



WINTER 2003



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Professional Ski Instructors of America
Eastern/Education Foundation

Impressions of Interski 2003

By Kim Seevers, PSIA-E Director of Education & Programs

I recently attended the XVIIth Interski Congress in Crans Montana, Switzerland. Interski Congresses are organized every four years and are visited by some 1000 to 1500 snowsports instructors from 34 skiing nations around the world. The delegates include the National demonstration teams of the Interski member nations and their goal is to meet and share information on current technical and teaching methodology. Each of our National Alpine Team members was assigned to shadow a team from another country throughout the congress and will be reporting to you in future issues of *The Professional Skier*. Here are some "strictly personal" observations about the event.

The Opening Ceremony: All of the teams in their colorful uniforms gathered on the town ice rink. Traditional Swiss Alpenhorns played under a beautiful full moon. The ceremony was immediately followed by an awesome fireworks display set to pulsating rock music.

On-Snow Opening Ceremony: After finding the demo slope (easier said than done), we tried to follow a couple of guys in Italian team uniforms. We arrived at a closed slope, only to have them turn around, and ask *us* (first in Italian, then German, then French, and finally in English) how to get to the demo slope! We finally found it, and the on-snow ceremony was great. We also got our first dose of the Snowli Village, the Interski version of an Olympic village. Each country's demonstration team was presented and welcomed in three languages.

Daily Workshops: Each day, national teams presented short technical demonstrations. These demos were followed by a variety of excellent workshops that team members from the remaining countries and other guests were invited to attend. We had the chance to ski with a couple team members from another country and learn both the technical basis behind what they do mechanically as well as their teaching philosophy. The workshops represented great opportunities for creating a new network of snowsports colleagues from around the world.

Big Impression! With all due respect to the men out there, I apologize for the sweeping generalization I'm about to make. And girls—I'm sure there's not one of you who's ever been in an exam

group who won't appreciate this! When you gather members of 34 national teams together and send them all off down one little trail all at the same time, which is what happened first run every morning, the testosterone level is off any chart imaginable. Incredibly scary. And when you ALL had to finish up each workshop with a run down the demo slope into the Snowli Village (where you were positive everyone gathered at the bottom was watching you and only you), take that testosterone level and jack it up into the ozone!

The Slovenian Bus: This was a black hole into which people disappeared never to be seen again. I can't explain this but anyone that was in Crans will understand.

Zermatt: Imagine skiing in the shadow of the Matterhorn under a crystal clear blue sky and thigh deep powder. Need I say more? Well, one other thing comes to mind—the group of new friends I got to share the experience with. The group included the Canadian Snowboard team, a couple Swedish guys, three Norwegians, some fellow Americans and a guide.

The morning newsletter: Every morning, an Interski newsletter would appear in each hotel. It detailed the highlights from the day before and

laid out the workshops and indoor lectures for the upcoming day. It was written in three languages and although the writer made an admirable attempt to get it into English, the translation was often very entertaining. Midway through the week, the big issue was that someone had stolen the Interski flag and "they" wanted it back for the closing ceremony. The flag never did find its way back; imagine that!

Afternoon lectures: Each afternoon, the various countries presented short indoor lectures on a variety of excellent subjects. These lectures were held in a big congress hall and there were generally four or five going on at a time. This was a somewhat chaotic situation. You had to find the session you wanted and see if you could sardine yourself into a room with fifty other people that was designed to seat half that many!

My list of lasting impressions would be incomplete without mention of the Italian Demo Team. They skied in the closing ceremony without pants. That is not a typo. I'm not sure there was any inherent educational value to this; I'll keep pondering that.

While these are certainly not the things that the National Team members will report on in their TPS articles, I thought it might be interesting to let you in on the Interski experience through the eyes of a guest. It was a week I'll never forget, and it reinforced my pride to be a part of the snowsports industry. ♦♦

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE

The PSIA-E Annual Membership meeting will be held at Killington, VT on Sunday, March 30, 2003, during the Spring Rally. The meeting will begin at 8:00 am. Complimentary coffee, tea and pastries will be served. No groups will go on-snow until the meeting is adjourned. Meeting room location will be posted at the Rally Registration area. Please plan to attend.

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EDITOR'S DESK

Guest Editorial

by Howard Harrison
PSIA-E Alpine Level I
Belleayre Mountain Ski Center, NY

"Big Deal" Congratulations

// Congratulations...Congratulations... high fives...thumbs up...how to go." Like wow, just about wherever I went on the mountain I was hearing it loud and clear. In the locker room, at line-ups, in the cafeteria, even from lifties and patrollers. And, it wasn't as if I'd won a Nobel Prize or the mega million lottery. Nope, all I had done was pass the skiing half of my Level II exam.

What was the big deal? After all, four others from my ski school had passed as well....as had roughly 2/3rds of the candidates at my exam session. But, after a little checking, I discovered that all of us who had passed had been hearing the same barrage of congratulations. Wait a minute; maybe this is a bit of a big deal even if you don't yet change the color of your pin.

So, what does this mean? After all, there's no level 1.5 certification. Guests won't come flocking with private requests based on your elevated status. The snow will still fall quiet and white and there will never be enough powder days in the season.

But, while instructor life may not change, it does mean a lot. First of all, it means you're a pretty darn good skier. You have a good sense of balance. You move smoothly and consistently down the hill showing all the right stuff... rhythm, flow, efficiency, power, sensitivity and precision. More to the point, you can do all that on command under the intense scrutiny of an examiner... not the most comfortable trail condition for many of us.

Secondly, it means you've worked your butt off. You showed up for clinics before the lifts were loading. You probably spent agonizing hours practicing center line maneuvers. Worst of all, those clinic hours were applied to train-

ing instead of playing in the untracked fluff that only seemed to arrive the night before the clinic.

Just when you thought your skiing was on the mark, someone showed up with video. What felt pretty good looked a bit back seat. Or, you participated in a pre-exam event and suddenly there were three or four major corrections you discovered you had to incorporate into your skiing. If that red-suited course conductor owned those moves, an examiner like him/her would expect you to have them as well.

So, you went back to the drawing board. You found a mentor. You sought analysis and you wound up with critique, some of which wasn't too easy to take. After all, you wore a jacket, you had a pin and could bash the moguls on a good day. Skiing for fun became a devilish dream. Your priority was the upcoming exam. It would be a little expensive not to pass.

More clinics. More exercises. More critiques. Whatever it took, you were going to conquer it. Maybe new skis. Or boots. Or, that's it.....boot fitting. Get that cant adjustment set so you're centered in the cuff. Check out forward lean. Just like a great sports car won't rev clean past 6000 rpm if it's not in perfect tune, your skiing suffers if your gear isn't properly set up. Heck, it even says that somewhere in the manuals.

Oh, yeah. You read the manuals; particularly the Alpine Exam and Study guide. Sure, your upcoming test was just about skiing. But, sooner or later you were going to ride up the lift with the examiner and you didn't want to sound like a dummy. Then, too, everything was spelled out clearly. All the required tasks were right there. Pretty simple. Almost an open book situation. But, here the "almost" poses a challenge.

Sure, there's plenty of science to skiing but any judgment of the national standards involves a degree of subjectivity. So, you practiced and practiced until you were confident your performance would fall on the pass side of subjectivity. To be smart you looked for the worst surfaces you could find. After all, it's a snap to link perfect wedge turns on a nice, quiet, machine-groomed slope. Somehow, you knew Murphy's Law would have you demonstrating them on a busy, off-fall line hard pack run. Or, in a snow storm, or rain, or whatever.

continued next page



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Guest Editorial, continued

Since the exam programs run regardless of weather, you knew....prepare for the worst!

You were smart, so you did some research. Did you know anybody who had taken the test recently? Anybody who skied the area where you'll be taking the test? Even better, you skied there on a day off to familiarize yourself with the terrain. Every little bit of help on your side works for success.

All this effort would have gone for naught, if you hadn't worked on your mental muscle. You needed to be prepared mentally as well as physically. Naturally, you had to have a storehouse of positive ski imagery. Plus, you had to perfect your attitudes. How do you react when a skier or boarder blasts across your line when you're doing a demo? What if a fellow candidate suggests you're skiing too fast, or too far back? What if you completely blow a demo? (Forget about it, you'll have many more chances to ski well, and maybe the examiner will give you a chance to ski that one over.)

Finally, you've strengthened your communications confidence. You're able to bond with your fellow candidates and offer them realistic feedback. Not the trite, "good job".....or "way to go" which is often heard, non-committedly, and which helps no one. Instead, you offered a discreet question or two to someone you felt needed a little wake up. You let them decide if they wanted to make any corrections.

You built up the skills to talk one-on-one with the examiners. Didn't understand an instruction? It was no problem to request a clarification. Thinking you screwed up on a run, you found the quiet break to ask the examiner. You remembered the phrase, "we're all professionals." Being professional is part of what it takes to pass.

Thinking back, maybe passing the ski exam was a bit of a "big deal". No, not the Nobel Prize. And, a winning lottery ticket would buy a nice new pair of skis. But, for now, all the "congratulations" I heard made for a happy ending to the winter.

Maybe when I earn that new Level II pin, I'll call it a "real big deal". ♦♦

Ed. Note: The above is a guest editorial. Members may feel free to contribute to this column. Please label the article, "guest editorial". Use of such articles for this column is at the discretion of the editorial staff.



administrative update

by Michael J. Mendrick
PSIA-E Executive Director

For most of us in the Eastern Division, the snow and conditions have been terrific so far this season, and that certainly helps improve almost every facet of our operations. At least that is the way it seems when people are excited and smiling about the great skiing and riding this year.

I have enjoyed being a more active participant in many of our programs so far this season. Last season being my first, much of it was a whirlwind of wondering just what the heck was going on! This time around, I feel I understand what it is we are trying to achieve, both for our membership and the public we serve. I continue to be impressed and proud to be associated with the snowsports education professionals I have met and with whom I have developed strong working relationships.

Some of the experiences that have impacted my service to you during the past few months include:

- Helping facilitate the special **Board of Directors meeting** on November 19, made necessary by the resignation of Vice President Joe Fucci and subsequent election of Bob Shostek to fulfill Joe's vacated term. As explained in the Fall 2002 *SnowPro* ("AASI Evolving," Mendrick, page 12) and Early Winter 2003 issue of *SnowPro* ("President's Message," Beerman, page 3) some difficult decisions were made leading up to this season regarding AASI, its leadership, programming and direction. I believe your president, Bill Beerman, along with fellow Board members handled this sensitive situation with class and dedication to our mission statement and the interests of members as a whole.

- Attending and participating in the **Alpine Board of Examiner training sessions** on November 20 at Killington. It was great to feel the enthusiasm and see the smiles that went along with the promising start to a good snow year. With mid-winter conditions on the hill, the only challenge in speaking with Alpine Education Staff members was keeping their attention from wandering outside. And who could blame them after the non-start to the 2001-02 season? I assisted Alpine Education Staff Chair Mick O'Gara and President Beerman in preparing, distributing and tabulating results of a new BOE survey. The survey reaffirmed the pride and rewards that our Education Staff feel as

BOE members, but also illustrated areas we can collectively work on to improve their experiences and help draw "the next generation" of staff members to get involved.

- Helping host the banquet at the **Snowsports Management Seminar at Mount Snow, VT**, during which time Kare Andersen, Einar Aas, Bill Hetrick and Norma Hetrick were officially honored as national life members. It was a fun, funny, touching and inspirational evening. The friendships I saw on display that evening were truly special, and it was an honor to be a part of the evening.

- Networking with members, sponsor representatives and Education Staff at **one of our most successful Snow Pro Jams** ever during the week of December 9 – 13 at Killington. The snow and weather couldn't have been better, the groups were filled with laughter and learning AND we raised nearly \$2,800.00 for the Membership Scholarship fund during our first Silent Auction during the Thursday banquet. A big thank you to sponsor reps (both on-site and off) Brian Brooks and Andre Ringuet (Avalanche Skiwear); Guy Rossi (The Cascades Lodge); Bill Irwin and Hans Dyhrman (Elan/Dolomite); Rodney Putnam and Charlie Adams (Dynastar); Greg Hoffmann and Pete Palmer (Green Mountain Orthotic Lab); Mike Martini and Willie Booker (Nordica); Pete Fickeisen, Mark Hand and Beau Noonan (Ovo Helmets); Deno Dudunake and Jamie Slayton (Rossignol); and Ivar Dahl and Ken Sheldon (Volkl/Tecnica) for helping make it a fun and successful week.

