

William Tilley

William “Bill” Tilley, affectionately known as “Mr. How To” among his fellow skiers moved to western Pennsylvania in the early 1950's. Bill and his wife, Helen, settled in North Huntingdon Township. Bill had been a member of the Glen Hickory Ski club in New Jersey. He was an advocate of organized skiing and saw a need for additional clubs especially in the eastern suburbs of Western Pittsburgh.

At that time the only viable clubs in the area were Laurel Mountain Ski Club, which centered its activities around Laurel Mountain Slope and the Pittsburgh Ski Club. In the winter of 1956 Bill began campaigning to organize a ski club in Westmoreland County. George Heasley, a member of the Pittsburgh Ski club who had tried to unsuccessfully to organize a local group of skiers, joined forces with Bill and the two became the founders of the Westmoreland Ski Club, the third in the Western Council.



Bill served as the Club's first President, two years as vice-president and then one more year as president. Membership in the new club increased quickly. By 1958 they had acquired an old duck pen at Seven Springs that would be renovated into a club lodge. Bill designed the lodge building and initiated many of the fund raising functions to pay for the renovations.

Continuing to be a supporter of organized skiing, Bill helped to reorganize the Western Pennsylvania Ski Council and encouraged the formation of new Clubs under its umbrella. Armed with his various credits of qualified instructor, proficiency judge, and other expertise, Bill helped lay the foundations for many of the Western Council's organized events that are still in place today. The Pennsylvania Ski Federation, Inc. and USEASA (United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association) now ESA (Eastern Ski Association) were two other ski umbrella organizations that benefited by Bill's great interest in organized skiing.

Out of the rapid growth of ski clubs in the early sixties came 'idea sharing' between clubs. One of these ideas was called “Style Skiing” introduced by two members of the Pittsburgh Ski Club. Perhaps because Bill and Helen were avid roller skating competitors, competing in free style roller-skating in the days before blades, they asked Bill to help them with the rules to govern a competition. This experience would later lead him to become an Apostle of Free Style skiing. Guided by rules of ice skating and diving. Bill wrote up a set of rules, which he called “Free Style Skiing” in 1962. He presented this set of rules to USEASA at Lake Placid, New York. As the force behind this concept, Bill became the chairperson for the newly formed “How To” committee of USEASA. He chaired this committee for five years, compiling its first directories and articles.

Prior to the 1964 Olympics Bill's campaign for Free Style Skiing resulted in a Free Style event at Boyce Park in Monroeville, Pennsylvania sponsored by the Western Council. The initial competition, using his scoring techniques, included 360s, jump turns, a few aerial twists about two feet off the ground, and some mogul bashing which by today's standards were very basic, but was really the start of today's highly technical Olympic competition. The first USEASA sanctioned Free Style event was held at Boyce Park in Monroeville, Pennsylvania in 1966 underbelly's supervision, just one month after the first non-sanctioned event, called “Ski Masters”, took place at Mt. Attitash in New Hampshire. In 1967 Bill presented to

USEASA the idea of a Free Style Skiing Committee and was elected its first chairperson. He also presented Free Style Skiing to the National Ski Association Convention that same year.

Concerned with ski safety, Bill presented his ideas to the Western Council, the Federation, and USEASA. Where, again, he was appointed a chairperson for USEASA's Safety for Skiers Committee for two years. The Safety for Skiers Placements, seen in many ski area food service facilities was one of Bill's ideas used on a national basis. Bill also introduced the USEASA Photography Contest, Publication Contest, and Club Safety for Skiers Trophy.

Bill's involvement with USEASA did not stop with his various chairmanships. He was elected as a director in USEASA(a two year term) by the skiers of Pennsylvania. He was also a judge of the Basic, Standard, and Advanced ESA proficiency tests.

After an unfortunate accident at Seven Springs, Bill was instrumental in establishing a Seven Springs safety patrol that promoted courtesy and safety on the slopes. They were known as Ski Rangers.

Bill's expertise and ideas were not limited to on slope activities. To raise money for expenses for the 1961 USEASA conference in Pittsburgh in 1961, Bill suggested a raffle with the top prize being a ski trip to Europe. As a never tried concept, the raffle was such a success that it became a model for later fund raisers in the area.

Organized skiing and skiers across the country, here in the State of Pennsylvania, and especially in western Pennsylvania have benefited from William "Bill" Tilley's many ideas and his personal enthusiasm and dedication to see them accomplished and put into action.