weight control; and of medium benefit for flexibility and muscular strength.

Downhillers can expect only medium benefit in muscular endurance and flexibility and low benefit in muscular strength, lung and heart endurance and weight control. Only swimming gets slightly higher marks than cross-country skiing.

NOT ONLY can you expect to build up your body, you can also expect to clear your mind of the stressful baggage we tend to carry around.

There's hardly a prettier sight than the rolling hills of a southern Michigan woods filled with snow. If the lift lines, crowded slopes and the fashion-con-

outdoors

sciousness of downhill skiing have soured you, consider making the switch. You owe it to yourself to experience the serenity of cross-country skiing.

While diehards start adjusting their bindings at the sight of the first flake, it's best to wait until about four inches of snow have fallen before you head for the trails.

Between state, county and metro-parks, there are hundreds of acres to explore only a short drive away. Our favorites are Maybury State Park in Northville Township, with nine miles of groomed trails, and Proud Lake and Highland State Recreation Areas near Milford for more strenuous trips. Rentals are available at all three sites.

Another close-to-home site is Independence Oaks County Park near Clarkston, with 16 kilometers of groomed trails, warming shelter with fireplaces, restrooms and concessions.

Huron-Clinton Metroparks have the largest network of trails in the tricoun-

ty area. Here's a list of Metropark facilities.

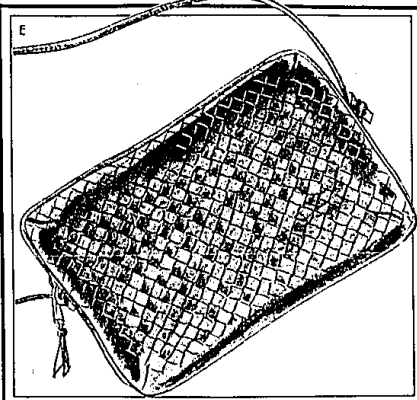
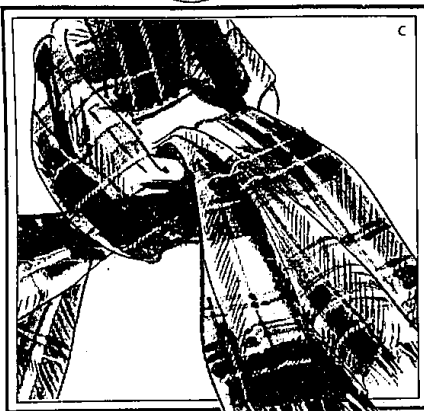
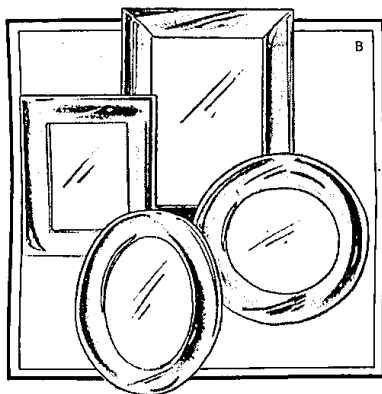
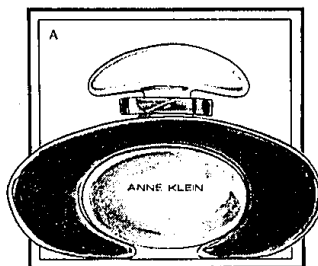
• **STONY CREEK** near Rochester has 15 miles of groomed trails from 1.7 miles and longer, ski rental and touring center. The center, at Eastwood Beach, is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday and 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekends. It has heated restrooms and coin lockers. Vending machines are at the nearby boat-launch building with snack bar service on weekends. Weekend lessons. For information, call 791-4242.

• **KENSINGTON** near Milford operates a ski center at the golf starter

building, which is open 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturdays and 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sundays. Fifteen miles of groomed trails from one to 4 1/4 miles. Night lighting at the golf site during touring hours. Expanded weekday hours during Christmas holiday. Ski lessons on weekends. Rentals with group rates available. Heated restrooms and food service. 685-1861.

• **HURON MEADOWS**, west of US-23 and south of Brighton, has six miles of trails. Four groomed trails. Ski-touring center at golf starter building with rentals, weekend lessons and food service. Hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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