- Presenting an adaptation of NSAA's "A Blueprint for Growth" to members at the **Southern Snowsports Management Seminar in Snowshoe, WV** on December 16. It was rewarding to present my "consumer's eye" viewpoints to help illustrate the valuable information from this recent NSAA initiative. The program was well-received, and there seems to be a lot of support for the concept of PSIA/AASI members proactively helping to be part of the snowsports growth solution.

- Listening and interacting with members during a special **"open forum" at the AASI Eastern Academy** on January 8 at Okemo, VT. There was no lack of passion for snowsports in that room, that much was for certain. Many good ideas, questions and concerns were discussed, and the input received was a great value as AASI Advisor Rob Bevier and I prepared to attend the PSIA/AASI National Congress in early February in Lakewood, CO.

As we chug along towards the completion of this season, I encourage you to join us for the Spring Rally at Killington on March 29-30. It should be a great wrap-up to the ski and ride season and I'd appreciate the opportunity to personally thank many of you for all your efforts and energy. As always, your comments, insight and ideas are welcome at: mmendrick@psia-e.org ♦♦



Region 1 (ME and NH)

Ross Boisvert, Regional Director, reports: It's come at last - at last it's come! This is what winter is all about. What an amazing change from last season, with early snow and cold temperatures. Snow depths are huge this year. Everyone that I have talked to in Maine and New Hampshire has been so busy they can't even get their heads above the water; or in our case, above the snow.

I hope everyone is enjoying this fantastic winter season and has been able to attend at least one of the events on this year's incredible PSIA-E/AASI events schedule. There are many late season events in March and April, as well, so sign up and enjoy.

I would like to remind everyone that elections for Region One take place this year. Please exercise your right to vote when you receive your ballot. Show your support and VOTE! Enjoy your winter!

Region 3 (MA, CT and RI)

David Welch (Regional Representative, report: What a difference a year makes. As the new year came, many of us in the region were enjoying something that was in short supply last year at this time - SNOW! Most areas had good snowmaking weather early and enough of the white stuff supplied by Mother Nature to provide great conditions for the early winter peak holiday periods. The combination of cold temperatures and storms got the season off to a great start.

Speaking of great starts, I'd like to remind our members to start talking with your PSIA-E Area Representative. They would like to here from you with your questions, comments or suggestions on PSIA-E/AASI matters. If your area doesn't have an Area Representative you can volunteer to be your school's rep by contacting your school director. Additional information on this program can be provided by Joan Heaton (jheaton@nac.net). It's a good program. I urge you to use it.

Region 4 (PA, NJ and all states southward)

Angelo Ross, Regional Director, reports: Well, guess who decided to show up this year—winter. What a great start to the season. We had our mid-January thaw a week early in southwestern PA. It was Wednesday, January

22 from 2:00pm until about 7:30pm.

I've had the opportunity to attend a few events this year. The snow was great, the attendance was great, and enthusiasm was definitely at a high. Let's keep our fingers crossed and hope that the middle and

end of the season are the same as the beginning. Please feel free to contact me through the Albany office with any suggestions or concerns. Hope to see you out there.

John Cossaboom, Region 4 Southern Representative reports: The southern states are finally having the kind of winter we always dream about - plenty of cold, clear weather. We are able to make lots of snow and don't have to plow the parking lots!

If members have been looking at the PSIA-E Forum, you know we are studying the possible creation of a PSIA-E Region 7. It would include all of the states south of PA and NJ. Most all comments received so far have been positive regarding this proposal. There is still time to provide input. The final report from the study task force will go to the Executive Committee in late March. If you have not provided your input, go to the Forum now and provide your thoughts, or contact me (John Cossaboom) through the office.

Region 5 (Western NY State)

Mickey Sullivan, Regional Director, reports: The snow in Region 5 has been abundant and everyone that I have talked to in the ski business is extra busy. As the farmers say, "You've got to make hay while the sun is shining." I'm sure that most of you have seen a good hay crop so far this season.

On December 14, there was a Region 5 meeting at Holiday Valley in western New York. There were approximately 25 people in attendance, representing five different ski areas. Ron Kubicki, your Regional Representative, led the meeting and was also a great host. A big THANK YOU to Holiday Valley for hosting the meeting and providing lift ticket discounts to our members. Ron brought those in attendance up-to-date on recent Board issues, including the installation of our new Vice President, Bob Shostek.

There was also a great deal of discussion on the cost of entry into our organization. Many feel that the initial price of joining PSIA-E - the First Tracks Seminar fee plus our organization's dues - is restrictive. A "pricing committee" has been formed, made up of Board members. It is studying possible alternatives that will be aimed at making the cost more attractive for potential new members.

NOTE: Come and join us for the **second Region 5 meeting this season**. This is a great

Professional Ski Instructors of America - Eastern Education Foundation and Professional Ski Instructors of America - Eastern

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Region V

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Representative - Ron Kubicki

Region VI

Director - Alex Sharpe

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Ray Allard

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Nordic Coordinator

Mickey Stone

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Rob Bevier

Race Programs Coordinator

Charlie Knopp

continued next page

AROUND THE REGIONS

Around the Regions, continued

time to find out what your organization is up to along with the opportunity to voice any concerns or suggestions that you have. The next Region 5 meeting will be held at Greek Peak Ski Resort on **Sunday, March 9 at 4pm**. This is the same day as the Jack Heib Memorial Race. So, come and make it a great day. A post-card was also sent out earlier announcing this meeting. We hope to see you there!

I hope that you either have or will be able to take advantage of at least one of the many events or seminars being offered in our region this season.

As a member of the PSIA-E Education Staff I have the opportunity to visit many of our region's ski areas. In my travels I have heard that there is a desire to have a "women-specific" event in our region. I'll certainly send this message to our events scheduling committee. If you have other desires, requests or concerns, please e-mail me at (mickeys@5pillars.com). Have a great season!

Region 6 (Eastern NY State)

Alex Sharpe, Regional Director, reports: This has been a great ski season so far in Region 6, as well as the whole Northeast. Actually, this is the way every winter was when I was a little kid growing up in the Catskills. We skied all winter and into spring, with no snowmaking!

We have a Region 6 Tech Day and Membership Meeting planned for March 17, at Hunter Mountain, NY. The cost for members to attend and have a great day of skiing or snowboarding at Hunter is only \$10.00 per person. This event does not count for credit. This is a fun day to ski or board with your peers and share information and ideas regarding PSIA-E.

If you're going to attend, please call 845-679-2248 by March 10. This is just to give us an idea on how many people to plan on for the Tech Day staffing. You'll pay your \$10.00 when you sign in, not in advance. Sign in will be between 8:00 and 8:30am DO NOT CALL THE ALBANY OFFICE. The office cannot help you with this event.

We're trying to schedule a second membership meeting in the Northern section of Region 6 sometime in February or March. The Albany office will be sending out reminder cards, and, hopefully, the second meeting will be listed there. Please plan to attend. These events are a lot of fun!

Other Regions - Not Reporting:

Region 2 (VT) ◆◆



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REGION 1

Region 1 (ME, NH) Election: Candidate Profiles & Voting Rules

Use the ballot on the inside back page of this newsletter to cast your vote. There are two (2) candidates running in Region 1 for Board seats and no candidates for the Snowsports School Management Committee or Education & Certification Committee. The Board candidate receiving the most votes will be elected Region 1 Director; the other candidate will be elected Region 1 Representative. No write-in votes for any positions will be accepted on the ballot form. Unfilled committee positions will be appointed at the June 21-22, 2003 Board of Directors meeting.

Region 1 Board of Directors: Ross Boisvert – A3 McIntyre Ski Area, NH

Statement of Background & Qualifications:

I am announcing my candidacy for a second term on the Board of Directors of PSIA-E. I have great passion for snowsports and a desire to serve our organization and membership. In addition to my experience as a ski instructor since 1984, I have spent the past 14 years as the ski school director as well as the manager of the retail and rental shop at McIntyre Ski Area. I have been serving on the Snowsports School Management Committee of PSIA-E (member at-large) for the past three years, and I am currently in my second year term on the Small Ski Areas committee of NSAA. I am a certified Ski Patroller and a member of the National Ski Patrol. I have served for the past year as the Region 1 Director for PSIA-E.

Statement of Philosophy & Direction:

Over the past year on the Board of Directors I have gained an even greater respect for the education staff of PSIA-E/AASI and the entire Board of Directors, and I will continue to support the progress and development of the organization's education programs. I also had the great opportunity to meet many fantastic people in Region 1 with such passion for snowsports as I have. If elected to a second term, I will work toward making educational, first tracks and certification events more accessible and affordable to members and new instructors. Additionally, I will work toward developing and maintaining relationships between all snowsports areas, especially between large and small ski areas, to sustain growth and training. I will continue to try to implement a committee or subcommittee on small ski areas, work toward addressing the needs of part-time instructors with increased weekend and night events and increase benefits for our membership. I will also work toward implementing a junior educational membership program to create new members at a younger age, as we need to build our organization's future and capture young snowsports participant's enthusiasm now. If elected, I will support the development and accessibility of snowsports for years to come, with a special focus on children's programs. They are our future, and we are theirs! With your support, your voice will be heard.

Important Note on Open Positions: Region 2 Board Representative, Region 2 Education & Certification Committee Representative, Region 1 Snowsports School Management Committee Representative and Region 1 Education & Certification Committee Representative are currently open positions, with no applying candidates. The PSIA-E Board of Directors will approve the appointment of these unfilled positions at their June 21-22, 2003 meeting. If you are interested in being considered as a designate for an open position, please send written notification to the attention of Michael Mendrick, Executive Director, at the PSIA-E office as soon as possible.

Region 1 Board of Directors: Dutch Karnan – A3, D3 (Employee) Waterville Valley, NH

Statement of Background & Qualifications:

I would like to announce my candidacy for a new term on the Board of Directors. My snowsports experience covers 28 years in three PSIA divisions—Rocky Mountain, Intermountain and the Eastern Division. During that time, I have served as a line-up instructor, supervisor, tech director, ski school director and examiner.

Statement of Philosophy & Direction:

Over the past seven years, I have enjoyed serving on very active and forward-thinking Boards which have transformed the certification process, expanded educational opportunities for members, and taken a proactive role in industry growth. In the upcoming term, I hope to play a role in the continuing growth of PSIA's largest division.

REGION 2

Region 2 (VT) Election: Candidate Profiles & Voting Rules

Use the ballot on the inside back page of this newsletter to cast your vote. There is one (1) Board candidate running for two (2) Board seats in Region 2, and one (1) candidate running for the Snowsports School Management Committee. There are no candidates running for the Education & Certification Committee. Each candidate will be elected by receipt of one vote. No write-in votes for any positions will be accepted on the ballot form. Unfilled committee positions will be appointed at the June 21-22, 2003 Board of Directors meeting.

Region 2 Board of Directors: Marty Harrison – A3 Okemo Mountain, VT

Statement of Background & Qualifications:

For twenty years, I was the Learning Center Director at Okemo Mountain Resort, overseeing the ski, snowboard and children's schools. I am currently retired but plan to work part-time at Okemo in a variety of capacities, including teaching this winter. I have also served on the PSIA-E/AASI Board of Directors and have been a member of the Executive Committee. I have participated in the last two Strategic Planning sessions, helping to chart the future course of our organization. In 1986, I started the PSIA-E Children's Committee, serving as its chairperson for seven years. I also served as the first chairperson of the PSIA National Children's Committee.

Statement of Philosophy & Direction:

I am running for another term on the Board of Directors because I believe that my experience in many aspects of the snowsports industry gives me the understanding and wisdom to help guide the organization during these times of change. As a woman who has made a career in our industry, I feel that I have a good perspective on many of the issues that we face as an organization. I would appreciate your vote.

