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Rob Courtney, Marion, crouches on the back of his skis as he comes down the slope of Squaw Creek.

Snow means fun for skiers

By Jim Meyer
Don't fight the snow, enjoy it! Try skiing. You don't have to drive to the mountains to try downhill skiing. Ski areas are only a few miles away—close enough to make the trip, ski several hours, relax after the exercise, and drive back home all in one day.

Outdoor

And although the gear can easily cost you a week's pay check, most ski areas have equipment for rent for \$20 or less per day, and many offer lessons. A few even have baby sitters for the younger set and other winter-type activities for members of the family who might not want to try the slopes, or who prefer to relax in the lodge and watch the fun from inside, near the fire.

If you live in the Cedar Rapids-Marion area, Iowa County, Waverly, Decatur or Dubuque, for example, a ski area is probably no more than 10 minutes away. It could be a quick trip to all the winter sports, or the coast for a strong case of cabin fever.

Here's a rundown of ski areas within a day's drive—many are less than two hours away—from most any place in Eastern Iowa. For more information, or to make reservations, call phone numbers given.

• **Squaw Creek Park**, east edge of Marion, has several kinds of slopes, with one rope tow. Slopes open at 10 a.m. Saturday and Sunday. Squaw Creek has lights for evening skiing and may stay open until 10 p.m. if there is reasonable demand, but generally closes earlier because there has been little demand for skiing after dark.

• **Marion**—One of the most complete ski resorts in the Midwest is Chestnut Mountain Lodge, nine miles south of Galena, Ill. The resort is open daily from 9 to 4:30 p.m., with night skiing from 8 to 10 p.m. There are three chairlifts and seven rope tows for the 14 runs; the longest run is 2,000 feet. Chestnut Mountain Lodge has ski lift tickets during the weekends, and \$5 during the week. Rope tow tickets are \$6 on weekends and \$5 during the week. The lodge has ski lessons and a rental shop—a package equipment deal is \$8 for adults and \$5 for children under 12.

• **Wiscasset**—Several areas in southwestern Wisconsin are within an easy drive for Eastern Iowans and offer good downhill skiing. General information about the area is available from Joe Knauth at Hidden Valley, Extension Office, Richard Camp, Richland Center, Wis. 53591. He says the nine-county western Wisconsin area has 120 miles of unspoiled hills and valleys with plenty of landscape for downhill and cross-country skiing. Operators of the five major ski facilities are optimistic about the season's prospects, he says. Knauth lists these major slopes: La Crosse—Mount LaCrosse, overlooking the Mississippi River; open daily, has a vertical drop of 516 feet with the longest slope just over one mile. One T-bar, three rope tows, and one chairlift available. For information call (608) 788-6044. Cape Mills—Snowdown, which is in the upper northeast corner of Wisconsin's Door County, has four downhill ski areas listed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Rochester, open Tuesday and Thursday and weekends and holidays with three runs, one rope tow and one lift. Phone (607) 238-6747. Waubesa's Coffee Mill, five runs, two chairlifts, full line of facilities. Phone (612) 965-4961. Potosi, Mount Frontenac, nine miles south of Bad Wing, eight runs, one rope tow, chairlift, rope tows, full line of facilities. Phone (612) 388-8208. Welch, Village Ski, 21 runs, full facilities, lodging. Phone (612) 258-4567.

• **Iowa County Park**, in Iowa County, south of Interstate 80 and five miles north of Mt. Pleasant, the ski slope in the 387-acre park opened Dec. 30 for this season's second season. The facility has a rope tow, and this year individual bases have been designed for skiing, tobogganing and sledding, but snow on the same hill was shaggy.

Saturday and Sunday the slope is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday are available for private parties, with members invited to make an advance reservation. All facilities are free, whether on an individual basis or for parties. The ski slope had a late opening this season because the lower end of the run is on Lake Iowa, and the Iowa County conservation board wanted to be sure the site was strong enough to handle the skiers.

• **Fun Valley, Montross**, located about three miles east of Montross, is a private ski area with eight runs, private ski lifts, ski rental, and has night snowmaking machines. There are ski and equipment shops. There are also a snack bar and snowmaking equipment.

• **Skii Villa**, located on the north edge of Waverly, Skii Villa has six runs, with two from 327 to 362 feet and special rates for private parties. Sleds are available from \$50 for students to \$160 for families. Lessons are \$15 for group classes and \$7 for private instruction. Equipment rental is \$15 for skis, \$2.75 for boots and \$1 for poles.

• **Skii Villa** is open from noon to 5:30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday; noon to 10 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday; 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Phone (319) 382-9922 or (319) 382-8158.

• **Sandown, 9000 Ashbury Road**, five miles west of Dubuque, offers the only chairlift in Iowa, and probably the most complete skiing facilities in the state. Sandown has one double chairlift, one triple chairlift and four rope tows. There are 14 runs, up to a half-mile long, including the sixth longest in the Midwest. Lift rates vary from \$10 per day on weekends and holidays to \$5 for youth and senior citizens. Lessons are \$6.50 in a group; \$5 per person and \$5 for the first person and \$5.50 for each additional person in groups of up to five.

• **Sioux**, six miles southeast of Pella, has three rope tows, a 200-foot slope for intermediates and experts and a 100-foot vertical drop. Lift rates are \$5 on day or \$3 after 6 p.m. Hours are 1 to 9 p.m. Saturdays and 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sundays and

open in a beginning run of 100 feet, two gentle slopes of 650 and 1,000 feet and two advanced slopes of 1,200 and 1,300 feet. The area has four rope tows and one cable haul tow.

• **Novi Ski Run, Decatur**, Skii Nov-Ski has shelter house, lights for night skiing, and ski instruction available. Two lifts are \$2 to \$4 with single family and student membership rates available. Rental fees are \$1 for skis, \$2 for boots and \$1 for poles. The run is open from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, and 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, closed Monday and Wednesday. Novi Ski has four rope tows and five slopes, a 250-foot vertical drop, 250-foot bunny slope, 400-foot beginner's run, two 1,000-foot and one 1,200-foot intermediate and a 950-foot expert run.

• **Devon**, located on Highway 63, 2 1/2 miles west of Montross, is a private ski area with eight runs, private ski lifts, ski rental, and has night snowmaking machines. There are ski and equipment shops. There are also a snack bar and snowmaking equipment.

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Skiers ride the tow rope at Squaw Creek.

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C.R. area students try skiing

By Christie Wallace
"It was fun, and I really learned a lot," said a typical student reaction after a day on the slopes of Dubuque's Sandown.

No, that's physical education instructor Roger Hanson's assessment of the skiing venture of some 100 Marion High School seniors and juniors last school year. And he made it after being the one in the group who came closest to confronting injury by missing for sliding into an evergreen bush.

Hanson said that plans are underway for a repeat trip in late January or early February because of both the success and popularity of the one-day pilot course last winter.

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Chestnut Lodge near Galena is a full-facility ski resort