REGION 2, CONTINUED

*Region 2 Snowsports School Management Committee Rep:
Sherman White – A3
Smuggler's Notch, VT*

Statement of Background & Qualifications:

- Level 3 Alpine Certified since 1973.
- Former Eastern and National Board member.
- Former President of PSIA-E.
- Current PSIA Member School Management Chair and Steering Committee member.



A Challenge to the Experienced Instructor

*by Einar Aas
PSIA-E Snowsports School Management
Committee Chair*

I am proposing a challenge to all experienced instructors, especially those of you who have spent a lot of time dealing with the first-time skier or snowboarder; and who have strong opinions and knowledge on how we should treat our first-timers - being it adults or children, skiers or snowboarders.

The area operators, through their organization, NSAA, have for the last two years been promoting the Growth Model. This is an initiative to not only persuade people to try skiing or snowboarding, but, more importantly, eventually make it their sport and increase our customer base.

It is obvious to me that we, the snowsports schools, are in the best position to influence the return of our first-time guests, and to help decrease the astonishing figure claiming that 85% of those who try our sport for the first time do not come back. Since 90% of first timers rent equipment, and 63% take lessons, we have a great opportunity in reaching most of the people at their first try at the sport.

So, I am asking all of you who feel you have something to contribute, to help in putting together this "First-Timers Experience Manual".

This writer obviously has some opinions himself, gathered from extensive "R & D" (Ripoff & Duplicate) from friends and colleagues at other areas. In addition, after listening to the Roundtable discussions at the Management Seminar this fall, it was obvious that many of you are using very creative and unorthodox methods to help the first-timer to enjoy that first experience in trying the sport. Hopefully, this will result in motivating them to try it again and eventually make it their sport.

Several schools already have a very specific 2-3 page "manual" dealing only with the very first lesson, starting at the rental shop. I don't

- Adult Program Director for past 15 years at Smuggler's Notch Resort in Vermont.
- Current at-large member of the Eastern Snowsports School Management Committee, and former committee chair.
- Divisional Clinic Leader in PSIA-E.

Statement of Philosophy & Direction:

The partnership between PSIA-E and its member schools is critical to the success of our members. The programs and policies of the organization need to match the needs and desires both of our members and the snowsports schools, which requires effective and frequent communication. I've been involved in building the partnership for a number of years, and look forward to continuing to do so in the future. My experience and background will help with this task.

think that a version of this kind of "manual" exists in any PSIA/AASI literature, and, in my opinion, this can only be properly assembled by input from experienced instructors who enjoy dealing with our first-time guests, and have experience doing it year after year.

The "stepping stones" for this "manual" must start before the skis or boards are put on the snow - if possible, at the rental shop. Our first task as an instructor is often having to deal with an irate and frustrated customer who has walked a long distance from the car to the lodge area, stood in a long line to purchase their "experience", spent an hour in a cramped and smelly rental shop, and now it is our turn in the school. What do we do with this person, how can we convince them that they are going to have fun, deal with their fear, teach them to ski or snowboard, stay in touch with them during their first day, and convince them to come back? I think you people have the answers, evident from the discussions at the management seminar and material given to me from many schools.

So, I am asking you to share your expertise with all of us, so we can all do a marvelous and professional job in getting others to enjoy what we ourselves have enjoyed for so many years.

If you would like to participate, please e-mail your thoughts and opinions to (einar@bcn.net), and I will in return share it with all of you.

If we can come up with a simple, easy to follow, cleverly assembled "First-Timers Experience Manual", NSAA will realize that we are their most important piece in their Growth Model. ♦♦

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Update on the PSIA-E/AASI Snowsports Growth Project at Hunter Mountain

by Ray Allard

Project Director

PSIA-E National Board Representative

PSIA/AASI Communications VP

NSAA's initiative to convert more beginning skiers and riders into lifetime participants is meant to be an ongoing, long-term program. This season's test project focuses on a "Cook-book" containing ten recommended strategies, many of which appear fairly basic, but few of which are being fully implemented at a majority of areas. Briefly, they are:

1) **Provide information**, by creating web pages *dedicated to beginners* that provide information and answers to typical questions. The design and "flow" of these pages should be well thought out.

2) **Arrival at the resort**: provide *visible*, proper signage and ensure that all resort staff who will encounter beginners are knowledgeable about guiding them to the right place, and answering their questions.



3) **Rental shop**: major areas to address are developing strategies to deal with crowding and wait times at peak capacity, and assisting beginners in getting a *proper boot fit*.

4) **Size of group lessons**: maximum should be 6-8 at all times, less for snowboard and kids.

5) **Grouping by athleticism and goals**, as well as student's age and type of equipment.

6) **Roving instructor** in beginner area to help out those not taking a lesson, plus performing other duties.

7) **Lesson closure** should include *individualized* feedback to each student, a "progress" card, and discounted coupon for the next visit.

8) **Staffing with senior instructors**, by rotating them through beginner and children's lessons.

9) **Post-lesson follow-up**: collect contact information and communicate with a thank-you, invitations, and incentives.

10) **Overall staff training** should foster a culture that values beginners, and has *all* departments working together as a team.

Early into this project, I have been struck by the differences among areas in their approaches to serving beginners; not only relative to the above strategies, but within their basic structures. Half a dozen years into the short shaped, beginner ski era, most areas still do not utilize them, despite their proven track record in allowing people to learn faster, easier and better, while having more fun. Even fewer

areas are utilizing learning boards, which provide the same benefits. The concept of Learning Centers (at least for children, if not all students) which can be realized as small set-aside spaces, as well as multi-million dollar structures, is just starting to be more widely embraced. Teaching terrain and facilities cover a broad spectrum. Hopefully, one result of this project will be to provide areas with qualitative proof that specific outlays of time, effort or cash will result in a positive pay back.

Beyond the NSAA "official" strategies, the Snowsports Growth Project is conducting research in the following areas:

- On-demand vs. 10-12-2 beginner lessons
- Length/structure/pricing of lessons
- Instructor side of the instructor/student equation, including training and deployment
- Tuning/maintenance of rental equipment
- Design of beginner boots
- Ski length/brand differences
- Direct parallel vs. small wedge approach
- Various beginner "stepping stone" progressions
- Snowboard or Children-specific issues
- Conducting and analyzing consumer surveys

I'll be visiting a number of areas this season, specifically to observe and share information on beginner issues. We are working on creating a "model" facility at Hunter from which others can learn and get ideas. The development of training programs and seminars, statistical and educational materials, plus consulting services, are all projected outcomes of our activities.

Representatives from test sites - Wachusett, Holiday Valley, Hunter Mt., and the Growth Project - participated as panelists in a session on growing the sport during the NSAA Winter Confer-

ence and Trade Show at Mt. Snow on Jan. 13-14. Our Project and other test sites will be involved in the National NSAA Conference to be held late next spring in San Diego, CA.

Watch next issue of *SnowPro* for further news on the Growth Project and reports on recent PSIA/AASI meetings and on Interski. ♦♦



Editor's Note: The Early Winter SnowPro contained an article describing the Growth Project at Hunter Mt., and announcing PSIA-E's support of the Project. This article is a project progress report.

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THE ZIPPER LINE

straight talk from the association

The question, "What is Happening in Our Terrain Parks?" has become such a popular question that the PSIA-E Education Committee decided to gather information that would help to answer that question. It was thought that the best way to gather "grass roots" information was to seek out the help of the Reps. of the PSIA-E Area Rep. Program. Under the leadership of Joan Heaton, PSIA-E Area Rep. Program Coordinator, the question was sent out to all of the Area Reps. The response was so great that it was decided to present a series of articles about the subject. This is the first article in that series.

Teaching For Freestyle Terrain

by Ron Dean

Region 2 Rep on the PSIA-E
Alpine Education & Certification
Committee
Okemo Mountain Resort, VT

Assisted by the following PSIA-E Area
Representatives:

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Greg Culver, Kissing Bridge
Carl Brown, Villa Roma
Dave Beckwith, Mt. Southington
Justin Foster, Snow Ridge
Ned Crossley, Windham
Peter Howard, Sugarloaf

Edited by:

Joan Heaton, Co-Chair, PSIA-E Alpine
Education
& Certification Committee

It started first with snowboarders, and then skiers saw how much fun it could be and they joined in. Let me tell you friends, Freestyle Terrain is here to stay! Most ski areas have some terrain that could qualify as "freestyle", whether they have moguls, half pipes, or terrain parks. If they don't have such terrain, well, I'll just bet that they will be considering it very

soon, because plain and simple, freestyle is fun and it is bringing more and more riders and sliders into our sport. Bringing more people into our sport not only adds to the bottom line of our snowsports areas, but it brings more students to our learning centers who are looking for our help. We need

to be able to be there for them.

That said, the ultimate goal is to find ways to keep the public happy while teaching them how to perform safely and with more skill in the Terrain Parks. Let's start with the "safely" part. Safety in Freestyle Terrain is a huge issue with the National Ski Area Association. They have come out with a responsibility code for ski areas to follow, starting with who will be in charge of the daily logs kept on each terrain area. This responsibility code stresses that while this terrain is for the public's enjoyment, it offers adventure, challenge, and fun; and, like all other skiing and riding, it exposes them to the risk of serious injury. NSAA has developed some new icons for warning signs as well as a Freestyle Terrain Responsibility Code. This code is listed below:

Your Responsibility Code for Freestyle Terrain

1. Freestyle Terrain contains man-made and natural terrain variations.
2. Freestyle Terrain changes constantly due to weather and use.
3. Inspect Freestyle Terrain before using and throughout the day.
4. In jumping and using this terrain, you assume the risk of serious injury.
5. Be courteous and respect others.
6. One user on a terrain feature at a time.
7. Never jump blindly - use a spotter when necessary. Look Before You Leap!
8. It is your responsibility to control your body on the ground and in the air.
9. Always clear the landing area quickly.
10. Always ride or ski in control and within your ability.

Our Responsibility

As instructors, it is our responsibility to make sure that our students are "absolutely ready" before they enter this terrain. Many of our PSIA-E Area Representatives stressed the fact that knowing the students' ability levels is an "absolute must" before taking students into the Terrain Park. As a result of seeing the extreme ski movies, students want to try right away for "Big Air" without concern for prior preparation of skills and knowledge. They do not realize that it takes years of work and training to be able to do these maneuvers. They want to do it themselves, and they want to do it NOW! The key to teaching in Freestyle Terrain is to use good judgement, and to make

sure that the students have the tactics to fit their goals and skill levels. We want our students to be successful. So, our goal is to show them how to have fun and to do it safely as well as skillfully.

Common sense is the best guideline to follow. Since you would not take students to unsuitable terrain to teach a beginner lesson, so you would not do it with a Freestyle Terrain lesson either. When we see our students doing very well on appropriate groomed terrain, then it is time to start honing these same skills for the Park and Pipe. I guarantee that students who consider groomed terrain easy will find that the Freestyle Terrain will immediately have their absolute and undivided attention. It is understandable that their movement patterns and skill levels on groomed slopes can easily break down when they get to the Park. However, if we have done our job of teaching the skills before entering the Park, we will be able to fulfill the goals that we established with our students at the beginning of the lesson.

Face the Fear and Find the Fun

Historically, our Terrain Parks and Half Pipes have been just a "passing" experience for our guests. However, the year requiring more specifics is upon us. Where do we start? Well, we begin with ourselves. Many newer instructors, as well as more "seasoned" instructors, hesitate to even venture into the Parks. So, let's "Face the Fear and Find the Fun." Start by working on the appropriate skills and movement patterns that you will need for yourself. Find clinics that will help prepare you. "Buddy up" with someone who is on or about the same ability level as you are and work together. Your progressions will be similar to the lessons that you will teach your students. Here are some ideas that some of our Area Reps e-mailed to us:

1. Go "low and slow" at first. Build experience, skills, and confidence. First, work on the skills on groomed terrain and then build up to terrain that is more challenging. Many mountains have "low end" Freestyle Terrain for learning skills before jumping into the harder stuff. Know your own ability level and use it as the strength to build on. After all, you are only doing what you teach your own students every day. If you start with some small bumps or jumps, you will be dealing with pressure control issues and finding your own fore and aft balance and stance. The same will apply to the other skills of rotary and edging and these same concepts apply to our students as well.

2. An Area Rep. sent us his "Four Step Plan," that he will write more about in a subsequent article in this series. It applies just as well to instructors as it does to our students.

The Four Step Plan

1) Introduce two or three movements that may be required for that particular feature.

2) Teach these movements on an easy groomed slope.

3) Apply and integrate these new movements to the goal on the easiest possible terrain.

4) Then, and only then, take it to the appropriate terrain and practice, practice, practice!

3. Another tip we received from an Area Rep. was to really work on these movements yourself. Gain mastery so that when you have to teach these movements, you will be giving an accurate picture for your students to follow. Have your area clinician observe and critique your technique to be sure that you are on the right page before you go out with students in the Terrain Park.

Affecting a Positive Change

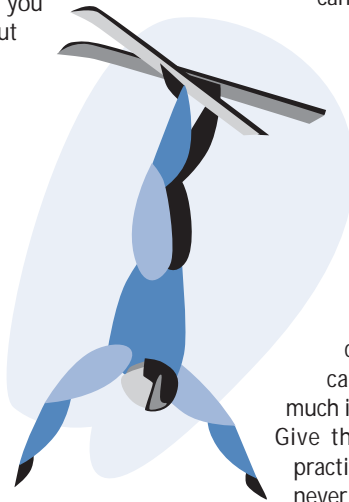
Now that you have done the clinics and the practice, you may feel that it is time to take your own groups into the Park! Be sure you know the skill levels of your students, as well as where the class interest lies. There may be divergent interests that could pull the class in different directions. Make sure that you tell them that many skill developments apply to many features in the parks. Let's face it, balance, speed control, and turning are all very important issues here. If you use your common sense and make sure your students understand their own ability levels, you will have fewer falls and more fun.

After working on their skills on easy groomed terrain, the first run through the park should be an exploratory run. During this time, explain the different features to your students and stress the safety issues involved in being in the Park. Remember that many people have never been in a terrain area, and a thorough introduction to the Park may very well take care of the fears of the unknown. Hopefully, after one visit through the park, the students may just wonder why they felt fearful in the first place. Be positive and reinforce the reasons why you taught them the skills on easier terrain. It is also important to explain how the features of the terrain park can change from run to run due to weather, use, and wear. What was easy one run might be quite different and more challenging the next.

This is also the time to start emphasizing courtesy. Without a strong commitment to courtesy, the Park can really become an unsafe place to be. Have your students observe how others use (or abuse) courtesy, and how it affects the general conduct of the Park. Cooperation among the participants in the Park re-

quires the "give and take" of all riders and skiers. According to our Area Reps, here are some specifics to emphasize:

- Be sure ALL jumps are clear before you even think of starting. Check to be sure the feature is safe, not only at the beginning, but at the end as well.
- Give a signal that will let others know that you are starting toward a feature or that you are dropping into a half pipe.
- When you fall, make sure you signal others. Make every effort to get to a safe place quickly.
- Remember that you are setting an example for your class, and also for everyone else in the park at that time. Courtesy can be contagious!



Another idea we received from an Area Rep was to keep the class moving! If you use the "K.I.S.S." principle, you cannot go wrong. Remember, you are trying to find the fun, so be careful to not get caught up in giving too much instruction at one time. Give the students plenty of practice on the hill – they will never forget that you helped them get better. Also, be sure

to address all the different learning styles and integrate them into your lesson with the appropriate teaching styles. Not every student learns in the same way, or responds to the same teaching style.

Conclusions

I could not end this article without thanking all the wonderful PSIA-E Area Representatives who e-mailed us their ideas and opinions. There is no doubt in my mind that the PSIA-E Area Rep. Program is truly awesome. If you or your fellow instructors have any ideas for future education articles, please find out which member of your learning center is your Area Rep., and ask him/her for direction in submitting those articles. This is a wonderful way to get all of our members at the "grass roots level" to share with others in PSIA-E who are working on similar projects. There is just no need for all of us to re-invent the wheel. Our organization is there for all of us and the more members that are involved, the better and stronger our organization will be. ♦♦

This is the second article in the series, "What is Happening in Our Terrain Parks?" Under the leadership of Joan Heaton, PSIA-E Area Rep. Program Coordinator, five questions were asked of the Area Reps. The following article is the response received from Kathy Brennan, PSIA-E Area Rep. for Loon Mountain, using input from Jeb Boyd, Snowsports Director, and Jay Scambio, Park Coordinator.

Terrain Park Guidelines/ Instruction Feedback

from Loon Mountain, NH for the PSIA-E Alpine Education/ Certification Committee

Objective: Gather helpful information from coaches in order to prepare an article for the "SnowPro", or eventually a handbook that provides coaches with guidelines or instruction for teaching in Terrain Parks.

Questions:

1. Just How Does a Coach Teach in the Terrain Park?

Like any ski or snowboard lesson, coaches teaching in the Terrain Park are able to utilize the basic Teaching Model components to help effectively to: introduce the lesson, assess the student, determine goals and plan objectives, present and share information, provide practice, check for understanding, and summarize the lesson.

In addition to these teaching basics, Jay Scambio, the Park Coordinator at Loon Mountain, points out that there are some special safety and class handling considerations for teaching in the Terrain Park.

1) Before using park elements, they must be "scouted out" by the coach and the students. The first run is an excellent opportunity to do this. It is a chance for the coach to assess the students' abilities. It is also an opportunity for the coach to instruct the students on what they should be looking for as they "scout out" an element.

2) All students in the class should be using the same type of snowsports equipment for the lesson to be effective.

3) Traditionally, terrain parks are high traffic areas that do not offer enough beginner elements. This environment creates class management challenges. Possible solutions include:

a. Using two coaches with a class. One coach is at the top of an element with the class.

continued next page

THE ZIPPER LINE

continued from previous page

They are responsible for coordinating how the class uses the element in concert with the public. The second coach is at the landing area to ensure it is safe and to provide feedback to the students.

b. Fencing off a single element for the class to use during the lesson period.

c. Providing a separate beginner terrain park that is not likely to attract the more experienced skiers and boarders. Not only does this area allow the coach to focus on learning, because it is a less intimidating environment; but it also provides an excellent opportunity for the coach to introduce and enforce the rules and etiquette for using any terrain park.

d. Creating mini or pocket parks throughout the resort. The pocket parks spread terrain park elements around the mountain. They are typically placed in out-of-the-way locations, often taking advantage of terrain that is under utilized. These small parks offer an ideal opportunity for coaches to introduce basic terrain park maneuvers and elements to their standard lessons. This, in turn, may help to sell terrain park lessons. In addition, coaches may use these pockets to present basic park safety and etiquette guidelines to all of their students. Dissemination of this information will promote safe and respectful use of all terrain parks. Finally, these pocket parks may be easily closed off for a specific lesson, if necessary.

4) All snowsports areas should require release of liability from those students taking terrain park lessons.

2. What Does He/She Teach? How?

Terrain park lessons may involve teaching students to use some of the park's elements including the pipe, rails, jumps and more. Alternatively, the park lesson may involve improving a student's basic skiing or boarding skills so they are better able to perform on the various elements.

The goal for the terrain park, like any lesson, is determined based upon the goals of the class and their ability level. Ideally, a coach is able to identify a single objective for the entire class. The lesson becomes much more complicated when students have individual/unique goals to learn specific maneuvers or terrain park elements, like jumps, pipes, rails or more. Unfortunately, according to Jay, it is not uncommon, particularly at the higher levels, for students' goals to vary dramatically. It is typical for a student to want to learn new tricks because they already have mastered others. If there is a disparity among the students' goals it is a challenge to manage the class to meet each student's expectations. In an ideal situation, these students should be split into different groups.

Regardless of the goals for the class, each lesson must include safety, fun, and learning. For example, when teaching a jump, the coach is not just teaching the student how to perform the maneuver. He/She is also teaching the etiquette for the jump and how to perform the jump safely. This includes, but is not limited to: scouting out the take-off and landing, highlighting where they are going to go after they land; and, pointing out the various obstacles, including trees, ice, traffic, the next jump, and more.

3. Is There Any Kind of Progression? Exercises?

Progressions aid any kind of learning. For example, starting spins on flat ground, without the board, allows the coach to introduce all of the basic mechanics that will be utilized when the maneuver is performed later in the progression.

A sample progression for learning to spin includes:

a. Spin with no board on flat ground (180-360-540-720-etc.).

b. Strap on the board, but still attempt spins on flat ground.

c. Move to an easy slope and do spins on the ground.

d. Progressively move from smaller to bigger jumps, working on spins.

4. Who is in Charge? What Rules are Asked to be Followed?

During the lesson the coach/instructor is obviously in charge. For the general public the Park Coordinator and crew ensure the rules are being followed. See the response to question #5 for more information about their responsibilities.

Jay and the other Terrain Park coaches at Loon always check out the park before they hit it with their lessons. Also, they remind their students that they need to listen to their coach, that safety is first and foremost, and that they must respect themselves and the others around them.

Burton's Smart Style has come up with three safety messages that sum it all up.

1) Look Before You Leap.

- Scope around the jumps first, not over them.

- Know your landings are clear, and clear yourself out of the landing area.

2) Easy Style It.

- Start small and work your way up. (Inverted aerials not recommended.)

3) Respect Gets Respect.

- From the lift line through the park.

The following is a partial list of the Terrain Park Etiquette from Loon's Serious Fun Guide.

1) When skiing or riding through a terrain park, stay clear of the paths to and from each element.

2) When crossing in front of an element, look uphill for skiers or riders approaching the element.

3) Always inspect the elements in the park before you use them.

4) When approaching an element, pause and wait your turn. Allow the skiers/riders ahead of you enough time to clear out of the way.

5) Use a spotter before you jump to be sure that the landing is clear.

6) Always stay clear of the landing area. You might be blind to those approaching.

7) When spectating, be smart about where you stand.

8) Obey the leash law! Always use a retention device, especially when hiking.

9) Most importantly, think!

5. Just How Are We Handling What Goes On in the Terrain Park?

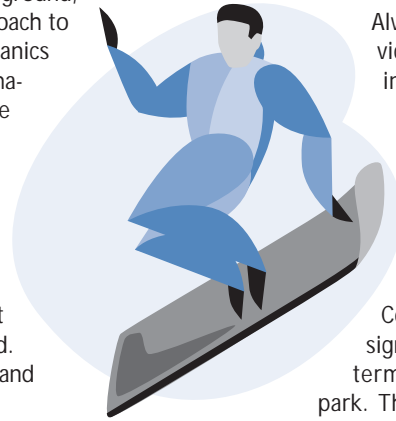
At Loon, the Park Coordinator and Park Designer work together to determine the layout of the park. They are supported by a staff of skiers and boarders who ride through the park in order to enforce the park's rules and help to maintain the park's elements throughout the day. Like ambassadors, this staff has different names at different mountains: Park Rangers, Park Patrol, Park Crew, and others. Typically, these mountain employees are college-age skiers and boarders that enjoy spending time in the park.

Summary

When approaching a terrain park lesson the Core Concepts and Teaching Model remain the foundation for any successful lesson. While every student wants a lesson where they learn something, they also want to be challenged and have a good time. For the typical terrain park student though, this isn't enough... the lesson must be "Slammin'" to keep them hungering for more!

At Loon we are committed to creating just that experience for our guests. Our signature park is over 3,500 ft. in length and spreads out over 5 acres. This year it includes our massive Superpipe, stretching over 400 ft., encompassed by a 10-speaker outdoor system!

We recognize that our terrain park users are a key component to the success of our resort. We are actively developing terrain and supporting programs specifically designed to attract and retain these customers at our mountain. ♦♦



Bodies in Motion Stay in Motion

by Dave Wisniewski
PSIA-E Alpine Development Team
Ski Liberty, PA

When our body becomes static during participation in dynamic activities, we often lose the ability to stay in balance. In the sport of Alpine skiing we can often enhance our ability to stay in balance by creating movement patterns that complement the motion of our feet and skis. Have you ever noticed how much easier it is to stay balanced on a bike that is even slightly moving, than it is to stay upright on the same bike standing perfectly still? Ever find yourself crossing over a small stream by walking across a fallen tree or log. Give it a test! Most people feel a greater sense of stability with some degree of consistent forward movement than attempting to stop and start after each step. Take a look at most all top-notch athletes performing at their best. From figure skaters to hockey players, and from gymnasts to bronco busting rodeo cowboys, flowing body movements are key to achieving dynamic balance.

Why, then, do we see so many first-time ski lessons address the challenge of balance on two slippery planks by having our guests "stand still" and feel their balance point, or rock back and forth until they "stop" in the middle to feel in balance? How often have we heard a new skier being told to simply keep the shins against the tongue of the boot and let the skis go straight down the hill? That perfect moment of static balance quickly evaporates unless the new skier has some awareness of the need to keep the body moving at the same speed and in the same direction as the equipment attached to the feet. The two tasks mentioned above are valuable in helping the student explore the extremes of fore and aft movements to find that happy medium, and to experience the proper shin-to-boot cuff pressure of a good stance.

Why "STOP" there?

The concept of body motion and flow is often not addressed, nor even demonstrated in early-stage lessons. This omission from the learning experience can especially haunt the skier through the later stages of development. The complex blending of fundamental movements at mid and upper skiing levels can be significantly retarded without precise dynamic balance. The following are a few ways to introduce our new guests to the sensations of dynamic balance from the moment they first step on the snow in their ski boots: While the students are on the flats in their boots, but

with skis off, have them practice some movement drills to encourage the feeling of the body keeping up with the movement of the feet. Demonstrate a straight-line walk in the boots. Guide the group to focus on the relative upright stance throughout the walk. Have them all give it a try.

Next, have them do a medium-pace jog in their boots. Ask the students what was different about their stance. Note that in the jog, the upper body had to achieve more forward action to keep up with the feet and allow the body to stay in balance.

With a more athletic group, have them go to a full-out run to get a more extreme example. It may be helpful to some students to observe the body movements of others in the group doing the exercise. There are likely to be a few folks who will learn more by watching as opposed to feeling.

Move the group to a part of the beginner area with a short, moderately steep slope (the slope should have enough pitch for the students to find it tough to walk straight up the hill on their skis with out going into an herringbone step). Demonstrate walking up the slope in your boots, following the path of a series of short radius turns. Ask the group to try walking uphill over the same serpentine path. Encourage them to feel the pressure cre-

ated between the shin and the cuff of the boot on a diagonal 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock position. Now, have everyone walk back down the hill following the same tracks. Ask them where they felt the pressure between the cuff and lower leg (most will feel the pressure between the calf and the back cuff of the boot).

Ask the group to again walk up the hill, and focus on the shin-to-cuff pressure. Now, suggest they go back down the hill and try to get the "uphill pressure" feeling while going downhill. Have your students do the same downhill path in a slight jog, with a movement to allow the body to keep up with the feet.

This relatively simple drill can help the soon-to-be skiers feel what it takes to keep the body in balance while moving downhill. It will introduce many in the group to moving in the diagonal plane; an experience that they may rarely encounter in their day-to-day activities.

The sensations created by practicing these fundamental efficient movement patterns can be archived and accessed at more advanced levels of skiing as well.

"The Athletic Stance" is a constantly changing place where the skier is in balance. From that place, skiers can move where they want. They can access the movements to adjust to most situations they encounter moving down the hill. ♦♦

In Memoriam

Wesley Marco, 87, of Bath, ME, passed away on December 22, 2002. Wes was an Alpine Level III Lifetime Member of PSIA-E. He became a member in 1962. Tom Reynolds comments regarding Wes: "He was a noted teaching professional and coach. He began his professional teaching career in the Hannes Schneider Ski School in North Conway, NH. Wes moved on to Pleasant Mt., ME, where he served as the first teaching pro and ski school director. He later moved to Titcomb Mt. in Farmington, ME, where he served as ski school director and race coach for over 40 years. He started the learn-to-ski program for the Farmington youth, trained instructors, directed the ski school and was head racing coach for the junior race program. At one time in the mid-1950s, Wes had seven athletes on the Junior National Team. Many of Wes's athletes went on to ski in Division I college programs. Wes will be missed by his family, friends and the skiing community."

Jerry Warlop, 59, of North Smithfield, RI, was killed on December 4, 2002, by a passing motorist while rescuing a passenger from a burning car on a highway. Jerry was an Alpine Level I Member of PSIA-E, having become a member in 1992. He had taught at Mohawk Mt. Learning Center and Cannon Mt.

PSIA-E extends its heartfelt sympathies to friends and families of our passing members.



Are You Giving Them the ABCs?

by Joshua Dee
AASI Level II
Mt. Snow, VT

Swing that foot around, lead with your eyes, push, lift, point your hands where you want to go, cut your edges in, put all your weight on the front foot, etc. Aren't these what sometimes we hear on the learning hill from other pros or the general public teaching their friends? These tips can many times be confusing and conflicting. This begs the question, "What constitutes the basic snowboard turn?" If we boil down all the fluff, are there certain building blocks that remain? As pros, isn't this what we need when we are constructing an agenda for our students? If the ABCs are implemented, then our artistry as teachers will kick in.

The basic skidded turn consists of three elements. The first is the relationship of rider and board. The second and third are the essential movements: body moving into the turn and steering. Let's briefly examine these three fundamentals in a chronological sequence that one can utilize with their students.

Rider-board relationship really means what feels natural and comfortable, because it's for the whole day. On the flats can we get our clients to be themselves on the board? A normal relaxed stance with joints loose and slightly flexed (imagine getting out of a hot tub, or relaxing at "happy hours"), weight equally distributed on both feet, and the hips and shoulders facing the feet. Try this first and progress to a gentle straight run. Use the neck to look where you are going. Play with this on various pitches at the bottom of the bunny slope, with different speeds according to their comfort zones.

Now, they are ready for the first of the two essential movements - the body (core, CM, trunk) moving into the turn. Starting again on the flats, can they balance on their heels and toes? Now, can a transition be made between the two? Explore different

ways to: balance and stand over each edge (What's the most efficient?)...to move the shoulders and head or the hips (What does one feel in the various lower joints as this movement occurs?). On a straight run, starting with their balance point in the middle, have them gradually shift it to the heelside (or toeside). Is the board still going in a straight line? This is a time of fertile discovery by our students. Let them experiment and acquire understanding of how this movement can affect them and the board. Depending on your area's learning slope, this first movement can be explored thoroughly to include moving the core from the heelside to toeside, and visa versa.

Learn what variations in the intensity of this move will do - be subtle or be vigorous. What about speed variations or the rate of execution? Perform it very slowly or do it quickly.

Our students are now turning and are ready for the second essential movement - steering. One may ask why we need to do this when we have our clients already turning? Consider the illustration of the bicycle: you might be seated on it properly and are able to negotiate some turns by tipping from one side to another, but are you truly being versatile and accomplished without steering the front wheel? Likewise in snowboarding, steering will give our clients the added panache needed to progress even further. The simplest steering movement is that of twisting the nose of the board. This releases the old edge, allowing the board to begin a new arc. It also helps engage the new edge, however subtle, for this beginning stage. Rossignol and others make special learning decks that twist effortlessly. Having our students perform this is a simple opening and closing of the ankle. Garlands are a great way of practice this move. Com-

bine this with the first movement of the core and your students will be cutting turns like fighter planes. For little kids this small bone move can be problematic. A gross steering movement such as scissoring both legs via the hip joints could be more effective for them.

If you construct a house with a poor foundation there will be continuing problems throughout the building process. Likewise in snowboarding let's get our students on the right track with the ABCs.

- A - Athletic aligned stance
- B - Body moves into the turn
- C - Control steering

Now, the sky's the limit. Pretty soon you will be giving them "D"- Drive the board thru the turn, or jump to the XYZs: X-treme, Y go small?, and Zoom! ♦♦



Upcoming AASI Events

Resort Trainers Program - Part 3

Location: Okemo, VT
Date: March 13-14, 2003

AASI Open - Pipe & Park

Location: Okemo, VT
Date: March 17-18, 2003

Girls Rule

Location: Jay Peak, VT
Date: March 20-21, 2003

Spring Rally

Location: Killington, VT
Date: March 29-30, 2003

Level II and III Exams at Sunday River

Date: April 7-9, 2003
Deadline: March 17, 2003

Rider Rally 2003

Location: Breckenridge, CO
Date: April 13-17, 2003
Cost: \$280 or \$75 per day
Deadline: March 15, 2003
Information: Please contact Eric Sheckleton at esheckleton@hotmail.com for more information.

Would you like to have an AASI event at your home mountain next season? Bid sheets will be sent to all member schools in March so let your Director know now!

ADAPTIVE AIR TIME



adaptive news

The Adaptive Level I Event - What is it?

by Gwen Allard
PSIA-E Adaptive Coordinator

Many people seem to be requesting information relative to the process and procedure of the Adaptive Level I exam. Hopefully, the following information will eliminate any misinformation or incorrect concepts you may have. It may even entice you to participate in an Adaptive Level I event.

First, if you are not already a member you may become a member of PSIA-E by attending this event, successfully passing the exam evaluation, and paying the PSIA-E/PSIA dues. This is a three-day event. Each day you will ski with a different examiner. Each examiner will present material within your category.

You will work on your personal skiing skills, review your teaching skills, and explore and review the medical, disability and specialized equipment of your chosen category. By the third day, you may well be saturated with information. This is the clinic part.

With that same examiner each day you will be evaluated on your skiing skills, your teaching abilities, and your medical, disability and specialized equipment knowledge in your chosen category. This is the exam part!

There are three specialty categories from which to choose your Level I specialty. They are: Blind and Developmentally Delayed, Three Track and Four Track, or Mono and Bi ski teaching. The Adaptive Level I does not exactly equate to the Alpine Level I. True, we test the

candidate's knowledge and ability from beginner through student Level 4. However, in addition we also evaluate all the medical, disability and specialized equipment related information. Some people think of this exam as an Alpine Level I PLUS.

This event provides you an opportunity to obtain a voluminous amount of information that will expand your "bag of tricks". You learn where to

find the answers relative to disability and medical questions, how to evaluate a student for physical and mental disabilities, and how to modify the PSIA skiing and teaching model to be successful. Of course, much of this information can be applied to able-bodied skiers as well and will assist you to meet the needs of all your students.

The Adaptive Level I event is a great way to introduce yourself to adaptive ski teaching, in addition to making you a better overall ski teacher. ♦♦

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The PSIA-E's Children's Academy

by Jay Minnicks
PSIA-E Alpine Level II, Member,
PSIA-E Children's Committee

It sure was - but yet it wasn't only - PSIA-Eastern! At Mount Snow, from December 16-18, there were 117 participants: 50 who stayed for two days, 42 who stayed for three days, 12 staff clinicians, 4 guests, and 1 porcupine. Attendees hailed from: Maine in the north to Virginia in the south; PSIA's Northern Rocky Mountain and Central Divisions; AASI; and from two treetops and the snow in between. Happily, there were no face plants on him while he waddled along.

To reach our personal and professional goals, the Children's Committee, chaired by Alison Clayton, came up with this year's theme of Tracks to the Core, which meshed beautifully with the new PSIA Core Concepts Teaching Manual and the idea of Stepping Stones from the new Alpine Manual. Committee members had previously suggested ideas for possible clinics within each of the Tracks. The ACEs and other clinicians fleshed out those ideas, contributed their own thoughts, and came up with a program to suit the needs of the attendees.

Before we went to our first clinics, one person from each Track was asked to share his or her thoughts before, during, and after the Academy. Lisa Martin, head of the Children's program at Liberty Mountain in South Central PA, who was in the Been-There Done-That Track, said she wanted to come away with, "Fabulous fresh new ideas for training her instructors." Later she said she had a great group with great dynamics, and felt that building relationships and finding how to apply those skills at home was important to her. She brought 3 of her staff. Next year, when she will definitely be back, she's going to try to bring a brand new instructor. Two extra highlights for her were the hot tub and the spa at the Grand Summit Hotel.

Phil Graziano, from Jay Peak, skied with the Been-There Track. Phil has been at Jay Peak for 6 years, and had never attended a Children's

Academy before. He said beforehand that he was looking for "insight to help kids." At the end of the session he said, "Great time, Great clinics. The Mountain was in great shape. The Pre Ski Activities for younger kids was unbelievable. It was very insightful." He wants to come back and bring his staff

members, "so they can learn from all of those instructors getting together and sharing ideas from different perspectives." He loved the personalized skiing improvement, the Après Ski time, and the fun.

Gretchen Gueneelsberger, from Mt. Snow, has been using PSIA techniques for 6 years. She was in the First-Tracks Track, and gaining knowledge to pass her exam. Catching her on the fly the 2nd day she said that she was loving it, having fun, and everybody in her group was contributing.

Chris Saylor, in the Newbie Track, works in the summer for the Vermont Parks Department, and said that he had put a special order in for the snow. The Children's Academy was Chris's first event ever. He received, "fantastic info," and is definitely coming back.

Here are more quotes from various people: Casey said, "I like the idea that all PSIA-E instructors will teach relatively the same method and use the same terminology." Sue noted, "These ideas give children a strong foundation," and that, "Not everybody can teach kids." Before the Academy started, Jill used the words, "Fun, Tips, & Skiing." Afterwards she used the word, "Ecstasy."

Our guests were: Grant Nakamura and Jeff Kennedy, both examiners from Montana, who said they might get 20 instructors at an event like ours. They talked to us about their program, Kidology. Jon Stepelton, from Ohio, who was using our Academy to help himself with his Level III, Part 2, took copious notes and said that there is nothing like this available in his area. Dave Lynch, an AASI Level III, said that he was having fun and spreading the word on how to use terrain differently.

At 4:00 P.M. on Tuesday, after a hard day on the slopes, six Children's Committee members and 14 others attended an open meeting of the Committee. The first order of business was to thank the Snow Gods. Next, we shared general comments about the Academy, all of which were favorable. Then, we found out that the raffle held the previous evening had raised \$400 for the Terry Scholarship Fund for children's instructors. Prizes included ski equipment and clothing, handmade pottery, snacks, a wilderness trip, and both skiing and horseback riding lessons. Our,

"Thanks" to all of the businesses and individuals who donated material goods and time and/or talent as prizes for the raffle. In new business we talked about: Next year having an early registration Sunday evening with a snack/drink reception; the possibility of a 2nd Academy in the southern part of Region IV; content ideas for next year's Academy; setting up some sort of event for junior instructors; setting up a junior membership program; and, most importantly, coming back to Mount Snow.

This year I was a Terry Fund scholarship recipient, for which I would like to thank the Scholarship Committee. A requirement for this scholarship is the writing of an article telling about the event that was attended with the use of those funds. The above report is my article. In my opinion there is a greater requirement however, and that is to share the information, the camaraderie that exists among our membership, and the professionalism that is attained by every member who attends an event, whether he or she is on scholarship or not; and, this I will do. I certainly improved my personal skiing, but, more importantly, from one of the best I learned how to be a better teacher. One of my fondest memories of the Academy was something that happened at an Après Ski get-together, where I watched a relative newcomer to our profession sit and talk with an Examiner, who is also an ACE. Only in PSIA, only at the Children's Academy!

There is one other "thank you" that must be publicly made. Time and time again I heard praise for the facilities, the staff, the kindness of the management and the local snowsports school for inviting us, and the general air of well being that prevailed throughout our time at Mount Snow. To each of you connected with Mount Snow, from all of us who attended the 2002 Children's Academy, our sincere "Thank you!" ♦♦

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XX-PLORING

by Mickey Stone
PSIA-E Nordic Coordinator

The beginning of the season is always busy with the holidays, pre-season planning, and hoping for snow and early season guests. Preparing your ski school, early season training, getting into shape, acquiring your equipment and getting it all set up are all the things that we enjoy doing every year. But, this year it all seems more fun and easier. Our best gift of the holidays was from the skies above. From North Carolina to Maine we have had snowfalls and cold weather. Nordic Centers were opened early and all resorts received their Christmas vacation guests.

The Nordic Downhill squad is the best it has been. A very successful training at Okemo Mt. allowed the staff to become comfortable with the new Telemark Components, skiing tasks, and time to create our direction for our new website manual to be done this late spring. We had the great chance to honor Kare Ander-

son of Bromely Mt., VT with a PSIA-E Life Membership award in telemark skiing. Kare has been promoting tele skiing and racing in the US for over 30 years. It was a special night to honor him. He told the crowd at Mt Snow's Grand Summit Hotel to put young kids on Nordic skis before Alpine equipment. A chuckle and some contemplative thoughts by the crowd were observed. Congratulations Kare!

Our Track/Skate staff shared an event and training with Mt Van Hovenberg's staff at the Olympic Verizon Center. The long-time dedicated staff at Mt Van Hovenberg showed us their first rate place. A 5k race, hundreds of kids and school lessons, adults

in skate and diagonal stride lessons, and a festive atmosphere that made you feel you were at a festival, or in Norway, all added to the buzz. Thanks to all of our event site hosts this season. The Track/Skate staff began to create a Track/Skate Component list for structure, as the Nordic Downhill squad has done. Having a structure of movements that works for skating and striding will be very beneficial for ski teachers. There is a ton of "how to" info in the cross-country world due to the strong racing technique background. We are looking to link to these sites and compile that info into our Track/Skate Component structure. Many thanks to the Track/Skate staff for a great start.

Our mid-season events are still to come. In Tele, the "Learn To's", off-piste, intermediate bumps and trees, and Bromley's fun race to honor Kare are yet to come. On the Track/Skate side the Skiing Improvement at Norsk, Woodstck upgrade and the Masters Clinic at Jackson Ski Touring, as well as the backcountry clinic at Garnett Hill, are waiting for their participants. With all this snow you owe yourself to try a Nordic event this year.



Handling the Crust



Since we have an abundant snow pack now in the off-piste, we thought we would show you a tip that might help you when that beautiful snow has been sitting around for a while. You know what happens to it when it gets a little sun, a little melt, and then a little freeze – presto, powder with a crust. A most delightful ski, especially if you have a pack on. There are many viable ways to ski it. The bottom line is that it is very athletic, dynamic and crucial to be in the right place at the right time dur-

ing the turn. You must have your feet under you with you body right over top. A slight bit forward or back will allow you to pressure the ski either forward or back to allow you to become part of the crusty experience.

The tactic is a slight down-weighting of the skis in the middle-to-end of the turn. This will create a platform for you to move off of to unweight your skis to enter the next turn. So, we will be getting into the crust (see figure 1) and then not hanging out in it very long until

we get the skis in the air (see figure 2) to redirect and make the lead change for the next platform to be set (see figure 3). The platform, the air exchange, and back down centered to break the crust is what the series of movements is all about. Practice standing still making a split lead change and dropping your center mass down until it stops - then pop back up. Now, take it into the crust. Oh yeah, expect to become part of the piecrust at times. Smile when you do, though!

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The New Skate

In last year's SnowPro Spring/Summer issue, Randy French and I wrote an article on this subject. Since most Nordic skiers watched the Olympics at Soldier Field in Utah this past winter we all noticed some subtle differences in skating technique compared to years past. In the article in the spring we organized movements from:

- 1) What do the feet do?
- 2) What does the body do?
- 3) What is the timing of feet, poles and body?

Overall, the angle of the ankle and knee is far more bent and stays in that position most of the time. Yes, now, like in Alpine skiing, the racers are even more forward than they ever were before, starting at the ankle. To keep the momentum moving forward, the ankle never opens up. It stays in this bent forward position. See Hal in figure 1. He is doing it in a recreational fashion as opposed to a race pace. If the ankle came up to straighten, forward momentum would be lost and an extra movement would be needed to gain the momentum back again. It is kind of like falling forward and never catching up with your feet to stand up. This allows the tempo to be faster, not by pushing or skating motions of the legs, but by the body falling forward and the legs and feet recovering underneath to catch us from falling.

Here are a few activities that can be linked together to perform the "New Skate". This is very appropriate to make someone more efficient, as well as showing it to a new skier.

1) With no poles and no skis, fall forward and at the last second bring your foot under you to catch yourself. See Hal in figure 2-3. Do this several times until you get used to your ankle closing or falling forward so your body falls in a forward direction - like the leaning tower. This could also be done with a partner, catching you as you fall forward.

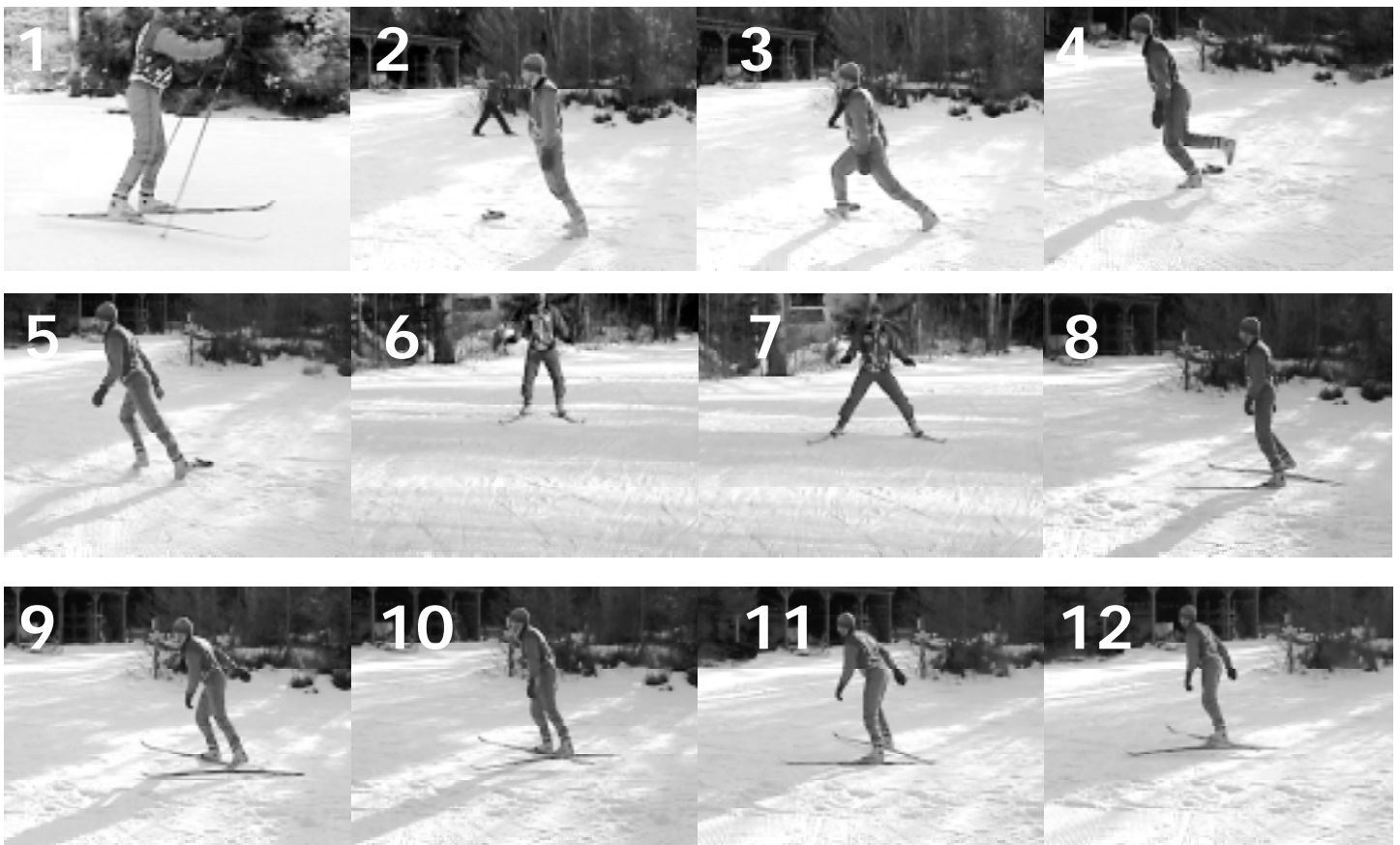
2) Do the same thing, but fall forward and keep stumbling forward by letting your legs and feet recover under you - like baby steps, with your ankle bent or closed so you feel like you're stumbling and your feet are not catching up with you. See Hal in figure 4-5.

3) Now, with skis on and no poles, point your feet out, roll ankles/knees in, and push both heels out at the same time - just like you would do in a split. Of course, catch yourself before you fall by letting one of your legs come under you. See Hal in figure 6-7.

4) Now, perform the same movement, but add a falling forward from the ankles as you push feet or heels out. Try to get the stumbling, awkward feeling going. See Hal in figure 8-10.

5) Now, put it together. Fall or lean forward as you push out and recover, but only enough that your forward momentum (body) is still ahead of your feet. See Hal in figure 11-12.

I would like to thank Hal Westwood and Randy French for the shots and technical components. ♦♦





members' opinions

USA Meets Snowli

by *Cherisse Rabl, Alpine Level II, Adaptive Sports Foundation at Windham Mountain*

This past January I was fortunate enough to be able to attend the 2003 Interski in Crans Montana, Switzerland. Over 30 countries from around the world gathered with their respective demo teams for one week to share their teaching philosophies and techniques and discuss snowsports on a world level.

Each morning there were on-snow workshops where each country presented different aspects of their teaching progressions and shared ideas with other countries. One morning I was standing around looking to see which workshop I might join when I saw a very colorful fenced off area to the right of the demo hill. There were people walking around with balloons tied to their hats, a cheerful song was playing on the speakers and lots of activity was going on. Then I realized, it must be universal, kids instructors are the same no matter what country they are from. They are the loudest, cheeriest, happiest people in the crowd. So, being an instructor that tends to gravitate towards kids lessons, I walked right over to the group and felt at home and that is where I met Snowli.

The group leader began the session by telling us the story of Snowli. Snowli came from another planet and landed here on Earth in the Swiss Alps. Snowli had never seen snow and was very lost and confused. He started wandering through the forest and ran into a snowman. The snowman welcomed him to the Swiss mountains and began to explain snow to him and most importantly began to tell Snowli about all the great things one can do on the snow. The snowman explained that no matter what kind of animal you are we all had common movements when it came to playing on the snow. The snowman told him to wander through the forest and his other animal friends will show him all he needed to know to slide on the snow.

Snowli was pretty jazzed up about this new white planet he landed on now and continued to walk through the forest where he came upon a bear. Snowli explained to the bear he did not know what to do in the snow. So, the bear said, "Well you must do what I do and take big steps through the snow." Snowli followed the bear around walking in big steps. Snowli lost the bear but came upon a penguin who showed him how to slide and stop on the snow. This really got Snowli excited because he could go fast on the snow. But he realized quickly that learning how to turn was probably a good thing and that is when he bumped into the snake. The snake taught him all about turning on the snow. So, as you can imagine, Snowli is just beside himself with excitement. This is just the berries according to him. However, just as he thought he could have no more fun, he met the kangaroo and the kangaroo taught Snowli how to jump and hop. Snowli learned how to jump over snowballs, off little ramps in the snow, etc.

Snowli was so exhausted after his very exciting first day on Earth in the Swiss Alps that he found a nice cave and went to sleep. Well, the next morning he woke up to find himself transformed. He had taken on the personalities and the colors of his friends he met the day before. His face looked like the snowman's, his arms were the color of the bear's, his tummy was the color of the penguin, his tail looked like the tail of the snake and his legs were the color of the kangaroo! Snowli was so excited about his new look and lifestyle that he went throughout the Swiss Alps and found as many kids as possible to teach all he learned the day he landed on Earth!

Well, after hearing that story, I was totally excited about meeting Snowli and learning about how he taught kids how to ski in the Swiss Ski Schools. Each school has a Snowli mascot that helps the instructors teach the kids how to ski. After each lesson, the kids get a Snowli report card that tells them how they did. Each skill (walking, sliding, turning and jumping) are denoted on the card in the color of the animal that represents them. This way, if a student goes to another Swiss Ski School, all they have to do is present their Snowli report card and the instructor knows exactly where the student is in their skill progression.



Snowli says "hi" from Interski

The Swiss Ski Schools are able to make this program universal to all their ski schools because the schools are supported by the Swiss government. If a ski school did not participate in the Snowli program, then the ski school would not receive their government funding.

It was really fun and exciting to see the Snowli program in action. We hung around the "Snowli Garden" and played around with some of the props that the Swiss Ski School instructors use. Most of the props we all have seen before, for example; cones, balls, hula hoops, etc. A couple of new ideas I got were using bubbles and encouraging students to chase after the bubbles on their skis to help them get use to moving around on skis. Using "noodles" (the noodles we all have by our poolside or lakeside that we all float on in the "off season") to help encourage stepping/turning by having a student on one end of the noodle and another student on the other end

of the noodle and they have to move in the a circle. Some instructors used the noodle to stimulate a horse and the kids rode the horse rocking back and forth to encourage fore/aft movement.

All in all Interski was a fabulous experience. Meeting instructors from all over the world was terrific. It was interesting to see the differences in the teaching techniques and learning the rationale behind them. However, there

was one thing that was universal throughout all the instructors that I met. No matter what country they were from, everyone there really loved skiing and riding and really loved teaching.

Special thanks to the Terry Fund Scholarship Committee for awarding me funding to supplement my costs of going to Interski. I really appreciated the opportunity and enjoyed the experience thoroughly. ◆◆

This section is utilized for the publication of articles from the membership, and we invite your active participation. Content reflects the opinion and knowledge of the writers only, and is not to be interpreted as official PSIA-E information.

Not an Instructor Y.E.T.I

by Dana Scronek
Assistant Ski and Snowboard
School Director
Children's Program Coordinator
Holiday Valley, NY

In a profession full of acronyms, this one tops them all - Y.E.T.I. Yes, you read it correctly. And, no, we are not referring to the "abominable snowman", although these brave, few, potential instructors might resemble one after a day on the job. Their responsibilities are both numerous and varied. To all of us at Holiday Valley Resort, a Y.E.T.I is a Young Enthusiastic Teaching Intern, and the young people in this program are just that. They are young, ages 14 and 15, and like most youngsters, their enthusiasm comes naturally. Their position in our snowsports school is that of an intern who is learning how to teach skiing and/or riding.

For many of you, this is not a new concept. Like us at Holiday Valley, many resorts are revisiting the forgotten "junior" instructor programs they once had. The question arises, "Why are we considering starting these programs again?" It is thought that when we have younger people on our staff, they seem to stay with us for about two years, and then we lose many of them when they enter college. Of the two years they are with us, it takes almost a full year to train them to the level where they are independent and can be productive. So, in essence, we are really only receiving one year of productivity from these young adults for our training efforts. At Holiday Valley, we decided that if we were to hire these people at a younger age, we could get a solid three to four years of productive service from them. This would not only benefit the snowsports school, but it would also offer a great opportunity for young people interested in teaching snowsports. So, it was decided that we would work with 14 and 15 year olds in this program. The participants receive the highest level of training and they are closely supervised in their work. The program enables them to begin to work at a younger age and to gain many of life experiences. At the same time, they are earning a free pass, they are able to wear a snowsports uniform, and, of course, they earn money and are paid.

This is our third year of offering the Y.E.T.I. Program, and I can honestly say the program has been a tremendous success. Every Y.E.T.I. that has graduated to an instructor position has turned out to be some of the best instructors we have had. They are trained in all aspects of snowsports teaching from class handling to safety issues. Because they get "on the job" training for the two years they are Y.E.T.I.s, when they turn 16 they don't require further training to get started. Therefore, they are ready right at the beginning of the year and can start working the day we open. So, while we are training new hires, we have the Y.E.T.I. Instructors who are already prepared to teach our customers. Best of all, they are independent and empowered at the young age of 16. We are also finding that the return for time invested in these young adults is well worth the training time given. All "new" 16 year olds go through our hiring clinic, which takes place in mid-December.

Many of you are probably thinking this sounds great, but aren't there a lot of responsibilities and liabilities. What about child labor laws? Prior to starting the program at Holiday Valley, we asked ourselves many questions. With solid answers to as many questions we could think of, we knew we would have fewer complications later. As for the child labor laws, each state varies. It is important that you follow your state regulations.

When we started the program, we decided to somewhat hand pick our first group of Y.E.T.I.s. We chose young people whom we knew. Their parents were employees at the resort or they lived locally in our community. By doing it this way, we already knew a little bit about each young person. We also looked closely at what kind of commitment we thought we could expect from a 14 and 15 year old. We wanted to be fair to both the student and to our snowsports school. We decided that because some 14 and 15 year olds have so much going on in their lives that one-day a weekend every weekend, or every other weekend, would be a fair commitment. We then appointed a trainer to lead this group. This trainer was responsible to see that the Y.E.T.I.s were cliniced regularly, that they met their schedules, and that they had fun.

After 15 years in the business, this program has proven to me to be one of the best things with which I have been involved. Personally, I started as a junior instructor and was welcomed into the organization by a group of experienced and seasoned instructors. For me, they gave new definition to the word, camaraderie. I know that programs like the Y.E.T.I. Program will do the same for these young people. For further information, or assistance in starting a program similar to our Y.E.T.I. Program, contact Dana Scronek at Holiday Valley Resort. ♦♦

A Partnership with Ski Patrol

by Judith Dixon
PSIA-E Alpine Level II
Ski Sundown, CT

Children will ski and ride more safely if you take the time to introduce them to the ski patrol early. Soon after my class has graduated from beginner terrain to the "big mountain", I make arrangements to stop in at the ski patrol top shack. There is a kind of secret clubhouse atmosphere to the top shack that intrigues most children (not to mention that the patrol jackets are way cool.) The patroller explains the radio system, emergency response, and routine patrol activities. He shows the contents of the medical pack each patroller carries and demonstrates the use of the toboggan. He discusses closed trail ropes and cautionary poles. All of this takes no more than 15 minutes.

I reinforce this information by playing a number of games. As we go down a trail, students call out, "Ski patrol!", and stop to point when they see something set out by ski patrol. Students get points: 1 point for a pole, 5 points for a closed trail rope, 10 points for a toboggan shelter, etc. We talk briefly about why there might be a pole in that spot, or why a trail might be closed.

I appoint a student to be a patroller. S(he) skis/rides last. Whenever someone falls, the student yells "wipe out", and then goes to help. We might even stage an "accident" to demonstrate what to do. I let all children who want to participate serve as a patroller sometime during the lesson, and thank each child for their service. I mention that the patrollers at our mountain are volunteers, too.

Older students enjoy spending more time with the patroller. Luckily, we have both skiers and riders on our patrol, and they can take a few runs with a class and talk about their job on the mountain.

Our students have a lot to think about. Their priorities are to stay upright, to stay in control of their board(s), and to stay with their friends. They also want fun and adventure. It is too much to expect that they will just intuit, for example, that two crossed poles in the middle of the trail mean "danger", rather than "ski under here" or "bonk these poles". Teaching important safety lessons can be both memorable and fun if you make the ski patrol your partner in the process. ♦♦

The Perfect Turn

by Gena D. Wagner
PSIA-E Alpine Level I
Elk Mt., PA

What is the perfect turn? Is the perfect turn a completely arced, sailing, long radius turn that draws the skier around the arc of the turn by complete centrifugal force and momentum – leaving only the seamless tracks of two skis in the otherwise pristine snow? Is the perfect turn a slightly more compromising medium radius turn that requires the skier to be as active in initiation as the skis are in driving momentum? Is the perfect turn the snappy short radius turn that requires the skier to whip the skis into and out of belled turns down steep terrain?

FYI: There is no such thing as the perfect turn! Rather, each and every style of turn is a skill or tactic used by the “experienced skier”, pulled from a portfolio of experiences.

For those of you who, like myself, entered this profession only recently, please be advised ... the perfect turn is a compilation of positive experiences stored and revisited when necessary. For example, the long radius turn can be used to dramatically gain speed or dramatically reduce speed on a given slope, depending upon the amount of time spent riding the skis across the fall line; the medium radius turn is best used to maintain speed in any given situation because the turn shape and time across the fall line neither increases nor decreases the speed; and, short radius turns (in a multitude of forms) are used to decrease the speed and increase manageability on steep terrain due to the quickness of movement from into-the-fall-line to across-the-fall-line.

If you missed the advisory: the perfect turn is terrain-dependent, and the list above provides only a fraction of the turns available and necessary in any skier’s arsenal. Each turn is vital as a part of your repertoire. To further explain, the perfect turn is perfect for the condition and the desired effect. Therefore, the questions to be asked by a skier of any level are when, how and where. The answers to these questions are learned through development over time and through exposure to conditions. For those in the profession it is referred to as “time on snow.”

So, for those of you out there in search of the perfect turn – ski!!!! The perfect turns takes time. Enjoy the process and appreciate each day. Learn from your mistakes but continue to make them. Remember: the perfect turn is developed by time and exposure to conditions and is mastered through practice and experience. ◆◆

Dear Sid....

by Seth Robins
PSIA-E Alpine Level II
Windham, NY

So, who’s Sid? Well, Sid represents the true spirit of skiing. He is a Rocky Mountain Division Level III, and, in some ways, his viewpoint is alien to the thinking of the East (not really, but you have to have a story to tell).

We met on a slow chair in Alta in early December. We talked, and it seems that he had run into “our kind” before and wanted to share some of his thoughts about us.

He started with, “Don’t mind my saying so, but...” According to him, we come across as very “...hung up over various details”, and are not particularly holistic in our skiing - if I understood him correctly. Since I was on his turf, in alien territory, and 200 feet from the ground, I agreed.

As our slopeside negotiations proceeded, he invited me to ski with him and his pal, JW. Well, these old Barts could ski like the wind, and we had a great time in knee-deep pow. My puppydog willingness to listen and learn led to a brief, but memorable, pointer. “Tip um more at the top...look down, go down”. Well, needless to say, this was a lesson that addressed the inability to simplify life and get on with it.

On the plane ride home I mulled over my experience. The details thing bothered me a bit, but I came up with some justifications for our alien ways. Analogies are funky, but I imagined the East as a barren field requiring a great deal of fertilizer, water and patience; whereas, the West is this tropical jungle where the food just appears on the trees. A stretch, but I was feeling a little defensive.

See ya, Sid ! Thanks!
Thwumping and gliding through the powder with you was a tip trip. ◆◆

Reflections

by Brennan McGuane
PSIA-E Alpine Level II
AASI Level II
Mt. Snow, VT

Imagine driving down the road so jacked you can hardly contain yourself. Jacked like stomping your first 3 in front of your buds. Stoked like after your first kiss. Cranked like finding \$100 in the parking lot. Imagine excitement and enthusiasm at a level where, if you can’t ride, you’ll have to write about riding. When I returned from my AASI Level III exam, I felt like this continuously for three days.

Preface: I wasn’t fortunate enough to walk away with a gold sticker. I do, however, consider myself successful at many levels.

The riding was so cool, and my improvement so great, that I returned home and introduced my wife to her new husband.

My group of six, the other L-III candidates, and the other L-II riders, all embraced me into the groups, creating a strong sense of belonging. Being welcomed and relaxed enabled me to perform (do what I do) at a much higher level than at any event I have ever attended.

continued next page

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YOUR TURN

continued from previous page

Thank you guys.

Whatever snow conditions we had, and we had them all, we rocked. The teaching segments, free riding, and tasks all helped demonstrate abilities, refine skills, and expand excitement levels (huge adrenaline rush).

As an aside, we should recognize the role of the examiners. These guys are often viewed as the bad guys, but they are just doing a job. The examiners are running a one-day group clinic, but also throwing scores. They review their performance at the end of each session the same way we do, and I was impressed each day. I found each session to be fun, educational, and safe.

Please refer to the first paragraph, and imagine each and every one of your guests with this excitement. Imagine the effect on the industry if all your interactions can lead to this impression. Imagine their friends and relatives searching you out as a pro because of what you gave them. Take advantage of your time with the examiners, and with your peers, and develop a professional persona that gives your students their peak experiences. Make efforts to give them what you have been lucky enough to receive, and hook them as hard as you have been hooked. ◆◆

A Positive Exam Experience

by Kevin Leyland
PSIA-E/AASI Level I
Ski Sundown, CT

In a previous submission to this publication, I replied adversely to a statement based on a couple of negative experiences I had had with PSIA. I feel it is only fair to write again after a very positive experience.

I attended an AASI Level I exam at Smugglers Notch, VT, with anticipation and trepidation. I felt I was very prepared, but, as we all know, preparation is in the eyes of the examiner. On day one I found I was 20 years older than the rest of the attendees, and at least ten years older than the examiner. This did not add a great deal to my confidence.

Surprisingly, during the preliminary discussions, I found I was the only one who had read the snowboard manual and completed the study guide. I felt a modicum of relief, but we were not on snow yet. When we arrived at the

beginning of the first run, the examiner (more about him later) asked two things of the group: To be open-minded and receptive, and, to leave our egos where we were and proceed from there. To my surprise, his was the first ego in the pile.

From that point on things just seemed to fall into place. It no longer seemed like an exam, but more like just a bunch of people riding and sharing information about riding. While I was not nearly as skilled as these "kids", I was able to keep up and learned a lot by watching them ride. It was FUN!

Getting back to the point of this story, what made this such a positive experience was the examiner, Mark Garon from Stowe. Mark is what I had expected all examiners to be like - PSIA, AASI, or whatever. Whether we were inside talking concepts, or out on the hill performing them, he stimulated us to participate fully the entire two days. He drew us out. When we didn't answer a question the way he wanted, he asked a different way until he got his answer. He knew that we knew, and he knew how to get it out of us.

What capped it for me was the personal attention he gave us. As a handicapped rider, it requires about one-and-a-half times the effort to accomplish whole rider ability. Mark sat on the chair with me, sat on the snow with me, and showed keen interest in my physical limitations. Based on his observations, he was able to offer some excellent insight and suggestions to help me ride better.

Needless to say, I passed the exam with merit in teaching and technical knowledge. Did I pass because I was prepared? Of course, it helped, but I was just as prepared for other exams I had failed. I passed because I had an examiner who was able to see beyond physical capabilities and get to the core knowledge we train for - and still keep it fun.

I recommend to every member to ride with Mark at some point, and I recommend all examiners to study Mark's style. Thanks again, Mark! ◆◆



WANT TO BUY: Old ski books, pins, patches, postcards, posters produced before 1970. Natalie Bombard-Leduc, Mt Pisgah Rd., RR #1, Box 365K, Saranac Lake, NY 12983. 518-891-4781

Bark Eaters...I Know You're Out There

by Jim Kapp
PSIA-E Nordic Downhill Level II
Seven Springs, PA

I'm a bark eater, I admit, and I suspect you may be one too! Go to your closet and check the outside sleeves of your ski jacket. Helmet bashers don't count. Are there little tinges of brown and a splash, or shall I say a slash, of evergreen? Yes! You have an affliction. You are not a "groomer", but a backwoods, off-piste seeker. Seeker of day-old freshies. Pockets of powder left by the last passing storm and left ignored by the less wandering. Left more valuable by their obscurity. Only to be enjoyed by a seeker of such delights. Knowing you worked hard to get to it makes the reward sweeter.

I got my affliction from the soft boughs of trees off the thunder quad chair at Jackson Hole as an Alpiner many years ago - more recently as a tele-er (bark eating is a prerequisite for the Nords) - and the backwoods, nooks and crannies of off-piste at several locations that shall remain nameless to protect their identities from powder poachers. A special thanks to Vermont local, and Level III Nordic Downhill, Peter, who graciously provided the tour for us non-locals.

Resorts are opening more glades for those left wondering how to dance through the trees. No doubt, Jay Peak has some of the best. They even appear on the trail map so a visitor can find them. Nice selection at Loon too! Mad River co-ops have their own trail maintenance day. Some are wide, allowing beginner bark eaters to try; some are skinny, tight, and unmarked. I like the ones that surprise, and have a rhythmic flow thru them - more hand cut, not bulldozed.

If your jacket passes the inspection, then I suggest - no, recommend - that to satisfy your affliction attend an off-piste event. Most are found in the Nordic Downhill section of your Snow Pro. There you will find like-minded fellow afflicted lovers of snow. They love it more because they actually seek it out. Hiking is sometime a necessity. Now, that is devotion! ◆◆

Notice for Region 1 and Region 2 Members

Eligibility to Vote: Eligible voters are all Level II and Level III members, plus Level I members with three consecutive years of membership as of February 15, 2003. Voters are eligible to vote in only one region. Your region is the one in which you live, unless you have specifically instructed the office that you wish to be recognized as a member of the region in which you work.

Voting Process: Please review the election candidate profiles and voting rules on preceding pages to determine the contests within your region. Then use the ballot on the bottom of this page to cast your vote. **You must return this original ballot with your mailing label attached on the reverse side. Photocopies and faxes will not be accepted.**

Board Candidate Eligibility: Please note that in compliance with PSIA-E Bylaws Section 10.3.A, only one candidate having an employment affiliation with PSIA-E may be

elected in each region (with the exception of Region 4, which has three Board seats). Candidate employment status is indicated in each candidate profile.

Return of Ballots: Completed ballots are to be mailed directly to: PSIA-E Election c/o Dorfman-Robbie Certified Public Accountants, P.C., 6 Wembley Court, Albany, N.Y., 12205-3831. **Ballots must be postmarked no later than March 21, 2003 to be valid.**

Results of Voting: Election results will be announced at the Spring Rally during the Annual Meeting on Sunday, March 30, 2003 and in the Spring/Summer issue of the *SnowPro*. The PSIA-E Board of Directors will approve the appointment of any unfilled positions at their June 21-22, 2003 meeting. If you are interested in being considered as a designate for an open position, notify the PSIA-E office in writing as soon as possible.

PSIA-E/AASI BALLOT FOR REGION

(Please enter your region number)

Mail to: PSIA-E Election c/o Dorfman-Robbie, 6 Wembley Ct., Albany, N.Y. 12205-3831

Instructions:

- 1) Print the name of the candidates of your choice on the lines provided.
- 2) Vote for only one candidate per position.
- 3) Write-in votes will not be considered for any position.
- 4) Only this original ballot, with mailing label attached on reverse, will be accepted. No faxes.
- 5) Ballot must be post-marked by March 21, 2003.

Board of Directors

Seat #1 (Regional Director) _____

Seat # 2 _____

Elected Committees

Education & Certification _____ No candidates – to be appointed

Snowsports School Mgt. _____

(Region 2 only, Region 1 to be appointed)



PSIA-E/AASI

Alpine / Snowboard / Nordic Downhill

Spring Rally

at

Killington, VT

March 29-30, 2003 (Sat – Sun.)

\$125.00 includes clinic, lifts, races, cocktail party & banquet

Registration Deadline: Friday, March 14, 2003

No late applications accepted

Annual Membership Meeting

Sun, March 30, 2003 8:00 AM

The Spring Rally is NOT open to non-members.

National News Blast

Your National Dues at Work

The AASI web site has undergone an upgrade. New services and descriptions about AASI programs, education materials, and promotional offers are being added daily. Check out the early offers from **Subaru**, **Rudy Project Technical Eyewear**, and **Transworld SNOWboarding** magazine. Login to AASI Member Services to see whatup.

On the PSIA front, alpine skiers will be thrilled with the latest offer from **Nordica**. Login to PSIA Member Services; you'll find a 'Promotional Offers' link on the left-hand column under Member Services

National Team Tryouts are Crankin' Up

Every four years, PSIA and AASI search high and low for the best instructors in the land to provide clinics, educational leadership, and a rippin' good time for the membership. Tryouts for the **PSIA Alpine Team**, **PSIA Nordic Team**, and **AASI Snowboard Team** are set for **May 2004** at **Snowbird, Utah**. The first round of information concerning tryouts is posted and you can find tryout information for the **AASI Snowboard Team** at www.aasi.org and tryout information for the **PSIA Alpine Team** and **Nordic Team** at www.psia.org. If you've activated your on-line member account, you'll be able to access the documents.



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